


















Procedure file

Basic information		
DEC - Discharge procedure	2023/2131(DEC)	Awaiting committee decision
2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Council and Council		
Subject 8.70.03.12 2022 discharge		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Budgetary Control	 FLANAGAN Luke Ming	26/06/2023
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 MARINESCU Marian-Jean	
		 RÓNAI Sándor	
		 MIHÁL Jozef	
		 PEKSA Mikuláš	
		 KUHS Joachim	
		 CZARNECKI Ryszard	
		Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion
 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.		
 Employment and Social Affairs	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.		

European Commission	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	07/09/2023
	FEMM	Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.
Commission DG		Commissioner	
Budget		HAHN Johannes	



Key events

28/06/2023	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2023)0391	
12/09/2023	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/02/2024	Vote in committee		
06/03/2024	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0071/2024	Summary
10/04/2024	Debate in Parliament		
23/04/2024	Decision by Parliament	T9-0288/2024	
23/04/2024	Report referred back to committee		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2023/2131(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Stage reached in procedure	Awaiting committee decision
Committee dossier	CONT/9/12773

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(2023)0391	28/06/2023	EC
Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N9-0060/2023 OJ C 000 04.10.2023, p. 0000	04/10/2023	CofA

Committee draft report		PE753.479	14/12/2023	EP	
Specific opinion	AFCO	PE756.240	29/01/2024	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE758.198	31/01/2024	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0071/2024	06/03/2024	EP	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document		06179/2024	12/03/2024	CSL	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0288/2024	23/04/2024	EP	

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Council and Council

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Luke Ming FLANAGAN (The Left, IE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section II European Council and Council.

The committee called on the European Parliament to postpone its decision on granting the Secretary-General of the Council discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Council and of the Council for the financial year 2022.

State of play of the discharge procedure

Members deeply regretted that since 2009, and again for the financial year 2021, Parliament had to refuse discharge to the Council because the Council continues to refuse to cooperate with Parliament on the discharge procedure, preventing Parliament from taking an informed decision based on a serious and thorough scrutiny of the implementation of the Councils budget. They also regretted that, on 12 October 2023, the General Secretariat of the Council informed Parliament once again that it would not be answering Parliaments questionnaire and that the Council would not be participating in the hearing which was arranged for 25 October 2023 as part of the discharge process and in which all other invited institutions participated.

The report deplored that the Council, for more than a decade, has shown that it does not have any political willingness to collaborate with Parliament in the context of the annual discharge procedure. The Council is called on to resume negotiations with Parliament at the highest level as soon as possible in order to break the deadlock and find a solution while respecting the respective roles of Parliament and the Council in the discharge procedure and ensuring transparency and proper democratic control of budget implementation.

Members stressed that a revision of the Treaties could render the discharge procedure clearer and more transparent by giving Parliament the explicit competence to grant discharge to all Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies individually.

Political priorities

The report regretted that the Council exerts its prerogative in the nomination and appointment procedures for many Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies without taking into account the views of the interested parties or the recommendations of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

A serious gender imbalance was noted in the Court, where, at the end of 2022, there were only 9 female members compared to 17 male members. Moreover, Members regretted that the decision-making process in the Council is still far from fully transparent. They also regretted that the Council does not fully utilise the mandatory transparency register beyond its current limitations, rejecting any recommendation for improvements. The report called on the Council to refuse to meet with unregistered lobbyists and on the rotating Council presidencies to stop using corporate sponsorship to contribute to covering their expenses.

Budgetary and financial management

The report noted that the budget for Council was EUR 611 473 556 for 2022, representing an increase of 2.9 % compared to 2021, which is significantly higher than the increase from 2020 to 2021 that was 0.6 %. Members reiterated their regret that the budget of the European Council and the Council has not been divided into two clearly separated budgets as recommended by Parliament in previous discharge resolutions in order to improve transparency and accountability.

Human resources, equality and staff well-being

The report noted that, given the Councils lack of cooperation with Parliament, observations in this section primarily rely on aggregated information published on the Councils website which provides limited detail.

The Council, in its budget for 2022, was assigned 3 029 posts which is the same as for 2021 but that the distribution among categories changed with the number.

The Council website states that the Council Secretariat had 3 108 staff (officials, temporary and contract staff and seconded national experts) on 1 January 2023.

Members regretted the:

- gender imbalance in senior management positions within the General Secretariat of the Council;
- lack of information on the implementation of the Councils gender action plan and on the measures taken to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities employed by the Council;
- the Council has not been replying to the questionnaire from Parliament therefore Parliament has no information about the number of trainees in Council during 2022 and whether they were paid during their traineeship or not.

Buildings

The report noted the total payments with respect to buildings amounted to EUR 45 435 994 in 2022, significantly up from EUR 35 709 119 in 2021, representing an increase of 27.2 %. The major reason for this increase is payments for water, gas, electricity and heating which increased from EUR 2 565 008 in 2021 to EUR 11 233 088 in 2022, equivalent to an increase of 338 %.

Unfortunately, Parliament has no information about initiatives in Council during 2022 concerning improved access to their buildings for people with disabilities and other possible initiatives for people with disabilities.

Communication

The Council is encouraged to engage with the European Data Protection Supervisor with a view to utilise the two open-source social media platforms, EU Voice and EU Video, that were launched as a public pilot project to promote the use of free and open -source social networks.