

Basic information

2023/2137(DEC)

DEC - Discharge procedure

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman

Subject

8.70.03.12 2022 discharge




Procedure completed

Key players


European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CONT Budgetary Control	FLANAGAN Luke Ming (The Left)	26/05/2023
	Shadow rapporteur MARINESCU Marian-Jean (EPP) RÓNAI Sándor (S&D) CICUREL Ilana (Renew) PEKSA Mikuláš (Greens/EFA) CZARNECKI Ryszard (ECR) KUHS Joachim (ID)		
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.	

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	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		
11/03/2024	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0084/2024	Summary
10/04/2024	Debate in Parliament		
11/04/2024	Decision by Parliament	T9-0234/2024	Summary
11/04/2024	Results of vote in Parliament		
10/10/2024	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2023/2137(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/9/12889

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE753.486	13/12/2023	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE758.204	31/01/2024	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0084/2024	11/03/2024	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0234/2024	11/04/2024	Summary
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	COM(2023)0391 	28/06/2023		

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N9-0060/2023 OJ C 000 04.10.2023, p. 0000	04/10/2023	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency				
Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives
FLANAGAN Luke Ming	Rapporteur	CONT	17/10/2023	Administrator, Secretariat General of the European Ombudsman Director of the Directorate for Administration of the European Ombudsman Policy Adviser - Parliamentary Relations, Cabinet of the European Ombudsman

Final act

Budget 2024/2243 OJ OJ L 10.10.2024	Summary
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2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman

2023/2137(DEC) - 11/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 580 votes to 8, with 17 abstentions, to grant the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2022.

In its resolution, adopted by 585 votes to 9 with 15 abstentions, Parliament made the following observations:

In its Annual Report for the financial year 2022, the Court of Auditors stated that it did not identify any specific issues concerning the Ombudsman. Members noted that 14 (23 %) of the 60 transactions contained errors but that the Court, based on the five errors which were quantified, estimates the level of error to be below the materiality threshold.

Budgetary and financial management

The Ombudsman's budget amounted to **EUR 12 222 108** in 2022, which represents a decrease of EUR 280 000 compared to 2021. This decrease is the result of a rationalisation of the budget based on actual needs.

The budget implementation rate was **96.97 %** in 2022, which is higher compared to the previous year, when the implementation rate was 88.8 % due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The resolution noted that the Ombudsman did not report any impact from the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on its 2022 budget for missions, procurement or building.

Internal management, performance and internal control

Members underlined that in 2022, noticing the flagrant absence of public information, the Ombudsman anticipatorily asked the European Commission how it will ensure transparency in the negotiations of national recovery plans, how it will guarantee public scrutiny of milestones reached by Member States, and how it will supervise the audits.

The Ombudsman received 2 223 complaints in 2022, compared to 2 192 in 2021, 35 % of which were within the Ombudsman's mandate. Furthermore, the Ombudsman opened 348 inquiries, including 60 inquiries of public importance, and closed 330 inquiries in 2022 compared to opening 338 inquiries in 2021 and closing 305.

Members noted that public access to documents has continued to be a major priority for the Ombudsman in 2022, with 121 complaints received, the highest number recorded within a year, and inquiries resulted in 90 complaints. They welcomed the swift handling of cases in the area of public access to documents, recalling that restrictions on access to documents, particularly legislative documents, should be exceptional and limited to what is absolutely necessary.

Human resources, equality and staff well-being

The composition of the staff in terms of status and job profiles has remained stable in recent years, with a total of 74 staff members at the end of 2022, the same number as in 2021. It is regrettable, however, that the post of the Secretary-General has been vacant since 1 September 2022.

Members encouraged the Ombudsman to continue its efforts to achieve a balanced representation of women and men among its staff.

Ethical framework and transparency

The forms for the declarations of conflicts of interest, external activities, publications and exercising an occupational activity after leaving the Union public service were revised to ensure consistent application of the Staff Regulations and the internal rules.

Members regretted that the Ombudsman did not formally join the EU transparency register. Members regretted that the Ombudsman has not formally joined the EU's Transparency Register, even though it has aligned his practices with the principles of the Transparency Register. On the other hand, they welcomed the high degree of transparency achieved by the Ombudsman by the publication on its website of information on inquiries, missions, meetings and events in which the Ombudsman takes part.

Buildings

Parliament noted that, following the move of the Ombudsman Brussels' Office to new facilities provided by Parliament in 2021, the building was organised as a collaborative workspace with very few individual offices and flexible collaborative meeting facilities. The Ombudsman returned 20.5 % of the surface rented by Parliament in Strasbourg at the request of the latter and that its rent was subsequently reduced.

Interinstitutional cooperation

Members welcomed the financial and administrative savings achieved through inter-institutional cooperation, in particular the wide-range of service-level agreements concluded with the Parliament and the Commission and the participation in interinstitutional procurement procedures. They welcomed the cooperation that the Ombudsman maintains with the EPPO, the ECA and OLAF aiming to avoid duplication of investigations and discussing topics of mutual interest, such as the improvement of the Union's oversight framework.

Communication

The overall budget for communication and promotional activities increased from EUR 92 100 to EUR 132 400, i.e. 43.8 %, between 2021 and 2022. The Ombudsman is congratulated for developing a comprehensive communication strategy. Members welcomed the adoption of a new logo and visual identity to increase the visibility of the Ombudsman's work.

Parliament praised the Ombudsman for actively promoting digitisation to reduce the use of paper and facilitate the exchange and storage of documents. It encouraged the Ombudsman to work closely with the European Union's cybersecurity agency (ENISA) and suggested that regularly updated cybersecurity training programmes be offered to all Ombudsman staff.

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman

2023/2137(DEC) - 11/03/2024 - 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 VIII – European Ombudsman.

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2022.

Budgetary and financial management

The Ombudsman's budget amounted to EUR 12 222 108 in 2022, which represents a decrease of EUR 280 000 compared to 2021. This decrease is the result of a rationalisation of the budget based on actual needs.

The budget implementation rate was 96.97 % in 2022, which is higher compared to the previous year, when the implementation rate was 88.8 % due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report noted that the Ombudsman did not report any impact from the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on its 2022 budget for missions, procurement or building.

Internal management, performance and internal control

Members underlined that in 2022, noticing the flagrant absence of public information, the Ombudsman anticipatorily asked the European Commission how it will ensure transparency in the negotiations of national recovery plans, how it will guarantee public scrutiny of milestones reached by Member States, and how it will supervise the audits.

The Ombudsman received 2 223 complaints in 2022, compared to 2 192 in 2021, 35 % of which were within the Ombudsman's mandate. Furthermore, the Ombudsman opened 348 inquiries, including 60 inquiries of public importance, and closed 330 inquiries in 2022 compared to opening 338 inquiries in 2021 and closing 305.

Members noted with great concern that the Ombudsman receives a number of complaints from citizens regarding extreme delays in gaining access to requested documents.

Human resources, equality and staff well-being

The composition of the staff in terms of status and job profiles has remained stable in recent years, with a total of 74 staff members at the end of 2022, the same number as in 2021. It is regrettable, however, that the post of the Secretary-General has been vacant since 1 September 2022.

Ethical framework and transparency

The forms for the declarations of conflicts of interest, external activities, publications and exercising an occupational activity after leaving the Union public service were revised to ensure consistent application of the Staff Regulations and the internal rules.

Members regretted that the Ombudsman did not formally join the EU transparency register. On the other hand, they welcomed the high degree of transparency achieved by the Ombudsman by the publication on its website of information on inquiries, missions, meetings and events in which the Ombudsman takes part.

Buildings

The report noted that, following the move of the Ombudsman Brussels' Office to new facilities provided by Parliament in 2021, the building was organised as a collaborative workspace with very few individual offices and flexible collaborative meeting facilities. The Ombudsman returned 20.5 % of the surface rented by Parliament in Strasbourg at the request of the latter and that its rent was subsequently reduced.

Interinstitutional cooperation

Members welcomed the financial and administrative savings achieved through inter-institutional cooperation, in particular the wide-range of service-level agreements concluded with the Parliament and the Commission and the participation in interinstitutional procurement procedures. They welcomed the cooperation that the Ombudsman maintains with the EPPO, the ECA and OLAF aiming to avoid duplication of investigations and discussing topics of mutual interest, such as the improvement of the Union's oversight framework.

Communication

The overall budget for communication and promotional activities increased from EUR 92 100 to EUR 132 400, i.e. 43.8 %, between 2021 and 2022. The Ombudsman is congratulated for developing a comprehensive communication strategy.

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman

2023/2137(DEC) - 10/10/2024 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2022.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision (EU) 2024/2243 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 VIII – European Ombudsman.

CONTENT: the European Parliament decided to grant discharge to the European Ombudsman in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2022.

This decision is in line with the European Parliament's resolution adopted on 11 April 2024 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 11 April 2024).

The Ombudsman's budget amounted to EUR 12 222 108 in 2022, which represents a decrease of EUR 280 000 compared to 2021. This decrease is the result of a rationalisation of the budget based on actual needs.

The budget implementation rate was 96.97 % in 2022, which is higher compared to the previous year, when the implementation rate was 88.8 % due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was noted that the Ombudsman did not report any impact from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on its 2022 budget for missions, procurement or building.

Members noted that public access to documents has continued to be a major priority for the Ombudsman in 2022, with 121 complaints received, the highest number recorded within a year, and inquiries resulted in 90 complaints. They welcomed the swift handling of cases in the area of public access to documents, recalling that restrictions on access to documents, particularly legislative documents, should be exceptional and limited to what is absolutely necessary.

Members expressed regret that the Ombudsman has not formally joined the EU Transparency Register, despite aligning its practices with the register's principles. However, they commended the high level of transparency achieved by the Ombudsman, as evidenced by the publication of information on inquiries, missions, meetings, and events on its website.