

2017 discharge: EU general budget, Court of Auditors

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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 Court of Auditors.**

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 Court of Auditors' appropriations for the financial year 2017: the CoA's budget amounted to around **EUR 141 million**. This represents less than 0.1 % of total EU spending or around 1.5 % of EU's total administrative spending. The proportion of the 2017 budget used was 98 %.

As regards the Court of Auditor's expenditure, the information is drawn from the Court of Auditors [2017 Annual Activity Report](#) and highlighted that 2017 was marked by:

- the official celebration of the Court's **40th anniversary**;
- a landscape review of EU action on energy and climate change and a rapid case review of the EU institutions' staff reduction;

- **the production of 55 specific annual reports** on the accounts of the EU's various agencies, bodies and joint undertakings located across the Union; **28 special reports** examining the effectiveness and added value of EU policies and programmes in areas such as youth unemployment, environment, migration and the banking union; **five opinions** on proposed new or updated EU laws with significant financial management implications, including one on the Financial Regulation for the EU budget and one on the funding of European political parties.

External audit of the ECA: the ECA's annual accounts are audited by an independent external auditor (PricewaterhouseCoopers Sàrl).