

2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Council and Council

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The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted a second report, presented by Isabel GARCÍA MUÑOZ (S&D, ES), on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2017, Section II – European Council and Council.

The committee invited the European Parliament 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 2017 financial year.

In the draft resolution accompanying the report, Members recalled Parliament's role in the discharge procedure while stressing that the European institutions must act in a responsible and professional manner with regard to the implementation of their budgets.

Members recalled the difficulties repeatedly encountered in the Council discharge procedures to date due to the lack of cooperation from the Council which led Parliament to refuse to grant discharge to the Secretary-General of the Council in relation to the financial years 2009 to 2016 and in March 2019 for the financial year 2017. They regretted that the request to separate the budget of the European Council and the Council into one budget for each institution, made by Parliament in previous discharge resolutions, has not been considered. They reiterated their concern at the very high level of appropriations carried over from 2017 to 2018, in particular for furniture, technical equipment, transport and IT systems.

Deploring the Council's lack of participation in the transparency register, Members called on the Council to continue discussions on the technical aspects of the package of instruments regarding the Transparency Register in order to achieve a political agreement between the three institutions as soon as possible, given that enhanced transparency within in the European institutions will increase public confidence in the Union. They recalled Parliament's support for the Ombudsman's recommendations to the Council, namely to make it easier for citizens to follow the Union's legislative process (transparency of the Council's legislative process). They also called on the Council to be transparent to the citizens of the Union regarding the funds entrusted to it.

Members stressed that satisfactory cooperation between the European Parliament and the Council institutions, in the form of an open and formal dialogue procedure, would send a strong signal to the citizens of the Union.