Basic information

2019/2062(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2018 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman **Subject** 8.70.03.08 2018 discharge	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	ZDECHOVSKÝ Tomáš (EPP)	04/09/2019
	Shadow rapporteur GARCÍA MUÑOZ Isabel (S&D) CHASTEL Olivier (Renew) PEKSA Mikuláš (Greens/EFA) FITTO Raffaele (ECR) KUHS Joachim (ID) FLANAGAN Luke Ming (GUE/NGL)	

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
27/06/2019	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2019)0316	
18/09/2019	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/02/2020	Vote in committee		
28/02/2020	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0028/2020	
13/05/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/05/2020	Decision by Parliament	T9-0086/2020	Summary
14/05/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
14/05/2020	End of procedure in Parliament		
15/05/2020	Results of vote in Parliament		
11/12/2020	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2019/2062(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/9/00881

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE639.833	11/12/2019	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE645.095	29/01/2020	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0028/2020	28/02/2020	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0086/2020	14/05/2020	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	05760/1/2020	17/02/2020	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2019)0316	27/06/2019	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Budget 2020/1883
OJ L 417 11.12.2020, p. 0157

2018 discharge: EU general budget, European Ombudsman

2019/2062(DEC) - 14/05/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 665 votes to 23, with 3 abstentions, to **grant discharge** to the European Ombudsman in respect of the implementation of the European Ombudsman's budget for the financial year 2018.

In the resolution accompanying its discharge decision (adopted by 666 votes to 21 against, with 6 abstentions), the European Parliament made a series of observations:

Budgetary and financial management

In its report on the European Ombudsman's annual accounts for the financial year 2018, the Court of Auditors did not identify any significant weaknesses as regards human resources and public procurement issues. It concluded that all payments for the year ended 31 December 2018 for the Ombudsman's administrative expenditure were free from material error and that the supervisory and control systems examined were effective.

The Ombudsman's budget in 2018 amounted to EUR 10 837 545 (compared with EUR 10 905 441 in 2017), a reduction of EUR 67 896 (0.62%).

Parliament welcomed the Ombudsman's overall sound financial management and prudence in the financial year 2018. Of the total appropriations, 95.33 % were committed (compared with 93.91 % in 2017) and 91.33 % were paid (compared with 86.20 % in 2017). It noted the improvements related to the appropriations carried over from 2018 to 2019. However, it highlighted the unused appropriations for several budget lines, such as 'external meetings' and 'publications', recalling the need to take measures to minimise budget over-estimates.

Staff

Taking note of the limited resources of the Ombudsman to deal with an ever increasing workload, Parliament supported the Ombudsman’s request to align the establishment plan with the actual needs and workload by identifying functions of a permanent nature which should be carried out by permanent staff. It asked the Ombudsman to report back on potential efficiency gains due to the sole fact of reorganisation and reallocation of tasks.

It welcomed the exemplary gender balance in management positions, with 4 women and 4 men.

The Ombudsman was encouraged to continue to develop a long-term human resources policy framework that takes into account work-life balance, lifelong guidance and career development, gender balance, non-discrimination, teleworking, geographical balance and recruitment of its staff, as well as the integration of persons with disabilities into its workforce.

Cooperation with Parliament

Parliament supported the Ombudsman's intention to cooperate more closely with Parliament to ensure that it is informed of shortcomings, particularly as regards cases of maladministration revealed by inquiries or the institutions' negative responses to recommendations made by the Ombudsman. Members considered that this information, provided in a summarised and structured way, would be extremely useful to Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control.

Performance

Parliament found that the proportion of inquiries closed within six months and 18 months is 57% and 88% respectively and that the ‘proportion of cases in which the decision on admissibility is taken" within one month has increased significantly, from 69% in 2016 to 86% in 2017. In addition, the average time for processing all categories of complaints increased to 79 days in 2018 (compared to 64 days in 2017), while the average time for investigations was reduced to 255 days in 2018 (compared to 266 days in 2017 and 369 days in 2013). The number of complaints lodged under the mandate (880, compared to 751 in 2017) continued to increase significantly in 2018 (+17%) after a 5.5% increase in 2017.

In addition, the average time for dealing with all categories of complaints increased to 79 days in 2018 (compared to 64 days in 2017), while the average time for dealing with inquiries decreased to 255 days in 2018 (compared to 266 days in 2017 and 369 in 2013). The number of complaints within the mandate (880, compared to 751 in 2017) has continued to increase significantly in 2018 (+ 17 %) after an increase of 5.5 % in 2017.

Information for citizens

Parliament stressed the importance of making EU citizens aware of the possibility of having recourse to the Ombudsman in cases of maladministration. It noted the Ombudsman's efforts to increase its visibility through tools such as the new website launched in 2018, and further invited it to use free, open-source and self-hosted social networking platforms having special regard to users’ data protection. It encouraged the Ombudsman to make progress on a coherent policy for the digitalisation of its services.

In general, Parliament highlighted the work achieved in recent years on issues such as performance-based budgeting, the ethical framework and the many related rules and procedures, enhanced communication activities and the increasing number of measures to improve transparency. It underlined the importance of collaboration and of sharing of experience among Union institutions and bodies and suggested that an analysis be made of the possibility of formalised networking activities in different domains in order to share best practises and to develop common solutions.