



Plenary sitting

A8-0123/2016

11.4.2016

REPORT

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section IV – Court of Justice (2015/2157(DEC))

Committee on Budgetary Control

Rapporteur: Anders Primdahl Vistisen,

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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 IV – Court of Justice (2015/2157(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 – C8-0202/2015)²,
 - having regard to the Court of Auditors' annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2014, together with the institutions' replies³,
 - having regard to the statement of assurance⁴ 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 Articles 317, 318 and 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002⁵, and in particular Articles 55, 99, 164, 165 and 166 thereof,
 - having regard to Rule 94 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A8-0123/2016),
1. Grants the Registrar of the Court of Justice discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Court of Justice 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 Court of Justice, the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the European Ombudsman, the European Data Protection Supervisor and the European External Action Service, and to arrange for their publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

¹ OJ L 51, 20.2.2014.

² OJ C 377, 13.11.2015, p. 1.

³ OJ C 373, 10.11.2015, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 377, 13.11.2015, p. 146.

⁵ OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1.

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 IV – Court of Justice (2015/2157(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 IV – Court of Justice,
 - having regard to Rule 94 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A8-0123/2016),
1. Notes with satisfaction that in its 2014 annual report, the Court of Auditors observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Court of Justice of the European Union ('Court of Justice');
 2. Welcomes the fact that, on the basis of its audit work, the Court of Auditors concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2014 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error;
 3. Notes that in 2014, the Court of Justice had appropriations amounting to EUR 355 367 500 (EUR 354 880 000 in 2013) and that the implementation rate was 99 %; welcomes the increase of the utilisation rate in 2014 when compared to that of 96,3 % in 2013;
 4. Takes note that the Court of Justice's budget is purely administrative, with more than 75 % being used on expenditure concerning persons working within the institution and the remaining on buildings, furniture, equipment and other expenditure;
 5. Welcomes the productivity of the judicial activity of the Court in 2014 with 1691 cases brought before the three courts and 1685 cases completed in that year;
 6. Notes that the Court of Justice completed 719 cases in 2014 (701 completed cases in 2013) and had 622 new cases brought before it (699 in 2013); endorses the positive statistical results and believes performance can be improved in the future;
 7. Takes note that in 2014 the General Court received 912 new cases, had 814 cases dealt with and 1423 cases pending, constituting a general increase in the number of proceedings when compared to 2012 and 2013;
 8. Points out that the creation of nine temporary secretary posts at the General Court in 2014 strengthened the judicial team in that Court ensuring its efficiency and increased rate of performance;

9. Notes that in 2014, the Civil Service Tribunal completed 152 cases, as against 184 in 2013 and had 216 pending cases; notes that in 2014 the Tribunal was less efficient in its general judicial activity;
10. Encourages the Court of Justice to continue improving the use of the existing resources; is of the opinion that the internal reforms implemented in 2014, namely the reform of the Rules of Procedure governing the operations of the General Court and of the Civil Service Tribunal and the development of IT applications to improve the dealing with procedures and communication, have contributed to an optimisation of use of resources;
11. Welcomes the Court of Auditors' plan to carry out a review of the Court of Justice to assess its performance, following Parliament's request made to it in the context of the discharge for 2013;
12. Notes the information, provided in January 2016, regarding the list of external activities pursued by the judges, which had been requested during the exchange of views in committee on the discharge for 2014; regrets that the number of judges participating in the various events is not mentioned; calls for an overview of all external activities undertaken by each judge, including lecturing, talks, other events and preparation for them during working hours, and not just of officially approved activities; requests disclosure of all resources used in conjunction with judges' external activities, e.g. translation services, law clerks and drivers;
13. Is of the opinion that all information on the outside activities of each judge should be accessible to the general public; requests that that information be published on the website of the Court of Justice and included in its annual activity reports (AARs);
14. Calls for a declaration of judges' financial interests to be posted on the website of the Court of Justice;
15. Expects that the ongoing reform of the General Court will go through an impact assessment in order to confirm that that revision is adequate and brings simplification to the judicial architecture of the Court of Justice;
16. Notes with satisfaction the improvements made in the e-Curia application and the increased number of Member States that started using it in 2014; however regrets that there are three Member States that remain out of the list of users;
17. Invites the Court of Justice to step further into new technologies so that a further reduction in the number of paper copies, translators and interpreters needed is possible without undermining the Court's responsibilities;
18. Takes note that the activity of the translation directorate was considered satisfactory; believes that savings can still be made in relation to the non-judicial documents applying a restricted translation regime;
19. Notes that the Court of Justice takes part in the inter-institutional working group on key inter-institutional activity and performance indicators that covers amongst other matters the costs of translations; regrets that the Court still does not provide data according to the harmonised methodology agreed within the inter-institutional group;

20. Reiterates the request to have the agenda of the Court of Justice meetings included as an annex in its AARs;
21. Notes that there is still a shortage of women in positions of responsibility at the Court of Justice; calls for the imbalance to be corrected as soon as possible;
22. Considers the answer given by the Court of Justice to Parliament's question no. 26 (Pensions) to be unsatisfactory; requests from the Court a clear and detailed answer, as is provided by other institutions; considers that the Court should answer to all questions sent to it by Parliament and calls on the Court to be fully transparent concerning pensions;
23. Notes that the Court of Justice has 75 official vehicles in its fleet at a cost of EUR 1 168 251; notes that the drivers' salaries amounted to EUR 2 434 599 in 2014; considers this to be an excessively high expense, which is in contradiction with the overall trend in the Union institutions to limit the usage of official vehicles; reiterates its call on the Court to reduce the number of official cars at the disposal of its Members and staff; stresses that the cost of the extensive private services provided by drivers is borne by Union taxpayers; recommends that the Court examine these matters in an inter-institutional context and urges it actively to promote green mobility;
24. Welcomes the measures taken by the Court of Justice to meet the principle of green public procurement; supports the maintenance of this strategy;
25. Notes with satisfaction that the Court of Justice's building policy is attached to its AAR;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	4.4.2016
Result of final vote	+: 19 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Louis Aliot, Inés Ayala Sender, Dennis de Jong, Martina Dlabajová, Ingeborg Gräßle, Verónica Lope Fontagné, Monica Macovei, Dan Nica, Gilles Pargneaux, Georgi Pirinski, Petri Sarvamaa, Claudia Schmidt, Bart Staes, Marco Valli, Derek Vaughan, Anders Primdahl Vistisen, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes present for the final vote	Marian-Jean Marinescu, Miroslav Poche
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Birgit Collin-Langen, Bodil Valero