



**2017/2143(DEC)**

29.1.2018

## **DRAFT REPORT**

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the  
European Union for the financial year 2016, Section VIII – European  
Ombudsman  
(2017/2143(DEC))

Committee on Budgetary Control

Rapporteur: Marco Valli

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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 2016, Section VIII – European Ombudsman (2017/2143(DEC))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2016 (COM(2017)0365 – C8-0254/2017)<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the Court of Auditors' annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2016, 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 2016, 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 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>5</sup>, and in particular Articles 55, 99, 164, 165 and 166 thereof,
  - having regard to Rule 94 of and Annex IV to its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A8-0000/2018),
1. Grants the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2016; / Postpones its decision on granting the European Ombudsman discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2016;
  2. Sets out its observations in the resolution below;
  3. Instructs its President to forward this decision and the resolution forming an integral part of it to the European Ombudsman, the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the Court of Auditors, the European Data Protection Supervisor and the European External Action Service, and to

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 48, 24.2.2016.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 323, 28.9.2017, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 322, 28.9.2017, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 322, 28.9.2017, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

arrange for their publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

## 2. MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, Section VIII – European Ombudsman (2017/2143(DEC))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, Section VIII – European Ombudsman,
  - having regard to Rule 94 of and Annex IV to its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A8-0000/2018),
1. Notes that in its 2016 annual report, the Court of Auditors observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified with respect to the audited topics related to human resources and procurement for the European Ombudsman (the “Ombudsman”);
  2. Notes 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 2016 for administrative expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error;
  3. Stresses that the Ombudsman's budget is purely administrative and amounted in 2016 to EUR 10 658 951 (EUR 10 346 105 in 2015);
  4. Notes that of the total appropriations, 95,40% were committed (92,32% in 2015) and 85,89% paid (86,19% in 2015), with a utilisation rate of 95,40% (92,32% in 2015); notes the increase in the utilisation rate;
  5. Welcomes the decision to reduce communication and translation costs linked to the production of publications without undermining their quality; notes that the length of the documents was reduced, and is therefore interested to know if the information now excluded from the publications is nevertheless accessible on demand;
  6. Notes that the organisation chart of the Ombudsman has been clarified and is available in its website;
  7. Stresses the fact that critical remarks the Ombudsman addressed to the different institutions in 2015 had a quite low rate of satisfactory follow-up (41%); recommends that, after identifying the reasons for that low rate, the Ombudsman analyse possible solutions to overcome the institutions’ resistance to acting on those remarks;
  8. Underlines the importance of making Union citizens aware of the possibility to turn to the Ombudsman in case of maladministration; reiterates its call for closer cooperation between the Ombudsman and the Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control in its strategic work concerning its inquiries and initiatives;
  9. Notes that some of the targets set by the Ombudsman to assess its performance through

key performance indicators were not reached<sup>1</sup>; asks the Ombudsman to identify the measures taken to enhance its results;

10. Welcomes the gender balance at management level and within the administrators; encourages the Ombudsman to maintain this trend and to do the necessary to improve the still considerable geographic imbalance;
11. Observes the Ombudsman's plan to comply with the interinstitutional agreement to reduce staff by 5% over the period of five years; asks to be informed how this reduction can be reconciled with the recruitment of new staff in 2016;
12. Regrets that there is still one ongoing complaint made to the European Data Protection Supervisor concerning the Ombudsman in 2016; asks for details of the complaints to be provided to the Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control;
13. Welcomes the inclusion of human resources and professional training charts in the Ombudsman's annual activity report for 2016;
14. Notes the lack of data from 2016 in different sections of the Ombudsman's annual activity report for 2016; urges the Ombudsman to provide the follow up to the 2015 discharge, in compliance with Article 166 of the Financial Regulation.

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<sup>1</sup> The impact of compliance; the visibility through visits to the website and use of the interactive guide to contact a member of the ENO; and the proportion of cases in which the admissibility decision is taken in one month - did not reach the target objective established by the Ombudsman.