

Procedure file

Basic information		
DEC - Discharge procedure	2008/2281(DEC)	Procedure completed
2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions		
Subject 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CONT Budgetary Control		
	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.

PETI Petitions

The committee decided not to give an opinion.

Council of the European Union

Council configuration

Meeting

Date

[Economic and Financial Affairs ECOFIN](#)

[2922](#)

10/02/2009

European Commission

Commission DG

Commissioner

[Budget](#)

KALLAS Siim

Key events

23/07/2008	Non-legislative basic document published	SEC(2008)2359	Summary
20/11/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/03/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
20/03/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0153/2009	
21/04/2009	Debate in Parliament		
23/04/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
23/04/2009	Decision by Parliament	T6-0292/2009	Summary
23/04/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		
26/09/2009	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2008/2281(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 102
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/6/67235

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	SEC(2008)2359	23/07/2008	EC	Summary
Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N6-0003/2009 OJ C 286 10.11.2008, p. 0001	10/11/2008	CofA	Summary
Committee draft report	PE416.561	28/01/2009	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE421.102	23/02/2009	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A6-0153/2009	20/03/2009	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T6-0292/2009	23/04/2009	EP	Summary

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

PURPOSE: to present the final annual accounts of the European Communities for the financial year 2007 - Other institutions: section VII - Committee of the Regions.

CONTENT: this document sets out the amount of expenditure and the financial statement of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) for 2007. It presents an analysis of the institution's financial management as well as its main axes of expenditure.

The figures mentioned hereafter are taken from volume I of the [consolidated annual accounts of the European Communities](#) for the year 2007:

Commitment appropriations:

- commitment appropriations authorised: EUR 68 million;
- commitments made in 2007: EUR 66 million (implementation rate of 96.22%);
- appropriations carried over to 2008: insignificant (0.13% of total commitments);
- appropriations lapsing: EUR 2 million (3.65% of the budget).

Payment appropriations:

- payment appropriations authorised: EUR 78 million;
- payments made in 2007: EUR 68 million (implementation rate of 86.89%);
- appropriations carried over to 2008: EUR 6 million (8.02% of total payments);
- appropriations lapsing: EUR 4 million (5.09% of the budget).

Main axes of expenditure for 2007: in the context of its political activities and its mission (namely its involvement in the EU decision-making process and policy-orientation debates as a consultative organ), the CoR, in 2007, represented local and regional authorities within the European institutions. By means of its consultative activities (adoption of opinions) and structured cooperation with the European institutions and associations of local and regional authorities, the CoR fully implemented its work programme and overall political strategy.

The main event organised by the CoR in 2007 (along with the seminars organised by the CoR's Commissions and the Open Days) was the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome (22-23 March 2007).

In 2007, the CoR also:

- adopted 44 opinions, of which the most important concerned structural funds, EU reform and enlargement, sustainable development and mobility and better lawmaking;
- continued its efforts in its consultative role to support the creation of the Security, Justice and Freedom Area, at the Conference in Adeje in the Canary Islands (October 2007);
- improved its image with Open Days held from 8 to 11 October 2007 under the theme 'Making it Happen' with some 5 500 policymakers as well as with the traditional inter-institutional 'Portes ouvertes' exercise in May;
- improved its level of external information with the creation of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network (June 2007). This network aims to facilitate the exchange of information between local and regional authorities of the EU as regards the proposals of the European Commission which will have an impact on subsidiarity when adopted. Its main achievements included producing the report 'Horizon 2010 - Local and Regional Authorities for Growth and Jobs';
- strengthened interinstitutional cooperation (particularly with the Council and Member States);
- held several meetings (ordinary and external) in Würzburg (Germany) and Vilamoura (Portugal);
- agreed to a new agreement on administrative cooperation with the EESC with a view to ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of these two institutions: the agreement concerns the Joint Services, mainly the production chain services from translation to printing, as well as IT/Telecommunications, Security and Catering services. Some services were integrated in the 'own' services of each Committee, such as the library, socio-medical service, the pre-press and internal services. A new governance structure was also created, which contributes to the transparency of operations;
- completed the administrative reform of the institution;
- further developed control standards.

With regard to the implementation of the budget, the activity report notes that, on the whole, the implementation rate improved considerably. The rate of carry-over appropriations is now significantly lower than in previous years (the CoR had an implementation rate of 97% for payment appropriations in 2007, up from an implementation rate of 84% in 2006).

The other main points concerning the implementation of the CoR budget can be summarised as follows:

Title I (staff expenditure): this Title is characterised by a reduction in remuneration and allowances (due to lower than expected salaries indexation), lower recruitment costs, considerably lower costs related to the interinstitutional crèche (miscalculation of costs by the Commission led to significant unforeseen savings for the CoR) and a notable reduction in expenditure on publishing.

Title II (operating expenditure): this Title is characterised by the cancellation of certain appropriations carried over, particularly for the item entitled 'annual lease payments' for the advance payments of the Trèves 74 and Belliard 93 buildings, as well as for 'observer' costs for the activities of Romanian and Bulgarian observers - these countries entered the EU on 1 January 2007. This Title was also characterised by the non-implementation of appropriations carried over from 2006 for the items 'expenditure on publishing and participation in public events' (mostly travel and accommodation costs for journalists), 'general publications' and other 'communication activities'.

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report drawn up by Søren Bo SØNDERGAARD (GUE/NGL, DK) recommending that the Parliament grant the Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2007.

The committee recalls that, in 2007, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of EUR 68.6 million (compared to EUR 74.4 million in 2006), with a utilisation rate of 96.22%.

Noting that the Court of Auditors indicated that the audit did not give rise to any significant observations as regards the CoR, MEPs recall that the internal audit on salary transfers (completed in 2006) revealed that "weaknesses existed concerning the principle of separation of functions in this area (initiating functions and internal verification) and "the control environment should have been given greater priority in view of the risks concerned". They also recall that, following an investigation, OLAF established with regard to eight transfers that they were not in compliance with statutory conditions and recommended recovering the amounts overpaid from the officials concerned. Noting with satisfaction that all recoveries were completed by early 2007, MEPs recall, nevertheless, that, with regard to six staff members, OLAF recommended the opening of disciplinary proceedings (and for five of them it also submitted files to the Belgian authorities). MEPs also note that the procedure concerning those persons is ongoing. They call on the CoR to consider proportionate disciplinary measures if the outcome of the pending cases requires them.

MEPs reiterate their call for Members of the CoR to declare their financial interests.

Administrative Cooperation Agreement with the EESC: MEPs welcome the signature in December 2007 of a new Administrative Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic and Social Committee and the CoR for the period 2008 to 2014. They are convinced that cooperation between the two institutions will be financially advantageous to European taxpayers (in terms of infrastructure, IT and telecommunications and translation). MEPs recall, however, that a number of services will be de-coupled and insist that this decoupling should be budget neutral.

Internal controls: MEPs recall that it is crucial that controls carried out by authorising officers, verifiers and auditors, are sufficiently rigorous. They note with satisfaction the development by the CoR's budget service of a new budget analytical monitoring tool ('BudgetWatch'), providing comprehensive information on all CoR budget lines and sub-lines, including the available appropriations, as well as the establishment of a list of sensitive posts.

Lastly, MEPs regret the fact that, despite amendments to the Financial Regulation, its rules on procurement are still excessively cumbersome for smaller institutions, such as the CoR. They therefore call on the Commission to consult extensively with this institution in order to ensure that its concerns are fully taken into account in the final draft.

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

The European Parliament adopted by 409 votes to 56, with 10 abstentions, a decision to grant the Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2007. The decision to grant discharge is also an approval of the closure of the accounts of this institution.

Moreover, the Parliament adopted by 438 votes to 33, with 6 abstentions, a resolution with observations which form an integral part of the decision to grant discharge. The resolution points out that in 2007 the CoR had commitment appropriations available amounting to a total of EUR 68.6 million (compared to EUR 74.4 million in 2006), with a utilisation rate of 96.22%.

The other main points of the resolution can be summarised as follows:

- Pending cases concerning the CoR: noting that the Court of Auditors' audit did not give rise to any significant observations as regards the CoR, the Parliament recalls that the internal audit on salary transfers (completed in 2006) revealed that "weaknesses existed concerning the principle of separation of functions in this area (initiating functions and internal verification) and the control environment should have been given greater priority in view of the risks concerned". It also recalls that, following an investigation, OLAF established with regard to eight transfers that they were not in compliance with statutory conditions and recommended recovering the amounts overpaid from the officials concerned. Noting with satisfaction that all recoveries were completed by early 2007, the Parliament further recalls that with regard to six staff members, OLAF recommended the opening of disciplinary proceedings (and for five of them it also submitted files to the Belgian authorities). Moreover, it notes that the procedure concerning those persons is ongoing. It calls on the CoR to consider proportionate disciplinary measures if the outcome of the pending cases requires them;
- Administrative Cooperation Agreement with the EESC: the Parliament welcomes the signature in December 2007 of a new Administrative Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic and Social Committee and the CoR for the period 2008 to 2014. It is convinced that cooperation between the two institutions will be financially advantageous to European taxpayers (in terms of infrastructure, IT and telecommunications and translation). It recalls, however, that a number of services will be de-coupled and insists that this decoupling should be budget neutral;
- Internal controls: the Parliament recalls that it is crucial that controls carried out by authorising officers, verifiers and auditors, are sufficiently rigorous. It notes with satisfaction the development by the CoR's budget service of a new budget analytical monitoring tool ('BudgetWatch'), providing comprehensive information on all CoR budget lines and sub-lines, including the available appropriations, as well as the establishment of a list of sensitive posts. It also requests the CoR to include in its following activity report (financial year 2008) a chapter giving a detailed account of the follow-up during the year to Parliament's earlier discharge decisions.

Furthermore, the Parliament reiterates its call for Members of the CoR to declare their financial interests.

Lastly, the Parliament regrets the fact that, despite amendments to the Financial Regulation, its rules on procurement are still excessively cumbersome for smaller institutions, such as the CoR. It therefore calls on the Commission to consult extensively with this institution in order to ensure that its concerns are fully taken into account in the final draft.

2007 discharge: EU general budget, Committee of the Regions

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the CoR for the financial year 2007.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 2009/638/EC of the European Parliament on the discharge for implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2007 (Section VII - Committee of the Regions).

CONTENT: with the present decision, the European Parliament grants the Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2007.

This decision is in line with the European Parliament's resolution adopted on 23 April 2009 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 23/04/2009).