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Basic information		
DEC - Discharge procedure	2020/2147(DEC)	Procedure completed
2019 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman		
Subject 8.70.03.09 2019 discharge		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Budgetary Control	 CHASTEL Olivier	10/07/2020
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 LENAERS Jeroen	
		 GARCÍA MUÑOZ Isabel	
		 PEKSA Mikuláš	
		 CZARNECKI Ryszard	
		 FLANAGAN Luke Ming	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	 Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	 International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	 Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
 Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
 Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
 Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
 Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
 Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
 Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
 Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
 Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to		

European Commission		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.
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	PETI Petitions	The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	Commission DG Budget	Commissioner HAHN Johannes

Key events

29/06/2020	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2020)0288	
15/09/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
01/03/2021	Vote in committee		
26/03/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0065/2021	Summary
27/04/2021	Debate in Parliament		
28/04/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0171/2021	Summary
24/09/2021	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2020/2147(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/9/03829

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(2020)0288	29/06/2020	EC	
Committee draft report	PE657.244	13/01/2021	EP	
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	05792/2021	05/02/2021	CSL	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE680.749	05/02/2021	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A9-0065/2021	26/03/2021	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T9-0171/2021	28/04/2021	EP	Summary

2019 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Olivier CHASTEL (Renew Europe, BE) calling on the European Parliament to give discharge to the European Ombudsman in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Ombudsman for the financial year 2019.

It welcomed the fact that the Court of Auditors observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Ombudsman. The Court concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2019 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error.

2019 was a transition year for the Ombudsman given that it coincided with the end of her first mandate and her re-election for the 2019-2024 parliamentary term. Members fully support the objectives identified by the Ombudsman for her strategy Towards 2024 covering her second mandate.

Budgetary and financial management

Members noted that the Ombudsmans budget is mostly administrative, with a large amount being used for expenditure related to persons, buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous running costs. This amounted in 2019 to EUR 11 496 261 (EUR 10 837 545 in 2018). The implementation rate in terms of commitments (including appropriations carried over from 2019 to 2020) is 92.3 % (compared to 95.3 % in 2018) and that of the total appropriations, 89.5 % were paid in 2019 (compared to 91.3 % in 2018).

The report welcomed the improvements in carry-overs, such as the fact that the amount of appropriations carried over from 2019 to 2020 is EUR 323 410 representing 2.8 % of the 2019 budget (compared to EUR 433 866 carried over from 2018 to 2019, representing 4 % of the 2018 budget).

Human resources

The need for gender balance at all hierarchical levels was recalled. The report acknowledged plans for a reorganisation in 2020 to increase the Ombudsmans efficiency resulting in a reduction in the number of managers, while taking into account the geographical balance, to the extent possible.

The Ombudsman was called on to tackle personnel-related issues and look into ways of improving recruitment processes. The flexible working arrangement offered to staff (flexitime, telework and part-time work) as well as training on team cohesion was highlighted. The Ombudsman should be a more inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities.

Complaints and inquiries

The report observed that in 2019, the number of complaints registered was 2171 (compared to 2160 in 2018), that the number of new cases processed was 2201 (compared to 2180 in 2018) and that the number of cases within the Ombudsmans mandate was 871 (compared to 880 in 2018). It noted that the Ombudsman opened 456 new inquiries based on complaints (compared to 482 in 2018) and closed a record number of 552 complaint-based inquiries (compared to 534 in 2018) and as a result of the high turnover of cases, only 117 inquiries were carried over to 2020 (compared to 222 carried over to 2019).

The categories of complaints that saw the biggest increase include: respect for fundamental rights, proper use of discretion (including infringement procedures), culture of service, transparency and respect for procedural rights.

2019 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Ombudsman

The European Parliament adopted by 682 votes to 9, with 7 abstentions, to grant discharge to the European Ombudsman in respect of the implementation of the European Ombudsman's budget for the financial year 2019.

In the resolution accompanying its discharge decision (adopted by 658 votes to 14, with 19 abstentions), the European Parliament made a series of observations:

Parliament welcomed the fact that the Court of Auditors observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Ombudsman. The payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2019 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error.

Budgetary and financial management

Parliament noted that the Ombudsmans budget is mostly administrative, with a large amount being used for expenditure related to persons, buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous running costs. This amounted in 2019 to EUR 11 496 261 (EUR 10 837 545 in 2018). The implementation rate in terms of commitments (including appropriations carried over from 2019 to 2020) is 92.3 % (compared to 95.3 % in 2018) and that of the total appropriations, 89.5 % were paid in 2019 (compared to 91.3 % in 2018).

The resolution welcomed the improvements in carry-overs, such as the fact that the amount of appropriations carried over from 2019 to 2020 is EUR 323 410 representing 2.8 % of the 2019 budget (compared to EUR 433 866 carried over from 2018 to 2019, representing 4 % of the 2018 budget).

Overall, Parliament recognised the sound financial management of the Ombudsman. Whenever, the underspending for certain budget lines

appears to be systemic, the Ombudsman reduces the related appropriations in subsequent years, such as the budget line for publications, which was reduced proactively and progressively from EUR 219 000 in 2017 to EUR 123 000 in the 2021 draft budget.

Inter-institutional cooperation

Given the ever increasing workload, Parliament encouraged the Ombudsman to maintain and expand contacts with bodies at EU and national level, which serve the purpose of exchanging information and best practice and adopting common approaches on general administrative, financial, personnel and IT matters as well as on ethics, transparency and public integrity.

The Ombudsman is called on to cooperate closer with Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control by making that Committee aware of relevant failures, in form of maladministration and/or institutions negative replies to recommendations made by the Ombudsman in a concise and time-relevant format.

Human resources

The need for gender balance at all hierarchical levels was recalled. The resolution acknowledged plans for a reorganisation in 2020 to increase the Ombudsmans efficiency resulting in a reduction in the number of managers, while taking into account the geographical balance, to the extent possible.

The Ombudsman was called on to tackle personnel-related issues and look into ways of improving recruitment processes. The flexible working arrangement offered to staff (flexitime, telework and part-time work) as well as training on team cohesion was highlighted. The Ombudsman should be a more inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities.

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