DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020 - European Council and Council (2021/2108(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Antonio Tajani
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

A. Whereas, in line with Article 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Parliament has the sole responsibility to grant discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the Union and whereas the Council’s budget is a section of the Union budget;

B. Whereas, under the terms of Article 319 TFEU, the Parliament shall give a discharge to the Commission;

C. Whereas, the lack of cooperation from the Council in the discharge procedure has resulted in Parliament’s refusal to grant discharge to the Secretary-General of the Council since 2009;

1. Regrets the Council’s continuing refusal to engage in loyal cooperation in the framework of the discharge procedure, which prevents Parliament making an informed decision, and its lack of respect for Parliament’s role as guarantor of the democratic accountability of the Union budget;

2. Calls on the Council to resume negotiations on memorandum of understanding on the cooperation during the budget discharge procedure; reiterates that, if those negotiations do not succeed, they should be extended to the Commission to ensure that Parliament is provided with necessary information on how the Council is implementing its budget, either directly or via the Commission;

3. 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;

4. Underlines that while the current situation could be improved through better interinstitutional cooperation within the Treaties framework, the revision of the Treaties could be considered in order to render the discharge procedure more clear, in the sense that the Parliament is tasked with the explicit competence to grant discharge to all institutions and bodies individually.