


Procedure file

Basic information		
DEC - Discharge procedure	2004/2042(DEC)	Procedure completed
2003 discharge: EC general budget, Council		
Subject 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	CONT Budgetary Control		Appointed 22/09/2004
			PPE-DE STUBB Alexander
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	AFET Foreign Affairs		Appointed 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.

Key events

01/06/2004	Non-legislative basic document published	DECHARGEVOLUMEIII/2004	Summary
26/01/2005	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/03/2005	Vote in committee		
17/03/2005	Additional information		Summary
22/03/2005	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0066/2005	
12/04/2005	Results of vote in Parliament		
12/04/2005	Debate in Parliament		
12/04/2005	Decision by Parliament	T6-0094/2005	Summary
12/04/2005	End of procedure in Parliament		
27/07/2005	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2004/2042(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 100
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document		DECHARGEVOLUMEIII/2004	01/06/2004	EC	Summary
Court of Auditors: opinion, report		C293/2004 OJ C 293 30.11.2004, p. 0001-0328	30/11/2004	CofA	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0066/2005	22/03/2005	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0094/2005 OJ C 033 09.02.2006, p. 0028-0203 E	12/04/2005	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2005)2124	19/05/2005	EC	

Final act

[Budget 2005/532](#)
[OJ L 196 27.07.2005, p. 0039-0039](#) Summary

2003 discharge: EC general budget, Council

PURPOSE : to present the revenue and expenditure account and the balance sheet concerning the activities of the budget for the financial year 2003 (Council).

CONTENT : this document sets out the amount of expenditure and the balance sheet for the other institutions of the Union (except the Commission) for the financial year 2003, in particular, the Council.

The document highlights that the 2003 Council's budget amounted to EUR 431 673 000, committed to an amount of EUR 428 845 188, that is a 99.34% rate of utilisation.

The payments made on the committed appropriations amount to EUR 361 199 521.

The year 2003 was framed in the context of the adaptation of the financial management of the Council in accordance with the demands of the new Financial Regulation. It was also marked by the preliminary enlargement commitments, the acquisition of the new LEX 2000 building, the organisation of several European Summits in Brussels and the outsourcing of the Council's restaurants and cafeterias from 01.01.2003.

Other salient issues from the implementation of the 2003 budget are as follows:

- preliminary commitments for enlargement: concerning human resources, expenditure associated with the acquisition of the Council buildings;
- staff expenses : the carry over of appropriations (EUR 3 million) was needed considering the over-estimation of necessary amounts and/or the non-utilisation of appropriations. These amounts concern in particular the costs linked to the Special Representatives of the Union;
- operating expenses : this sector was also subject to an important carry over of appropriations to the year 2004 due to work being carried out on buildings which started in 2003 and which will be finished in 2004 (EUR 12 million); the rate of payment instalments for the LEX 2000 building from the 2003 budget (EUR 15.9 million); IT projects still being carried out (EUR 8.5 million); invoices from the DG SCIC for 2003 (EUR 2.5 million);
- expenses resulting from the missions carried out by the Council : such as those associated with the CFSP and seconded national experts. It appeared that the amounts initially foreseen for the military experts were overestimated and therefore were not spent throughout 2003. Moreover, a number of missions initially foreseen were cancelled or carried over which reduced the actual amounts initially provided. On the other hand, amounts provided for the activities annexed to certain experts were strengthened in order to establish the Joint Situation Centre of the EU (the amounts necessary were found via appropriation transfers between posts and budget lines).

2003 discharge: EC general budget, Council

EP: decision of committee responsible, 1st reading/single reading

The committee adopted the report by Alexander STUBB (EPP-ED, FI) granting discharge to the Council for the 2003 financial year. In its accompanying remarks, the committee welcomed the introduction in the Court of Auditors' 2003 Annual Report of a separate section for the Council. It also praised the fact that improvements in the exchange of information between Council and Parliament had resulted in greater transparency under the discharge procedure. However, it pointed out that there needed to be clearer information about spending on and the management of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) within the Council. The Council was urged to identify CFSP preparatory costs within its budget, as recommended by the Court of Auditors in its 2001 Special Report. MEPs also stressed the need for clarification of the Commission's role in the implementation of CFSP and recommended that clear operational principles and arrangements for this be included in the new interinstitutional agreement on the budget.

The Council was asked to provide the discharge authority with an annual activity report as specified in the Financial Regulation, "as all other institutions have done including the European Parliament".

Lastly, the committee wanted Parliament to be given more time to consider the various discharge recommendations and therefore called for changes to the time-scale for the discharge procedure.

2003 discharge: EC general budget, Council

PURPOSE : to grant discharge to the Council for the implementation of the 2003 general budget.

LEGISLATIVE ACT : Decision 2005/532/EC, Euratom of the European Parliament on the discharge for implementing the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2003 (Section II ? Council).

CONTENT : with the present decision, the European Parliament grants a discharge to the Secretary General of the Council for the implementation of the general budget for 2003.

This decision is in line with the European Parliament's resolution adopted on 12 April 2005 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 12/04/2005).

2003 discharge: EC general budget, Council

The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Alexander STUBB (EPP-ED, FI) granting discharge to the Council for the 2003

financial year. (Please see the summary of 17/03/2005).

- Increased transparency: Parliament welcomed the introduction in the Court of Auditors' Annual Report for 2003 of a separate section for the Council, and the enhanced exchange of information between the Council and Parliament through the informal dialogue that had taken place between the two institutions as part of the discharge procedure. These elements had helped to increase transparency with regard to discharge of the Council's budget. Parliament noted the Council's intention to provide the documentation and adopt the outstanding actions needed to comply with the requirements of the new Financial Regulation, as specified in the Court of Auditors' Annual Report, by the end of 2004. It asked the Council to submit to the European Parliament a list of problems occurring with implementation of the Financial Regulation.

- Respecting procedures: Parliament also noted the Court's observation that the Council's legal services were contracted without any tendering procedure, although their value exceeded the threshold above which a tendering procedure was required. It noted that the Council had initiated a tendering procedure in order to establish a framework contract for the type of legal services mentioned. Parliament stressed the importance of respecting the rules on procurement set out in the Financial Regulation. It asked the Council to make available to the discharge authority, as all other institutions had done including the European Parliament, the annual activity report referred to in Article 60(7) of the Financial Regulation of 25 June 2002.

- CFSP expenditure: Parliament found that greater clarity with regard to the management of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) within the Council would enhance transparency. It urged the Council separately to identify CFSP preparatory costs within its budget, as recommended by the Court of Auditors. The Commission's role in the implementation of CFSP needed to be clarified.

- Council recommendation on the discharge: finally, Parliament regretted that due to time constraints, it was not able to give the Council's discharge recommendation the attention it deserved, and invites the Commission to forward a proposal for modification of Article 145(1) of the Financial Regulation with regard to the timescale of the discharge procedure.