

MONDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2017

15.00 - 18.30

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017

09.00 - 12.30 and 15.00 - 18.30

Room: Altiero Spinelli (5G-3)

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The draft agenda was e-mailed to Members on 20 February 2017 and is in the [file for the meeting](#).

2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair draws attention to the following points:

Languages available

FR, DE, IT, NL, EN, EL, ES, FI, CS, ET, HU, LT, PL, SL, BG, RO.

Webstreaming

The CONT meeting is webstreamed on the [Europarl web-site](#).

Please be aware that each time a speaker activates the microphone to make an intervention, the camera will be automatically directed to the speaker.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS

The following minutes are published on the [CONT website](#):

- 5 December 2016
- 8 December 2016
- 9 January 2017
- 9 January 2017 - joint BUDG-CONT-JURI
- 23-24 January 2017
- 30-31 January 2017

If no objections are received before the end of the meeting, the minutes will be deemed approved.

MONDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2017

15.00 - 18.30

PUBLIC MEETING

2015 DISCHARGE: GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EU - OTHER INSTITUTIONS (ITEMS 4 TO 11)

4. **COUNCIL AND EUROPEAN COUNCIL** CONT/8/07219
5. **EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE** CONT/8/07214
6. **COURT OF JUSTICE** CONT/8/07327
7. **EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS** CONT/8/07347
8. **EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE** CONT/8/07366
9. **COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS** CONT/8/07386
10. **EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN** CONT/8/07406
11. **EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION SUPERVISOR** CONT/8/07426



Consideration of draft reports

Co-Rapporteurs: [Benedek Jávor](#) and [Bart Staes](#) (Greens/EFA)
Administrators: Tereza Pinto De Rezende and Olivier Sautière

Shadow Rapporteurs: Marian-Jean Marinescu (EPP), Cătălin Sorin Ivan (S&D), Monica Macovei (ECR) for Court of Justice and Court of Auditors, Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR) for all the other institutions, Michael Theurer (ALDE), Dennis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Marco Valli (EFDD), Jean-François Jalkh (for the Council) & Barbara Kappel (ENF)

On 21 November 2016 the questions from CONT Members concerning the 2015 discharge "Other institutions" were sent to the Council of the European Union, Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions, European Ombudsman, European Data Protection Supervisor and the European External Action Service.

The replies received from the institutions (except from the Council) were e-mailed to CONT Members on 20 December 2016.

The CONT Members held an exchange of views on the main issues concerning the 2015 discharge with the Secretaries General of the Institutions (except of the Council) on 9 January 2017.

The Council did not reply to the questionnaire and its Secretary General simply reiterated the content of the replies sent to the Rapporteurs in charge of discharges 2013 and 2014. The Council favours an agreement by the two institutions to exchange financial information during the annual discharge and supports the setting up of a "modus vivendi" procedure between the European Parliament and the Council, which would contribute to the satisfactory cooperation between the two institutions.

Concerning the EEAS discharge, the CONT Members held an exchange of views with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms Federica Mogherini, on 31 January 2017.

This meeting provided an opportunity to address a wide range of issues relating to the adaptation of the EEAS organization, the integration of EU special representatives and staff into the work of the service, the state of play in terms of geographical and gender balance and the management of costs through the pooling of supporting means to EU delegations and the costs of the building policy.

Replies to a first set of 63 questions submitted to the EEAS on 16 November 2016 were e-mailed to CONT Members on 20 December 2016. A second set of replies to 11 additional questions, submitted to the EEAS on 15 February 2017, were sent to CONT Members on 24 February 2017.

The Rapporteurs prepared their draft reports based on the documents submitted by the institutions, on the exchange of views in CONT and on the replies given by all the institutions – except the Council – to the questionnaires.

The Members received the original language version of the draft reports on 13 February 2017. Other language versions are available on the [CONT website](#).

At this CONT meeting, the CONT Members will have an exchange of views on the 2015 discharge "Other institutions" after the presentation of the draft reports by the respective rapporteurs.

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017 14.00
Adoption in CONT	CONT	23 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

2015 DISCHARGE: AGENCIES (ITEMS 12 TO 44)

- 12. REPORT ON DISCHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AGENCIES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2015: PERFORMANCE, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL** CONT/8/07541
- 13. ACER** AGENCY FOR THE COOPERATION OF ENERGY REGULATORS CONT/8/07509
- 14. BEREC** OFFICE OF THE BODY OF EUROPEAN REGULATORS FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS CONT/8/07511
- 15. CDT** TRANSLATION CENTRE FOR THE BODIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION CONT/8/07465
- 16. CEDEFOP** EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING CONT/8/07432
- 17. CEPOL** EUROPEAN POLICE COLLEGE CONT/8/07485
- 18. EASA** EUROPEAN AVIATION SAFETY AGENCY CONT/8/07475
- 19. EASO** EUROPEAN ASYLUM SUPPORT OFFICE CONT/8/07515
- 20. EBA** EUROPEAN BANKING AUTHORITY CONT/8/07502
- 21. ECDC** EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL CONT/8/07479

- 22. **ECHA** **EUROPEAN CHEMICALS AGENCY** CONT/8/07494
- 23. **EEA** **EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY** CONT/8/07461
- 24. **EFCA** **EUROPEAN FISHERIES CONTROL AGENCY** CONT/8/07492
- 25. **EFSA** **EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY** CONT/8/07477
- 26. **EIGE** **EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY** CONT/8/07500
- 27. **EIOPA** **EUROPEAN INSURANCE AND OCCUPATIONAL PENSIONS AUTHORITY**
CONT/8/07504
- 28. **EIT** **EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY** CONT/8/07513
- 29. **EMA** **EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY** CONT/8/07467
- 30. **EMCDDA** **EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE FOR DRUGS AND DRUG ADDICTION**
CONT/8/07458
- 31. **EMSA** **EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY** CONT/8/07473
- 32. **ENISA** **EUROPEAN NETWORK AND INFORMATION SECURITY AGENCY** CONT/8/07481
- 33. **ERA** **EUROPEAN RAILWAY AGENCY** CONT/8/07483
- 34. **ESA** **EURATOM SUPPLY AGENCY** CONT/8/07496
- 35. **ESMA** **EUROPEAN SECURITIES AND MARKETS AUTHORITY** CONT/8/07507
- 36. **ETF** **EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION** CONT/8/07471
- 37. **EU-LISA** **EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR THE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF LARGE-SCALE
IT SYSTEMS IN THE AREA OF FREEDOM, SECURITY AND JUSTICE** CONT/8/07517
- 38. **EU-OSHA** **EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK** CONT/8/07463
- 39. **EUROFOUND** **EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING AND WORKING
CONDITIONS** CONT/8/07435
- 40. **EUROJUST** **THE EUROPEAN UNION'S JUDICIAL COOPERATION UNIT** CONT/8/07469
- 41. **EUROPOL** **EUROPEAN POLICE OFFICE** CONT/8/07498
- 42. **FRA** **EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS** CONT/8/07437
- 43. **FRONTEX** **EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF OPERATIONAL COOPERATION
AT THE EXTERNAL BORDERS OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN
UNION** CONT/8/07487
- 44. **GSA** **EUROPEAN GNSS AGENCY (GSA)** CONT/8/07490



Consideration of draft reports

Rapporteur: [Inés Ayala Sender](#) (S&D)
Administrator: Hrvoje Svetić

Shadow Rapporteurs: Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP), Raffaele Fitto (ECR), Nedzhmi Ali (ALDE), Dennis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Benedek Jávor (Greens/EFA), Marco Valli (EFDD), Barbara Kappel (ENF)

The number of decentralised agencies being subject to discharge for the financial year 2015 is 32, the same as in the previous year. In addition to the draft reports on the decentralised agencies, the Rapporteur, Ms Inés Ayala Sender, will present the draft report containing horizontal observations on the agencies. The draft reports are based on the European Court of Auditors' Annual Reports on the agencies, and the following documents containing information on the agencies' financial management for the 2015 financial year:

- Reports on the follow-up of the previous year's discharge resolutions;
- Reports on 2015 budgetary and financial management;
- 2015 annual activity reports;
- Agencies' answers to the written questions by the CONT Committee (sent to CONT Members on 17 January 2017); and
- Oral replies provided in the course of the CONT hearing of 24 January 2017.

Out of the 32 decentralised agencies subject to the discharge procedure, the European Court of Auditors issued a qualified opinion to two agencies, the European Institute for innovation and Technology (EIT) and the European Agency for the Management of Operation Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (now European Border and Coast Guard Agency) (FRONTEX).

The Court concluded that for all other decentralised agencies subject to discharge, the final accounts present fairly, in all material respects, their financial position at year-end. In addition, the transactions underlying the annual accounts of these agencies for the year 2015 were legal and regular in all material respects.

The main issues identified at the EIT were related to the application of transitional provisions relating to the flat-rate payments of indirect costs to the "Knowledge and Innovation Communities", recipients of EIT's grants. As regards FRONTEX, the basis for the qualified opinion was an accounting error related to the underestimation of the cost incurred in 2015 but not yet invoiced for pre-financed services related to maritime surveillance.

For the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Banking Authority (EBA), the Court in its statement of assurance included the information on the referendum results in the United Kingdom, which happened after the balance sheet date for both agencies. In particular, the Court noted that the accounts of both agencies were prepared using the information available at the date of the signing of accounts, when the results of the referendum were not yet known.

The draft reports for other agencies focus, inter alia, on issues related to the reliability of accounts, the legality and regularity of transactions, internal controls and budget implementation. A high level of carry-overs is one of the most frequent issues identified as it is usually considered by the Court to be at odds with the budgetary principle of annuality. The reports note, however, that those issues often resulted from events which were, completely or partly, beyond the agencies' control, or were justified by the multi-annual nature of operations, procurement procedures or projects.

The draft reports, the Court of Auditors' reports and other relevant information (including annual reports, final accounts etc.) can be found on the [CONT website](#).

The draft reports in English were emailed to CONT Members on 13 February 2017. All language versions of the draft reports will be available on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017 14.00
Adoption in CONT	CONT	23 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

2015 DISCHARGE: JOINT UNDERTAKINGS (ITEMS 45 TO 51)

- 45. BBI** **BIO-BASED INDUSTRIES** CONT/8/07528
- 46. CLEAN SKY 2** **AERONAUTICS AND ENVIRONMENT** CONT/8/07524
- 47. ECSEL** **ELECTRIC COMPONENTS & SYSTEMS FOR EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP** CONT/8/07537
- 48. FCH** **FUEL CELLS AND HYDROGEN** CONT/8/07533
- 49. IMI** **INNOVATIVE MEDICINES INITIATIVE** CONT/8/07530
- 50. ITER** **INTERNATIONAL FUSION ENERGY ORGANISATION** CONT/8/07519
- 51. SESAR** **SAFETY OF AIR NAVIGATION** CONT/8/07521



Consideration of draft reports

Rapporteur: [Miroslav Poche](#) (S&D)
 Administrator: Michal Czaplicki

Shadow Rapporteurs: Brian Hayes (EPP), Raffaele Fitto (ECR), Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL) Indrek Tarand (Greens/EFA), Marco Valli (EFDD), Barbara Kappel (ENF)

The rapporteur, Mr Poche will present the draft reports which focus mostly on the issues identified during the financial year 2015.

The reports look at issues and efforts made by the JUs regarding monitoring and reporting, internal control systems as well as the implementation of the relevant parts of the new Financial Regulation into their respective financial rules. In his report Mr Poche underlines the efforts made by F4E and ITER under new management in improving its performances.

He notes with satisfaction that BBI reached smoothly its operational capacity and financial autonomy. He notes that despite a qualified opinion of the Court on EcSEL JU, the Joint Undertaking following a good example of the previous year, provided to the budgetary authority written declarations of National Funding Authorities (NFAs) that the implementation of their national procedures provided for a reasonable assurance of the legality and regularity of transactions, which are in this case a prerequisite for granting discharge. The rapporteur regrets to discover that one case of suspicion of fraud was submitted to OLAF in IMI, even though OLAF decided not to open an investigation. Mr Poche appreciates that in terms of widening participation in Clean Sky projects, 76 new core partners joined the program. He recognises that 2015 was the first year of real transition from SESAR 1 to SESAR 2, since the Horizon 2020 grant

agreements and the bilateral agreements with Eurocontrol and the aviation industry were not concluded at the end of 2015. He welcomes the fact that the residual error of FCH is 0,98%.

The Court of Auditors' reports and other relevant information (including annual reports, final accounts etc.) can be found on the [CONT website](#).

The draft reports in English have been sent by email to CONT Members on 6 February. All language versions are available on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017 14.00
Adoption in CONT	CONT	23 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

52. ECA SPECIAL REPORT N° 34/2016 (2016 DISCHARGE) ON “COMBATING FOOD WASTE: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE EU TO IMPROVE THE RESOURCE-EFFICIENCY OF THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN”

CONT/8/09059



Presentation of the Special Report by the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, *Bettina Jakobsen*, and consideration of a working document

Rapporteur: [Tomáš Zdechovský](#) (EPP)
 Administrator: Tereza Pinto De Rezende

Shadow Rapporteurs: Gilles Pargneaux (S&D), Martina Dlabajová (ALDE), Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL), Marco Valli (EFDD)

Food waste is a global problem that has moved up the public and political agenda in recent years. Food is a precious commodity and its production can be very resource intensive. Estimates show that up to one third of food is wasted or lost and therefore huge environmental and economic costs are at stake.

The Court of Auditors examined the role the EU plays in combating food waste, the actions taken thus far and the way in which the various EU policy instruments work to reduce food waste. It focused on the actions of prevention and donation which are those most preferred in the fight against food waste.

The report concluded that the action to date has not been sufficient and that the EU strategy on food waste has to be strengthened and better coordinated.

The report recommends that the Commission should strengthen the EU strategy to combat food waste and coordinate it better, with an action plan for the years ahead and a clarification of the food waste concept. It should consider food waste in future impact assessments and better align the different policies which can combat food waste, in particular common agricultural policy, common fisheries policy and food safety policy. The Commission should promote the option of donating food that is safe for consumption and that would otherwise be wasted. In particular, it should clarify the

interpretation of legal provisions that discourage the donation of food; complete the legislative requirement to allow the use of food from agricultural stocks from public intervention and promote among MS the use of existing provisions for donation, with particular reference to fruit and vegetables withdrawn from the market and to the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived.

The Rapporteur welcomes the Court's audit and fully endorses its recommendations. He regrets the lack of political will to put forward effective measures and the fragmented approach of the Commission towards combating food waste. The Rapporteur criticizes the Commission for an inconsistent approach, being on one side the leader in combating climate change and on the other not fully committed to combating food waste. The Commission lacks concrete results and is called to deliver as soon as possible, namely by proposing a common definition of food waste, a common methodology for measuring and monitoring food waste and providing guidelines on use of waste hierarchy. The Rapporteur calls on the Commission to draft action plans with measurable targets and performance indicators in specific policy areas. Food donation should be facilitated and the Commission is invited to take measures necessary to overcome the existing legal and procedural obstacles. MS are encouraged to promote education in the area of food management and food waste. The Commission is also asked to clarify the concepts 'best before' and 'use by' to avoid misconception, and the Rapporteur concludes by challenging the EU institutions to address the issue of food waste and regulate the donation of unconsumed food in their catering services.

The Rapporteur's recommendations will possibly be included in the 2016 Commission discharge report.

The Members of the ENVI Committee were invited to the exchange of views.

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017

09.00 - 12.30

PUBLIC MEETING

53. 2015 DISCHARGE: GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EU - EUROPEAN COMMISSION CONT/8/07174

54. 2015 DISCHARGE: SPECIAL REPORTS OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS CONT/8/07581



**Consideration of draft reports in the presence of *Günther Oettinger*,
Commissioner responsible for Budget and Human Resources**

Rapporteur: [Joachim Zeller](#) (EPP)

Administrators: Philippe Godts and Christian Ehlers

Shadow Rapporteurs: Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D), Anders Primdahl Vistisen (ECR), Martina Dlabajová (ALDE), Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL), Bart Staes (Greens/EFA); Marco Valli (EFDD)

In his draft report, the rapporteur states that the seven-year duration of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is not synchronised with the five years mandates of the Parliament and the Commission. Furthermore, he points out that the 10-year strategic planning cycle is not aligned either with the seven-year cycle for managing the EU budget. The rapporteur is of the opinion that this is the cause of a major deficiency of the Union political governance since the Parliament and the Commission are bound by previous agreements on political objectives and finances, which may

Committee on Budgetary Control

create the impression that the European elections are of limited impact. He also stresses that in 2015 the budget of the Union had not only to support the achievement of the objectives of two different long-term political programmes while also responding to a number of crises: refugees, insecurity in Europe and its neighbourhood, financial instability in Greece and the economic impact of the Russian ban exports.

Mr Zeller regrets that the current budgetary arrangements do not facilitate the translation of political aspirations into useful operational objectives for spending programmes and schemes.

Bearing in mind that Union policies may have different short-, medium- and long-term objectives, whose realisation cannot be determined by a single multi-annual financial framework, he holds the view that a new balance must be struck between political agenda setting, policy implementation and financial frameworks.

Pointing out that there will be an opportunity in 2020 to bring the long-term strategy and policy-making into line with the budgetary cycle, the rapporteur stresses that it is time for the Commission to explore other options, for example:

- a rolling budgeting with a five years planning horizon, clause(s) of revision by objectives and policies and rolling evaluation programme;
- determining the duration of programmes and schemes on policy needs rather basing it on the length of the financial planning period and requiring Member States and the Commission to present well justified needs for Union funding and results to be achieved before spending is set.

He calls on the Commission to put on the agenda of the next experts' meeting on Budget Focused Results (BFOR) the suggestions made by the Court in its "briefing paper on mid-term review" of 28.10.2016, in order to prepare the next Conference on EU Budget focused on Results that could debate the policy areas, in which the Union budget should be spent before deciding upon the financial framework.

The English version of the 2015 Commission draft discharge reports were sent to Members respectively on 10 and 13 February 2017.

Other language versions are available on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017 14.00
Adoption in CONT	CONT	22 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

55. ECA SPECIAL REPORT N° 36/2016 (2016 DISCHARGE) ON “AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CLOSURE OF THE 2007-2013 COHESION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES”^{CONT/8/09301}



Presentation of the Special Report by the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, *Ladislav Balko*, and consideration of a working document

Rapporteur: [Boguslaw Liberadzki](#) (S&D)

Administrator: Christian Ehlers

Shadow Rapporteurs: Andrey Novakov (EPP), Martina Dlabajová (ALDE), Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL), Marco Valli (EFDD)

For the 2014-2020 programme period, around EUR 460 billion was allocated to cohesion and rural development programmes from the EU budget, compared with around EUR 430 billion for 2007-2013 and EUR 300 billion euro for 2000-2006. This represents approximately 40 % of the total EU budget for 2000-2006, 44 % for 2007-2013 and 43 % for 2014-2020.

The cohesion and rural development areas have similar characteristics in terms of their delivery mechanisms, instruments and control systems under a shared management set-up. Both aim at reducing regional disparities.

The rapporteur

1. Welcomes the Court’s special report and endorses its recommendations;
2. Notes with satisfaction that the Commission provided adequate and timely support to help Member States prepare for the closure of 2007-2013 programmes;
3. Welcomes the Commission’s readiness to seek further harmonisation of regulatory provisions between the funds, including on terminology, assurance and closure processes, whenever it enables to improve the management of EU funds and it contributes to a simpler and more effective implementation in Member States and regions;
4. Notes with astonishment the Commission’s refusal to consider specific commitment in relation to legislative proposals for the post 2020 period, knowing that they can already build on the experience of two complete financial periods (1999-2006, 2006-2013); rejects therefore this Commission argument;
5. Supports the Court’s call for further alignment of the regulatory provisions for closure between cohesion and for the investment-related measures under rural development;
6. Considers that calculated residual risk rates remain an unknown quantity based on experience and can at best be used as pointers;
7. Notes the Court’s demand that eligibility periods should no longer overlap with the subsequent programme period after 2020 and its concern that extended eligibility periods (i.e. n+2, n+3) are one of the reasons for financial backlogs and the late start of the subsequent programming period along with delays in finalisation of revised programming and funding legislation and associated implementation rules, particularly in 2014/2015; emphasises in this regard the importance of ensuring maximum absorption and the smooth-running of multiannual projects;

8. Notes that the final closure of the financial period only occurs every seven years; shares therefore the Court's opinion that the Commission should inform the budgetary authority and its Committee on Budgetary Control about the final outcome of the closure procedure in a separate document; such a document should not only confirm the legality and regularity of the expenditures but it should also measure the result and impact of the programmes (performance approach).

The Rapporteur's recommendations will possibly be included in the 2016 Commission discharge report.

Members of the AGRI, REGI and EMPL committees have been invited to attend.

The English language version of the working was circulated to Members on 23 February and is available on the CONT website.

56. ECA SPECIAL REPORT N° 31/2016 (2016 DISCHARGE) ON "SPENDING AT LEAST ONE EURO IN EVERY FIVE FROM THE EU BUDGET ON CLIMATE ACTION: AMBITIOUS WORK UNDERWAY, BUT AT SERIOUS RISK OF FALLING SHORT" CONT/8/08542



Presentation of the Special Report by the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, *Phil Wynn Owen*, and consideration of a working document

Rapporteur: [Tomáš Zdechovský](#) (EPP)

Administrator: Olivier Sautière

Shadow Rapporteurs: Nedzhmi Ali (ALDE), Younous Omarjee (GUE), Gilles Pargneaux (S&D), Marco Valli (EFDD)

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the European Union (EU) and governments across the globe, which can be managed through two policy responses: the 'mitigation' approach for addressing climate change, seeks to address the causes of climate change by reducing or limiting the emission of greenhouse gases and the 'adaptation' approach aims at anticipating the adverse and positive effects of the climate change that will happen and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimise the potential damage.

The International Climate Change Agreement, adopted in Paris at the end of 2015, is the first binding universal agreement to fight against climate change, setting up a transparency framework for tracking the progress of countries towards achieving their individual greenhouse gas reduction targets. In order to respond to climate change and the associated substantial investment needs, the EU has agreed that at least 20 % of its budget for 2014-2020 - 'one euro in every five' - should be spent on climate-related action. This objective forms part of the EU's leadership in climate action and is considered as indispensable for the 2015 International Climate Change Agreement to be a success.

According to the Court's estimates, the target corresponds to a pledge of approximately 212 billion euro. The Commission decided to achieve the objectives linked to climate change 'mitigation' and 'adaptation' by including related concerns into all policy areas and the corresponding funds of the EU budget, instead of creating one dedicated funding instrument.

The Court examined whether the target to spend at least 20 % of the EU budget on climate-related action was likely to be met and whether the European Commission's approach was likely to add value by leading to more and better-focused funding on climate action. The audit work focused on the overall system established at Commission level and in two areas of shared management: cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy, these areas accounting together for two-thirds of the EU budget and three-quarters of the overall target for climate funding under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework. Audit visits were carried out in Poland, in Germany and Romania, and in France and Spain. This report does not however include an assessment of the general effects of EU policies on climate, the performance of the EU against its 2020 and 2030 climate and energy targets, or the optimum level of EU climate funding.

The Court observed that ambitious work was underway and that progress had been made. However, there remained a serious risk that the EU's target of spending 20 % of the EU budget on climate action between 2014 and 2020 will not be met without more effort to tackle climate change and to ensure a 'real shift' towards climate action. Weaknesses were

reported on the tracking method used by the Commission and Member States for planning and measuring progress towards the 20% target across the EU budget.

The implementation of the target has led to more and better focus on climate action in the European Regional Development and the Cohesion Fund. But in the areas of agriculture, rural development and fisheries, and in the European Social fund, there has been no significant shift towards climate action with a situation that was largely business as usual or with potential opportunities for funding climate related action that were not fully explored by the Commission and Member States.

The Rapporteur welcomes the ambitious targets to spend at least 20% of its budget on climate related action for the 2014-2020 budgeting period but regrets that according to the Court, there is a serious risk of falling short of the 20% budget target;

He considers of high importance for the Commission to continuously demonstrate sufficient leadership and commitment to climate change issues through an effective implementation of the Paris agreement as well as to consolidate its international credibility and tools for shaping conditions for the Union's climate policy and green diplomacy in future years. The Rapporteur further calls on the Commission to develop a concrete overall strategy on reaching the set target that will entail area-specific action plans pointing out detailed measures and instruments, methodology of measurement and reporting, and performance indicators employed in the climate-related actions of specific policy areas.

The Rapporteur finally believes that mainstreaming of the funding programmes needs to be further refined by defining clear adaptation or mitigation strategies and related action plans, including adequate tools of quantification of investment and climate incentives needed and, better estimates tracking methods for getting right projections on the progress achieved across EU programmes and Member States' actions.

The Rapporteur's working document (EN) is available on the [CONT website](#).

The Rapporteur's recommendations will possibly be included in the 2016 Commission discharge report.

57. 2015 DISCHARGE: PRESENTATION OF THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS BY EDWARD SCICLUNA, MALTESE MINISTER OF FINANCES



On 21 February 2017 the Council adopted its recommendations on the discharge to be given to the Commission, the executive agencies, the Agencies and Joint undertakings for 2015. They were sent to Members on 21 February 2016 and are published on the CONT website.

The initial presentation by Edward Scicluna, Maltese Minister of Finance will be followed by an exchange of views with the Members of the Committee.

Commission Discharge:

The Council recommends to the European Parliament to give discharge to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015.

The Council considers that the simplification of rules is of paramount importance in achieving a lower level of error. Simplification of rules, including those in delegated and implementing acts, as well as improved guidance, not only reduces the administrative burden on national authorities and beneficiaries, thereby reducing the risk of error, but also allows for more efficient and less costly controls.

The Council call on the Commission and Member States to take full advantage of the existing options when implementing the programmes under the current legislative framework for the period 2014-2020, by making the appropriate use of the variety of simplification measures at their disposal.

The Council welcomes the findings of the Court, in particular, on performance and delivery of results from the EU budget, as specified in its annual report and its various special reports, and invites the Commission to take them into consideration, where appropriate and possible, during the preparations of the next multiannual financial framework (MFF).

The Netherlands and Sweden have adopted a joint declaration; they appreciate that the overall estimated level of error has improved compared to last year, however they regret that, for the 22d consecutive year, the European Court of Auditors has been unable to grant an unqualified Statement of Assurance on the EU budget as a whole.

They are of the opinion that further discussion needs to take place on how the EU-budget can be re-designed to better support overall political priorities, generate results and react to unforeseen challenges, and support the Commission's "Budget focused on Results" initiative in this regard.

For this purpose, they call on the Commission to initiate a comprehensive spending-review with the aim to systematically evaluate each area in the EU-budget regarding their efficiency, the EU added value and the contribution towards overall EU-priorities ahead of the next multiannual financial framework.

European Development Fund (EDF):

As regards to activities funded by 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th EDFs for the financial year 2015, the Council notes with concern that the error rate has not decreased compared to the previous year (3.8%) and that this error rate is still too high and urges the Commission to work within the agreed target of 2% error rate. The Council notes the revenue of the EDFs the

Committee on Budgetary Control

global commitments entered into by the EDFs were free from material error but takes notes that the payments made by the EDFs were materially affected by error.

The Council acknowledges the efforts made by the Commission to reduce old open prefinancing and old outstanding commitments (le RAL (le reste à liquider)) and the number of open expired contracts, but considers that further progress is needed in this regard. The Council positively notes further progress made by the Commission in the implementation of monitoring system regarding the recovery of interests of prefinancing.

Moreover the Council notes with concern that errors relating to the absence of supporting documents and non-compliance with procurement rules account for 70% of the estimated level of error with more errors committed by the Commission and its implementing partners, as in previous years, in transactions relating to programme estimates, grants and contribution agreements with international organisations than in other types of support.

The Council calls on the Commission to pay more attention to ex-ante checks, given the high-risk operational environment in which the operations are implemented while also noting improvements made by the Commission by putting in place a quality grid to assess the reliability of checks, the development of a new audit application and measures taken in the areas of document management and procurement

Finally, the Council welcomes the Commission announcement to revise the system for expenditure verifications directly contracted by the beneficiaries and apply a quality assurance scheme also to these verifications, but however acknowledges that improvements should be made in certain important areas such as expanding the use of quality grid to audits and expenditure verifications contracted directly by beneficiaries, improving the provision of necessary documentation by the external entities or improving risk assessment for payments under indirect management with beneficiary countries,

Overall, the Council recommends that the European Parliament give discharge to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the operations funded by 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th EDFs for the financial year 2015.

Agencies:

The Council recommends the European Parliament to give discharge to all of the decentralised agencies

The Council, in its draft recommendations, recommends granting discharge for all of the 32 decentralised agencies in respect of the implementation of their budgets for the financial year 2015. The draft recommendations contain, moreover, the accompanying comments for 30 agencies which focus on, inter alia, budgetary management and expenditure, procurement procedures as well as financial programming and monitoring of budget implementation.

Joint undertakings:

The Council recommends the European Parliament to give discharge to all of the Joint Undertakings in respect of the implementation of their budgets for the financial year 2015.

In order to avoid excessive carry-overs, the Council calls on the Joint Undertakings to pay due attention to the proper programming and implementation of commitment and payment appropriations in the course of the budgetary year and to decommit unused appropriations if necessary, in line with the budgetary principle of annuality.

Moreover, the Council encourages the Joint Undertakings to implement their action plans on planning, performance monitoring and reporting, the dissemination of research results, the quality control of beneficiaries' publications, and the establishment of a central repository of outputs without delay.

Committee on Budgetary Control

Finally, the Council invites the Joint Undertakings to incorporate in their procedures declarations of absence of a conflict of interest as stated in the Commission's guidelines.

The Council is concerned about the very significant cost increase of the ITER project that in November 2015 was estimated at EUR 2 375 million for the construction phase. The Council invites the Joint Undertaking to update the valuation of its contribution to the ITER project beyond the construction phase and to present it with the least possible delay. It urges the Joint Undertaking to implement swiftly its action plan in order to improve the performance of the project and to increase the reliability of its monitoring and forecasts.

The Council is concerned about the shortcomings identified by the Court in the presentation of the ECSEL's and BBI's accounts, where the value of in-kind contributions by other members was based on estimates. It urges the Joint Undertakings to obtain from its members the reports on the value of their in-kind contributions on time.

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017

15.00 - 17.30

PUBLIC MEETING

58. 2015 DISCHARGE: GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EU - EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

CONT/8/07194



Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: [Denis de Jong](#) (GUE/NGL)
Administrator: Mauro de Oliveira

Shadow Rapporteurs: Tamás Deutsch (EPP), Derek Vaughan (S&D), Anders Primdahl Vistisen (ECR), Nedzhmi Ali (ALDE), Benedek Jávor (Greens/EFA), Marco Valli (EFDD), Jean-François Jalkh (ENF)

The European Parliament draft discharge report for the financial year 2015 is based on a wide range of information, which is available on the [CONT website](#):

- Parliament's accounts for the financial year 2015,
- the report on budgetary and financial management,
- the Secretary-General's Statement of Assurance,
- the Annual Activity Reports by the Authorising Officers,
- the European Court of Auditors' Annual Report 2015,
- the follow-up report drawn up by the Administration in response to the previous year's discharge resolution,
- the questionnaire with the Secretary-General's replies emailed to Members on 24 January 2017, and
- the exchange of views in CONT on 30 of January with the Vice-President responsible for budgetary affairs, the Secretary General, the Court of Auditors and the Internal Auditor.

The Rapporteur, Mr de Jong, will present his draft report on the Parliament's management during 2015. His draft report contains comments and recommendations based, inter alia, on the Court of Auditors' and the Internal Auditors' findings, as well as, the result of the extensive discussion process held with the Parliament's Authorising Officers.

He commends the commitment of the Parliament's administration to continuously improving the performance of the Parliament's services. He welcomes the revised rules governing the payment of financial contributions for sponsored visitors groups that reduce considerably cash payments and introduce mandatory electronic transfers.

He emphasises that MEPs ought to be able to use the Parliament's website to provide their constituencies with maximum transparency on their activities and calls upon the Secretary-General to develop a system in which MEPs can indicate how they want their personal webpages to be organised.

Mr de Jong shows concern that media and the public at large find it difficult to obtain the specific information they are looking for about MEP's allowances or underlying documents regarding the decision on the recognition of the European political parties and European political foundations. He requests the newly established authority for European political parties and foundations to submit a progress report to Parliament after its first year of activity.

He voices his uneasiness that the current code of conduct for MEPs does not offer sufficient safeguards in order to avoid conflicts of interests and expresses the need for the establishment of a working group on the strengthening of the code of conduct. The Rapporteur recalls that that according to the Court of Auditors the costs of the geographic dispersion of the Parliament amount to EUR 114 million per year and demands the Bureau to develop, without delay, a roadmap to a single seat for Parliament.

All language versions of the draft report will be available on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017 14.00
Adoption in CONT	CONT	22 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

59. 2015 DISCHARGE: EU GENERAL BUDGET - 8TH, 9TH, 10TH AND 11TH EDFs

CONT/8/07429



Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: [Younous Omarjee](#) (GUE)
 Administrator: Olivier Sautière

Shadow Rapporteurs: Claudia Schmidt (EPP), Karin Kadenbach (S&D), Anders Primdahl Vistisen (ECR), Martina Dlavajová (ALDE), Indrek Tarand (Greens/EFA), Marco Valli (EFDD), Jean-François Jalkh (ENF)

In the course of the preparation of the European Development Fund (EDF) discharge report for 2015, the Committee submitted written questions both to the Member of the European Commission responsible for International Cooperation and Development, Mr Neven Mimica, and to the Director General and Deputy Head of Operations of the European Investment Bank (EIB) for Operations outside the EU, Mr Luca Lazzaroli, on 24 October 2016. Replies were emailed to Members on 4 November 2016.

Committee on Budgetary Control

CONT Members held an exchange of views with Commissioner Neven Mimica on the findings concerning the EDF chapter of the Court of Auditors (ECA) 2015 Annual Report on 8 November 2016, in the presence of Ms Danièle Lamarque Member of the European Court of Auditors. On this occasion, CONT Members also held an exchange of views with Mr Luca Lazzaroli, Director General of EIB for Operations outside the EU who had been invited to present the main results achieved by the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Investment Facility for 2015.

The Rapporteur emphasised the following issues: the challenging issue of assessing the performance of the development policy in particular to improve EDF aid effectiveness, the risk of outsourcing certain objectives of the development policy with the use of trust funds, the simplification of EDFs' implementing procedures, the need for better alignment of EU policies contributing to the overall objective of development, the migration issue and the EDF development aid and the future of the Cotonou Agreement after 2020.

In that context, the Rapporteur globally called for a higher level of consistency in the management of the development policy and the necessity of getting more guarantees when funding development interventions.

Separate chapters are also dedicated to budget support and related conditionalities, to the cooperation frameworks with international organisations particularly the combination of respective governance frameworks, to the African Peace Facility and to the aid delivery to Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).

As regards EIBs activities, the discussion focused on the evaluation tools of the sustainability of the ACP Investment Facility's actions, the definition of clear ex-ante objectives, the lending risks and the EIB's due diligence requirements.

The English draft report was sent to Members on 13 February 2017.

All language versions of the draft report and the reference documents can be consulted on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for amendments	CONT	6 March 2017 14.00
Adoption in CONT	CONT	22 March 2017
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	APRIL II

60. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

61. NEXT MEETINGS

- 22 March 2017, 09.00 to 12.30 and 15.00 to 18.30 (Brussels)
- 23 March 2017, 09.00 to 12.30 (Brussels)
- 27 March 2017, 15.00 - 18.30 (Brussels)

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2017

17.30 - 18.30

IN CAMERA

62. COORDINATORS' MEETING



Meeting held in Camera

WATCH LIVE

Watch the CONT committee meeting live on the [EP website](#) or on [Europarl TV](#)

PAPERLESS PROGRAMME (INTERNAL USERS ONLY)

Access CONT committee meeting documents on [eMeeting](#) or any CONT committee information on [eCommittee](#)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the [CONT Secretariat](#) or visit the [website](#) of the CONT committee