

Discharge for 2018 budget Second reports for the European Council and Council, and the Economic and Social Committee

In May 2020, the European Parliament decided to postpone the decision on granting discharge to the European Council and Council, and to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) for the 2018 budget, and presented a number of observations. Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control has examined the situation again, and, in its second reports, recommends not granting discharge to these institutions. The votes on the second discharge reports are scheduled for the October II plenary session.

Discharge procedure

The European Parliament has exclusive competence to grant, postpone or ultimately refuse discharge for the execution of the EU budget, after the Council has delivered its recommendation. The EU budget is structured around separate sections for the budget of each EU institution, with the exception of the European Council and the Council, which share the same section (Article 46 of the [Financial Regulation](#)). Through the [discharge procedure](#) (Article 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)), Parliament scrutinises how each section was implemented in the year concerned, verifying compliance with relevant rules ([Rules 100](#) and [104\(3\)](#) and [Annex V](#) of the Rules of Procedure). The procedure for 2018 started back in June 2019 when the Commission presented the [consolidated annual accounts](#).

Committee on Budgetary Control's position

In [May 2020](#), Parliament decided to postpone the decision on granting discharge for the 2018 budget for the [European Council and the Council](#) (section II) and the [Economic and Social Committee](#) (section VI). On 1 October, Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) voted on second reports and proposed to **refuse the granting of discharge** to these institutions. The accompanying motions for resolution present the following observations:

European Council and Council: CONT regrets the Council's lack of cooperation in the discharge procedure, for ten years now, which is detrimental to the accountability of the Union and its institutions. Recalling Parliament's wish to overcome this deadlock, it invites the Council to re-open the negotiations, based on the 'non-paper' put forward by Parliament's negotiating team. It insists that the European Council and the Council should have separate sections for their budgets. It finally invites the Council to establish a common register for lobbyists with Parliament. Parliament has refused to grant discharge to the Council since financial year 2009.

Economic and Social Committee: CONT recalls OLAF's conclusion on the responsibility of a senior member of the EESC for acts of harassment and serious misconduct, and the submission of this case by OLAF to the Belgian authorities. It notes with concern that the measures taken to protect the victims were insufficient. While the EESC's bureau discharged the member from management or administration of staff activities, the decision could not be fully enforced due to shortcomings in the Committee's internal procedures. It considers this a case of concern regarding accountability, budgetary control and good governance of human resources. It invites the EESC to take these elements into account in the action plan for a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment, and urges it to introduce the necessary rules and inform the budgetary authority on the procedures and processes taken in order to avoid such regrettable events reoccurring in the future.

Discharge reports: [European Council and Council](#) (section II) and [Economic and Social Committee](#) (section VI);
Committee responsible: CONT; Rapporteur: Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP, Czechia).

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