

## Basic information

2023/2131(DEC)

DEC - Discharge procedure

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Council and Council

### Subject

8.70.03.12 2022 discharge

Procedure completed

## Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">CONT</span> Budgetary Control	SJÖSTEDT Jonas (The Left)	24/07/2024
	Shadow rapporteur ZDECHOVSKÝ Tomáš (EPP) MOLNÁR Csaba (S&D) GERBRANDY Gerben-Jan (Renew)	
Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">CONT</span> Budgetary Control	FLANAGAN Luke Ming (The Left)	26/06/2023
Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">AFET</span> Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">DEVE</span> Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">INTA</span> International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">BUDG</span> Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">ECON</span> Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

<b>EMPL</b> Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>ENVI</b> Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>ITRE</b> Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>IMCO</b> Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>TRAN</b> Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>REGI</b> Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>AGRI</b> Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>PECH</b> Fisheries	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>CULT</b> Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>JURI</b> Legal Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>LIBE</b> Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
<b>AFCO</b> Constitutional Affairs	DE MEO Salvatore (EPP)	07/09/2023
<b>FEMM</b> Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

European Commission	<b>Commission DG</b>	<b>Commissioner</b>
	Budget	HAHN Johannes

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
28/06/2023	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2023)0391 	
12/09/2023	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/02/2024	Vote in committee		
06/03/2024	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0071/2024	Summary
10/04/2024	Debate in Parliament		
11/04/2024	Results of vote in Parliament		
23/04/2024	Decision by Parliament	T9-0288/2024	Summary
23/04/2024	Results of vote in Parliament		
23/04/2024	Report referred back to committee		
30/09/2024	Vote in committee		
03/10/2024	Committee report tabled for plenary	A10-0003/2024	
10/10/2024	Final act published in Official Journal		
22/10/2024	Decision by Parliament	T10-0026/2024	Summary
22/10/2024	Results of vote in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2023/2131(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/10/00445 CONT/9/12773

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE753.479	14/12/2023	
Specific opinion	<span style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">AFCO</span>	PE756.240	29/01/2024	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE758.198	31/01/2024	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0071/2024	06/03/2024	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0288/2024	23/04/2024	Summary
Committee draft report		PE761.252	24/07/2024	

Amendments tabled in committee		<a href="#">PE763.112</a>	09/09/2024	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A10-0003/2024</a>	03/10/2024	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		<a href="#">T10-0026/2024</a>	22/10/2024	<a href="#">Summary</a>

#### Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	06179/2024	12/03/2024	

#### European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	<a href="#">COM(2023)0391</a> 	28/06/2023	

#### Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N9-0060/2023 <a href="#">OJ C 000 04.10.2023, p. 0000</a>	04/10/2023	
EU	For information	32024B2224 <a href="#">OJ OJ L 10.10.2024</a>	10/10/2024	

#### Final act

Budget 2024/3090 <a href="#">OJ OJ L 12.12.2024</a>	<a href="#">Summary</a>
--	-------------------------

## 2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Council and Council

2023/2131(DEC) - 06/03/2024 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Luke Ming FLANAGAN (The Left, IE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section II – European Council and Council.

The committee called on the European Parliament to **postpone** its decision on granting the Secretary-General of the Council discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Council and of the Council for the financial year 2022.

#### **State of play of the discharge procedure**

Members deeply regretted that since 2009, and again for the financial year 2021, Parliament had to refuse discharge to the Council because the Council continues to refuse to cooperate with Parliament on the discharge procedure, preventing Parliament from taking an informed decision based on a serious and thorough scrutiny of the implementation of the Council's budget. They also regretted that, on 12 October 2023, the General Secretariat of the Council informed Parliament once again that it would not be answering Parliament's questionnaire and that the Council would not be participating in the hearing which was arranged for 25 October 2023 as part of the discharge process and in which all other invited institutions participated.

The report deplored that the Council, for more than a decade, has shown that it does not have any political willingness to collaborate with Parliament in the context of the annual discharge procedure. The Council is called on to resume negotiations with Parliament at the highest level as soon as possible in order to break the deadlock and find a solution while respecting the respective roles of Parliament and the Council in the discharge procedure and ensuring transparency and proper democratic control of budget implementation.

Members stressed that a revision of the Treaties could render the discharge procedure clearer and more transparent by giving Parliament the explicit competence to grant discharge to all Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies individually.

### ***Political priorities***

The report regretted that the Council exerts its prerogative in the nomination and appointment procedures for many Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies without taking into account the views of the interested parties or the recommendations of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

A serious gender imbalance was noted in the Court, where, at the end of 2022, there were only 9 female members compared to 17 male members. Moreover, Members regretted that the decision-making process in the Council is still far from fully transparent. They also regretted that the Council does not fully utilise the mandatory transparency register beyond its current limitations, rejecting any recommendation for improvements. The report called on the Council to refuse to meet with unregistered lobbyists and on the rotating Council presidencies to stop using corporate sponsorship to contribute to covering their expenses.

### ***Budgetary and financial management***

The report noted that the budget for Council was EUR 611 473 556 for 2022, representing an increase of 2.9 % compared to 2021, which is significantly higher than the increase from 2020 to 2021 that was 0.6 %. Members reiterated their regret that the budget of the European Council and the Council has **not been divided into two clearly separated budgets** as recommended by Parliament in previous discharge resolutions in order to improve transparency and accountability.

### ***Human resources, equality and staff well-being***

The report noted that, given the Council's lack of cooperation with Parliament, observations in this section primarily rely on aggregated information published on the Council's website which provides limited detail.

The Council, in its budget for 2022, was assigned 3 029 posts which is the same as for 2021 but that the distribution among categories changed with the number.

The Council website states that the Council Secretariat had 3 108 staff (officials, temporary and contract staff and seconded national experts) on 1 January 2023.

Members regretted the:

- gender imbalance in senior management positions within the General Secretariat of the Council;
- lack of information on the implementation of the Council's gender action plan and on the measures taken to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities employed by the Council;
- the Council has not been replying to the questionnaire from Parliament therefore Parliament has no information about the number of trainees in Council during 2022 and whether they were paid during their traineeship or not.

### ***Buildings***

The report noted the total payments with respect to buildings amounted to EUR 45 435 994 in 2022, significantly up from EUR 35 709 119 in 2021, representing an increase of 27.2 %. The major reason for this increase is payments for water, gas, electricity and heating which increased from EUR 2 565 008 in 2021 to EUR 11 233 088 in 2022, equivalent to an increase of 338 %.

Unfortunately, Parliament has no information about initiatives in Council during 2022 concerning improved access to their buildings for people with disabilities and other possible initiatives for people with disabilities.

### ***Communication***

The Council is encouraged to engage with the European Data Protection Supervisor with a view to utilise the two open-source social media platforms, EU Voice and EU Video, that were launched as a public pilot project to promote the use of free and open -source social networks.

## **2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Council and Council**

2023/2131(DEC) - 23/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided, by 539 votes to 26, with 29 abstentions, to **postpone its decision** on granting the Secretary-General of the Council discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Council and of the Council for the financial year 2022.

### ***State of play***

Parliament regretted that it had to refuse discharge to the Council because the Council continues to refuse to cooperate with Parliament on the discharge procedure, preventing Parliament from taking an informed decision based on a serious and thorough scrutiny of the implementation of the Council's budget.

It also deplored that for more than a decade, the Council has shown that it does not have any political willingness to collaborate with Parliament in the context of the annual discharge procedure. This attitude has had a lasting negative effect on both institutions, has discredited the management and democratic scrutiny of the Union budget and has damaged the trust of citizens in the Union as a transparent entity.

The Council is called on to resume negotiations with Parliament at the highest level as soon as possible to break the deadlock and find a solution while respecting the respective roles of Parliament and the Council in the discharge procedure and ensuring transparency and proper democratic control of budget implementation.

Members stressed that a revision of the Treaties could render the discharge procedure clearer and more transparent by giving Parliament the explicit competence to grant discharge to all Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies individually.

Despite the Council being unwilling to cooperate in the discharge procedure, Parliament, nevertheless, stressed some political priorities and set out some observations concerning the budgetary and financial management of the Council and other observations relevant for the discharge procedure in this resolution.

### ***Political priorities***

Parliament regretted that the Council exerts its prerogative in the nomination and appointment procedures for many Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies without taking into account the views of the interested parties or the recommendations of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

A serious gender imbalance was noted in the Court, where, at the end of 2022, there were only 9 female members compared to 17 male members. Moreover, Members regretted that the decision-making process in the Council is still far from fully transparent. They also regretted that the Council does not fully utilise the mandatory transparency register beyond its current limitations, rejecting any recommendation for improvements. The resolution called on the Council to refuse to meet with unregistered lobbyists and on the rotating Council presidencies to stop using corporate sponsorship to contribute to covering their expenses.

### ***Budgetary and financial management***

The budget for Council was **EUR 611 473 556** for 2022, representing an increase of 2.9 % compared to 2021, which is significantly higher than the increase from 2020 to 2021 that was 0.6 %. Members reiterated their regret that the budget of the European Council and the Council has **not been divided into two clearly separated budgets** as recommended by Parliament in previous discharge resolutions in order to improve transparency and accountability.

### ***Human resources, equality and staff well-being***

Observations in this section primarily rely on aggregated information published on the Council's website.

The Council, in its budget for 2022, was assigned 3 029 posts which is the same as for 2021 but that the distribution among categories changed with the number. The Council website states that the Council Secretariat had 3 108 staff (officials, temporary and contract staff and seconded national experts) on 1 January 2023.

Members regretted the:

- gender imbalance in senior management positions within the General Secretariat of the Council;
- lack of information on the implementation of the Council's gender action plan and on the measures taken to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities employed by the Council;
- the Council has not been replying to the questionnaire from Parliament therefore Parliament has no information about the number of trainees in Council during 2022 and whether they were paid during their traineeship or not.

### ***Ethical framework and transparency***

Parliament regretted that Parliament does not have any possibility to ask questions concerning the ethical framework in place in the Council since the Council will not answer questions from Parliament. No information is received about the code of conduct applicable to all members of staff of the Council.

### ***Buildings***

Parliament noted the total payments with respect to buildings amounted to EUR 45 435 994 in 2022, significantly up from EUR 35 709 119 in 2021, representing an increase of 27.2 %. The major reason for this increase is payments for water, gas, electricity and heating which increased from EUR 2 565 008 in 2021 to EUR 11 233 088 in 2022, equivalent to an increase of 338 %.

Unfortunately, Parliament has no information about initiatives in Council during 2022 concerning improved access to their buildings for people with disabilities and other possible initiatives for people with disabilities.

### ***Communication***

The Council is encouraged to engage with the European Data Protection Supervisor with a view to utilise the two open-source social media platforms, EU Voice and EU Video, that were launched as a public pilot project to promote the use of free and open -source social networks.

# 2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Council and Council

2023/2131(DEC) - 22/10/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **refuse to grant discharge** to the Secretary-General of the Council in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Council and the Council for the financial year 2022.

In its resolution, adopted by 431 votes to 131 with 83 abstentions, Parliament deeply regrets that since 2009, and again for the financial year 2022, Council continues to refuse to cooperate with Parliament on the discharge procedure, preventing Parliament from taking an informed decision based on a serious and thorough scrutiny of the implementation of the Council's budget and thereby compelling Parliament to refuse discharge. According to Members, this attitude has had a lasting negative effect on both institutions, has discredited the management and democratic scrutiny of the Union budget and has **damaged the trust** of citizens in the Union as a transparent entity.

The Council is called on to resume negotiations with Parliament at the highest level as soon as possible, involving the Secretary-Generals and the Presidents of both institutions, in order to **break the deadlock** and find a solution while respecting the respective roles of Parliament and the Council in the discharge procedure and ensuring transparency and proper democratic control of budget implementation.

Parliament stressed that a **revision of the Treaties** could render the discharge procedure clearer and more transparent by giving Parliament the explicit competence to grant discharge to all Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies individually. It underlined, however, that pending such a revision, the current situation must be improved through better interinstitutional cooperation within the current framework of the Treaties and urged the Council to actively engage with the Parliament in addressing the current situation.

Members also regretted that the Council did not prepare to avoid a Council Presidency led by a Member State subject to an Article 7 procedure (Suspension clause), with the consequence that the Council Presidency is being abused by the Hungarian government, and the principle of sincere cooperation violated.

Lastly, Parliament reiterated that the use of the unanimity voting procedure in the Council in certain policy areas is paralysing the Union's decision-making process and therefore making it prone to blackmailing by Member States, especially those who fail to respect the rule of law.

# 2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Council and Council

2023/2131(DEC) - 12/12/2024 - Final act

PURPOSE: discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section II – European Council and Council.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision (EU) 2024/3090 of the European Parliament on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section II – European Council and Council.

CONTENT: the European Parliament decided to **refuse discharge** to the Secretary-General of the Council in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Council and of the Council for the financial year 2022.

Parliament deeply regrets that since 2009, and again for the financial year 2022, Council continues to refuse to cooperate with Parliament on the discharge procedure, preventing Parliament from taking an informed decision based on a serious and thorough scrutiny of the implementation of the Council's budget and thereby compelling Parliament to refuse discharge. It also deplored that for more than a decade, the Council has shown that it does not have any political willingness to collaborate with Parliament in the context of the annual discharge procedure.

Parliament stressed that all other Union institutions recognise and understand the principle that, given the delegation of power concerning the implementation of the budget, Parliament has the right and obligation to scrutinise their budgets and their implementation in the discharge procedure. It therefore expressed its strong disapproval of the Council's continued refusal to cooperate with Parliament in this regard.

The Council is called on to resume negotiations with Parliament at the highest level as soon as possible in order to break the deadlock and find a solution while respecting the respective roles of Parliament and the Council in the discharge procedure and ensuring transparency and proper democratic control of budget implementation.