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DRAFT REPORT

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section I – European Parliament (2015/2155(DEC))

Committee on Budgetary Control

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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 2014, Section I – European Parliament (2015/2155(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014¹,
- having regard to the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2014 (COM(2015)0377 – C8-0200/2015)²,
- having regard to the report on budgetary and financial management for the financial year 2014, Section I – European Parliament³,
- having regard to the Internal Auditor’s annual report for the financial year 2014,
- having regard to the Court of Auditors’ annual report on the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2014, together with the institutions’ replies⁴,
- having regard to the statement of assurance⁵ 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 2014, 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 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 1605/2002⁶, 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 budget⁷, and in particular Article 13 thereof,
- having regard to the Bureau decision of 16 June 2014 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the European Parliament’s budget⁸, and in particular Article 22

¹ OJ L 51, 20.2.2014.

² OJ C 377, 13.11.2015, p. 1.

³ OJ C 247, 28.7.2015, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 373, 10.11.2015, p. 1.

⁵ OJ C 377, 13.11.2015, p. 146.

⁶ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

⁷ PE 349.540/Bur/ann/fin.

⁸ PE 422.541/Bur.

thereof,

- 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 (A8-0000/2016),
- A. whereas the President adopted Parliament's accounts for the financial year 2014 on 8 July 2015,
- B. whereas the Secretary-General, as principal authorizing officer by delegation, certified, on 18 September 2015, his reasonable assurance that the resources assigned for the Parliament's budget have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principle of sound financial management,
- C. 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 2014;
 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 and the Court of Auditors, and to 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 2014, Section I – European Parliament (2015/2155(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 2014, Section I – European Parliament,
 - 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 (A8-0000/2016),
- A. whereas in his certification of the 2014 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 significant weaknesses in the selected systems and annual activity reports of the institutions and bodies,
- C. whereas, in accordance with the usual procedure, a questionnaire was sent to the Parliament's administration and replies were received and discussed by the Committee on Budgetary Control, in the presence of the Vice-President responsible for the Budget, the Secretary-General and the Internal Auditor,
- D. whereas there is permanent scope for improvement in terms of quality, efficiency and effectiveness in the management of public finances, and scrutiny is necessary to ensure that political leadership and Parliament's administration are held accountable to Union citizens,

The European Parliament's accounts

1. Notes that Parliament's final appropriations for 2014 totaled EUR 1 755 631 742, or 20,13 % of heading V of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) set aside for the 2014 administrative expenditure of the Union institutions as a whole representing a 0,3 % increase over the 2013 budget (EUR 1 750 463 939);
2. Notes that total revenue entered in the accounts as at 31 December 2014 was EUR 174 436 852 (2013: EUR 158 117 371), including EUR 26 979 032 in assigned revenue (2013: EUR 25 991 783);
3. Recalls that four chapters accounted, in 2014, for 72 % of the 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 2014 were closed, namely:

(a) Available appropriations (EUR)	
appropriations for 2014:	1 755 631 742
non-automatic carry-overs from financial year 2013:	734 000
automatic carry-overs from financial year 2013:	277 774 604
appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue for 2014:	26 979 032
carry-overs corresponding to assigned revenue from 2013:	106 934 452
Total:	2 168 053 830
(b) Utilisation of appropriations in the financial year 2014 (EUR)	
commitments:	2 138 652 789
payments made:	1 742 390 229
appropriations carried forward automatically including those arising from assigned revenue:	383 988 975
appropriations carried forward non-automatically:	0
appropriations cancelled:	39 918 558
(c) Budgetary receipts (EUR)	
received in 2014:	174 436 852
(d) Total balance sheet at 31 December 2014 (EUR)	1 476 824 398

5. Notes that a total of EUR 71 500 000 was transferred from provisional appropriation headings and from other sources, so as to help fund the annual lease payments for the Konrad Adenauer Building in Luxembourg and its extension and modernisation;

remarks that this accounts for 4 % of the final appropriations for 2014;

Court of Auditors' opinions on the reliability of the 2014 accounts and on the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions

6. 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, including the European Parliament and that overall, audit evidence indicates that spending on administration is not affected by a material level of error; takes note that checks of transactions indicate that the estimated level of error present in heading 5 of the MFF on administration is 0,5 % (down from 1 % in 2013);
7. Recalls that the audit involved an examination of a sample of 129 payment transactions, including 92 payments of salaries and pensions, related allowances and other staff costs, 14 payments in respect of contracts related to buildings and 23 payments connected with other expenditure (energy, communication, information technology, etc.); stresses that out of the 129 transactions audited, 20 (or 15,5 %) were affected by error; takes note that for the 12 quantifiable errors, the estimated level of error is 0,5 %;
8. Takes note of the Court of Auditors' recommendation that Parliament reinforce its checks on the costs reimbursed by European political parties to their affiliated organisations and develop appropriate rules for European political parties on public procurement and monitor their application through appropriate checks and better guidance;

The internal auditor's annual report

9. Notes that at the competent committee's meeting with the internal auditor on 25 January 2016, the internal auditor presented his annual report signed 16 July 2015, stating that in 2014, he performed the following audit work on Parliament's administration:
 - a transversal follow-up of open actions from internal audit reports - phases I and II of his work in 2014;
 - a consulting assignment on internal management and control procedures in the Directorate for Democracy Support (DG EXPO);
 - a periodic review of the Konrad Adenauer building project - see "Phase 2: Estimation, reporting and control of project costs of the report";
 - an audit of Members' salaries and transitional allowances;
 - an audit of the grants process in DG Communication (DG COMM);
 - an information systems audit of IT infrastructure and operations - see "Assignment 1 - first report: Resource optimization and IT continuity";
 - an audit of implementation of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism, concerning interpretation services;

10. Emphasises that in his audit of the grants process the internal auditor concludes that there is significant scope for improving certain management and control procedures and thus providing more assurance that the grants programme achieves its objectives by:
- ensuring that the multi-annual grants programme is fully aligned with and supports the objectives of the institution's long-term communication strategy;
 - ensuring that the value added by the programme is measured by appropriate performance indicators and tools;
 - concluding agreements with a more limited number of strategic partners capable of proposing an action plan that would cover the whole period of the partnership agreement;
 - improving the evaluation of proposed projects by defining a common methodology for their assessment by all evaluation committees;
 - improving the financial and operational evaluation of completed projects at the final payment stage, namely that actions have been realised in accordance with their initial objectives;

Audit of Parliament's internal control framework

11. Notes that at the end of 2014, after substantial progress, only 4 actions remained incomplete out of the 452 internal control framework actions initially agreed; calls on the internal auditor to keep the Committee on Budgetary Control informed on the progress achieved on those remaining actions;

Follow-up to the 2013 discharge resolution

12. Takes note of the written answers to its 2013 discharge resolution for the financial year 2013¹, provided to its Committee on Budgetary Control on 15 October 2015; welcomes the presentation by the Secretary-General on the various questions and requests made by Parliament in that resolution and the exchange of views with Members that followed;
13. Notes that Parliament started applying "fixed price contracts" for catering services; points out that the budgetary means required for catering services were quite insignificant, accounting for only 0,23 % of the annual budget; expects that pricing in Parliament catering outlets will remain stable following the repeated substantial increases in the prices of the menus offered;
14. Takes note that the new contracts for catering activities in Brussels concluded in 2015 do not foresee exclusivity for one catering provider any longer; expects that the planned smaller catering outlets in Brussels will be operated, on the basis of concessions, by

¹ Resolution of the European Parliament, of 29 April 2015, with observations forming an integral part of 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 (OJ L 255, 30.9.2015, p. 3).

small and medium-sized providers;

15. Notes with concern that, as price levels have risen, this has led to unjustified disadvantageous pricing, especially for assistants, interns and visitors; stresses that the increases mean that prices in Parliament are now practically equivalent to the ones in the surrounding restaurants and bars;
16. Considers that the numerous constituency and plenary weeks represent periods during which the canteens and cafeteria facilities are not fully employed; suggests that the staff of these facilities be employed gainfully elsewhere; calls for a proposal by the administration that aligns procurement and subsidy procedures with the subsidy practices of other international organisations and national parliaments;
17. Regrets that the administration is not able to provide data on the variable number of meals served during the different parliamentary days and weeks; wonders how any control can be exerted on contract providers if basic information like this is not available; calls on the administration to make available to the Committee responsible the catering contract which came into force on 26 September 2015;

Discharge for 2014

18. Acknowledges the quality of the exchange of views between the Vice President 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 4 February 2016;
19. Takes note of the signature of the cooperation agreement with the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on 5 February 2014;
20. Recalls that Parliament will recruit a maximum of 80 members of staff who are affected by the restructuring of the committees' translation service and will work for the new European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS); expects that in-house production will increase with less budgetary means devoted to outsourcing studies, assessments or evaluations;
21. Criticises the transfer of responsibilities from the administration to the offices of Members; calls for a review by and about the administration to check which obligations (e.g. responsibility for insuring trainees) can be returned to the administration;
22. Notes that after considerable delay, internal whistleblowing rules have been adopted and are in force since January 2016; expresses concern at the protection afforded to whistleblowers and calls on Parliament to ensure that their rights are fully upheld;
23. Notes that it was difficult to differentiate fully the President's political activities from his preparation as "Spitzenkandidat" to head the Party of European Socialists in the 2014 European elections; considers that an unequivocal distinction has not been made between the two roles; calls for a clear segregation of office holders' functions and candidates for European election campaigns; regrets the at least indirect use of Parliament staff to help prepare the campaign;

24. Welcomes the delivered list of the missions undertaken by the President in the first six months of the election year in answer to the questionnaire concerning the 2014 discharge; would like to request additional information on the transportation used by the President from Brussels to these meetings and whether private flights were also chartered;
25. Notes that in the period from 22 January to 18 April, the official international missions undertaken by the President were mostly with government and official representations attached to socialist parties and organisations; calls for further information in this regard;
26. Requests further information on the reasons for the President being accompanied by officials in the final days of the election campaign; requests also concrete information on the meetings that have not been listed in the answer to question 15 of the questionnaire;
27. Recalls its discharge resolution for the financial year 2012¹, in which detailed information was called for "on how the President, as a politically neutral figure, has kept his duties in office separate from his preparations to head the Socialists and Democrats' list in the European elections, in particular with regard to the staff in his cabinet and in Parliament's information offices and to travel expenses"(par. 51);

Miscellaneous

28. Regrets that the budget line for the provision of drinking water in meeting rooms will expire in July 2016; regards the availability of mineral water during long meetings as appropriate, both in summer and winter; criticises the excessive savings in service provision (such as paper, coffee, drinking water, canteens); calls for a rethinking of the saving targets for the committee weeks of the Parliament that doesn't harm its working environment;

General expenditure allowance (GEA)

29. Recalls that the GEA is intended to cover expenditure in the Member State of election, such as a Members' office rent, equipment, supplies, documentation or logistical organisation of events; takes note that a comprehensive system of control of the Member's parliamentary mandate allowance would represent 40 to 75 new administrative posts in the area of financial management;
30. Supports the need for more transparency as regards the GEA; urges the Bureau to revise the list of expenses which may be defrayed from the GEA;

Management of the subsidy scheme for visitors' groups

¹ Resolution of the European Parliament, of 16 April 2014, with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section I — European Parliament (OJ L 266, 5.9.2014, p. 3).

31. Is deeply worried that the single critical action identified by the Parliament's internal auditor concerns a better alignment of Parliament's subsidies to visitors' groups with the real costs incurred in this regard;
32. Is concerned that the expenditure for visitor's groups in 2014 is still being paid mostly in cash: expenditure of EUR 24 593 928,16 in 2013 was paid 73,14 % in cash and 26,86 % by bank transfer, while expenditure of EUR 22 281 749,46 in 2014 was paid 71,15 % in cash and 28,85 % by bank transfer;
33. Notes the Court of Auditors' finding in its landscape review of the financial management of the Union budget that the practice of making cash payments for the reimbursement of costs to visitor groups was a "high risk concern"; demands therefore that cash payments be eliminated as far as possible when reimbursing costs to visitor groups; points out the high reputational risk for Parliament and the significant security risk entailed in making cash payments to visitor groups; acknowledges the practical concerns and calls for an evaluation of alternative and efficient methods to making cash payments before adopting new rules governing the reception of visitors' groups;

Transparency Register

34. Welcomes the revised Transparency register approved by Parliament on April 2014;
35. Calls additionally for a report by the administration on which former managers, CEOs, directors and board members in relevant European NGOs are now Members of the Parliament; calls in addition for a personal declaration from those Members stating the extent to which their current political activities have been shaped by their previous engagements and whether they still receive financial, personal and administrative support from their previous employers;
36. Calls for a report by the administration on the extent to which - besides economic panels - environmental and social associations, NGOs and interest groups organise events in Parliament; wonders if there are guidelines that exclude the disproportionate presence of such organisations in Parliament;

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

37. Welcomes the fact that the costs of delegations, joint parliamentary assemblies, *ad hoc* delegations and election observation missions outside the Union in 2014 were curbed from EUR 5 794 360 (2013) to 1 351 212 (2014) following the remarks made by Parliament in its above-mentioned discharge resolution for the financial year 2013; however, notes that some of Parliament's missions were excessively expensive, especially where distant destinations were concerned; expects those costs to be further reduced in the near future;

Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services

38. Recalls that the new Members' research service began to provide a dedicated research capability for individual Members through briefing publications across all major policy fields; points out that in its first full year of activity the research service generated over

450 publications, responded to 1 675 requests for research from Members and dealt with 745 similar requests from Parliament's other clients; notes that this facility grants access to a large amount of pertinent information that should significantly reduce recourse to external expertise, representing a considerable saving;

39. Requests clearer definition of the tasks of the various service areas (research service, impact assessment) and that these areas of responsibility be made known to Members;
40. Requests that the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value improve its visibility with respect to the excellent services the unit is able to provide to Members and to their rules of engagement via email; encourages the pursuit of training sessions for advisors and assistants to Members; demands a substantial improvement in the staff resources available in this area, as this will contribute significantly to enabling the Parliament to participate as an equal partner in the decision-making process;
41. Asks for clearer qualification requirements for staff of the impact assessment unit; requests the introduction of specific requirements with respect to staff's ideological and political neutrality; requests that the Parliament be presented with criteria for staff selection;

Directorate-General for Communication

42. Notes that VoteWatch received two grants (EUR 149 172 in 2012 and EUR 350 000 in 2013) for the co-financing of specific projects related to the European elections; requests details of the concrete advantages of these sponsored projects for Parliament;
43. Criticizes the presentation of statistical data on explanations of vote, speeches in plenary, parliamentary questions, amendments, motions for resolutions on the Parliament website, which appear designed to prove which Members of the Parliament are supposedly "active" on platforms such as MEPRanking; calls on Parliament to stop providing the raw numbers in a statistical form and to take into account more suitable criteria to identify a Member as "active";
44. Notes that DG COMM is extremely vocal in calling for a reduction in expenditure and a greater stress on efficiency; calls for greater emphasis on the effective rather than costly deployment of information and communication technologies (ICT); notes that despite the large sums spent on the Parliament website, it remains complex, difficult to navigate and fails to generate the desired visibility; advises a review of the marketing strategy;
45. Calls for a new and efficient Parliament website search engine, which provides both strong search engine optimization and a fully comprehensive search engine results page alongside a dedicated effort to enhance access to the site by means of improved keyword recognition; recommends intense inter-institutional cooperation to connect all the website databases of Union institutions; notes that this will ensure greater transparency of Union activities for all citizens;

House of European History

46. Is disappointed to learn that the works on the Eastman Building, which will provide the

premises for the House of European History, has continued to accumulate delays; calls for a communications plan/ promotion and website projects/ marketing plan that will detail how the House of European History is to achieve the desired level of impact;

47. Recalls that the works should have been completed by the end of 2014; expects the initially agreed global budget for the construction of the project to be respected, despite the delays, and the first exhibition to open at the end of 2016;
48. Calls for a strict separation with the contents of information provided in the already-existing Parliamentarium; warns again of the risk of overly high subsequent costs, which are by no means proportionate to the commission of the facility;

European Parliament Visitors' Centre

49. Welcomes the fact that the Parliamentarium is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Brussels and received 340 500 visitors in 2014 (in 2013 it was 337 000 visitors); stresses the importance of informing the Belgian authorities of those figures and the benefits therein;
50. Is concerned that the budget line for the European Parliament Visitors' Centre increased by 24 % over the previous year in comparison by the visitors increase which was only 1 %;
51. Recommends that the member state where the Parliamentarium facilities are established partly finance their establishment and running costs;

Lux Prize

52. Criticizes the total cost of the LUX Prize in 2014, which reached an all-time high of EUR 906 902 (2013: EUR 448 000 (2012: EUR 434 421); deeply regrets the fact that the results of a survey on awareness of the LUX-Prize, requested in the 2013 discharge report, is not yet available; calls for the results of this study to be available to the public by mid-May 2016 and an official presentation of the results to be made to its Committee on Budgetary Control;

Directorate-General for Personnel

53. Takes note that in 2014, 309 officials and other temporary staff were recruited to the Secretariat, 8 temporary staff were recruited to the political groups and that as at 31 December 2014, a total of 6 040 officials (in 2013: 6 105) (5 295 (in 2013: 5 308) in the Secretariat and 745 (in 2013: 797) in the political groups) and temporary staff were employed within Parliament;
54. Stresses that in the context of the 2014 revision of the staff regulations and the current MFF as at 1st January 2014, 67 posts (66 permanent and 1 temporary) had been deleted from the establishment plan in order to achieve the reduction of 5 % of the number of posts over the period from 2013 to 2017, excluding political groups;
55. Notes that the proportion of female officials remains very high and has risen (59,2 % at

the end of 2014, as against 58,8 % at the end of 2013 but accounts for only 30 % of heads of unit 34 % of directors and 18,2 % of directors-general;

56. Takes note that at the end of 2014 there were 1 686 (2013: 1763) accredited parliamentary assistants (APAs) working at Parliament and 4 453 local assistants had an employment contract with a Member;
57. Welcomes the fact that the Bureau adopted on 26 October 2015 a new set of rules for the management of the parliamentary assistance allowances, reinforcing the requirements for the reimbursement of local assistant contracts, namely by earmarking at least 25 % of the parliamentary assistance allowance to cover expenditure on accredited assistants;
58. Notes that APAs made up 26,7 % of Parliament staff at the end of 2014; recalls that the contracts of some 1700 APAs employed during the seventh parliamentary term came to an end in July 2014 and a major operation undertaken by the Directorate-General for Personnel for the recruitment of 1 686 APAs was drawn up before the end of 2014 to serve Members during the eighth parliamentary term;

Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics

59. Emphasises that the new medium-term buildings strategy will involve efforts to find new premises to meet Parliament's needs within a set perimeter close to the main buildings; stresses that the multiannual planning for renovation works should be based on realistic and detailed forecasts both with respect to their financial parameters and timescales; recalls that Parliament owns 81 % of all surface area it occupies and that the budget needs to be protected against the renovation costs for ageing buildings in what will be a major challenge facing Parliament in the coming years;
60. Insists on absolute prudence before committing to new acquisitions or rentals and the need for regular monitoring and adjustment of the strategic accommodation plan, considers that concepts in the strategic execution framework should also provide the opportunity for the Parliament to reduce the need for new buildings as it drives the organisation to a greater focus on results and staff work-life balance; points out that commonly available technologies and practices such as teleworking could also contribute to a more efficient use of time and a more environmentally-friendly Parliament;
61. Notes that since June 2014, some 1000 staff from DGs IPOL, EXPO and EPRS moved in to the Square de Meeûs building; recalls that this removal was the first key stage in the process of making additional space available to Members in Parliament's main buildings; wishes to be informed on the next steps of Parliament with a concrete timeline for when additional offices will be made available;
62. Regrets that a cooperation agreement between Parliament and the Commission on joint management of Europe Houses was still not possible; urges the two institutions to find a mutually acceptable agreement setting out a framework for purchasing or leasing property and to simplify the administrative and financial procedures for the Europe Houses' day-to-day management; calls for the political hierarchy to intervene, if

necessary;

63. Deems overdue a renovation of the Paul-Henri Spaak building, including an extension of the building and an expansion of the seminar rooms for visitors and offices spaces for Members of the Parliament; supports the administration's planning, but stresses that it must be conducted on the basis of the current number of Members and not on the numbers in a possible - and unrealistic - enlargement of the Union;
64. Demands concrete planning and cost projections for the renovation works; urges greater transparency and the participation of individual Members in decisions that have a decisive bearing on administrative and financial aspects of the institution; deems insufficient the information given and prior agreements concluded at the level of the Conference of Presidents and the Bureau; requests that all strategic documents on the organisation and future development of Parliament be distributed to all its Members;

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

65. Notes that the average number of hours per week that staff interpreters spent in their booths in 2014 delivering interpretation services was 10,7 hours/week;
66. Reiterates the importance of multilingualism for the democratic legitimacy of the institution; welcomes the fact that as a result of the resource-efficient multilingualism policy adopted by the Bureau in 2011 and of subsequent organisational reforms, significant savings have been achieved in interpretation;
67. Insists that large efficiency gains are still possible in the supply of interpretation, notably by enhancing the efficiency of a service currently hampered by rules dating from 2005 that are no longer compatible with the current meeting patterns of the institution;
68. Calls upon the secretary general to modernise the framework for the management of interpretation, with a view to increasing individual productivity and to bringing the working practices of interpreters into line with the changed needs of the house;

Directorate-General for Finance

Travel agency

69. Encourages the travel agency to intensify comparison of prices. Calls on the travel agency to actively seek less expensive tickets when booking and, in general, to offer more competitive prices; notes with concern that the staff in the travel agency have partly gained a reputation for their lack of cooperation and professionalism; calls for an improved service;

Voluntary pension fund

70. Notes that the voluntary pension fund increased its estimated actuarial deficit, calculated on the basis of the assets of the fund, to EUR 242,6 million at the end of 2014 (in 2013:

EUR 207,9 million); stresses that this raises concerns about the premature dissipation of the fund's capital;

71. Points out that its projected future liabilities are spread over several decades; calls on the Bureau to consider options to improve the liquidity of the fund;
72. Calls for the results of the external assessment requested by Parliament in its above-mentioned discharge resolution for the financial year 2013 to be delivered in due time; identifies the board of the voluntary pension fund as responsible for the extent of the fund's deficit; calls for a sole concept for the private pension fund, to decrease the liabilities of this fund; estimates necessary to decrease the retirement benefits for the participant members of the fund;

Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support

73. Notes that Parliament's information security policy requires a coordinated and harmonised corporate security strategy;
74. Takes note that an external ICT audit was carried out by an independent third party as requested during the 2013 discharge; further notes that the objective of this audit was to assess Parliament's ICT security capabilities and its systems' potential exposure to cyber threats, with a view to developing an ICT security improvement plan including a suggested roadmap to enhance Parliament's global security level;
75. Is concerned that the assessment of Parliament's ICT security organisation, maturity and capabilities carried out according to the ISO 27002:2013 standards and international best practices showed a relatively weak level of maturity of organisational security;
76. Calls for regular stress-testing of the Parliament's security systems in the domain of ICT;
77. Notes that the Bureau adopted an ICT systems security policy in its meeting on 7 September 2015; stresses the urgency of implementing a considerably more robust ICT security policy in line with Parliament's roadmap for a global information security strategy;
78. Criticises the conversion of the Twitter official account of the "President of the European Parliament" into a personal campaign vehicle leading to a party website;

Directorate-General for Security and Safety

79. Takes note that the internalisation of security services was completed in Brussels on December 2014 and in Strasbourg on 1 July 2015 following the adoption of a global security concept; stresses that further security measures and an urgent revision of the global security concept as adopted by the Bureau in 2011 should take place in view of the recent security context;
80. Expresses concern with regard to the different approaches taken by the Brussels and

Strasbourg authorities concerning the security of parliamentary premises; considers it indispensable to work closely with the Belgian, French and Luxembourg authorities to enhance the security perimeter around the Parliament's buildings;

81. Insists that reinforcing the security of the Parliament's buildings and their immediate surroundings be given the highest priority; reiterates its request to the Bureau to make it mandatory for Members to show their badges when entering the Parliament's premises; requires it necessary to ensure appropriate equipment for security staff in view of the current security situation;
82. Calls for a revision of building security measures and for greater control at the entrance to the Parliament's carparks by means of automatic number plate recognition; demands the implementation of a central external control point to check all outside providers entering the Parliament's buildings;
83. Considers it fundamental to have robust pre-employment screening, binding procedures regulating the departure of staff, appropriate security management structures and adequate crisis management training;
84. Recalls the incident on 7 of October 2014 involving Kurdish protesters; calls for a comprehensive and confidential assessment of the Parliament's security services to be performed; welcomes, as a first step, that a high-level group comprising representatives of the Parliament, the Commission, the Council and the Belgian state has been established to enhance cooperation in the security domain; calls for further cooperation with national and international security services;
85. Insists on the need for greater levels of cooperation between DG SAFE and DG ITEC, with a view to ensuring the appropriate level of protection of information and communication in the Parliament;

Political groups (budget item 4 0 0)

86. Notes that in 2014, the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 0, attributed to the political groups and non-attached Members, were used as follows:

Group	2014 first half-year					2014 second half-year				
	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 (2015)
EPP	11 147	7 813	11 311	101 %	7 649	8 772	7 744	6 485	74 %	9 960
S&D	7 956	4 619	8 415	106 %	4 160	7 663	4 194	6 435	84 %	7 810
ECR	2 128	1 053	2 731	128 %	450	2 886	457	1 745	60 %	2 507
ALDE	3 401	1 759	3 644	107 %	1 516	2 813	1 531	1 847	66 %	3 107
GUE/NGL	1 374	417	1 519	111 %	272	2 153	272	1 170	54 %	1 764
Greens/EFA	2 211	1 388	2 689	122 %	911	2 081	912	1 707	82 %	2 146
EFDD	1 229	1 137	1 544	126 %	822	2 002	827	1 164	58 %	1 615
Non-attached Members	753	441	715	95 %	92	1 238	92	566	46 %	533
Total	30 200	18 626	32 567		15 872	29 608	16 030	21 118		29 442
* all amounts in thousands EUR										

European political parties and European political foundations

87. Notes that in 2014 the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 2 were used as follows¹:

Party	Abbreviation	Own resources*	EP grant	Total revenue ²	EP grant as % of eligible expenditure (max. 85 %)	Revenue surplus (transfer to reserves) or loss
European People's Party	EPP	2.126	9.327	13.605	85%	345
Party of European Socialists	PES	1.083	5.297	7.864	85%	78
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party	ALDE	759	2.813	3.582	85%	173
European Green Party	EGP	575	1.918	2.493	84%	50
Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists	AECR	373	1.943	2.376	85%	0
Party of the European Left	EL	282	1.219	1.501	85%	54
European Democratic Party	EDP/PDE	123	565	730	85%	13
European Free Alliance	EUD	49	274	340	85%	0
EUDemocrats	EFA	126	526	708	85%	0
European Christian Political Movement	ECPM	73	388	475	85%	4
European Alliance for Freedom	EAF	93	521	614	84%	-3
European Alliance of National Movements	AEMN	117	363	480	85%	37
Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy	MELD	124	635	941	85%	5
Total		5.903	25.789	35.709	85%	756
(*) all amounts in thousands EUR						

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

88. Notes that in 2014 the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 3 were used as follows¹:

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	831	4.203	5.034	85%
Foundation for European Progressive Studies	FEPS	PES	636	3.087	3.723	85%
European Liberal Forum	ELF	ALDE	169	941	1.110	85%
Green European Foundation	GEF	EGP	174	914	1.088	85%
Transform Europe	TE	EL	111	587	698	85%
Institute of European Democrats	IED	PDE	43	265	308	85%
Centre Maurits Coppieters	CMC	EFA	48	216	264	85%
New Direction - Foundation for European Reform	ND	AECR	195	915	1.110	85%
European Foundation for Freedom	EFF	EAF	45	244	289	85%
Organisation For European Interstate Cooperation	OEIC	EUD	21	135	156	85%
European Christian Political Foundation	ECPF	ECPM	37	187	224	85%
Foundation for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy	FELD	MELD	62	271	333	85%
Identités & Traditions européennes	ITE	AEMN	42	174	216	85%
Total			2.414	12.139	14.553	85%
(*) all amounts in thousands EUR						

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