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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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#### **Discharge 2013: EU general budget - European Parliament**

##### **1. European Parliament decision of 29 April 2015 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament (2014/2078(DEC))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2013 (COM(2014)0510 – C8-0147/2014)<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the report on budgetary and financial management for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Internal Auditor's annual report for the financial year 2013,
- having regard to the Court of Auditors' annual report on the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2013, together with the institutions' replies<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the statement of assurance<sup>5</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 2013, pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 314(10) and Article 318 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>6</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 66, 8.3.2013.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 403, 13.11.2014, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 201, 30.6.2014, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 398, 12.11.2014, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 403, 13.11.2014, p. 128.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.

- 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>1</sup>, and in particular Articles 164, 165 and 166 thereof,
  - having regard to the Bureau decision of 27 April 2005 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the European Parliament's budget<sup>2</sup>, and in particular Article 13 thereof,
  - having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2012 on the guidelines for the 2013 budget procedure – Sections I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, and X<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 29 March 2012 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2013<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 94 and Rule 98(3) of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A8-0082/2015),
- A. whereas the President adopted Parliament's accounts for the financial year 2013 on 25 June 2014;
  - B. whereas the Secretary-General, as principal authorising officer by delegation, certified, on 6 November 2014, his reasonable assurance that the resources assigned for the Parliament's budget have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management;
  - C. whereas the audit of the Court of Auditors stated that, as regards administrative expenditure in 2013, all the institutions satisfactorily operated the supervisory and control systems required by Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012;
  - D. whereas Article 166(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 requires each Union institution to take all appropriate steps to act on the observations accompanying the Parliament's discharge decision;
1. Grants its President discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Parliament for the financial year 2013;
  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 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 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> PE 349.540/Bur/ann/fin.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 249 E, 30.8.2013, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 257 E, 6.9.2013, p. 104.

**2. European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2015 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 2013, Section I – European Parliament (2014/2078(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 2013, Section I – European Parliament,
  - having regard to the Decision of the European Ombudsman of 26 February 2015 closing her own-initiative inquiry OI/1/2014/PMC concerning whistleblowing,
  - having regard to Rule 94 and Rule 98(3) of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A8-0082/2015),
- A. whereas in his certification of the final accounts, Parliament's accounting officer stated his reasonable assurance that the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of Parliament in all material respects and that no issues requiring a reservation have been brought to his attention;
- B. whereas, through its audit, the Court of Auditors concluded that the audit did not identify any serious weaknesses in respect of the topics audited for Parliament and the supervisory and control systems, as regards administrative expenditure in 2013, were assessed as effective;
- C. whereas, in accordance with the usual procedure, a questionnaire was sent to the Parliament administration and the majority of replies were discussed by the Committee on Budgetary Control, in the presence of the Vice-Presidents responsible for budget, the Secretary-General and the Internal Auditor; whereas for the first time, a series of questions from Members did not receive any reply, either in writing or orally, thus preventing Parliament from having the relevant information and being able to make an informed decision as to certain important aspects relating to the discharge of Parliament;
- D. whereas scrutiny is necessary to ensure that Parliament's administration and political leadership is held accountable to Union citizens; whereas there is permanent scope for improvement in terms of quality, efficiency, and effectiveness in the management of public finances;
- E. Whereas the Court of Auditors' report adopted on 11 July 2014 states that the potential savings for the Union budget would be about EUR 114 million a year if Parliament centralised its activities;
- F. Whereas Parliament is the only institution among all the Institutions to grant discharge not to the Secretary-General or to a Vice-President in charge but rather to its President;

*The European Parliament's accounts*

1. Notes that Parliament's final appropriations for 2013 totalled EUR 1 750 463 939, or 19,07 % of heading V of the Multiannual Financial Framework set aside for the 2013 administrative expenditure of the Union institutions as a whole representing a 1,9 % increase over the 2012 budget (EUR 1 717 868 121);
2. Notes that total revenue entered in the accounts as at 31 December 2013 was EUR 158 117 371 (2012: EUR 175 541 860), including EUR 25 991 783 in assigned revenue (2012: EUR 22 274 843);
3. Takes note that four chapters accounted for 70 % of total of the commitments: Chapter 10 (Members of the institution), Chapter 12 (Officials and temporary staff), Chapter 20 (Buildings and associated costs) and Chapter 42 (Expenditure relating to parliamentary assistance);
4. Takes note of the figures on the basis of which Parliament's accounts for the financial year 2013 were closed, namely:

<b>(a) Available appropriations (EUR)</b>	
appropriations for 2013:	1 750 463 939
non-automatic carry-overs from financial year 2012:	0
automatic carry-overs from financial year 2012:	305 457 875
appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue for 2013:	25 991 783
carry-overs corresponding to assigned revenue from 2012:	106 900 532
Total:	2 188 814 129
<b>(b) Utilisation of appropriations in the financial year 2013 (EUR)</b>	
commitments:	2 162 476 429
payments made:	1 769 756 705
appropriations carried forward automatically including those arising from assigned revenue:	384 709 057
appropriations carried forward non-automatically:	734 000
appropriations cancelled:	33 114 755
<b>(c) Budgetary receipts (EUR)</b>	
received in 2013:	158 117 371
<b>(d) Total balance sheet at 31 December 2013 (EUR)</b>	<b>1 573 957 198</b>

5. Notes that in 2013, 99,02 % of the appropriations entered in Parliament's budget were committed with a cancellation rate of 0,8 % and that, as in previous years, a very high level of budget implementation was achieved;
6. Points out, however, that such a high percentage figure in budget execution does not reveal if it contains transfers for the purpose of transferring any appropriations available at year-end to the budget lines for buildings and, in particular, for advance capital payments to reduce future interest payments; requests to therefore receive the budget execution figure prior to the start of the "mopping-up" procedure;
7. Notes in this context that EUR 54 000 000 was transferred from provisional appropriation headings and from other sources so as to help fund the extension and modernisation of the Konrad Adenauer Building (KAD), which is the main construction project in Luxembourg;
8. Understands that this will result in an estimated EUR 18 100 000 reduction on financing charges over the construction and loan amortisation period; reminds its competent bodies however that pre financing or repayments on buildings should be set as part of

the budgetary strategy; calls on its competent bodies to therefore budget Parliament's property policy for future acquisitions with sufficient clarity;

9. Reminds its administration that Parliament has repeatedly called for its property policy to be properly budgetised; expects this to happen by the 2016 budget year;
10. Criticises the ever increasing level of carry-overs into 2013 of EUR 305 457 875 (2012: EUR 222 900 384);

***Court of Auditors' opinions on the reliability of the 2013 accounts and on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts***

11. Commends the fact that the audit did not identify any serious weaknesses in respect of the topics audited for Parliament;
12. Recalls that the Court of Auditors performs a specific assessment of administrative and other expenditure as a single policy group for all the Union institutions;
13. Takes note that the Court of Auditors found that the testing of transactions indicates that the most likely error present in that policy group population is 1 % and therefore not affected by a material level of error and that the supervisory and control systems were assessed as effective;
14. Notes that the audit involved an examination of a sample of 153 payment transactions, namely 95 for staff related expenditure, 17 for buildings expenditure and 41 for other expenditure; emphasises that administrative and other expenditure is considered as a low-risk area and calls on the Court of Auditors to concentrate further its analysis on the areas more prone to errors, namely non-compliance with the procedures for procurement, buildings related expenditure and the implementation of contracts;
15. Recalls that substantial savings could be made by having a single Parliament seat;

***The Internal Auditor's annual report***

16. Notes that at the competent committee's meeting with the Internal Auditor held on 26 January 2015, the Internal Auditor presented his annual report signed 23 July 2014, stating that in 2013, he performed the following audit work on Parliament's administration:
  - a consulting assignment on Representation & Entertainment Expenses of Parliamentary Committees & Interparliamentary Delegations;
  - a transversal follow-up of open actions from Internal Audit Reports - Phases I and II of 2013;
  - an audit of the external expertise acquired for STOA (Science and Technology Options Assessment);
  - a periodic review of the Konrad Adenauer (KAD) building project - Phase 1: Project governance and management systems;
  - a review of the project for the new Financial Management System (FMS) - Phase 1: Project scope, governance, resources & risk management;

- an audit of the external expertise acquired for the Directorate-General for External Policies;
  - an audit of Information Offices and of the imprest expenditure settlement ("regularisation") process;
17. Emphasises in the Audit Review of the Konrad Adenauer ("KAD") Building Project that:
- the continued efficiency and effectiveness of the partnership with the Luxembourg authorities for the entire duration of the project be ensured;
  - adequate staffing of the KAD project team for the entire duration of the project be ensured;
  - the financial management and control procedures that apply to the implementation of the lease agreement concluded with the property company "SI KAD PE" be further defined and clarified;
18. Calls for a short summary (three pages) of the main criticisms contained in the Internal Audit Service's annual report to be drawn up by 20 May 2015;

*Audit of the Parliament's Internal Control Framework*

19. Notes that at the end of 2013, after successive follow-up audits, 13 actions still remained incomplete out of the 452 internal control framework actions initially agreed; takes note of the progress made on four of those 13 actions that enabled to reassess the residual risk from 'significant' to 'moderate';
20. Urges the departmental and central management to implement the remaining 'open actions' without further delay; calls on them to adhere to stricter timetables on actions to be implemented; calls on the Internal Auditor to keep the Committee on Budgetary Control informed on the progress achieved on those actions; calls on them to also quantify the costs and savings of the new measures proposed in this resolution and to include them in the monitoring of the 2013 discharge;

***Follow-up to the 2012 discharge resolution***

21. Takes note of the written answers to the 2012 discharge resolution provided to the Committee on Budgetary Control on 28 October 2014 and of the presentation by the Secretary-General to the various questions and requests of Parliament's 2012 discharge resolution and the exchange of views with Members that followed; regrets that some of Parliament's recommendations did not receive the appropriate follow-up;
22. Takes note that after five years of implementation of the new Statute for parliamentary assistants, the evaluation should have been submitted by the end of 2014 as the Secretary-General had agreed to do in his oral replies and in writing concerning the follow-up to Parliament's recommendations for the 2012 discharge; calls for the evaluation to be carried out in association with the representatives of accredited parliamentary assistants (APAs) of the previous parliamentary term who are still working in Parliament, calls for it to be submitted by 30 June 2015 and calls for the Committee on Budgetary Control to be informed of its results; points out that as of 31

December 2013, there were 1763 accredited parliamentary assistants employed within Parliament;

23. Notes that the catering service registered a deficit of EUR 3 500 000 at the end of 2013; is surprised that an increase of customers by around 150% during the period 2002 to 2011 didn't provide the opportunity for a balanced financial situation; reiterates its request, in light of the second revision of prices (approved by the Bureau on 10 June 2013), that price policies in Parliament should not depart from practice in other institutions; points to, for instance, the different price structure in the catering services and cafeterias of the Commission; points out, furthermore, that the substantial increase in the prices of the menus offered has not been accompanied by any improvement in either quality or variety, which, on the contrary, have deteriorated considerably;
24. Wonders why there is a surcharge for the coffee provided at the entrance to some of the parliamentary committee meeting rooms, which costs 20 % more than the same product which can be obtained either from the same type of machine or in Parliament's cafeterias; points out that the service is managed by the same company that is responsible for catering which, in turn, operates the Nespresso vending machines in Parliament; deems it necessary for an explanation to be given about the additional cost of the extension of the contract between Parliament and this contractor;
25. Takes the view that particular importance should be attached to improving opportunities for access by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to all Union concessions markets; is of the view that the concession granted by Parliament to the current company responsible for catering in the Brussels headquarters is an obstacle to the freedom to provide services as it deprives other SMEs of the commercial rights and opportunities they have hitherto had very little chance to benefit from; calls for the introduction of a degree of flexibility in concession contracts to be considered to ensure that other operators have genuine, non-discriminatory access to specific services; is of the opinion that this will also foster a more optimal use of resources and will enable better quality services to be enjoyed at the best price;

#### ***Parliament's 2013 discharge***

26. Notes the exchange of views between the Vice-Presidents responsible for the budget, the Secretary-General and the Committee on Budgetary Control in the presence of the Member of the Court of Auditors and the Internal Auditor, on 26 January 2015;
27. Reaffirms once again that Parliament's governing bodies and administration are held accountable for the resources placed at Parliament's disposal throughout the discharge and that it is therefore essential for the entire decision-making procedure to take place in a completely transparent manner to ensure that Union citizens are provided with a true and accurate view of the way that Parliament takes its decisions and uses the resources placed at its disposal;
28. Criticises the fact that the Secretary-General has failed to answer a series of questions asked by Members; reiterates that the effective monitoring of the implementation of Parliament's budget has always called for and will continue to call for close cooperation between Parliament's administration and the Committee on Budgetary Control; calls, therefore, on the Secretary-General to complete the questionnaire by answering the following questions in writing:

### *Strategic Execution Framework for the European Parliament*

- (a) When presenting the Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) for the European Parliament on 3 June 2014, the Secretary-General stated that the SEF is based on an academic theory developed at the Stanford School of Engineering in Palo Alto (California). Can the Secretary-General explain how Parliament came to choose this theory as the basis for the SEF? Were other theories developed by other universities or specialist establishments, in particular in Europe, or other international institutions considered, studied and compared before Parliament opted for the Stanford theory? If so, why was the theory developed by the Stanford School of Engineering chosen? How was the decision taken, and by whom?
- (b) Can the Stanford theory be used free of charge, or is Parliament required to pay a fee of some kind? If so, what is the fee involved?
- (c) When the SEF was being developed, did Parliament staff have to undergo specific training at Stanford or any other academic institution? If so, which staff members (grades and posts) underwent training and how much did that training cost for each person? Will further training be required in the future? If so, how much will it cost?
- (d) Are there plans to hold interdepartmental discussions or discussions with the Staff Committee and trade unions about the SEF? How and when will the SEF be implemented and what is the likely cost?

### *Strategic Documents*

- (e) In recent months the Secretary-General has submitted to the Bureau a series of strategic documents on the functioning of Parliament which will have a decisive bearing not only on administrative life, but also on Parliament's approach to EU lawmaking and policies. Given these documents' importance for the organisation and future development of our work, why has no provision been made for a discussion and decision-making procedure which involves all the parties concerned, and not just Parliament's Bureau?

### *Resource Efficiency Measures Strategy*

- (f) Before the new time slots for meetings were proposed and introduced, was the impact of the changes on the organisation of Members' work assessed (restricted time slots for meetings, working meetings, meetings with organisations and members of the public, etc. outside official meetings)? Why were Members not consulted on a decision which has such a clear bearing on their work?

### *Members of the European Parliament*

- (g) Now that it has been operating for several months, how effective has the one-stop shop for the provision of parliamentary services to Members been?

### *Directorate-General for Communication*

#### *Communication strategy and preparation of the information campaign for the 2014 elections*

- (h) The European Youth Event held in May 2014 as part of that campaign brought 5000 young people to Strasbourg. When that event was being prepared, was due account



taken of the economic situation in Europe and of the way in which the expenditure involved in holding an event on such a scale might be perceived by young Europeans?

- (i) Is the concept 'ACT, REACT, IMPACT' generally considered to be a success? What are the performance indicators to measure this success? How is the concept used after the elections and was any assessment/evaluation report made after the EP legislative and value campaigns? Please provide the Committee on Budgetary Control with a copy of the evaluation.
- (j) What assessment/evaluation has been made of the multi-annual grants programme 2012-2014 aimed at raising awareness on the role of the European Parliament and can such evaluations be made available to the Committee on Budgetary Control?

*Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs)*

- (k) Has the effectiveness of the recruitment tool for APAs, APA-PEOPLE, introduced at the start of the parliamentary term already been assessed?
- (l) What was the reason for a delay of several months for some APA to be included in the relevant mailing lists of EP (Assistants 8th legislature, Bruxelles) which has impeded them from receiving information concerning their work? Have some measures been taken?

*Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics*

*Catering services*

- (m) Would like to know the reason why the prices in the SQM building are 25 % more expensive than in the ASP canteen and wonders if this may hamper the intention to drive out customers from the overcrowded ASP canteen.

*Directorate-General for Security and Safety*

- (n) Which measures have been identified to increase security after recent breaches notably on 7 October 2014 by Kurdish protesters? Will the New Global Security Concept be updated?
  - (o) Did Parliament acquire an electronic recognition system for car number plates? What was the cost? Was this system installed and used at the entrances of the garage to check if the number plate corresponds with the information on the entry badge?
29. Recommends, in the interests of the greater transparency and effectiveness of Parliament's political and administrative activities, that all Members, Parliament staff and the general public be informed, immediately and generally, of all agendas and minutes of meetings and decisions taken by Parliament's decision-making bodies; recalls the usefulness of the old Committee on the Rules of Procedure as a forum for discussing and improving, in a transparent and public manner, both the regulatory process and Parliament's internal affairs; recommends in this regard the establishment of a neutral Committee on the Rules of Procedure and Internal Affairs to enable all these matters to be dealt with and subsequently legitimised by Parliament in plenary session;

30. Is deeply worried that Parliament allocated EUR 17 800 000 to promotional activities described as institutional election campaign over the period 2013 to 2014 while turnout in the 2014 European elections declined again to 42,54 % (2009: 43 %); encourages the adoption of a new strategy aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the European elections in the Member States;
31. Emphasises that an external *ex post* evaluation report of the communication strategy for the 2014 elections is expected by June 2015; asks that the Committee on Budgetary Control be informed on the date of publication; expects a detailed analysis of the funds in the report;
32. Notes that the European Parliament Eurobarometer survey (EB/EP 82.5) shows that during the 2014 electoral campaign 23 % of the respondents had a very negative image of Parliament, while 43 % had a neutral image; points out that media analysis suggests that a negative image is often related to financial arrangements for Members such as allowances, salaries and the budget of Parliament in general; is convinced therefore that structural improvements, for example full transparency and the accounting of the general expenditure allowance, are needed to improve trust and support for Parliament;
33. Notes the establishment of the new Directorate-General for European Parliamentary Research which will provide independent academic advice, principally to individual Members, thereby supplementing the work of the policy departments which cater for the needs of parliamentary bodies;
34. Welcomes the setting-up of a unit to assess the impact of Union legislation; calls for this service to focus on the compromises negotiated by Parliament and Parliament's amendments to Commission proposals; calls for an approach to be developed to the prompt assessment of legislation and its impact, for the profile of the service to be raised among Members and for a breakdown of the overall costs to be provided by 30 October 2015; urges this service to hold regular exchanges of views with the corresponding services in the Commission, the Council and the national parliaments;
35. Notes the cooperation agreement between the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and Parliament, which was finally signed on 5 February 2014 and which began with a transfer of important staff from both committees to the new European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS); is of the opinion that effective interinstitutional cooperation should be improved and believes that pooling expertise and purchasing power in areas where the institutions require assistance of a similar nature should improve delivery and may reduce overall costs; hopes that the development of this agreement between the three institutions will achieve these objectives, be balanced and be of equal benefit to the three institutions; calls on each of these institutions, once this collaboration has been implemented for a year, to conduct an individual assessment of the impact of this agreement from the point of view of human resources, expenditure, synergies, added value and substance;
36. Takes note of the creation of Directorate-General for Security and Safety; recalls that the internalisation of Parliament's security services has generated savings of EUR 195 000 in 2013 and is projected to produce savings of more than EUR 11 million over the period 2013-2016; considers it appropriate to negotiate with the Belgian Government a greater contribution on its part to Parliament's security of, given that Belgium benefits economically from the presence of the Union institutions on its territory; calls for an evaluation of the quality of the security service before and after the creation of the

Directorate-General for Security and Safety to be submitted to the Committee on Budgetary Control by 30 September 2015; insists that a comparative study of the security systems of other institutions be carried out;

37. Reiterates that maintaining the security of Parliament's buildings and their immediate surroundings must be given the highest priority; requests that as a part of this work, security in the car parks should be improved;
38. Is concerned about the lack of parity in the administration, whereby women accounted for 29 % of heads of unit, 34 % of directors and 33 % of Directors-General as of 31 December 2013; calls for the implementation of an equal opportunities plan, especially with regard to management positions, in order to remedy this imbalance as soon as possible;
39. Calls for a balance as regards the country of origin to be sought among senior officials of Parliament's administration; expects a report setting out the progress made towards achieving this objective to be drawn up by the end of 2015;
40. Asks to be provided, by the end of 2015, with year-on-year breakdowns of trends in staffing levels and staff costs, by grade and level of management; asks Parliament's administration to state whether comparable studies of the administrations of international parliamentary assemblies could contain important lessons for Parliament's work; notes that work outsourced to specialists should also be included in the reports to promote the ethos of transparency, while also serving the best interests of constituents; notes with concern that the large number of staff based in the office of the President of the European Parliament, which amounts to 35 staff, including two drivers and a personal usher, is highly questionable and that this sets a bad example for cost reduction and fiscal responsibility within Parliament;
41. Notes that the implementing measures for the Code of Conduct for Members were adopted by the Bureau on 15 April 2013; is concerned, however, by the lack of implementation and the differences of interpretation as reported by a coalition of NGOs<sup>1</sup> and calls for a strengthening of the position of the Advisory Committee by providing it with a right of initiative to start random checks of the declarations of interests provided by Members;
42. Welcomes the fact that Members must be more transparent about the on-the-side activities they do while in public office; recalls, however, that Members, similar to Members of national parliaments, do not have an exclusive mandate and may therefore exercise other professional activities; is of the opinion that a more detailed declaration template for Members would help to increase transparency and avoid potential conflicts of interests; requests the Secretary-General to set up a public database, to be accessible through the Parliament's website, of all the on-the-side activities of individual Members;
43. Stresses the need for greater transparency as regards the general spending allowances for Members; calls on the Bureau to work on the definition of more precise rules regarding the accountability of expenditures authorised under this allowance, without causing additional costs to Parliament;

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<sup>1</sup> ALTER-EU: Mind the Gap (<http://www.alter-eu.org/sites/default/files/documents/Mind%20the%20Gap%20briefing.pdf>)

44. Is concerned with the lack of *ex post* verification of the use of service cars by Members and questions the availability of two service cars for the President of Parliament;
45. Endorses the fact that the 5 % cut in Members' travel expenses and staff mission expenses produced savings of EUR 4 million in 2013; considers it advisable to pursue a stringent policy to reduce travel expenses through negotiated agreements with airlines; calls on the Secretary-General to submit proposals to that effect;

#### ***Management of the subsidy scheme for visitors' groups***

46. Is deeply worried that the Court of Auditors reported in its landscape review of the financial management of the Union budget the practice of making cash payments for the reimbursement of costs to visitor groups as a “high risk concern”; stresses that 73 % of the subsidies were paid in cash and only 27 % were paid by bank transfer in 2013; is concerned about the high reputational risk for Parliament and the significant security risk entailed in making cash payments to visitor groups;
47. Underlines the need and value of informing visitor groups, prior to their visit, of sustainable means of transport to Parliament; recommends the introduction of different rates of reimbursement according to the means of transport chosen and the level of emissions;
48. Stresses that Parliament and the Council, in order to create long term savings in the Union budget, must address the need for a roadmap to a single seat, as stated by Parliament in several previous resolutions;

#### ***Directorate-General for Internal Policies and Directorate-General for External Policies***

49. Points to the costs of delegations, joint parliamentary assemblies, ad hoc delegations and election observation missions outside the Union in 2013, which amounted to some EUR 5 794 360; calls for a breakdown of costs in these areas for the period from 2005 to 2015 to be drawn up by the end of 2015;
50. Notes with concern that the cost of one parliamentary assembly delegation amounted to EUR 493 193; invites the Bureau to develop simple but effective principles for a more economic cost structure for delegation visits, in particular taking account of their political importance, duration and results;

#### ***Interparliamentary delegations***

51. Takes the view that it is a matter of importance and urgency to develop and increase the substance of the websites of the interparliamentary delegations; considers it also vital that budget permitting, public meetings of the delegations should be broadcast live via webstreaming, as parliamentary committee meetings are;

#### ***Directorate-General for Communication***

52. Deplores the fact that the multiannual grants programme 2012 to 2014, aimed at raising awareness on Parliament's role, cost some EUR 14 500 000; expresses doubts as to whether that grants programme represents Parliament's core competences and the tasks which stem from its legislative, budgetary and discharge prerogatives; calls on its administration to provide the Committee on Budgetary Control with an external evaluation of this grant programme in time for the 2014 discharge procedure;

53. Asks to be provided with a full breakdown of all the grants for communication projects funded from Parliament's budget, including the amounts involved and the recipients;
54. Asks to be provided with a breakdown of expenditure, if any, from Parliament's budget on the organisations MEP Ranking and Vote Watch Europe; criticises the fact that these organisations assess Members' work on the basis of quantitative criteria, which may provide the wrong kind of incentives and generate unnecessary work; takes the view that Members are facing increasing levels of red tape and ever tighter restrictions on their freedom to perform their duties;

#### *EuroparlTV*

55. Recalls that the budget for the EuroparlTV was EUR 8 000 000 in 2013 and EUR 5 000 000 in 2014 and appreciates that the performance of the service has been improved with a number of new activities and projects; notes that between 2012 and 2014 the average monthly number of videos watched has gone up from 53 000 to 400 000;
56. Recalls that following the decision of the Bureau on 12 December 2012, an external study was launched in 2014 to give input on future developments of Parliament's web-video service (EuroparlTV); notes that the recommendations of this study are to be implemented during the first half of 2015;

#### *LUX Prize*

57. Takes note that the expenditure on the LUX Prize in 2013 amounted to EUR 448 000 in line with the 2012 costs (EUR 434 421) and covered:
  - the procedure related to the official selection and competition;
  - communication in Brussels and Strasbourg;
  - targeting Members and specialised media partners, as well as the general public;
  - costs of subtitling into 24 official languages;
  - creation of the adapted version of the winning film for hearing or visually impaired;
  - Parliament's involvement in major European film events in order to promote the Lux Prize;
58. Calls for efficiencies to be found in its budget;
59. Calls for a representative survey of Members to be conducted by the end of 2015 to determine whether the LUX Prize is well known and how, if at all, it is viewed in their respective Member States;

#### *Information Offices*

60. Notes with concern that the mission expenses of the Information Offices amounted to EUR 1 839 696 in 2013, with missions to Strasbourg accounting for EUR 1 090 290; regrets that the cost of missions from the Information Offices to Strasbourg increased by

around 7 % from 2012, with a further 2 % increase being due to the creation of the new Information Office in Croatia; asks to be provided with details of the main reasons why Information Office staff undertook missions to Strasbourg and Brussels; asks to be provided with a breakdown of the missions undertaken by the staff of each Information Office in 2005, 2010 and 2015, so that comparisons can be drawn up; insists that priority should be given to the use of videoconferences, making both structural cost reductions to the Parliament's budget and environmental improvements, which do not detract from Parliament's work;

61. Points out that the websites of several Information Offices in the Member States have not been updated since the elections; draws attention to the implications this could have for Parliament's credibility with the general public; insists that an investigation be carried out on the use of funds allocated to the Information Offices, with an explanation of the significant variation in internet connection costs between the different Member States;

### ***Parliament logo***

62. Notes that the European Parliament logo was changed; expresses disapproval that yet again, it was not informed of a decision in a timely manner; calls on the services responsible to explain why they implemented this change, what the decision-making process was and what the costs of this change were;
63. Calls for a detailed overview of all external and internal Parliament related costs for the European House of History, separated according to planning costs (including preliminary planning), investment costs and running costs (including construction and maintenance reserve, personal expenditure, exhibition costs); notes that the Commission supports the funding of the European House of History with an annual allocation of EUR 800 000; points out the European House of History will have positive effects not only for the Union institutions but also for the Belgian state, in the form of a new, income-generating tourist attraction; recommends, therefore, that the Belgian state be asked to support the establishment of the European House of History;

### ***Directorate-General for Personnel***

64. Takes note that Parliament's officials (permanent civil servants) can, in principle, only be recruited through public competitions whereby approximately 10 % of candidates are successful at the average age of 34 years old; is concerned that despite the fact that youth employment is a top priority for the Union, the Union institutions, including Parliament, have absolutely no policy to boost employment for young people under the age of 30;
65. Points to the difficulties in recruiting officials or agents from certain Member States in particular; notes that the current salary scales and entry level conditions offered by the institutions are less attractive to new staff; points out that they offer neither competitive salaries nor attractive career prospects to many EU-15 Member States' citizens, especially those nationals now reaching retirement age; points out that the inevitable shrinkage of the European public administration will, in the immediate future, adversely affect the quality of service provided and lead to the risk of an increased geographical imbalance;

66. Requests the examination of activities organised and financed by the Staff Committee, detailing the types of activity, the expenses incurred and compliance with sound financial management;
67. Asks DG Personnel and the responsible services to actively promote women for high level positions in Parliament or "to assess the reasons" for the lack of parity and to subsequently propose measures to facilitate women's integration in high-level positions in the Parliament's administration;
68. Notes the high cost of "away days" and similar events for the staff in the year 2013 (EUR 140 730 for eight events); considers that at a time of crisis and budgetary cuts in general, the cost of "away days" for staff at the Union institutions must be proportionate and that they should, where possible, be confined to the institutions' own premises, given that the added value derived from them does not justify such high costs;

### *Parliamentary assistants*

69. Voices its support for the measures taken to organise the management of the termination of the contracts of some 1 700 APAs in preparation for the end of the seventh parliamentary term and the beginning of the eighth parliamentary term, and in particular the implementation of APA-People; considers, however, that more administrative staff should have been assigned to APA recruitment in certain areas to ensure greater speed and efficiency; points out that staffing and technical resources were insufficient to avoid delays in the signing of contracts of assistants, interruption of contracts, and delays in the payment of expenses, allowances and hence salaries; acknowledges, nevertheless, that the process has improved significantly compared to 2009, while also noting that Parliament must persevere in its efforts to improve the speed and efficiency of its recruitment procedures; is concerned that no solution has been found for APAs whose rights have been undermined following the shortening of their contracts by at least one month as a result of early elections to Parliament; stresses the need to bring legislation regarding pension eligibility periods into line with the changes affecting the real parliamentary term;
70. Regrets that the 2013 Parliament social report - like its predecessors - contains scarcely any information regarding APAs, although they make up 29,4 % of Parliament's staff; calls for the matter to be rectified, given the fundamental importance of this document in improving its staff management;
71. Regrets the Civil Service Tribunal Judgment of 12 December 2013 in Case F-129/12 and deeply regrets the fact that Parliament was condemned for being unable to help APAs in cases of harassment and irregular layoffs; notes the Bureau decision of 14 April 2014 setting up the Advisory Committee for the prevention of mobbing at the workplace, so as to avoid APAs being exposed to this; is concerned, however, about the imbalance in the composition of this committee, which is composed of three Quaestors, one representative of the administration and one APA representative; notes that up to November 2014 at least, in three cases before the committee 'the Quaestors ruled that there were no grounds for further action' ; calls on the Bureau therefore to review its decision regarding the composition of the committee so as to ensure more balanced representation with at least two APA committee members;
72. Notes with concern the high dropout rate among APAs in language courses, amounting to 32 % compared to 8 % for other staff; calls for a change to be made to the curriculum

- of language courses to ensure that they are tailored more closely to the specific working conditions of APAs;
73. Calls for an investigation of the possible reasons for the wide disparity between APAs and other staff regarding the taking of sick leave;
  74. Points out that subsistence allowances received by APAs travelling to Strasbourg are 30-45 % less than those of other staff; points out also that APAs themselves are reimbursed under a three-tier system, which means that, in certain cases, no mission expenses may actually be payable for travel to Strasbourg; calls on the Bureau to take the necessary measures to remedy this inequality and bring APA entitlements in this respect into line with those of other staff;
  75. Expresses concern that the number of local assistants employed per Member varied greatly between zero and 43 in 2013; asks for an investigation to assess whether the recruitment procedures have been followed in cases with high numbers of local assistants and assess the reasons for such high numbers; requests an evaluation of recruitment procedures of local assistants and proposals to streamline this in order to avoid excessive numbers of local assistants per Member; calls for increased transparency with regard to the employment of local assistants and service providers; calls for a list of the names of all service providers employed by Members to be published on the internet;
  76. Draws attention to the fact that Article 43(d) of the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members adopted in July 2008 excludes the possibility for Members to employ their spouses or stable non-marital partners or their parents, children, brothers or sisters as assistants;
  77. Is concerned by the delayed adoption of the internal whistleblowing rules; calls for the implementation of these rules without further delay;

### ***Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics***

#### *Parliament's buildings policy*

78. Takes note that in its three places of work, Parliament occupies 1,1 million m<sup>2</sup> and owns 81 % of this surface area; deems it of the utmost importance to establish proper measures to ensure the sustainability of Parliament's buildings against increased maintenance costs;
79. Calls for a cooperation agreement between Parliament and the Commission on the joint management of Europe Houses with the aim, on the one hand, of setting out a framework for multiannual planning property surveys with a view to purchasing or leasing property and, on the other hand, of simplifying the administrative and financial procedures for the day-to-day management;
80. Takes note that since July 2013, the Europe House in Sofia has been fully operational; notes that the defects and non-compliances of the building structure were charged to the seller before the signature of the deed of purchase;

### ***Directorate-General for Interpretation and Conferences and Directorate-General for Translation***



81. Notes with satisfaction that the implementation of the Bureau decision on a resource efficient multilingualism produced in 2013 savings of EUR 15 million and EUR 10 million in the interpretation and in the translation services respectively, without affecting the principle of multilingualism or impairing the quality of parliamentary work; reiterates that interinstitutional cooperation is essential in order to exchange best practices that promote effectiveness and allow for savings to be made;

### ***Directorate-General for Finance***

#### *Voluntary Pension Fund*

82. Notes that the Voluntary Pension Fund increased its estimated actuarial deficit, calculated on the basis of the assets of the Fund, to EUR 197, 5 million at the end of 2013; emphasises that these projected future liabilities are spread over several decades;
83. Notes that it is ultimately impossible to judge whether the Fund is being run efficiently and properly, and urges the carrying out of an external assessment;
84. Notes, nevertheless, that this raises concerns about the possible exhaustion of the Fund and that Parliament is guaranteeing the payment of pension rights when and if this fund is not able to meet its obligations;
85. Takes note that the Court of Justice ruled in 2013 that the decision to increase the age of retirement for Fund subscribers from 60 to 63 years in order to avoid the early exhaustion of the capital and to align it with the new Statute for Members of Parliament were valid;

### ***Services provided for Members***

86. Calls for the names of the service providers and the services provided to the Member to be made accessible to the public on the homepage of the Members of Parliament, next to the data on the APAs and the local assistants;

### ***Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological support***

87. Takes note of the process of the internalisation of staff in the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support and the promised reduction of costs and the increased level of expertise among the staff in the IT area; recalls that the increased level of expertise concerning permanent innovations was also the reason given to externalise this sector several years ago; calls on the Secretary-General to cooperate with the European Personnel Selection Office to find ways how to accelerate the recruitment procedure and to attract the best experts in the area of IT technologies and security;
88. Recalls that the personal and confidential individual mail-boxes of selected Members, parliamentary assistants and officials were compromised after Parliament had been subject to a man-in-the-middle attack where a hacker captured the communication between private smartphones and the public Wi-Fi of Parliament;
89. Notes that an independent third party ICT security audit was carried out on all parliamentary ICT and telecommunications systems with a view to completing a clear roadmap towards a more robust ICT security policy in 2015; points out the ICT security audit was due in December 2014; reiterates that in light of the recent elevated security

threat, this should be a priority, asks that its Committee on Budgetary Control to be informed on the results as soon as the report has been finalised;

90. Takes note of the immediate and medium-term measures adopted by the Bureau on 9 December 2013 in order to enhance Parliament's security rules for the use of mobile equipment;
91. Insists that Parliament collaborates further with the Commission's Directorate-General for Informatics to identify suitable replacements for old ICT tools and infrastructures that go in the direction of open, interoperable and non-vendor dependent solutions with a view to getting a cost efficient, high quality IT environment for Parliament;
92. Welcomes the launch some years ago of the very useful and successful at4am application for tabling amendments; considers it necessary to improve and update it, particularly with regard to such useful functions as self-correction and back-up;
93. Calls, for the sake of transparency and equality regarding document availability, for all Members, and not only full or substitute committee members, to be given access through ePetition to all petitions submitted by citizens to its Committee on Petitions;

#### ***Environment-friendly Parliament***

94. Is aware of Parliament's 'New World of Work' concept, the EMAS accreditation and process and the paperless programme including e-Committee and e-Meeting applications; calls for enhancement of this programme with available applications for smartphones and tablets;
95. Draws attention to the fact that teleconferences and teleworking may contribute to a more efficient use of time and a more environmentally-friendly Parliament, reducing the administrative and travelling costs;
96. Takes note that greenhouse gas emissions from Parliament's staff travel between Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg have dropped by 34 % in 2012 compared to 2006; calls on the Bureau to ensure complete transparency and to also account for emissions caused by Members travelling from their home countries to Brussels and Strasbourg; welcomes measures to offset those emissions that cannot be reduced and are unavoidable; recommends further offsetting policies to be implemented with projects according to the UN recognised Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) 'Gold Standard';
97. Calls on the Secretary-General to design a plan to reduce the number of trunks available for parliamentary travels; suggests that smaller trunks be used or a shared system be implemented, thus reducing its cost in financial and carbon footprint terms;
98. Calls on the responsible services to develop a sustainable and coherent concept to fully use budget line 239 for CO<sub>2</sub> offsetting up to the maximum amount, in order to offset unavoidable CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the institution with projects according to the UN recognised CDM 'Gold Standard';
99. Calls for the air-conditioning system to focus on energy efficiency in order to ensure it has the lowest possible environmental impact;

#### ***Annual report on contracts awarded***

100. Notes that of a total of 264 contracts awarded in 2013, 120 were based on open or restricted procedures, with a value of EUR 465 million, and 144 on negotiated procedures, with a total value of EUR 152 million; takes note that although the total number of contracts awarded by negotiated procedures was 37 % lower in 2013 (144, as against 241 in 2012) there has been no particularly significant change in terms of value of negotiated procedures;
101. Highlights in this context the need to implement the concept of Green Public Procurement for all contracts and call for tenders; calls for escalating and ambitious binding targets for green contracts, notably in the areas of food and catering, vehicles and transport, sanitary and water equipment, paper, waste management, IT and imaging equipment, lighting, cleaning, and furniture;
102. Notes that the majority of the contracts awarded in 2013 were service contracts (61 %) with a total value of EUR 374 million and that three Directorates-General awarded 14 contracts with a value of more than EUR 10 million; stresses the need to ensure that those high value contracts should be specially subject to adequate control systems that monitor continuously the execution of orders;
103. Notes the breakdown of contracts awarded in 2013 and 2012 by type of contract used as follows:

Type of contract	2013		2012	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Services	189	72 %	242	70 %
Supplies	48	18 %	62	18 %
Works	19	7 %	36	12 %
Building	8	3 %	4	1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Type of contract	2013		2012	
	Value (EUR)	Percentage	Value (EUR)	Percentage
Services	374 147 951	61 %	493 930 204	57 %
Supplies	91 377 603	15 %	145 592 868	17 %
Works	15 512 763	2 %	48 386 872	5 %
Building	136 289 339	22 %	180 358 035	21 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>617 327 656</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>868 267 979</b>	<b>100 %</b>

(Annual report on the contracts awarded by the European Parliament, 2013, p.7)

104. Notes the breakdown of contracts awarded in 2013 and 2012 by type of procedure used as follows:

Type of procedure	2013		2012	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage

Open	106	40 %	98	28 %
Restricted	14	5 %	5	2 %
Negotiated	144	55 %	241	70 %
Competition	-	-	-	0 %
Exception	-	-	-	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Type of procedure	2013		2012	
	Value (EUR)	Percentage	Value (EUR)	Percentage
Open	382 045 667	62 %	381 116 879	44 %
Restricted	83 288 252	13 %	245 156 318	28 %
Negotiated	151 993 737	25 %	241 994 782	28 %
Competition	-	-	-	0 %
Exception	-	-	-	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>724 297 066</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>603 218 807</b>	<b>100 %</b>

(Annual report on the contracts awarded by the European Parliament, 2013, p.9)

#### *Exceptional negotiated procedures*

105. Takes note that exceptional negotiated procedures accounted for 39 % of the negotiated procedures launched in 2013; is concerned that Parliament made use of the exceptional negotiated procedure in 2013 to award 56 contracts and requests that not only the total number of contracts is indicated but also the aggregate value of those contracts;
106. Takes the view that authorising officers should offer comprehensive and transparent justifications for making use of an exceptional negotiated procedure; requests that information be compiled by the Central Financial Unit in the annual report on contracts awarded to the discharge authority;

#### *Political Groups (budget item 4 0 0)*

107. Notes that in 2013, the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 0, attributed to the political groups and non-attached Members were used as follows:

Group	2013					2012				
	Annual appropriations	Own resources and carried-over appropriations	Expenditure	Rate of use of annual appropriations	Amounts carried over to next period	Annual appropriations	Own resources and carried-over appropriations	Expenditure	Rate of use of annual appropriations	Amounts carried over to next period (2011)
EPP	21 680	4 399	18 437	85,04%	7 642	21 128	2 024	18 974	89,81 %	4 178
S&D	15 388	6 849	17 649	114,69%	4 588	14 908	6 313	14 520	97,40 %	6 702
ALDE	6 719	2 172	7 142	106,30%	1 749	6 673	2 281	6 855	102,72 %	2 100
Greens/EFA	4 366	1 787	4 778	109,44%	1 375	4 319	1 460	4 002	92,65 %	1 778
GUE/NGL	2 658	1 076	3 317	124,79%	416	2 563	1 094	2 602	101,52 %	1 055
ECR	4 046	1 602	4 598	113,64%	1 050	3 765	1 219	3 407	90,51 %	1 577
EFD	2 614	939	2 422	92,65%	1 132	2 538	881	2 494	98,29 %	925
Non-attached Members	1 316	367	931	70,74%	441	1 362	413	963	70,73 %	367
<b>Total</b>	<b>58 786</b>	<b>19 193</b>	<b>59 274</b>	<b>100,83%</b>	<b>18 394</b>	<b>57 255</b>	<b>15 687</b>	<b>53 817</b>	<b>94,00 %</b>	<b>18 680</b>
* <i>all amounts in thousands EUR</i>										

**European Political Parties and European Political Foundations**

108. Notes that in 2013 the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 2 were used as follows<sup>1</sup>:

Party	Abbreviation	Own resources*	EP grant	Total revenue	EP grant as % of eligible expenditure (max. 85 %)	Revenue surplus (transfer to reserves) or loss
European People's Party	EPP	1.439	6.464	9.729	85%	192
Party of European Socialists	PES	1.283	4.985	6.841	85%	118
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party	ALDE	518	2.232	3.009	85%	33
European Green Party	EGP	461	1.563	2.151	78%	-36
Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists	AECR	307	1.403	1.970	85%	45
Party of the European Left	EL	233	948	1.180	68%	-258
European Democratic Party	EDP/PDE	91	437	528	85%	0
EU Democrats	EUD	48	197	245	85%	12
European Free Alliance	EFA	93	439	592	85%	12
European Christian Political Movement	ECPM	61	305	366	85%	8
European Alliance for Freedom	EAF	68	384	452	85%	1
European Alliance of National Movements	AEMN	53	350	403	85%	-38
Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy	MELD	107	594	833	85%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.762</b>	<b>20.301</b>	<b>28.299</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>89</b>

(\*) all amounts in thousands EUR

<sup>1</sup> Source: PV BUR. 20.10.2014 (PE 538.295/BUR) and PV BUR. 20.10.2014 (PE 538.297/BUR) point 12.

109. Notes that in 2013 the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 3 were used as follows<sup>1</sup>:

Foundation	Abbreviation	Affiliated to party	Own resources*	EP grant	Total revenue	EP grant as % of eligible expenditure (max. 85 %)
Centre for European Studies	CES	EPP	772	3.985	4.757	85%
Foundation for European Progressive Studies	FEPS	PES	491	2.762	3.253	85%
European Liberal Forum	ELF	ALDE	214	1.108	1.322	85%
Green European Foundation	GEF	EGP	158	881	1.039	85%
Transform Europe	TE	EL	130	538	668	85%
Institute of European Democrats	IED	PDE	50	219	269	85%
Centre Maurits Coppieters	CMC	EFA	50	227	277	85%
New Direction - Foundation for European Reform	ND	AECR	183	645	828	85%
European Foundation for Freedom	EFF	EAF	39	210	249	85%
Organisation For European Interstate Cooperation	OEIC	EUD	20	123	143	85%
European Christian Political foundation	ECPF	ECPM	31	170	201	85%
Foundation for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy	FELD	MELD	60	280	340	85%
Identités & Traditions européennes	ITE	AEMN	31	177	208	85%
<b>Total</b>		-	2.229	11.325	13.554	85%
(*) all amounts in thousands EUR						

<sup>1</sup> Source: PV BUR. 20.10.2014 (PE 538.295/BUR) and PV BUR. 20.10.2014 (PE 538.297/BUR) point 12.