Basic information

2008/2282(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman **Subject** 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	SØNDERGAARD Søren Bo (GUE/NGL)	26/03/2008

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

TRAN	Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
REGI	Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AGRI	Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH	Fisheries	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT	Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
JURI	Legal Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AFCO	Constitutional Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM	Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PETI	Petitions	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN	2922	2009-02-10

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Budget	KALLAS Siim

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
		SEC(2008)2359	Summary

23/07/2008	Non-legislative basic document published		
20/11/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/03/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
20/03/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0156/2009	
21/04/2009	Debate in Parliament		
23/04/2009	Decision by Parliament	T6-0263/2009	Summary
23/04/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
23/04/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		
26/09/2009	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2008/2282(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 102
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/6/67375

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE416.555	28/01/2009	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE421.127	23/02/2009	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0156/2009	20/03/2009	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0263/2009	23/04/2009	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	SEC(2008)2359	23/07/2008	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N6-0003/2009 OJ C 286 10.11.2008, p. 0001	10/11/2008	Summary

Additional information		
Source	**Document**	**Date**
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act	
Budget 2009/0639 OJ L 255 26.09.2009, p. 0089	Summary

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2008/2282(DEC) - 10/11/2008

PURPOSE: to present the report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2007 (other institutions – European Ombudsman).

CONTENT: in its annual report for the financial year 2007, the Court focuses on the legality and regularity of the operating expenditure of the institutions. In 2007, the Court notes that all the institutions operated satisfactorily the supervisory and control systems required by the Financial Regulation and the transactions tested were free from material error of legality and regularity.

However, the Court draws attention to a number of findings which should be taken into consideration by the institutions concerned. Nevertheless, in the specific case of the audit of the **European Ombudsman**, the audit did not give rise to any significant observations.

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2008/2282(DEC) - 23/07/2008 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present the final annual accounts of the European Communities for the financial year 2007 - Other institutions: section VIII - European Ombudsman.

Note: this summary provides a general overview of the main trends in terms of the European Ombudsman's expenditure for the financial year 2007. It does not cover the details of the implementation of the expenditure by the institution due to the unavailability of the relevant document.

However, it does cover the figures for the Ombudsman's expenditure as presented in volume I of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Communities for the year 2007.

CONTENT: the summary of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Communities for the year 2007 show that the European Ombudsman's expenditure was as follows:

Commitment appropriations:

- commitment appropriations authorised: EUR 8 million;
- commitments made in 2007: EUR 7 million (implementation rate of 90.48%);
- appropriations carried over to 2008: EUR 1 million (9.52% of total commitments);
- appropriations lapsing: EUR 1 million (9.52% of the budget).

Payment appropriations:

- payment appropriations authorised: EUR 9 million;
- payments made in 2007: EUR 7 million (implementation rate of 84%);
- appropriations carried over to 2008: EUR 1 million (6.42% of total payments);
- appropriations lapsing: EUR 1 million (9.58% of the budget).

Main axes of expenditure for 2007: the Ombudsman's budget focused on the following main elements:

Complaints and enquiries: this is the area that concerns most of the Ombudsman's activities. During 2007, the Ombudsman received 3 211 new complaints, compared to 3 830 in 2006. On the other hand, the number of admissible complaints increased in both absolute and relative terms, from 449 (12% of the total) in 2006 to 518 (16%) in 2007. As a result, 17% more inquiries were opened during the year on the basis of complaints received.

In almost 70% of cases, the Ombudsman was able to help the complainant by opening an inquiry into the case, transferring it to a competent body, or giving advice on where to turn for a prompt and effective solution to the problem. A total of 303 new inquiries were opened during the year on the basis of complaints. The Ombudsman also began six inquiries on his own initiative.

Overall, the European Ombudsman dealt with a total of 641 inquiries in 2007, 332 of which were carried over from 2006. As in previous years, most of the inquiries concerned the European Commission (413, or 64% of the total). The main types of maladministration alleged were lack of transparency, including refusal of information (in 28% of cases), unfairness or abuse of power (18%), unsatisfactory procedures (13%), avoidable delay (9%), discrimination (8%), negligence (8%), legal error (4%), and failure to ensure fulfilment of obligations, that is, failure by the European Commission to carry out its role as “guardian of the Treaty” vis-à-vis the Member States (3%).

In total, the Ombudsman handled **10 484 complaints and information requests** from citizens during the year in question.

Better communication: the other main objective of the year was to work with the institutions to promote good administration and refocus communication efforts so that all those who might need to make use of the European Ombudsman’s services are properly informed of how to do so. This objective was subject to particular attention because, thanks to an ambitious and carefully targeted information campaign, the number of admissible complaints increased by 17% (see above). In 2007, the European Ombudsman developed an interactive guide that will help citizens find the most appropriate avenue of redress for their grievances. The guide should enable a greater proportion of complainants to address directly the body best equipped to deal with their complaint. Lastly, in terms of communication, 2007 was closed with the publication of the Annual Report of the European Ombudsman, which enables the Ombudsman to provide an account of his work to the European Parliament and to the other institutions.

European Network of Ombudsmen: 2007 was also characterised by the adoption of the European Network of Ombudsmen Statement. The aim of the Statement is to make the EU dimension of the work of ombudsmen better known and to clarify the service that members of the Network provide to people who complain about matters within the scope of EU law.

Staff policy: from an organisational perspective, 2007 saw a slight change with the Ombudsman’s complaint-handling secretariat now supervised directly by the Assistant to the Head of the Legal Department. The establishment plan of the Ombudsman showed a total of 57 posts in 2007, the same as for 2006.

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2008/2282(DEC) - 23/04/2009 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2007

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 2009/639/EC the European Parliament on the discharge for implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2007 (Section VIII - European Ombudsman).

CONTENT: with the present decision, the European Parliament grants the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2007.

This decision is in line with the European Parliament’s resolution adopted on 23 April 2009 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 23/04/2009).

2007 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2008/2282(DEC) - 23/04/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 581 votes to 12, with 42 abstentions, a decision to grant the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2007. The decision to grant discharge is also an approval of the closure of the accounts of this institution.

Moreover, the Parliament adopted a resolution with observations which form an integral part of the decision to grant discharge. The resolution recalls that, in 2007, the European Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) had available commitment appropriations amounting to a total of EUR 8.2 million (compared to EUR 7.7 million in 2006), with a utilisation rate of 90.48% (below the average of the other institutions). Parliament notes, in particular, that over the period 2003 to 2007, commitment appropriations steadily increased while the number of posts did not increase for the second consecutive year.

Other main issues in the resolution can be summarised as follows:

Internal audit: noting that the Court of Auditors’ audit of the Ombudsman did not give rise to any significant observations, Parliament notes, nevertheless, that, according to the Internal Auditor's report in 2007, the institution was faced with a number of specific problems, including the implementation of an action plan concerning the management of individual entitlements and compliance with public procurement rules. It also notes that improvements in effectiveness were considered to be necessary in some areas, such as identification of sensitive functions, improvement of planning and programming and performance indicators, and encourage the Ombudsman to make every effort to further improve the efficiency of the internal control framework of the institution.

Framework Agreement with the European Parliament: Parliament notes that the new framework cooperation agreement of indefinite duration between the Ombudsman and the Parliament (which entered into force on 1 April 2006) started to bear fruit in 2007 in terms of the provision of certain administrative services (buildings, IT, communications, legal advice, medical services, training, translation and interpretation). It also praises the

Ombudsman for having continued its efforts to develop inter-institutional links with other bodies (in particular OPOCE, EAS and EPSO) and with the Translation Centre. In addition, Parliament welcomes the fact that, in 2007, the Ombudsman faced fewer difficulties than in previous years regarding the recruitment of qualified lawyers.

Welcoming the publication of the declaration of interests of the Ombudsman, Parliament congratulates the Ombudsman on its accession on 2 June 2008 to the Interinstitutional Agreement of 25 May 1999 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission concerning internal investigations by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). It also requests that the Ombudsman include in its 2008 activity report a chapter giving a detailed account of the follow-up during the year to Parliament's earlier discharge decisions.

Lastly, Parliament regrets the fact that, despite amendments to the Financial Regulation, its rules on procurement are still excessively cumbersome for smaller institutions, such as the Ombudsman. It therefore calls on the Commission to consult extensively with this institution in order to ensure that its concerns are fully taken into account in the final draft.