Basic information

2018/2172(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Economic and Social Committee **Subject** 8.70.03.02 2017 discharge	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	KOHN Arndt (S&D)	27/07/2018
	Shadow rapporteur SALAFRANCA SÁNCHEZ-NEYRA José Ignacio (PPE) FITTO Raffaele (ECR) KLINZ Wolf (ALDE) DE JONG Dennis (GUE/NGL) JÁVOR Benedek (Verts/ALE) VALLI Marco (EFDD) JALKH Jean-François (ENF)	

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.	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner

Budget	OETTINGER Günther

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
28/06/2018	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2018)0521	Summary
11/09/2018	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
20/02/2019	Vote in committee		
27/02/2019	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0100/2019	Summary
26/03/2019	Decision by Parliament	T8-0249/2019	Summary
26/03/2019	Results of vote in Parliament		
26/03/2019	Debate in Parliament		
26/03/2019	End of procedure in Parliament		
27/09/2019	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2018/2172(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/8/14183

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE626.821	17/01/2019	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE634.533	30/01/2019	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0100/2019	27/02/2019	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0249/2019	26/03/2019	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	05824/2019	11/02/2019	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2018)0521	28/06/2018	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N8-0013/2019 OJ C 357 04.10.2018, p. 0001	12/07/2018	Summary

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

Final act
Budget 2019/1426 OJ L 249 27.09.2019, p. 0117

2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Economic and Social Committee

2018/2172(DEC) - 28/06/2018 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: presentation by the Commission of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2017, as part of the 2017 discharge procedure.

Analysis of the accounts of the EU Institutions: **European Economic and Social Committee**.

CONTENT: the organisational governance of the EU consists of institutions, agencies and other EU bodies whose expenditure is included in the general budget of the Union.

This Commission document concerns the **EU's consolidated accounts for the year 2017** and details how spending by the EU institutions and bodies was carried out. The consolidated annual accounts of the EU provide financial information on the activities of the institutions, agencies and other bodies of the EU from an accrual accounting and budgetary perspective.

It is the responsibility of the Commission's Accounting Officer to prepare the EU's consolidated annual accounts and ensure that they present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position, the result of the operations and the cash flows of the EU institutions and bodies with a view to granting discharge.

Discharge procedure: **the final step of a budget lifecycle is the discharge**. It is the decision by which the European Parliament '**releases**' the Commission from its responsibility for management of a given budget by marking the end of that budget's existence. It is granted by the European Parliament on the recommendation of the Council.

The decision is based in particular on the European Court of Auditors reports, in particular its annual report, in which the Court provides a Statement of Assurance (DAS) on the legality and regularity of transactions (payments and commitments).

The procedure results in the granting, postponement or refusal of discharge.

The final discharge report including specific recommendations to the Commission for action is adopted in plenary by the European Parliament and are subject to an annual follow up report in which the Commission outlines the concrete actions it has taken to implement the recommendations made.

All EU institutions and other agencies, bodies and joint undertakings are subject to their own discharge procedures.

(2) Implementation of the Economic and Social Committee's appropriations for the financial year 2017: the EESC's 2017 budget totalled **EUR 133.8 million**. In 2017, in line with an agreement between the EU institutions to reduce the staff by 5% within the period 2013-2017, 6 posts were cut. At the same time, as the exemption for the Irish language will come to an end, one post was added to build up an Irish translation capacity.

As regards the budget implementation of the EESC, the Annual Activity Report 2017 stated that the Committee focused on the following activities:

- the EESC adopted a total of **155 opinions and reports**, including 13 exploratory ones. A total of 61 opinions were adopted in response to referrals from the European Parliament and Council;
- Members of the European Parliament actively participated in 35 EESC legislative work meetings. This highlighted the **increased dialogue** at political level between the two institutions;
- continuation of the modernisation of administrative procedures which started in 2015 to help the EESC's general secretariat and administration increase its efficiency and provide better service to the institution and support for its members;
- a Brexit Follow-up Group was created in order to monitor the evolution in the UK's withdrawal from the EU and to assess the potential need for reactions or positions of the EESC;
- the official launch of the European circular economy platform by the EESC and the European Commission, during the Circular Economy Stakeholder Conference.

2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Economic and Social Committee

2018/2172(DEC) - 11/02/2019 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

Based on the observations contained in the report by the Court of Auditors, the Council called on the European Parliament to grant discharge to all of the EU institutions in respect of the implementation of their respective budgets for the financial year 2017.

However, it considered that budget implementation required a series of comments from the Council which should be fully taken into account by the Commission.

The Council welcomed the fact that the administrative and related expenditure of the EU institutions remained, as in previous years, free from material error with an estimated level of error of 0.5 %, which while being well below the materiality threshold is higher by 0.3 % compared to the Court's findings for 2016 (0.2 %). It noted with satisfaction that no serious weaknesses were identified by the Court in the supervisory and control systems and in the examined annual activity reports.

The Council took note that, as in previous years, there was a small number of errors relating to staff costs and some weaknesses in the Office for Administration and Payment of individual entitlements' (PMO) management of family allowances. It called on the Commission to improve its procedures to avoid errors related to staff expenditure.

The Court did not identify any specific problems concerning the European Economic and Social Committee.

2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Economic and Social Committee

2018/2172(DEC) - 27/02/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Arndt KOHN (S&D, DE) calling on the European Parliament to grant discharge to the Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Economic and Social Committee for the financial year 2017.

Members welcomed the conclusion of the Court of Auditors, according to which the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2017 for administrative and other expenditure of the European Economic and Social Committee were free from material error. No significant weaknesses were identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement.

Budgetary and financial management

In 2017, the Committee's budget amounted to EUR 133 807 338 (compared to EUR 130 586 475 in 2016), with an implementation rate of 96.5 % compared to 97.2 % in 2016. The implementation rate of appropriations carried forward from 2016 to 2017 was higher than in 2016, 84.9 % (EUR 7.4 million) compared to 65.7 % in 2016 (EUR 6.8 million).

Members welcomed the Committee's commitment to extend the performance-based budgeting methodology to relevant parts of its budget.

Staff

The Committee reduced the overall number of posts in its establishment plan by 59 posts, from 727 in 2013 to 665 in 2017, mainly due to the implementation of the 5 % staff cuts decision. It also adjusted its organisational structure, in particular through the merger of the directorate for human resources and the directorate for finance in May 2017.

Performance

Members took note that the Committee adopted in 2017 a total of 155 opinions and reports, including 13 exploratory opinions on referral from the EU presidencies or the Commission, 59 opinions on referral from Parliament and Council, and 45 on referral from the Commission.

They highlighted that translation services are still in transition towards a higher degree of outsourcing due to the transfer of staff to Parliament under the cooperation agreement (with 16.61 % of the budget in 2016 being used for outsourced translation and 17.10 % in 2017). Members called on the Committee to follow up the areas related to translation management requiring further attention from management highlighted by the internal audit service.

Inter-institutional administrative cooperation with Parliament was welcomed and further encouraged.

Procurement

Members regretted the low participation of economic operators in the calls for tenders launched by the Committee. They asked the Committee to increase the publication efforts and to reduce the number of exceptional negotiated procedures with only one candidate.

Brexit

Lastly, Members noted that the Council has not taken a decision yet about any change in the number of Committee members and delegates following the decision of the United Kingdom to withdraw from the Union. They called on the Committee to provide information of the direct budgetary impact of the decision, at the latest in the follow-up to the 2017 discharge.

2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Economic and Social Committee

2018/2172(DEC) - 26/03/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 510 votes to 124, with 7 abstentions, to grant discharge to the Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee in respect of the implementation of the committee's budget for the 2017 financial year.

It welcomed the conclusion of the Court of Auditors, according to which the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2017 for administrative and other expenditure of the European Economic and Social Committee were free from material error. No significant weaknesses were identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement.

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Members welcomed the inter-institutional administrative cooperation with Parliament and the mid-term evaluation results on the implementation of the cooperation agreement between the Committee and the Committee of the Regions, which highlights the successful implementation of several measures. It noted that in the context of a redeployment exercise, the Committee has already moved 16 posts from the directorate for translation to its own services, and that remaining moves will happen progressively. The calculation of the budgetary savings made by the Committee and the Committee of the Regions through this inter-institutional cooperation, such as the savings, inter alia, in infrastructure costs amounting to EUR 12.5 million, in IT costs amounting to EUR 5 million, or in security staff costs amounting to EUR 500 000.

Parliament called on the Committee and the Committee of the Regions to continue to improve this inter-institutional cooperation in order to achieve further savings.

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2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Economic and Social Committee

2018/2172(DEC) - 12/07/2018

PURPOSE: presentation of the Annual report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2017.

CONTENT: the Court of Auditors published its 41th annual report on the implementation of the general budget of the Union for the year 2017. This report follows a five-part structure:

- the statement of assurance (DAS) and a summary of the results of the audit on the reliability of accounts and the regularity of transactions;

- the analysis of budgetary and financial management;

- the Commission’s performance reporting framework;

- the findings on EU revenue;

- the presentation of the main headings of the current multiannual financial framework (MFF), the results of the testing of the regularity of transactions.

The Court concludes that payments for 2017 are legal and regular, with the expenditure recorded in 2017 covering spending on a reimbursement basis. It believes that the EU accounts present a true and fair view of the EU’s financial position.

The report also assessed the potential impact on the 2017 accounts of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union. On 29 March 2017, the United Kingdom (UK) formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the European Union (EU). On 22 May 2017, the negotiations started for the withdrawal agreement between the EU and the UK.

Part Five (Financial Provisions) of the draft withdrawal agreement of 19 March 2018 concerning the financial settlement states that the UK will pay all its obligations under the current and previous Multiannual Financial Frameworks as if it were still a Member State.

Based on this, the Court concluded that the accounts as at 31 December 2017 correctly reflect the withdrawal process.

The audit also focuses on the budget implementation of the Committee of the ***European Economic and Social Committee***.

The overall audit evidence indicates that the level of error in spending on ‘Administration’ was not material. For this MFF heading, the testing of transactions produced an estimated overall level of error of 0.5 %

The Court did not detect any specific problem regarding the European Economic and Social Committee.