

Procedure file

Basic information		
DEC - Discharge procedure	2012/2172(DEC)	Procedure completed
2011 discharge: EU general budget, Economic and Social Committee		
Subject 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CONT Budgetary Control		29/02/2012
		ECR ČEŠKOVÁ Andrea	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		PPE DEUTSCH Tamás	
		PPE SONIK Bogusław	
		S&D KALFIN Ivailo	
		ALDE SKYLAKAKIS Theodoros	
		Verts/ALE STAES Bart	
		EFD ANDREASEN Marta	
		NI EHRENHAUSER Martin	
	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.
European Commission	Commission DG Budget	Commissioner ŠEMETA Algirdas

Key events			
25/07/2012	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2012)0436	Summary
13/09/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
19/03/2013	Vote in committee		
21/03/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0076/2013	Summary
16/04/2013	Debate in Parliament		
17/04/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
17/04/2013	Decision by Parliament	T7-0129/2013	Summary
17/04/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		
16/11/2013	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2012/2172(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/7/10401

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2012)0436	25/07/2012	EC	Summary
Court of Auditors: opinion, report		N7-0127/2012 OJ C 344 12.11.2012, p. 0001	06/09/2012	CofA	Summary
Committee draft report		PE497.969	29/01/2013	EP	

Document attached to the procedure		05752/2013	01/02/2013	CSL	Summary
Amendments tabled in committee		PE506.052	26/02/2013	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0076/2013	21/03/2013	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0129/2013	17/04/2013	EP	Summary

Final act

[Decision 2013/547](#)
[OJ L 308 16.11.2013, p. 0126](#) Summary

2011 discharge: EU general budget, Economic and Social Committee

PURPOSE: presentation by the Commission of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2011, as part of the 2011 discharge procedure.

Analysis of the accounts of the EU Institutions: Section VI - European Economic and Social Committee.

Legal reminder: the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the year 2011 have been prepared on the basis of the information presented by the institutions and bodies under Article 129(2) of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union. They were prepared in accordance with Title VII of the Financial Regulation and with the accounting principles, rules and methods set out in the notes to the financial statements.

The objective of the financial statements is to provide information about the financial position, performance and cashflow of a body that is useful to a wide range of users. The objective is to provide information that is useful for decision making, and to demonstrate the accountability of the entity for the resources entrusted to it.

1) Purpose: the document helps to bring insight into the EU budget mechanism and the way in which the budget has been managed and spent in 2011. It recalls that the European Union's operational expenditure covers the various headings of the financial framework and takes different forms, depending on how the money is paid out and managed. In accordance with the Financial Regulation, the Commission implements the general budget using the following methods: direct or indirect centralised management (by means of bodies or agencies of public law or other); decentralised management where the Commission delegates certain tasks for the implementation of the budget to third countries; and, thirdly, shared management where budget implementation tasks are delegated to Member States, in areas such as agricultural expenditure and structural actions.

The document also presents the different financial actors involved in the budget process (accounting officers, internal officers and authorising officers) and recalls their respective roles in the context of the tasks of sound financial management.

Amongst the other legal elements relating to the implementation of the EU budget presented in this document, the paper focuses on the following issues:

- accounting principles applicable to the management of EU spending (business continuity, consistency of accounting methods, comparability of information ...);
- consolidation methods of figures for all major controlled entities (the consolidated financial statements of the EU comprise all significant controlled entities institutions, organisations and agencies, this being 50 controlled entities, 5 joint ventures and 4 associates). In comparison with 2010, the scope of consolidation has been extended by 7 controlled entities (one institution, 6 agencies);
- the recognition of financial assets in the EU (tangible and intangible assets, financial assets and other miscellaneous investments);
- the way in which EU public expenditure is committed and spent, including pre-financing (cash advances intended for the benefit of an EU organ);
- the means of recovery following irregularities detected;
- the modus operandi of the accounting system;
- the audit process followed by the European Parliament's granting of the discharge.

To recap, the final control is the discharge of the budget for a given financial year. The discharge represents the political aspect of the external control of budget implementation and is the decision by which the European Parliament, acting on a Council recommendation, "releases" the Commission from its responsibility for management of a given budget by marking the end of that budget's existence.

The document also details specific expenditure of the institutions, in particular: i) pensions of former Members and officials of institutions; ii) joint sickness insurance scheme and iii) buildings. For the Parliament, the outstanding contractual obligation relating to building contracts totalled EUR 434 million in 2011.

Lastly, the document presents a series of tables and detailed technical indicators on (i) the balance sheet; (ii) the economic outturn account; (iii) cashflow tables; (iv) technical annexes concerning the financial statements.

2) Implementation of appropriations under Section VI of the budget for the financial year 2011: the document also comprises a series of detailed tables, the most important concerning the implementation of the budget. Concerning the expenditure of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the information drawn from the [EESCs Annual Activity Report 2011](#) shows that:

- commitments granted to this institution for 2011 were EUR 128.6 million;

- amount actually spent: EUR 122.6 million;
- the rate of budgetary implementation was 95.4%

3) Budgetary implementation - conclusions: in more general and political terms, the Committees budgetary implementation for the financial year 2011 was marked by the following:

- in the context of the Hungarian Presidency: organisation of events in the economic, social, cultural and educational field on a wide variety of subjects, reflecting, in particular, the theme addressed by the Europe 2020 strategy, partnership with eastern European countries, energy policy and SME policy (including taxation);
- in the context of the Polish Presidency: organisation of events in the economic, social, cultural and educational field on the financial crisis, sustainable development, innovation and combating poverty. In the cultural field, work focused on Polish literature and music;
- strengthening of the involvement of civil society and citizens in the framework of the institutions work;
- organisation of international and pan-European debates and dialogues;
- organisation of public events targeted at wider audiences.

In parallel, internally, the EESCs activities involved:

- budgetary consolidation and the management of the budget procedure with a view to the complete autonomy of the Committees budget;
- mid-term evaluation of the cooperation agreement with the Committee of the Regions;
- modernisation of member support services and the digitisation of the archives (Mota Project);
- creation of a pilot action to strengthen the involvement of civil society in the Committees activities, thanks to the creation of a data base of civil society organisations.

2011 discharge: EU general budget, Economic and Social Committee

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Andrea ?EKOVÁ (ECR, CZ) in which it calls on the European Parliament to grant the Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Economic and Social Committee budget for the financial year 2011.

Members welcome the fact that, on the basis of its audit work, the Court of Auditors concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2011 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error.

They point out that, in the 2011 annual report, the Court of Auditors included observations on the conclusion of contracts with temporary and contract staff, identifying some inconsistencies in the guidelines applicable to the grading and recruitment of staff. They call on the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to ensure that those inconsistencies do not recur.

Members also note that in 2011 the EESC had commitment appropriations of EUR 128.6 million available, with a utilisation rate of 95.4%, lower than the rate of 2010. This is mainly due to the Council's decision not to adopt the Commission's proposal for salary adjustments for 2011.

The report notes how Members are pleased with the achievements in the area of translation following the renewed EESC, Committee of the Regions Cooperation agreement. Further efforts are needed however.

Members also call for : (i) improvements as regards energy consumption; (ii) translation and interpretation services. They wish to see more detailed information included in the EESC's annual report on the provision of space for meetings organised by external civil-society organisations working in conjunction with the EESC.

It should be noted that in its resolutions of May 2011 and May 2012 granting discharge in respect of the implementation of the EESC budget, Parliament called on the European Ombudsman to inform it of cases of maladministration which had arisen within the EESC. They considered that Parliament should envisage the possibility to send this issue back to the competent parliamentary committee. They take note that the EESC has pledged, and has taken measures, to prevent similar situations from happening in future.

2011 discharge: EU general budget, Economic and Social Committee

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European Economic and Social Committee for the financial year 2011.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 2013/547/EU of the European Parliament on discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Unions General Budget, section VI European Economic and Social Committee, for the financial year 2011.

CONTENT: with the present decision, and in accordance with Article 318 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the European Parliament grants discharge to the Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2011.

The decision is in line with the European Parliament's resolution adopted on 17 April 2013 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 17 April 2013).

2011 discharge: EU general budget, Economic and Social Committee

The European Parliament adopted by 549 votes to 68, with no abstentions, a decision to grant the Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Economic and Social Committee budget for the financial year 2011.

In its resolution accompanying the discharge decision, Parliament welcomes the fact that, on the basis of its audit work, the Court of Auditors

concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2011 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error. It points out that, in the 2011 annual report, the Court of Auditors included observations on the conclusion of contracts with temporary and contract staff, identifying some inconsistencies in the guidelines applicable to the grading and recruitment of staff. It calls on the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to ensure that those inconsistencies do not recur.

Parliament also notes that in 2011 the EESC had commitment appropriations of EUR 128.6 million available, with a utilisation rate of 95.4%, lower than the rate of 2010. This is mainly due to the Council's decision not to adopt the Commission's proposal for salary adjustments for 2011. It supports the EESC's efforts to limit the budget for 2013, keeping it at the level of 2012 and thereby ensuring a flat rate increase.

Parliament is also pleased with the achievements in the area of translation following the renewed EESC, Committee of the Regions Cooperation agreement. Further efforts are needed however.

Parliament calls for : (i) improvements as regards energy consumption; (ii) translation and interpretation services. It wishes to see more detailed information included in the EESC's annual report on the provision of space for meetings organised by external civil-society organisations working in conjunction with the EESC.

Maladministration: Parliament notes that in its resolutions of May 2011 and May 2012 granting discharge in respect of the implementation of the EESC budget, it called on the European Ombudsman to inform it of cases of maladministration which had arisen within the EESC. It expresses its concern at the Decision of the European Ombudsman of 6 November 2012 - complaint No 2744/2009(MF)JF - relating to a very serious case of maladministration and stating its intention to forward that decision to the President of the Parliament for consideration as to whether it should be submitted to the competent parliamentary committee. Members take note that the EESC has pledged, and has taken measures, to prevent similar situations from happening in future.

Parliament regrets that during 2011, there was an inappropriate linkage of the institutional website of the EESC and the personal blog of its Secretary General, which only ceased after an incident in which comments on the latter were highlighted. It reiterates the importance of separating institutional information and the personal opinions of officials.