



Procedure file

Basic information		
DEC - Discharge procedure	2013/2256(DEC)	Procedure completed
Discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2012: performance, financial management and control		
Subject 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges		

Key players				
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed	
	CONT Budgetary Control		10/10/2013	
		PPE SARVAMAA Petri		
		Shadow rapporteur		
		S&D KADENBACH Karin		
		ALDE GERBRANDY Gerben-Jan		
		Verts/ALE STAES Bart		
		ECR ANDREASEN Marta		
		EFD VANHECKE Frank		
		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			09/10/2013	
	S&D BERÈS Pervenche			
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.			

European Commission	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	04/11/2013 PPE MATHIEU HOUILLON Véronique
	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.
Commission DG	Budget	Commissioner	ŠEMETA Algirdas

Key events

17/03/2014	Vote in committee		
21/03/2014	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0237/2014	Summary
02/04/2014	Debate in Parliament		
03/04/2014	Results of vote in Parliament		
03/04/2014	Decision by Parliament	T7-0299/2014	Summary
03/04/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2013/2256(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/7/14175

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE521.682	29/01/2014	EP	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE524.629	13/02/2014	EP	
Committee opinion	LIBE	PE524.747	24/02/2014	EP	

Amendments tabled in committee	PE521.818	25/02/2014	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A7-0237/2014	21/03/2014	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T7-0299/2014	03/04/2014	EP	Summary

Discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2012: performance, financial management and control

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Petri SARVAMAA (EPP, FI)

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2012: performance, financial management and control.

Members acknowledged the role of the agencies in supporting Union policies from their initial phase to their implementation. They called for the broader use of this expertise and capacity in the relevant stages of the European Semester policy process. However, the committee believed that for efficient operation of the agencies and in order to make the most of their resources, they must seek synergies, exchange best practices and share services. Furthermore, the access to services provided by the Commission could be further improved.

The common approach: Members recalled that in July 2012, Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted a Common Approach on decentralised agencies and they called in this regard for prompt solutions of any on-going issues related to agency headquarters in order to ensure undisturbed operation. They regretted that Member States had failed to conclude headquarters agreements with 10 agencies on their territory, including three in France and one each in Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. They expressed concern that this may have serious implications for the staff of the agencies and called on the Member States concerned to conclude such agreements before the start of the next budget discharge procedure.

The committee welcomed the Commission's Roadmap on the follow-up to the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies and invited all involved parties to take on board the ideas expressed in it. Members supported the main objectives as set out in the Roadmap, and called on the Commission to continue its efforts and to report on its progress on an annual basis, inter alia, to report on the progress as regards completion of actions, the implementation of the completed actions and their outcomes and effectiveness. They stressed that in line with the Roadmap the agencies had a responsibility to ensure that their websites mention that they were agencies of the Union.

Democratic accountability: the report recalled that agencies were independent and that the Commission could give agencies guidance through the development of guidelines. Members were of the opinion, however, that it was up to the agencies to decide on the follow-up and believed that the only institution that could politically discuss the agencies was Parliament. Accordingly, the reporting system to the discharge authority was of utmost importance and should be strengthened to improve transparency on the activities of the agencies.

Members also called for:

- strengthening the democratic accountability of the agencies;
- emphasis to be placed on their efficiency on the results obtained;
- enhancing the reporting on social accountability of the agencies, which would lead to the increased visibility of the agencies activities for the general public.

They also stressed the importance of parliamentary scrutiny of draft annual work programmes of the agencies before the final work programmes were adopted.

Common issues as regards budgetary and financial management: the report noted with concern that there were a number of problems identified by the Court of Auditors which affected several agencies, in particular as regards:

- weaknesses in budgetary planning;
- potential conflicts of interest;
- procurement and contract management;
- lack of transparency or rigour in recruitments;
- carryovers which are not supported by commitments or are excessively high;
- weaknesses in verification of grant transactions.

Possibilities of closer cooperation and of merging certain agencies: Members acknowledged that the results of a survey conducted by agencies about services shared between them show that they already cooperate and that awareness-raising could help develop those good practices further. They welcomed the good example set by, for instance, the European Maritime Safety Agency (based in Lisbon) which shared its Internal Audit Capability with the European Fisheries Control Agency (based in Vigo), whereas European Railway Agency (based in Valenciennes) was preparing an agreement for sharing the services of the Accounting Officer with the European Securities and Markets Authority (based in Paris). Members recalled that the Commission's proposal for a European agency for law enforcement and training proposing to merge the European Police College (CEPOL) with Europol could have allowed for administrative costs savings (in particular staff posts) which could have been redeployed. They noted, however, that the Commission proposal assured neither the Parliament nor the Council of a merger or relocation of CEPOL to the Hague.

They welcomed the Commissions intention to merge agencies where appropriate and its willingness to continue its assessment of the possibilities to merge some of the existing agencies.

Other recommendations: Members made a series of technical recommendations on:

- the management of budgetary resources stressing the need to respect the principle of annuality and regretting that there is little evidence to justify the creation of a reserve fund for partially self-financed agencies;
- the performance by requesting the Court of Auditors to provide an evaluation on the performance and the results of the agencies in time for the review in 2016 of the multiannual financial framework;
- the importance of the agencies' independence. Members regretted that this is currently this is not always the case;
- conflicts of interest by asking the Agencies to apply the Commissions guidelines on the matter and calling on them to publish on their website, before the 1 December 2014 at the latest, their policy and/or arrangements on the prevention and management of conflict of interest;
- the internal control systems and internal audits to strengthen their impact;
- recruitment procedures in order to improve the rules:
- the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) to ensure that they are fully financed by the EU budget;
- promoting gender equality to ensure that women and men are properly represented on the agencies' governing bodies;
- IT systems in order to make them more efficient.

Discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2012: performance, financial management and control

The European Parliament adopted by 554 votes to 40, with 8 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2012: performance, financial management and control.

Parliament acknowledged the role of the agencies in supporting Union policies from their initial phase to their implementation. It called for the broader use of this expertise and capacity in the relevant stages of the European Semester policy process. However, it believed that for efficient operation of the agencies and in order to make the most of their resources, they must seek synergies, exchange best practices and share services. Furthermore, noting there has been a substantial increase in the number of agencies over the last decade, the access to services provided by the Commission could be further improved.

The common approach: Parliament recalled that in July 2012, Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted a Common Approach on decentralised agencies and it called in this regard for prompt solutions of any on-going issues related to agency headquarters in order to ensure undisturbed operation. It regretted that Member States had failed to conclude headquarters agreements with 10 agencies on their territory, including three in France and one each in Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. Parliament also expressed concern that this may have serious implications for the staff of the agencies and called on the Member States concerned to conclude such agreements before the start of the next budget discharge procedure.

Commissions Roadmap: Parliament welcomed the Commission's Roadmap on the follow-up to the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies and invited all involved parties to take on board the ideas expressed in it. It supported the main objectives as set out in the Roadmap, and called on the Commission to continue its efforts and to report on its progress on an annual basis, inter alia, to report on the progress as regards completion of actions, the implementation of the completed actions and their outcomes and effectiveness. It stressed that in line with the Roadmap the agencies had a responsibility to ensure that their websites mention that they were agencies of the Union.

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Parliament also called for:

- strengthening the democratic accountability of the agencies;
- emphasis to be placed on their efficiency on the results obtained;
- enhancing the reporting on social accountability of the agencies, which would lead to the increased visibility of the agencies activities for the general public;
- a template for consolidated annual activity reports adapted to the requirements set by the new FFR.

It also stressed the importance of parliamentary scrutiny of draft annual work programmes of the agencies before the final work programmes were adopted.

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