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**A7-0226/2014**

21.3.2014

# REPORT

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section VII – Committee of the Regions  
(COM(2013)0570 – C7-0279/2013 – 2013/2202(DEC))

Committee on Budgetary Control

Rapporteur: Bogusław Sonik

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## 1. PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DECISION

### on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section VII – Committee of the Regions (COM(2013)0570 – C7-0279/2013 – 2013/2202(DEC))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2012 (COM(2013)0570 – C7-0279/2013)<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors on implementation of the budget for the financial year 2012, together with the institutions' replies<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the statement of assurance<sup>4</sup> as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the Court of Auditors for the financial year 2012 pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
  - having regard to Article 314(10) and Articles 317, 318 and 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
  - having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities<sup>5</sup>, and in particular Articles 50, 86, 145, 146 and 147 thereof,
  - having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002<sup>6</sup>, and in particular Articles 164, 165 and 166 thereof,
  - having regard to Rule 77 of, and Annex VI to, its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A7-0226/2014),
1. Grants the Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions discharge in respect of the implementation of the Committee of the Regions' budget for the financial year 2012;
  2. Sets out its observations in the resolution below;
  3. Instructs its President to forward this Decision and the resolution that forms an integral part of it to the Council, the Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the Court of Auditors, the European Ombudsman and the European Data Protection Supervisor, and to arrange for their publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 56, 29.2.2012.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 334, 15.11.2013, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 331, 14.11.2013, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 334, 15.11.2013, p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

## 2. MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge for implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section VII – Committee of the Regions (COM(2013)0570 – C7-0279/2013 – 2013/2202(DEC))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2012 (COM(2013)0570 – C7-0279/2013)<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors on implementation of the budget for the financial year 2012, together with the institutions' replies<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the statement of assurance<sup>4</sup> as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the Court of Auditors for the financial year 2012 pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
  - having regard to Article 314(10) and Articles 317, 318 and 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
  - having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities<sup>5</sup>, and in particular Articles 50, 86, 145, 146 and 147 thereof,
  - having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002<sup>6</sup>, and in particular Articles 164, 165 and 166 thereof,
  - having regard to its previous discharge decisions and resolutions,
  - having regard to Rule 77 of, and Annex VI to, its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A7-0226/2014),
1. Notes with satisfaction that in its 2012 annual report the Court of Auditors observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect of the audited topics related to the human resources and the procurement for the Committee of the Regions ('the Committee');
  2. 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 2012 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 56, 29.2.2012.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 334, 15.11.2013, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 331, 14.11.2013, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 334, 15.11.2013, p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

3. Notes that in 2012, the Committee had an approved budget of EUR 86 503 000 (EUR 84 059 000 in 2011), of which EUR 85 000 000 were commitment appropriations, with a utilisation rate of 98,2 %; stresses that the Committee's budget is purely administrative;
4. Notes with satisfaction that the budget implementation rate of 98,2 % represents an increase on the 2011 rate of 97,5 %; expects further improvements in the budget implementation rate in subsequent periods;
5. Welcomes the establishment of a Subsidiarity Steering Group to strengthen the Committee's political governance and implement the Committee's enhanced new role, as outlined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
6. Welcomes the projects on the internal organisation of the Committee, which set out the objectives of cooperation between services and the development of synergies in common activities and joint actions; welcomes, with regard to last year's recommendations, the information provided and asks to be continually updated on the projects and to be informed on the budgetary consequences of the measures taken;
7. Takes note of the information provided on the energy used from renewable sources; notes with satisfaction that all electricity used by the Committee is coming from renewable sources;
8. Notes with satisfaction that the recommendations and requirements made by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control are recorded by the budget service of the Committee in a central database and that the progress of implementation is regularly monitored;
9. Asks the Committee to continue to monitor the staff structure in order to ensure that the organisation of posts is fully efficient and contributes to a better spending of the allocated budget;
10. Considers that human resources (HR) management should have an efficient IT assistance; asks to be informed of any delays concerning the application of new systems to HR;
11. Requests clarifications on the Committee's 2012 audit programme, in particular on risky activities and the corresponding action plan to prevent them;
12. Notes with satisfaction the drop in external translation from 5,8 % in 2011 to 4,5 % in 2012; believes that these figures are evidence that improvements to efficiency continue to be possible;
13. Calls on the Committee to include the information on unused interpretation services in the annual activity report;
14. Calls on the Committee to cooperate with other institutions to come up with a unified methodology of presenting the translation costs in order to simplify the analysis and comparison of the costs;
15. Strongly believes that some improvements should be made to rationalise human resources in the Joint Services and in translation; finds the on-going contacts between the Committee, the European Economic and Social Committee ('EESC') and Parliament in this matter a positive contribution to the rationalisation of resources;
16. Notes that a mid-term review of the cooperation between these institutions would be a useful tool to evaluate the benefits of the cooperation and to further plan for improved and tailor-made solutions in the future;

17. Congratulates the Committee for the consistent quality of the annual activity report and for providing a comprehensive annual impact report that is an important tool for the assessment of its work; notes with satisfaction that an exhaustive table of all human resources at the Committee's disposal was provided in the annual activity report;
18. Believes that the administrative cooperation agreement between the Committee and the EESC is an efficient mechanism; recommends to the Committee its preservation under an updated format;
19. Requests information on the precise amount of budgetary savings as a result of the updated administrative cooperation agreement with the EESC and on the precise areas which will be affected by the new agreement;
20. Anticipates that the updated administrative cooperation agreement with the EESC will also lead to the strengthening of cooperation in the management of common services;
21. Calls on the Court of Auditors to include in its next annual report a review of the follow-up by the Committee of Parliament's recommendations in this resolution.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	18.3.2014
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ :            23 - :            3 0 :            0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Marta Andreasen, Inés Ayala Sender, Zuzana Brzobohatá, Tamás Deutsch, Martin Ehrenhauser, Jens Geier, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Ingeborg Gräßle, Cătălin Sorin Ivan, Rina Ronja Kari, Monica Luisa Macovei, Jan Mulder, Eva Ortiz Vilella, Monika Panayotova, Crescenzo Rivellini, Paul Rübiger, Bogusław Sonik, Bart Staes, Georgios Stavrakakis, Michael Theurer, Derek Vaughan
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Amelia Andersdotter, Philip Bradbourn, Esther de Lange, Vojtěch Mynář, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Barbara Weiler