AMENDMENTS
1 - 19

Draft opinion
Antonio Tajani
(PE660.215v01-00)

2019 discharge: General budget of the EU - Council and European Council
(2020/2142(DEC))
Amendment 1
Charles Goerens, Sandro Gozi, Pascal Durand

Draft opinion
Recital A

Draft opinion

A. whereas, under the terms of Article 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the European Parliament shall give a discharge to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union;

Amendment

A. whereas, under the terms of Article 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the European Parliament shall give a discharge to the Commission in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union; whereas the Council’s budget is a section of the Union budget;

Or. en

Amendment 2
Antonio Tajani

Draft opinion
Recital A a (new)

Draft opinion

A a. whereas the procedure of giving discharge separately to the individual Union institutions and bodies is a long-standing practice to guarantee transparency and democratic accountability towards Union citizens and is accepted by all institutions and bodies except the Council;

Amendment

A a. whereas the procedure of giving discharge separately to the individual Union institutions and bodies is a long-standing practice to guarantee transparency and democratic accountability towards Union citizens and is accepted by all institutions and bodies except the Council;

Or. en

Amendment 3
Charles Goerens, Sandro Gozi, Pascal Durand

Draft opinion
Recital A a (new)
A. whereas, under the terms of Article 319 (2) TFEU, the Commission must submit to the European Parliament, at the latter’s request, any necessary information concerning the execution of expenditure and the operation of financial control systems;

Or. en

Amendment 4
Domènec Ruiz Devesa

Draft opinion
Recital B

Draft opinion

B. whereas the persistent difficulties in receiving answers from the Council due to a lack of cooperation have resulted in Parliament’s refusal to grant discharge to the Council for the implementation of its section of the budget for more than 10 years;

Amendment

B. whereas the persistent difficulties in receiving answers from the Council due to a lack of cooperation have resulted in Parliament’s refusal to grant discharge to the Council for the implementation of its section of the budget for more than 10 years; whereas this situation has an important impact on the functioning of the institutions and diminishes citizens' trust in the procedure for political scrutiny;

Or. en

Amendment 5
Domènec Ruiz Devesa

Draft opinion
Recital B a (new)

Draft opinion

B a. whereas, as an additional sign of those difficulties, in respect of Articles 263 and 265 TFEU, Section 1(2), second subparagraph, point c), of the European
Council’s conclusions of 10 and 11 December 2020 does not comply with Articles 15 and 17 TEU;

Amendment 6
Daniel Freund
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Recital B a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

B a. whereas the impossibility to grant discharge to the Council has resulted, since 2009, in more than EUR 6 billion in public funds being spent without democratic scrutiny;

Amendment 7
Charles Goerens, Sandro Gozi, Pascal Durand

Draft opinion
Recital B a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

B a. whereas the European Court of Justice’s case-law supports the right of taxpayers and public opinion to be kept informed on the use of public revenues;

Amendment 8
Charles Goerens, Sandro Gozi, Pascal Durand

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1
1. Regrets that, despite the letter sent by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on 25 May 2020 to the secretary-general of the Council to inform that Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control has been mandated by Parliament's Conference of Presidents to reopen negotiations with the Council on cooperation during the annual discharge procedure, those negotiations have not yet resumed;

1. Stresses the need for a Memorandum of Understanding between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the provision of the information necessary for the European Parliament to take an informed decision on discharge; regrets that negotiations with the Council to that end have still not resumed and this despite the letter sent by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on 25 May 2020 to the Secretary-General of the Council to inform that Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control has been mandated by Parliament's Conference of Presidents to reopen negotiations with the Council on cooperation during the annual discharge procedure;

Amendment 9
Domènec Ruiz Devesa

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1

Draft opinion

1. Regrets that, despite the letter sent by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on 25 May 2020 to the secretary-general of the Council to inform that Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control has been mandated by Parliament's Conference of Presidents to reopen negotiations with the Council on cooperation during the annual discharge procedure, those negotiations have not yet resumed;

Amendment

1. Regrets that, despite the letter sent by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on 25 May 2020 to the Secretary-General of the Council to inform that Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control has been mandated by Parliament's Conference of Presidents to reopen negotiations with the Council on cooperation during the annual discharge procedure, those negotiations have not yet resumed; recalls that a refusal by an institution to comply with this requirement, after being called upon to act, could be a breach of the principle of sincere cooperation;
Amendment 10
Antonio Tajani

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2

Draft opinion

2. Calls on the Council to resume those negotiations without undue delay; reiterates its previous position that, if those negotiations with the Council do not succeed, the negotiations should be extended to the Commission, so as to ensure that Parliament is provided with the necessary information on how the Council is implementing its budget, either directly or via the Commission;

Amendment

2. Remains convinced that an agreement on this matter is possible and therefore, calls on the Council to resume those negotiations without undue delay; reiterates its previous position that, if those negotiations with the Council do not succeed, the negotiations should be extended to the Commission, so as to ensure that Parliament is provided with the necessary information on how the Council is implementing its budget, either directly or via the Commission;

Or. en

Amendment 11
Daniel Freund
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2 a (new)

Draft opinion

2 a. Is of the opinion that, if no interinstitutional solution is found, Parliament should grant discharge to the Commission only, while continuing with the practice of adopting accompanying resolutions with observations addressed to each of the Union’s institutions and bodies, so as to ensure that no section of the EU budget is implemented without proper scrutiny;

Amendment

2 a. Is of the opinion that, if no interinstitutional solution is found, Parliament should grant discharge to the Commission only, while continuing with the practice of adopting accompanying resolutions with observations addressed to each of the Union’s institutions and bodies, so as to ensure that no section of the EU budget is implemented without proper scrutiny;

Or. en
Amendment 12
Domèneç Ruiz Devesa

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3

3. Believes that increased transparency, and a proactive approach to sharing information, on the side of the Council would be conducive to a better-informed discharge procedure from the outset;

Amendment

3. Believes that increased transparency, and a proactive approach to sharing information, on the side of the Council would be conducive to a better-informed discharge procedure from the outset; proposes, for this purpose new instruments such as a memorandum of understanding between Parliament and Council on the information necessary for the European Parliament to take a decision on discharge;

Or. en

Amendment 13
Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Mario Furore

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 a (new)

Draft opinion

3a. Reiterates that discharge is first of all a procedure to certify that expenditure has been carried out correctly and that financial control systems are functioning; recalls that the EU budget is funded ultimately by EU citizens and that full transparency and reliability has to be ensured on their behalf; states that the continued failure, without any real repercussions, to grant discharge to the Council undermines performance of the procedure from both an ethical point of view and one of respect for the principles contained in the Treaties; calls therefore on the Council and the Commission to resume negotiations immediately to find a solution which places respect for citizens to the fore;
Amendment 14
Charles Goerens, Sandro Gozi, Pascal Durand

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 a (new)

Amendment

3 a. Is of the opinion that Parliament should address its decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget to the Commission alone, while continuing the practice of adopting accompanying resolutions with observations addressed to each of the Union’s institutions and bodies, so as to ensure that no section of the EU budget is implemented without proper scrutiny;

Or. en

Amendment 15
Daniel Freund
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 a (new)

Amendment

3 a. Takes the view that, while the current situation can be solved through sincere and loyal cooperation between Union institutions, the possibility of a revision of the Treaties could ultimately be considered in order to task the Parliament with the explicit competence to grant discharge to all institutions and bodies individually;

Or. en
Amendment 16
Daniel Freund
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 b (new)

Draft opinion

3 b. Reiterates its full endorsement of the Ombudsman’s recommendations following the strategic inquiry on the transparency of the legislative discussions in the preparatory bodies of the Council of the EU; urges the Council to take all necessary measures to implement them without undue delay;

Amendment

Or. en

Amendment 17
Charles Goerens, Sandro Gozi, Pascal Durand

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Considers that the Conference on the future of Europe provides an opportunity to discuss proposals to enhance transparency and democratic accountability with regard to the protection of the Union’s financial interests.

Amendment

4. Suggests that, while the current situation could be improved through better cooperation between the Union institutions within the Treaty framework, a revision of the Treaties could ultimately be required, so as to offer more legal clarity with regard to the discharge procedure by giving the European Parliament the explicit competence to grant discharge to all institutions and bodies individually; believes, in that regard, that the Conference on the Future of Europe provides an opportunity to discuss such a proposal and explore possible ways to increase transparency and democratic accountability with regard to the protection of the Union’s financial interests.

Or. en
4. Considers that the Conference on the future of Europe provides an opportunity to discuss proposals to enhance transparency and democratic accountability with regard to the protection of the Union’s financial interests.

Amendment 18
Antonio Tajani

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

Amendment

4. Considers that the Conference on the future of Europe provides an opportunity to discuss proposals to enhance transparency and democratic accountability with regard to the protection of the Union’s financial interests, such as the possibility of a Treaty change giving the Parliament the explicit competence to grant discharge to all institutions and bodies individually; underlines that the impact of such changes on the inter-institutional balance as provided for in the Treaties should be thoroughly examined by Parliament's competent committee.

Or. en

Amendment 19
Domènec Ruiz Devesa

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

Amendment

4. Suggests that a revision of the Treaties, could be required in order to render the discharge procedure clearer, so as to give Parliament the explicit competence to grant discharge to all institutions and bodies individually; considers that the Conference on the future of Europe provides an opportunity to initiate this debate in order to discuss these proposals to enhance transparency and democratic accountability with regard to the protection of the Union’s financial interests.