



2024/2020(DEC)

17.12.2024

DRAFT REPORT

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2023, Section I – European Parliament (2024/2020(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 2023, Section I – European Parliament (2024/2020(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2023¹,
- having regard to the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2023 (COM(2024)0272 – C10-0068/2024)²,
- having regard to the report on budgetary and financial management for the financial year 2023, Section I – European Parliament³,
- having regard to the Internal Auditor’s annual report for the financial year 2023,
- having regard to the Court of Auditors’ annual report on the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2023, 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 2023 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) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012⁶, and in particular Articles 260, 261 and 262 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union⁷, and in particular Articles 266, 267 and 268 thereof,

¹ OJ L 58, 23.2.2023, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/budget/2023/1/oj>.

² OJ C, C/2024/5462, 10.10.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5462/oj>.

³ OJ C, C/2024/3115, 23.5.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/3115/oj>.

⁴ OJ C, C/2024/5882, 9.10.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/5882/oj>.

⁵ OJ C, C/2024/6041, 10.10.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/6041/oj>.

⁶ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1., ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1046/oj>.

⁷ OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj>.

- having regard to the Bureau decision of 10 December 2018 on the Internal Rules on the implementation of the European Parliament’s budget, and in particular Article 34 thereof,
 - having regard to Rule 102 and Rule 106(3) of, and Annex V to, its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A10-0000/2025),
- A. whereas the President adopted Parliament’s accounts for the financial year 2023 on 19 June 2024;
- B. whereas the Secretary-General, as the principal authorising officer by delegation, certified, on 18 June 2024, his reasonable assurance that the resources assigned for Parliament’s budget have been used for their intended purpose, in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that control procedures established give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions;
- C. whereas the Court of Auditors stated in its audit that, in its specific assessment of administrative and other expenditure in 2023, it did not identify any serious weaknesses in the annual activity reports of the institutions and bodies it examined as required by Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046;
- D. whereas Article 262(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 requires each Union institution to take all appropriate steps to act on the observations accompanying 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 2023 / Postpones its decision on granting its President discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Parliament for the financial year 2023;
 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 2023, Section I – European Parliament (2024/2020(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 2023, Section I – European Parliament,
 - having regard to Rule 102 and Rule 106(3) of, and Annex V to, its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A10-0000/2025),
- A. whereas, in his certification of the final accounts, the European Parliament's (the 'Parliament') accounting officer stated his reasonable assurance that the accounts, in all material aspects, present fairly the financial position, the results of the operations and the cash-flow of Parliament;
- B. whereas, in accordance with the usual procedure, 61 questions were sent to Parliament's administration and written replies were received and discussed publicly by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on 4 December 2024, in the presence of the Secretary-General, the Parliament's Vice-Presidents responsible for the Budget, the director of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (the 'Authority') and the Internal Auditor;
- C. whereas there is always scope for improvement in terms of quality, efficiency and effectiveness in the management of public finances; whereas scrutiny is necessary to ensure that political leadership and Parliament's administration are held accountable to Union citizens;
- D. whereas legal certainty is the guiding principle for implementing administrative decisions and binds the administration to provide assurance when dealing with members and their offices; whereas an ever-increasing number of rules and obligations leads to confusion and ambiguity for those concerned and creates an environment prone to gold-plating; whereas legal certainty must be enjoyed by members and their offices, obliging the administration to engage in clear, comprehensive and legally sound communication;
- E. whereas it is paramount to stress that the core work of members is the participation in and contribution to negotiations on legislative files and budgetary procedures as well as political discussions in the EU decision-making process and that members must receive financial and logistical support to conduct their work and depend on the support of the administration to fully engage in their profession; whereas the relations between members, their offices, committee secretariats and the administration are built on mutual trust and as such should be a guiding principle when equipping members with financial support; whereas this should be reflected in the level of checks and reviews

ex-ante and ex-post applied by the administration; whereas it is evident that clear, proportionate, targeted, standardised, and simplified procedures are the best and most effective way to conduct reviews and controls of financial entitlements; and that such actions create savings while reducing bureaucracy but ensure an adequate level of transparency and accountability to justify the expenses;

Parliament's budgetary and financial management

1. Notes that Parliament's final appropriations for 2023 totalled EUR 2 247 million, or 19,7 % of Heading 7 of the Multiannual Financial Framework¹ set aside for the 2023 administrative expenditure of the Union institutions as a whole, representing a 3,95 % increase compared to the 2022 budget (EUR 2 161 million);
2. Notes that total revenue entered in the accounts as of 31 December 2023 was EUR 255 205 473 (compared to EUR 250 473 773 in 2022); notes that assigned revenue made available in 2022 amounted to EUR 50 186 995 (compared to EUR 61 267 620 in 2022);
3. Notes that six chapters accounted for 84,5 % of total commitments: Chapter 10 'Members of the institution'; Chapter 12 'Officials and temporary staff'; Chapter 14 'Other staff and external services'; Chapter 20 'Buildings and associated costs'; Chapter 21 'Data processing, equipment and movable property' and Chapter 42 'Expenditure relating to parliamentary assistance';
4. Notes the figures on the basis of which Parliament's accounts for the financial year 2023 were closed and which are reported in the annual accounts of the European Parliament for the Financial Year 2023, the Report on Budgetary and Financial Management for Section I: European Parliament, and the Report on Contracts and Concessions Awarded by the European Parliament;
5. Notes that 19 transfers were approved by Parliament's Committee on Budgets ('C transfers'), in accordance with Articles 31 and 49 of the Financial Regulation, in the financial year 2023, amounting to EUR 77 986 378 or 3,47 % of final appropriations; notes that the President authorised 8 transfers ('P transfers') amounting to EUR 9 835 982 or 0,4 % of the 2023 budget;
6. Notes that despite a moderate increase in the initial appropriations for the 2023 budget, there was no increase in non-statutory expenditures; highlights that the rise in statutory expenditure was primarily driven by factors beyond the administration's control, such as adjustments to salaries for staff and Members, which are mandated by statutory obligations; welcomes that, for the first time, the European Parliament has requested neither an increase in its overall budget nor an expansion of its staffing levels, reflecting a commendable effort to prioritise efficiency and fiscal responsibility;
7. Welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to establishing a dedicated unit for simplification and good administration; notes with satisfaction that simplification is

¹ Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 (OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/2093/oj>).

embraced not merely as a goal to be achieved but as a guiding principle to be systematically applied across all areas of Parliament's work, ensuring more effective and accessible administrative processes;

8. Notes that in 2023, the euro area's economic environment was significantly affected by ongoing geopolitical tensions contributing to high inflation, which peaked at 10,6 % in October 2022 before gradually declining to 5,4 % for the year 2023; recalls that Parliament's initial estimates for 2023, based on preliminary salary indexation forecasts, required adjustments through Amending Letter 1/2023; welcomes the fact that despite these challenging circumstances, Parliament's administration managed additional statutory salary adjustment costs through careful internal reallocations, prioritisation of essential spending, and postponement of lower-priority projects;

European Court of Auditors' opinions on the reliability of the 2023 accounts and on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts

9. Recalls that the European Court of Auditors (the 'Court') performs a specific assessment of administrative and other expenditure as a single policy group for all Union institutions; highlights that administrative expenditure comprises expenditure on human resources including pensions, which in 2023 accounted for about 70 % of the total administrative expenditure, and on buildings, equipment, energy, communications and information technology; highlights that the Court's work over many years indicates that, overall, this spending is low risk;
10. Notes that the Multiannual Financial Framework Heading 7 'European public administration' accounted for EUR 12,3 billion or 6,4 % of the Union budget in 2023, of which Parliament accounts for EUR 2,3 billion or 18,7 %; stresses the fact that the Court found that the level of error in spending on 'European public administration' was not material;
11. Notes that the Court's annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2023 specifically examined the supervisory and control systems of Parliament, in particular the implementation of internal control standards, risk management, and the functioning of key controls defined in the Financial Regulation, including ex ante and ex post controls on payments, as well as a statistically representative sample of 70 transactions covering the full range of spending under this MFF heading and the regularity information given in the annual activity reports of all Union institutions and bodies;
12. Notes that the Court has examined supervisory and control systems at Parliament, concentrating on the four biggest spending directorates-general; takes note that the Court found that the directorates-general adopted different approaches to the performance of ex ante and ex post controls of expenditure; notes that the Court found that there was not a common methodology in the approach taken with regard to the ex-ante controls or to harmonise the categorisation of errors detected;
13. Calls on Parliament's administration for the sake of greater simplification to align itself on a common methodology of the control of the expenditure and the categorisation of errors, only if it is reasonable to adopt a standard approach and taking into account the specificities across the directorates-general and services; takes note that in order to increase the standardisation of ex-ante control procedures within Parliament,

Parliament's Directorate-General for Finance will create a forum for ex-ante verifiers, implement a yearly specific training programme and provide regular guidance;

14. Takes note of the observations of the Court with regard to Parliament's internal rules; notes that Parliament's administration is subject to the Financial Regulation and its procurement rules; however, notes that for Political groups the Bureau has adopted the Rules on the use of appropriations from budget item 400, which contain a number of specific provisions for certain procurement procedures; recalls that political groups manage the funds allocated to them according to the principles of indirect management of funds in analogical application of Article 62(1), point (c), of the Financial Regulation; considers that these rules themselves replace the "contribution agreements" (as referred to in Article 158(7) of the Financial Regulation); stresses that an external auditor for each group approves the respective annual activities to ensure compliance and this guarantees a neutral level of control; highlights that the European Court of Auditors also scrutinises the activities of the political groups in its annual report;
15. Notes that according to Article 1.4 of the Rules on the use of appropriations from budget item 400, political groups shall be responsible to the institution for the use of appropriations, within the limits of the powers conferred upon them by the Bureau; remarks that they shall ensure that the appropriations are used in accordance with these Rules; welcomes Parliament's administration efforts to assist political groups with the aim of guiding their respective financial management knowledge and capacity;
16. Welcomes the implementation of the 14-point action plan and its efforts in implementing the new rules on integrity and transparency; welcomes that Parliament has taken initiatives to prevent and detect fraud, including the Bureau's decisions on whistleblowing, also welcomes initiatives by the Secretary-General with regard to the treatment of financial irregularities, fraud awareness content on Parliament's intranet site, training activities, and related actions on ethics;
17. Notes that Parliament accepts the Court's recommendation on enhancing actions to combat fraud at Parliament; notes that in line with the Financial Regulation, the prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities are core objectives of each Directorate-General's internal control framework; takes note that Parliament will task its competent services with evaluating its existing actions to fight against fraud and, if appropriate, to develop an overarching framework applicable to Parliament's administration;

Internal Auditor's annual report

18. Notes that, at the meeting between the committee responsible and the internal auditor held on 4 December 2024, the internal auditor presented his annual report and described the assurance audits he carried out and consulting services he provided, and reported on the outcome of the current state of play, which in 2023 covered a transversal Follow-up of Open Actions from Internal Audit Reports, an audit of the purchase and use of security equipment and services in the Directorate-General for Security and Safety, an audit of financing European political parties and European political foundations, a periodic review of the ADENAUER 2 building project, an audit of the backup and restore arrangements, a review of inventory management, audits in the Institution of the European Ombudsman, and the Internal Audit Service's Quality Assurance and

Improvement Programme;

19. Welcomes and supports the actions that the internal auditor has agreed with the directorates-general responsible, as a result of the assurance assignments;
20. Takes note of the assurance assignments for which preliminary conclusions are currently being prepared or for which fieldwork is still ongoing, and which are currently following the process envisaged by the Charter of the Internal Auditor;
21. Notes that the 2023 follow-up process resulted in 27 of the 69 actions being considered as effectively implemented and therefore validated by the Internal Audit Service; notes that for three significant actions, the risk was lowered to take account of ongoing developments; notes that the residual risk pertaining to two actions related to cybersecurity were reinstated from “moderate” to “significant” due to the drawn-out progress;
22. Acknowledges that, in accordance with Article 118(9) of the Financial Regulation, the reports and findings of the internal auditor, as well as the report of the Union institution concerned, shall be accessible to the public as soon as the internal auditor has validated the action: notes that, in practice, the reports are published once all recommendations have been implemented; welcomes the fact that the internal auditor reports to the Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control on the annual audit activities carried out;
23. Welcomes the fact that the Internal Audit Service has, through its 2023 quality assurance and improvement programme, continued to seek the enhancement of its activities in relation to providing objective assurance to the decision-making and oversight authorities, authorising officers and management; welcomes that in 2023, the quality assurance programme focused on implementing the actions for further enhancement, which the Internal Audit Service had drawn up following the 2021 external assessment; welcomes the fact that these mainly included strengthening IT capacity, including the recruitment of an IT auditor with a strong operational profile in IT security and further development of internal expertise; takes note that the internal auditor stated that he did not receive instructions or guidance from any source, which would be such as to compromise his independence;
24. Calls on the internal auditor to make proposals for a reduction in bureaucracy to help Parliament to streamline processes, reduce the administrative burden, find intersections between IT applications, and ensure that measures for Members are easily understandable and easy to implement; stresses the need for the internal auditor to assess the proportionality of administrative expenditure via a cost-benefit equation to see if audit and control activities are in line with the bureaucratic burden on Members; asks the internal auditor to assess to what degree Artificial Intelligence solutions could help the administration to improve the efficiency of audit and control activities;

Follow-up to the 2022 discharge resolution

25. Takes note of the written answers to the 2022 discharge resolution provided to Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control on 24 September 2024, the presentation by the Secretary-General addressing the issues in Parliament’s 2022 discharge resolution and the exchange of views with Members that followed on 30 September 2024;

26. Recalls that pursuant to Rule 25 of and Annex V to the Rules of Procedure and Articles 6 and 268 of the Financial Regulation, once the Plenary calls for different rules or measures to be implemented by Parliament, the rules or measures proposed are discussed and voted on by the Bureau; recalls, in light of Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure, that the Bureau is responsible for taking decisions on financial, organisational and administrative matters concerning Members; recalls that the Bureau is composed of the President of the European Parliament, the 14 Vice-Presidents and the five Quaestors (non-voting members) democratically elected by Parliament; notes, that the members of the Bureau deliberate on Parliament's draft estimates;
27. Takes note of the deaf community's longstanding demand for the possibility to submit petitions in national sign languages used within the Union; notes the discussions held during the Committee of Petitions meeting on 29 November 2023 and on 19 March 2024, specifically addressing Petition 1056/2016, and underlines Parliament's commitment in that regard; recalls that Parliament's services are assessing the viable solutions in accordance with the Rules of Procedure; recalls that Parliament's Rules of Procedure stipulate that any petition submitted to the Parliament must be in written form; encourages the Administration to invite relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the deaf community, to provide input and feedback on the proposed solution and during the implementation process to ensure the effectiveness and inclusivity of the proposed measures;

Directorate-General for the Presidency

28. Recalls that the Directorate-General for the Presidency (DG PRES) provides expertise and facilitates the legislative and parliamentary work of the President, the Plenary and Parliament's governing bodies and Members at each stage of the parliamentary and legislative process; recalls that it is also responsible for inter-institutional relations, for protocol support to official visits and events sponsored by the President, for the management of Union classified information, and for the management of official and registered mail; notes that by 31 December 2023, there were 379 members of staff, of which 307 were officials, 23 were temporary agents, 46 were contract agents, 1 seconded national expert and 2 agency members of staff;
29. Notes that DG PRES's final appropriations amounted to EUR 1 447 385,50 in 2023, representing 0,1 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 1 384 558,19 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
30. Remarks that on 18 January 2023, the Conference of Presidents approved a mandate proposed by the President for a political Working Group; highlights that this group was tasked with focusing on Parliament's legislative role and procedures, as well as examining improvements to its role and capacity as the arm of the budgetary authority and sole discharge authority;
31. Notes with satisfaction that DG PRES continued to ensure, and to further improve, its support function with regard to Parliament's core missions, and in particular, its plenary planning and legislative coordination functions, the promotion of the Plenary as a forum for high-level debates, the preparation and follow up to the meetings of the Conference of Presidents, the improvement of and increase in the availability of state of the art tools and services for all its activities, making relevant parliamentary and legislative activities

more accessible, actively contributing to the actions launched by Parliament in relation to the 2024 European Elections, and its contribution to solidarity initiatives and to administrative support to the Ukrainian Parliament;

32. Welcomes the contribution of DG PRES in ensuring quality support and follow-up to the transparency and integrity reform process based on the 14-point plan proposed by the President and endorsed by the Conference of Presidents on 8 February 2023 to adjust the institution's transparency and accountability frameworks; welcomes the efforts in implementing the new rules on transparency, integrity, accountability, and anti-corruption;
33. Highlights that on 13 July 2023, the Plenary endorsed recommendations for the reform of Parliament's rules aiming to combat foreign political interference, espionage, and corruption attempts; notes the agreement reached between the Union Institutions to jointly establish a new Body for Ethical Standards; highlights that this body will develop, update, and interpret common minimum standards for ethical conduct, publish reports reflecting those standards in internal rules, and provide independent expertise for consultation on issues such as declarations of interest; underlines that Parliament should not bear a disproportionate share of the financial or administrative burden compared to other institutions involved; calls for the fair and balanced allocation of costs and staff across all participating institutions, ensuring that each body contributes proportionately; emphasises the need to maintain cost-efficiency and transparency in its operations and avoid duplications with other bodies such as the advisory committee on the Code of Conduct;
34. Welcomes that DG PRES has also continued its effective cooperation with the Council and Commission on all elements concerning the interinstitutional secretariat of the transparency register, having participated in 21 meetings in 2023, with a view to continue to keep enhancing the operation of the Register; notes that the full implementation of the mandatory transparency Register is a key tool for promoting transparency at Union level; establishing mandatory registration as a prerequisite for interest representatives to be able to engage in specific activities with the Union institutions, including Parliament; calls for the provision of all necessary resources to ensure that the internal rules related to the transparency register are effectively enforced; stresses that obligation on Members to record meetings only concerns scheduled meetings, those that involve interest representatives falling under the scope of the transparency register and those that deal with parliamentary business; explains that this approach provides a fair balance between transparency requirements and the administrative burden;
35. Welcomes the increased use of the transparency register as an information and reference tool for interest representation activities at Union level, shown by the rise in applications for registration and an increase in the number of visits to the website year-on-year; welcomes the development of IT solutions to improve the transparency register; notes that the quality of entries in the transparency register has improved and recalls the necessity to keep strengthening data quality checks of new applicants; welcomes the establishment of robust standards at Parliament with regard to transparency and access to institutions for entities listed in the transparency register, including NGOs; recalls that NGOs were allegedly used as vectors of foreign interference as a consequence of the events of alleged corruption in the House;

reiterates, in this context, the need for comprehensive financial pre-screening of entities before they are listed in the transparency register;

36. Stresses that Parliament's reputation as the only directly elected institution must be protected from undue influence and underlines that NGOs and networks with a clearly activist agenda trying to directly influence the decision-making process in Parliament by sending prewritten amendments and papers for committee decisions and trilogues are harming the work of the House; stresses that Parliament should make a clear distinction between NGOs and professional networks staffed with political activists and those entities whose work is carried out by volunteers and individuals with honorary posts; calls on Parliament to sanction NGOs that unduly try to manipulate decisions;
37. Remarks that on 7 December 2023, the Conference of Presidents endorsed a package of reform measures based on the recommendations of the working group "Parliament 2024" to be implemented by the end of the parliamentary term; recalls that these measures encompass five key areas identified in the working group's mandate: legislation, scrutiny, budgetary functions and budgetary control, plenary and external relations; highlights that the reform proposals aim to enhance Parliament's functioning as a co-legislator, strengthen its capacity for democratic oversight, and ensure accountability, particularly regarding other institutions, in particular the Commission;
38. Welcomes that in relation to transparency issues, in 2023, DG PRES pursued technical improvements, awareness-raising activities and the provision of technical expertise and services, including to Members; notes that, in particular, DG PRES carried out its secretariat function for the Advisory Committee on the Conduct of Members, which has been given considerably strengthened powers; welcomes that this also included undertaking urgent IT development for all digital forms or, in terms of awareness raising, the preparation of trainings, briefings and communications to Members and political groups on ethics and transparency rules;
39. Notes that DG PRES also participated in the Parliament 2024 Reform process aiming to strengthen Parliament's internal working methods as well as its institutional role and capacity to act; remarks that it was directly involved in plenary matters, as well as other aspects related to this reform such as committees, external relations, scrutiny and budgetary matters; notes that it provided assistance to the working group set up by the Conference of Presidents on 18 January 2023;
40. Asks DG PRES to review the implementation of the rules in after 12 months of implementation to assess their benefits and address any shortcomings, in particular shortcomings related to the excessive administrative burden and legal uncertainty with regard to Members;

Directorate-General for Communication

41. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM) is a multi-site Directorate-General, with staff located in Brussels, Strasbourg and the Liaison Offices in each of the 27 Member States, as well as in the Jean Monnet House in Bazoches (France);
42. Notes that DG COMM's mission is to ensure that citizens understand the importance of this institution so that they can improve engagement in the European democratic

process; highlights that its key tasks are to collaborate with the media, to inform, explain and enhance the visibility of Parliament's work, to increase awareness of Parliament among citizens in all Member States, stakeholders and opinion leaders through the European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs) located in the Member States, to foster interaction with citizens through enhanced visitor projects, events and information campaigns and its presence on social media, and to provide expertise to Members and political groups on topics such as media intelligence and public opinion monitoring;

43. Notes that DG COMM's final appropriations amounted to EUR 151 176 035 in 2023, representing 6,9 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 151 156 839 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
44. Underlines that DG COMM's communication efforts are focused on helping citizens to understand what Parliament is, what it does and what it stands for; notes that this goal is undertaken via several key pillars: media, multipliers (ranging from stakeholders to online content creators) and citizens themselves (i.e. via the visitors offer); welcomes the fact that DG COMM applies a data-driven strategy and evaluation method, while ensuring that all communication is undertaken in a strategic, integrated and consistent way;
45. Notes that 2023 was a special year for DG COMM due to preparation for the 2024 European Elections (EE24); welcomes the focus placed on so-called "delivery" communication, including a strong focus on communicating the decisions taken by Parliament and their impact on people's lives; welcomes DG COMM's efforts to enlist various multipliers to promote the message of the election; notes that collaboration extended across private companies, civil society organisations, inter-institutional partners, and international organisations; notes that media engagement was pivotal, involving the development of new tools and actions, including grant schemes, management-led tours to meet key media figures and efforts to counter misinformation;
46. Highlights that DG COMM's centrally orchestrated actions and strategies were mirrored and extended on the ground in each Member State through the EPLOs; notes that these offices serve as vital bridges between Members and national media, stakeholders, and citizens; highlights that the EPLOs also played a crucial role in expanding the Europa Experience interactive spaces; remarks that these spaces serve as tangible sources for explaining European elections to citizens on the ground;
47. Highlights that the eleven Europa Experience centres, already running in the Member States, provide Members with a unique and effective communication tool, which allows local visitors and their specific audiences to feel Parliament closer than ever in their capital cities; notes with satisfaction that with the 2024 European Elections and beyond in mind, the rollout of the Europa Experience interactive spaces continued with three new Europa Experiences opening their doors in Stockholm, Warsaw and Vienna; notes that the exhibitions were upgraded to relay the key messages of the EE24 campaign and the together.eu community, with the aim of providing Members and Liaison Offices with tailored elections venues in 2024;
48. Notes that the initial plan to establish 27 Europa Experience centres across all Member States by the end of 2024 has not materialised in full, with only 13 centres currently

open and experiencing varying levels of visitor engagement; acknowledges that certain sites very successfully attract considerable public, while others struggle to reach a broad audience; welcomes the Secretary-General's announcement to reassess the original rollout plan, taking into account the performance, cost-effectiveness, and visitor usage of the existing exhibitions;

49. Underlines the importance of thoroughly evaluating the lessons learned so far, in particular the search for adequate buildings and access for target groups, identifying best practices, and adapting the future development of Europa Experience centres to local needs and demonstrated impact; stresses that this reassessment should guide future adjustments or reconsiderations in further expansion, ensuring that any future investments are more efficient in serving their intended purpose of bringing Parliament closer to citizens and improving their understanding of the Union's democratic process;
50. Notes that an audit on the payment of visitor groups was launched in 2019, the final report of which was received in February 2021; highlights that the report contains a 14-point action plan with implementation due dates to reinforce the management and the control framework; remarks that out of these actions, only five fall entirely within the remit of what DG COMM can implement autonomously, whereas the remaining ones can only be accomplished through a revision of the rules governing the invitation of visitor groups; notes that these new rules on payment of subsidies for sponsored visitor groups were adopted by the Bureau on 11 September 2023, with an entry into force date of 1 January 2024;
51. Highlights that 2023 was the year of the 5th edition of the European Youth Event in the month of June; notes that there were over 8 500 participants in Strasbourg and a further 10 000 reached via online streaming; highlights that the event included 325 activities with 400 speakers, among them 35 Members, all co-created with young people; notes with satisfaction that the 2023 edition was a great way to raise awareness about the European elections, allowing young people to express their hopes and ideas for the future of the Union;
52. Notes the constant struggle that the Union faces with regard to safeguarding Union values and the integrity of the democratic process; acknowledges the growing attempts by foreign actors to influence the work of Parliament and emphasises the need for vigilance in countering disinformation campaigns originating outside the Union; welcomes the actions taken by Parliament to prevent and react to disinformation; while recognising that no significant incident has yet occurred, stresses the importance of maintaining proactive measures to preserve the integrity of Parliament's public debate and votes; highlights the added value of initiatives like fact-checking meetings and summits, which play a crucial role in fostering transparency, equipping stakeholders with tools to counter misinformation, and strengthening collaboration among fact-checking organisations within and beyond the Union;

Directorate-General for Personnel

53. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Personnel (DG PERS) is responsible for the appropriate and efficient management of human resources within Parliament and ensures that Members are supported by a highly skilled workforce to enable them to duly fulfil their mandate; notes that by 31 December 2023, there were 475 members of

staff, of which 294 were officials, 64 were temporary agents, 106 were contract agents, 1 seconded national expert and 10 agency members of staff;

54. Notes that DG PERS's final appropriations amounted to EUR 1 163 329 780 in 2023, representing 50,1 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 1 160 835 147 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
55. Notes that, in 2023, DG PERS organised competitions and selection processes, handling an increasing pool of applicants; welcomes the efforts made by DG PERS to organise competitions, ensuring their completion on time and maintaining the necessary quality standards; welcomes that over 401 candidates were successfully shortlisted on reserve lists, thereby bolstering the recruitment efforts of various Directorates-General; regrets however that the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) has encountered systematic issues with the organisation of competitions and the lack of an available pool of candidates suited for Parliament's needs; acknowledges the general difficulties encountered by DG PERS and other DGs in attracting and retaining talent, which has an impact on the performance of Parliament's workforce; calls for more efficient, better targeted and shorter selection procedures that would result in increasing the attractiveness of Parliament as an employer and allow the Directorates-General to speedily recruit the specialist profiles needed to support their work;
56. Welcomes Parliament's first-ever nationality-specific competitions with the aim of improving the geographical balance of Parliament's members of staff by offering a wider pool of candidates from underrepresented Member States; regrets the lack of geographical balance within Parliament's senior and middle management; insists that improvements are needed and asks the Secretary General to report back on the progress achieved in correcting the geographical imbalance within Parliament's staff to the discharge authority;
57. Acknowledges that several Directorates-General have expressed their concerns about attracting talent and specialised profiles that are essential to carry out Parliament's core business; notes that only services that are essential may be considered for a potential internalisation exercise; highlights that some services are carried out by external service providers due to their specific nature, which does not meet the conditions for internalisation; is therefore of the opinion that the services not meeting these conditions cannot be considered for internalisation by the governing bodies;
58. Notes that, in 2023, DG PERS played a leading role in the social dialogue with the interpreters' representatives, with the Director-General for Personnel having been mandated by the President to lead negotiations in close cooperation with DG LINC; highlights that improved working conditions for interpreters were successfully adopted in autumn 2023; notes that the improved conditions enabled a return to regular interpretation capacity after a period of reduced maximum weekly working hours that was introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also addressing concerns about the potential impact on staff wellbeing and auditory health related to interpretation of remote speakers; remarks that the social dialogue that was created in the course of the negotiations has proven very useful in the negotiations that began in the autumn of 2023 on a new framework agreement with trade unions and staff associations ; acknowledges that the work of interpreters depends largely on the quality of the technical equipment in order to avoid unnecessary obstacles in their working environment; notes that Members

have in some instances observed a difference in the quality of interpretation between languages during committee meetings and calls on DG LINC to address this matter;

59. Welcomes the work done by DG PERS with Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs); highlights that the Staff Front Office Unit provided a wide range of educational events, namely 62 info-sessions for staff including APAs, in addition to four webinars on retirement, two on contract termination, and seven conferences covering legal topics such as international taxation and inheritance law; welcomes the APAs Front Office Unit as a support and information source for APAs and Members; notes that in 2023 DG PERS played a critical role in preparing a proposal to the Bureau for a revision of the rules governing the employment conditions for APAs; highlights that those amendments introduced a degree of flexibility, in particular by allowing for the possibility of a mutually agreed termination of an APA contract;
60. Acknowledges that the work of APAs is an integral part of the work of Members and therefore of Parliament; notes that following the adoption of the APA statute in 2009, their status over the years has been protected by the rules; notes the efforts made by Parliament to create a framework for providing support to APAs; calls for due adherence to the rules in place; notes, that since then, APAs participate in official missions to Parliament's three places of work; welcomes that the rules concerning the reimbursement of APA's missions between the three place of work have been aligned with those applicable to officials, ensuring equality of treatment for APAs;
61. Notes with great concern the reports of a data breach centered on Parliament's recruitment application PEOPLE, affecting mainly non-permanent Parliament staff, including APAs; regrets that the data breach involved ID card details, birth certificates, diplomas, employment history, medical records, rights to entitlements, insurance and documents related to proof of work dating back up to 10 years; calls on the administration to thoroughly investigate the incident, build safeguards to better protect private information and prevent another leak of data stored in recruitment databases while assessing why certain sensitive documents were stored for such long periods in the first place; calls on the responsible DGs to jointly report back to the Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control about the investigation and the details of the attacks, the search for the attackers, cooperation with EUROPOL and OLAF to investigate the incident, and measures taken following the attack, in particular the minimisation of data storage of private information;
62. Notes that, in 2023, DG PERS enhanced its recruitment processes, in particular contract staff recruitment through the management of the contract staff contracts platform (AC-People), improving electronic signatures, contract termination procedures, and grade calculations; notes that the completion of the functional analysis for the management of the permanent and temporary agents contracts platform (FT-People), aiming to manage recruitment files for officials and temporary agents, aligns with DG PERS' goals for efficiency and for a paperless process;
63. Welcomes that the Missions Unit successfully deployed the eMiss application for electronic mission order processing, achieving a significant milestone in 2023 with the completion of its first phase, improving the operational efficiency of Parliament's staff; welcomes that the Payroll Unit made significant strides in salary management through the semi-automation of shift allowances for security agents, representing thousands of

transactions, and finalising a dashboard for managing individual rights; highlights that these advancements significantly improved operations within the unit;

64. Notes that, in 2023, DG PERS finalised the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and its accompanying roadmap and advanced with the Diversity Roadmap, implementing supporting measures regarding disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and racism; highlights that measures included conducting surveys on racial and ethnic diversity, integrating a third non-binary option in administrative forms, introducing special leave to facilitate the arrival of a new-born child to a household in cases where none of the parents receiving a child meet the conditions to benefit from maternity or adoption leave and improvements in physical or digital accessibility; remarks that with these actions, DG PERS supported the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity in its quest to make Parliament a leading example for inclusion in the Union and the world through mainstreaming gender equality and diversity within all its operations;
65. Notes that, based on the decision adopted by the Bureau in April 2023 that modified the calculation of the Luxembourgish social allowance provided to agents in Luxembourg with a basic salary below the minimum wage for qualified workers in Luxembourg, retroactively effective from January 2023, a comprehensive review of the files of the concerned colleagues was undertaken; highlights that as a result, 712 adjustments were implemented during payroll processing in June 2023;
66. Welcomes the review of the teleworking rules carried out by the Secretary-General in close cooperation with DG PERS and all DGs; notes that the new rules offer increased flexibility, effectively balancing the operational efficiency of the institution with the well-being and satisfaction of Parliament's staff, impacting the attractiveness of Parliament as an employer;
67. Welcomes the possibility for staff to telework from abroad for five days per year; calls for a proactive monitoring and evaluation of the new ways of working;

Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics

68. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO) manages facilities covering 1,3 million m² in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, as well as the Liaison Offices and Europa Experience facilities in Member States; notes that DG INLO also provides catering and transport, and manages and equips Parliament's office and meeting spaces; notes that by 31 December 2023, DG INLO was made up of 642 members of staff, of which 252 were officials, 50 were temporary staff, 339 were contract staff, and 1 Agency member of staff;
69. Notes that DG INLO's final appropriations amounted to EUR 223 331 000 in 2023, representing 10,5 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 221 658 618 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
70. Welcomes that throughout 2023, the administration continued the implementation of Parliament's 'Building Strategy Beyond 2019' as endorsed by the Bureau in April 2018;
71. Takes note of major building projects in 2023, and in particular, the construction progress of the West Wing of the ADENAUER II building in Luxembourg, which

reached 90 % completion and which, when finished, will bring all Parliament staff and services under the same roof; in this respect notes that an intra-DG appropriation of EUR 13 037 813 was mobilised to finance the extraordinary indexation costs; notes that the construction progress of the Europa Experience facility in Luxembourg reached 46 %; notes the signing of the long-term lease for the VEIL building in Strasbourg, with preliminary works conducted for the initial fit-out necessary to facilitate the building's occupation starting in autumn 2023; notes that the works to secure the entrance of the WEISS building were 84 % completed at the end of 2023, and that the renovation of the CHURCHILL restaurant and the establishment of the multiservice space in the DE MADARIAGA building were completed, and the opening ceremony took place in December 2023;

72. Takes note that during its meeting on 12 June 2023, the Bureau discussed the next steps for the renewal of the SPAAK building; notes that the Bureau expressed a preference for a comprehensive environmental renovation and approved the project on 11 December 2023; stresses that the SPAAK building has been in use since 1993 and is approaching the end of its life cycle in its current state; underlines that a renovation has the aim of achieving a high-quality environmental renewal of the building, while preserving its architectural design and its functionalities; highlights that this would result in a nearly zero-energy building, a zero emission building, a proactive rainwater management system, and the lowering of the carbon footprint by means of circularity and life-cycle assessment of materials; appreciates that the SPAAK renewal project will be used as a reference for sustainable building techniques; notes the ambitious renovation is expected to be completed in time for the 200th Jubilee of the Kingdom of Belgium in July 2030;
73. Welcomes the fact that the renovation works for the hemicycle in the SPAAK building align with the conclusions of airflow studies conducted after the COVID-19 crisis to evaluate the ventilation of heavily used areas; notes that those works were 80 % completed at the end of 2023, with the final phase scheduled for May 2024;
74. Welcomes the completion of the renovation works for the multifunctional restaurant facility in the SPINELLI building, which opened on 24 April 2023;
75. Takes note that a permit for the Citizens' House renovation project was obtained from local authorities in February 2023, highlights that works were estimated to begin in mid-2024 and were expected to conclude by the end of 2025; welcomes that Parliament wanted to incorporate a green space amenity into the visitor circuit and create a meeting space for Members, European citizens and civil society representatives; notes that, due to the building's protected heritage status, the current strengthened environmental and energy performance criteria outlined in the new European Fit for 55 legislation, as well as the severe economic impact of the war in Ukraine, the initial budget of EUR 1,9 million presented to Members in 2017 increased to EUR 5,36 million and calls on DG INLO and DG COMM to evaluate how to better incorporate external factors into their planning that might lead to significant cost increases;
76. Takes note that the strategic approach of 'going local' and 'closer to the citizen' in implementing Europa Experiences continued throughout 2023; notes that in the course of the year, three Europa Experience facilities were opened to the public in Stockholm, Vienna, and Warsaw; highlights that by the end of 2023, 50 % of the planned Europa

Experience facilities had been opened;

77. Notes that the Bureau has established an Environmental Management System (EMS) for the institution in accordance with the European standard for eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) under Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009² ('EMAS III'); highlights that Parliament's three places of work have been listed in the European EMAS register since 2007; welcomes that, in 2023, Parliament successfully updated the registration to include the ADENAUER II building in Luxembourg;
78. Welcomes that in early 2023, the Parliament's Guide for Socially Responsible Public Procurement was adopted by the Public Procurement Forum, which also manages the Green Public Procurement Helpdesk service, in coordination with 23 other participating Union Institutions and Agencies; notes that a Working Group on Sustainable Public Procurement was established with the mandate to continually monitor and exchange best practices on sustainable procurement methods;

Directorate-General for Translation

79. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Translation (DG TRAD) is responsible for the provision of high-quality multilingual legislation and other linguistic services to Parliament, Parliament's services and all citizens of the Union, based on the principle of full resource-efficient multilingualism; notes that by 31 December 2023, DG TRAD was comprised of 1 161 members of staff, of which 950 were officials, 109 were temporary agents, 88 were contract agents, and 14 were agency members of staff;
80. Notes that DG TRAD's final appropriations amounted to EUR 20 242 272 in 2023, representing 0,8 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 20 021 717 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
81. Notes that, in 2023, over 2,96 million gross pages were translated and edited; acknowledges that this represents a 2,7 % increase compared to 2022, owing to the cyclical nature of translation demand; remarks that the demand for DG TRAD's services traditionally increases steadily during the legislative term; highlights that this continued to be the case in 2023, the fourth full year following the elections in 2019; notes with satisfaction that on-time delivery was 98,9 % in normal circumstances, and 98,2 % when the requested deadlines did not comply with the rules of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism;
82. Notes that, in 2023, in addition to supporting the plenary work, legislative, budgetary, discharge and scrutiny processes, and external action activities, DG TRAD continued to promote and produce content in Citizens' language; recalls that this is Parliament's own approach to clear language in formats adapted to people's needs (text, audio and video) and in the 24 official Union languages; notes that DG TRAD undertook various actions to promote this policy, including training courses on clear language that were offered to

² Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS), repealing Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 and Commission Decisions 2001/681/EC and 2006/193/EC (OJ L 342, 22.12.2009, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1221/oj>).

drafters and authors from all across Parliament, comprising a total of over 1 000 participants; notes that DG TRAD continued to produce subtitles in 24 languages, delivering, for example, the subtitles of the five nominated films of the 2023 LUX Audience Awards edition and ensuring that the winner was subtitled for audiences who are deaf and hard of hearing;

83. Notes that, in 2023, DG TRAD produced 343 audio programmes (for a total of 6 667 language versions) and notes with concern that these platforms reached an audience of 9 394 plays for the Europarl Radio website and app and 28 096 plays for commercial audio platforms; notes the cooperation with Union radio stations in 2023 involved 25 radio stations in Austria, Cyprus, Finland, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden; notes that Parliament has not reported the number of listeners obtained from this cooperation; notes that the audio-related tasks represent around 25 % of the work of the DG TRAD's Directorate for Citizen's Language; notes that the core team for audio programmes comprises four sound engineers and five producers in Luxembourg (all temporary and contractual agents); calls on DG TRAD to use the resources employed for audio programmes in a more efficient way, and potentially reassign the resources to activities with higher outreach;
84. Notes that 2023 was a year of preparation of the groundwork for new outsourcing tenders which will be published in 2024 for all 24 languages; highlights that the goal is for the new contracts to enter into force in 2025; notes that the Enlargement and non-EU Languages Unit was up and running in 2023, contributing to Parliament's activities in supporting Ukraine; remarks that DG TRAD provides linguistic services in Ukrainian, including translations, audio products and subtitles for a dedicated website "Stand with Ukraine"; notes that it also covers translations into Russian, Arabic and soon, Chinese, and coordinates the external translation and quality control of documents in any other non-EU language;
85. Welcomes that DG TRAD, together with DG PERS, successfully recruited Intercultural and Language Professionals from the second round of competitions organised in 2022 and that in addition, a new round of competitions was launched for five more languages; highlights that this cooperation makes the recruitment of highly qualified officials with updated and forward-looking profiles significantly quicker and has been another step towards achieving full coverage of all language needs;
86. Welcomes that DG TRAD already harnesses the power of technology in its machine translation tools and has embarked on a journey towards artificial intelligence for its IT landscape, by exploring how this can be integrated in its workflows; welcomes that DG TRAD has explored potential options in view of a Single Digital Workflow Tool; highlights the work done on the DG TRAD Speech-to-text tool increased its coverage of languages to all 24 official languages of the Union; remarks that the tool can automatically transcribe and translate multilingual parliamentary debates in real time, highlights that the innovation partnership to develop and acquire the tool has come to an end, and the preparations to implement the tool in Parliament's infrastructure have begun; asks DG TRAD to quantify how the implementation of such new technologies will help to achieve financial savings and contribute to synergies in Parliament's workflow;

Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences

87. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (DG LINC) is responsible for providing linguistic, technical and logistical support for meetings and conferences; notes that by 31 December 2023, there were 710 members of staff, of which 432 were officials, 36 were temporary agents, 88 were contract agents and 154 were agency members of staff; highlights that the quality of the interpretation provided has a direct impact on the message conveyed to the citizens of the Union;
88. Notes that DG LINC's final appropriations amounted to EUR 76 681 673 in 2023 representing 3,2 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 76 442 728 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
89. Notes that a total of 22 169 meetings were organised by Parliament in 2023, and the Directorate-General's interpreters, conference technicians, ushers and support staff played a crucial role in servicing those meetings during a busy pre-election year; notes that of those meetings, 5 534 took place with interpretation; notes that 46 039 conference participants registered in Parliament's events registration platform managed by DG LINC;
90. Welcomes that a milestone was reached in the social dialogue with interpreters' representatives when improved working conditions for interpreters were adopted in the autumn of 2023; notes that those conditions enabled a return to regular interpretation capacity after a period of reduced maximum weekly working hours introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also addressing concerns about the potential impact of poor sound quality related to interpretation of remote speakers on staff wellbeing and auditory health;
91. Notes that increases in the remuneration of external conference interpreter agents required careful management of resources available; notes that further actions were needed to consolidate and further enhance conference technology (including interpretation and meeting room equipment and remote meeting participation), in an environment of growing cost pressure and unstable supply chains; welcomes that DG LINC actively tracked the evolution of its budget and organised a number of budget transfers;
92. Notes that further improvements were made to the quality of hybrid meetings through its technical support services, which serviced a total of 3 007 hybrid meetings, as well as by adding new features to the multilingual videoconferencing platform;

Directorate-General for Finance

93. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Finance (DG FINS) is the administrative body responsible for Parliament's budgetary and financial affairs; notes that by 31 December 2023, there were 243 members of staff, of which 147 were officials, 27 were temporary agents, 62 were contract agents, and 7 were agency members of staff;
94. Notes that DG FINS's final appropriations amounted to EUR 400 593 290 in 2023, representing 19,3 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 399 173 592 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
95. Notes that 2023 was a special year for DG FINS in that it was the year preceding the European elections, which took place in June 2024; notes that expansion in Members'

activities in 2023 was reflected in an increased workload in a number of areas for which DG FINS is responsible, in particular travel arrangements (25 % more bookings) and travel-related reimbursements (+7,1 %);

96. Recommends that DG FINS establishes a risk-based approach to controlling and auditing Members; acknowledges that is essential to have a baseline level of control to ensure compliance with the rules; welcomes the fact that in the event of doubtful expenditure by a Member, the administration has every right to control the funds concerned; underlines, however, that an approach of general suspicion towards Members, by continuously increasing the number of rules to a degree and complexity that Members and their offices struggle to fully comply, creates legal certainty only for the administration; stresses that Members and their offices must also be assured of legal certainty;
97. Acknowledges the problem of attracting staff in Luxembourg, where 37 % of DG FINS posts are based and notes that the recruitment difficulties stem mainly from the disparity in remuneration levels on the labour market and the difference in the cost of living, particularly in relation to housing; calls on DG FINS, DG PERS and DG PRES to address this issue and work out a dedicated plan to create incentives to fill vacancies or consider the relocation of some urgently needed staff to Brussels where the labour market offers better conditions;
98. Takes note of the ‘2024 DG FINS Digital and Capital Transformation’ initiative, the first two programmes of which (“digital transformation for improved financial services for Members” and “Digital transformation for improved services for Parliament’s administration”) seek to further the digital transformation of the services offered by DG FINS to its clients, whether those be Members or the institution’s financial actors; notes that the third strategic programme (“Capital Transformation for a more productive and cohesive workplace”) aims to create a more productive and cohesive working environment;
99. Calls for a modification to the statutory period of limitations for document retention, suggesting a balanced reduction of 7-10 years for document storage obligations on Members, staff, APAs and administrative bodies; highlights that this adjustment aims to streamline document management practices while aligning with modern digital storage capabilities; recommends the adoption of flexible guidelines allowing for digital storage options, facilitating a more efficient, secure, and accessible approach to document retention that reduces the need for physical copies and enhances sustainability efforts;
100. Calls on DG FINS to establish clear and reasonable retention rules for documents to be stored by the administration and members; recalls that the statute of limitations should not exceed 10 years and that factually there are limits on how many receipts and other paper documents can reasonably be stored by Members; underlines that the extent of the PEOPLE application data leak was only possible because Parliament keeps sensitive data for unduly long periods of time;
101. Welcomes the fact that DG FINS continued to deploy SAP solutions within Parliament through two projects which support the rationalisation of tools for managing Members’ social entitlements and the development of Parliament’s financial reporting capacities; encourages increased investment in IT infrastructure, particularly in systems like SAP,

to enhance data management capabilities, minimise redundant data submissions, and improve data accessibility; stresses the need to shift from a predominantly risk-based approach to a trust-based approach in the handling of Members' financial allowances; remarks that this approach aims to foster a culture of mutual respect and reduce the prevailing atmosphere of suspicion towards Members, in order to facilitate a more productive and cooperative environment;

102. Notes that, in 2023, DG FINS continued its strategy of digitising services for Members; highlights that nine new forms went into production on the e-Portal – the dedicated digital front office for Members to manage their entitlements – and seven were modified; notes that as a result of those efforts, there was a rise in the number of data searches (+32,9 %) and in the number of forms submitted (+13,6 %); remarks that in addition, the Human Capital Management project, designed to make use of SAP solutions superseding obsolete technical applications for managing Members' social and financial entitlements, went 'live' in September 2023, and that it led to an organisational change within DG FINS;
103. Takes note of the Human Capital Management project, which involves replacing obsolete applications for managing Members' salaries, allowances and pensions with a new solution based on the SAP S4/HANA platform; notes that after a development stage in 2022, the application was phased in from July 2023 onwards for managing Members' bank accounts, salaries and general expenditure allowances; highlights that deployment will continue in 2024, extending to management of former Members' pensions that are governed by the Statute for Members;
104. Notes with satisfaction that DG FINS continued to promote the electronic invoicing platform deployed in Parliament for internal and external stakeholders; notes that the investment made it possible to increase the number of providers using the platform; notes that there was a significant increase in the number of invoices submitted electronically, compared to the previous year (+140 %);
105. Notes with satisfaction that DG FINS made significant progress in developing its personalised advice services for Members; highlights that 382 individual information sessions were held in 2023 – 88 % more than in 2022; notes that the sessions dealt with parliamentary assistance allowances; notes that a visual simulation tool developed in-house lets DG FINS services support Members, ensuring better financial management of the allowance and helping identify risks associated with decisions they make about their allowance in advance;
106. Notes that DG FINS services dealing with local assistance for Members organised four information sessions for paying agents on Tipanet, the extranet set up to help paying agents provide services for Members; highlights that a new feature was added to the extranet in January 2023: PAMbot, a chatbot to answer questions from Members, Members' assistants and paying agents about local parliamentary assistance (local assistants, service providers, trainees in the country where the Member was elected);
107. Stresses that there should be no general suspicion about local assistants who are, in parallel, members of a political party or volunteer in political decision making at local level, such as in a town council; is aware that cases involving former French Members have led to a great deal of distrust with regard to the work of local assistants; highlights

that the misdeeds of some should not reflect on all assistants; stresses that random audits of local assistants and requesting proof of work are legitimate tools used by the administration to check the work of local assistants; calls, however, on DG FINS to inform local assistants at the start of their job what type of working documentation they require during audits and to provide guidelines with clear examples to local assistants in due time;

108. Calls on Parliament to ensure that local assistants are treated equally to APAs when it comes to access to information and data; stresses the need to offer information courses for local assistants to outline their rights and obligations; underlines that such courses should be offered in languages other than English as well to accommodate the needs of local assistants; stresses that equal treatment increases team spirit in every Member's office;
109. Notes that, in February 2023, DG FINS pushed ahead with its strategic financial support projects by launching 'EP Finance Academy by DG FINS' which derive from the works of the project 'Streamlined Path for Financial Actors' included in its projects' portfolio; notes that initial training courses followed on from an overhaul of the instruction corpus in terms of both content (creation of role-specific training trajectories, creation of new training courses) and format (preparatory works to the implementation of video tutorials to complement in-person or hybrid training courses);
110. Notes that in the context of DG FINS' work with regard to supporting Members in managing their financial and social entitlements, 2023 was dominated by the work of the Bureau's ad hoc working group which was tasked by the President, at the Bureau meeting of 21 November 2022, with evaluating and revising the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members (IMSM); notes that DG FINS was one of the main architects of the revision process; highlights that the work, which began in November 2022, involved 13 working group meetings, culminating in the adoption by Parliament's Bureau of 97 amendments to the IMSM at its meeting of 11 September 2023; remarks that the impact of the amendments is extensive (modifying and translating hard-copy and on-line forms);
111. Notes that following the Bureau's decision at its 17 October 2022 meeting to amend the IMSM with regard to the general expenditure allowance, which is paid in a lump sum, DG FINS took the necessary steps to implement the decision in 2023; highlights that DG FINS updated 49 administration forms relating to Members' financial and social entitlements and other documents and publications following changes to the numbering of IMSM articles; notes that DG FINS drafted guidelines for paying agents appointed by Members to help them with the voluntary publication of how their general expenditure allowances are used; notes that the work was discussed in Quaestors' notice 29/2023 in October and highlights the need to take into account aspects of transparency, accountability and sound financial management made available to Members, bearing in mind the principle of freedom and independence of the parliamentary mandate and the objective of legal certainty for Members as well as avoiding an unnecessary administrative burden for Members, their offices and Parliament's services;
112. Highlights that Members are free to document their use of the funds under the General Expenditure Allowance, in detail or by type of cost, on their own or with the support of an external auditor, and to have this information published in whole or in part on their

online page on Parliament's website in accordance with Rule 11(2) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure; welcomes that a simplified list of types of costs is integrated into the IMSM and that an amendment clarifying the possibility for Members to use the General Expenditure Allowance when an exhaustion of other allowances has also been adopted; notes that all Members have been informed about the specifics of this allowance;

113. Recalls that OLAF has the mandate to investigate suspicions of serious misconduct by Union staff and members of the Union institutions, including possible breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament; notes that a procedure to strengthen the mandate of OLAF in Parliament in cases of substantiated suspicions regarding individual Members when it is strictly needed and proportionate in terms of the investigation and fully respecting confidentiality in accordance with the principle of immunities as laid down in Protocol (No 7) on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Union could be implemented; reiterates its call on the Bureau to set up such a procedure without delay;
114. Highlights that Members are protected by non-liability for votes cast and opinions expressed in the performance of their duties and are protected from prosecution and restrictions on their personal freedom while carrying out their duties in Parliament; recalls that OLAF can only enter Members' offices after Parliament's President grants access following a request issued by a responsible authority of a Member State, in most cases a judge; points out that OLAF has to fully respect rule of law standards applying to Members in such cases, in particular the right to have access to data, the right to legal representation and the overarching principle of the presumption of innocence; underlines that the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI), pursuant to its mandate under Annex VI of the Rules of Procedure, plays a key role in the interpretation and application of Members' privileges and immunities; emphasises JURI's responsibility in ensuring the legal protection of Parliament's rights and prerogatives, which are essential in protecting the independence of Members in fulfilling their duties; recalls that OLAF needs to respect these limits in the observance of its duties and stresses that alleged misconduct cannot be used as a pretext to request access to offices;

Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support

115. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support (DG ITEC) provides Parliament with information and communications technology (ICT) services and equipment, videoconferencing and multimedia services as well as publishing and printing services; notes that by 31 December 2023, there were 550 members of staff in DG ITEC, of which 346 were officials, 73 were temporary agents and 131 were contract staff;
116. Notes that DG ITEC's final appropriations amounted to EUR 156 879 247 in 2023 representing 6,5 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 156 465 399 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
117. Takes note that, in order to emphasise the urgency of enhancing Parliament's cyber-defence capabilities and following the Bureau's approval of cybersecurity capacity-building measures, 40 "ICT Security Specialist" posts were added to DG ITEC's establishment plan in January 2023; notes that out of these, 24 posts have been filled

despite a challenging competitive market for cyber specialists and significant delays in EPSO competition results; notes that given the continued recruitment challenges in 2023, the focus of the human resources team was on setting up new ways to attract new talent, as well as building up the outreach plan and engage in outreach activities;

118. Takes note that following the Bureau's decision in February 2021 regarding the necessity to house Parliament's data centre in the highest available industry standard (Tier IV), DG ITEC awarded the contract in 2022, allowing for the set-up and roll-out of the data centre in 2023; highlights that this significant investment ensures a futureproof infrastructure for years to come, and is key in maintaining a robust hybrid work environment for Parliament;
119. Takes note that, in 2023, DG ITEC adopted a new Enterprise Risk Framework, further enhancing both DG ITEC internal risk management and Parliament's corporate risk management; takes note that the administration considers that this renewed practice is crucial for proactively anticipating threats and promptly seizing potential opportunities; notes that a new data protection guide was published in 2023, offering guidance on both legal and technical aspects of data protection;
120. Notes that, in 2023, DG ITEC proactively monitored the lifecycle of technology components, from introduction to obsolescence, through the 'Technology Clock'; highlights that the review of obsolescence is an established process that runs every quarter and allows DG ITEC and the client DGs to understand the timing and impact of technology changes, and positions them well for embracing new technologies;
121. Notes that 2023 has seen, as in previous years, a constantly growing cyber threat and risk landscape around Parliament and the other Union Institutions, bodies and agencies; highlights that particular threats have been identified in the domains of social engineering, phishing (all channels), teleworking, videoconferencing tools and cybersecurity at home; remarks that the main target audience is Members, APAs, and administrative staff;
122. Notes that the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2023/2841³ was adopted in December 2023 and entered into force in January 2024, laying down measures for a high common level of cybersecurity at the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union;
123. Highlights that DG ITEC reports that the first line cybersecurity verification service for Members and their offices to detect spyware on their mobile phones has seen considerable growth; notes that this service also complements the user awareness campaigns on IT security topics offered by DG ITEC;
124. Underlines that cybersecurity must be seen as an integral, ongoing priority across all stages of operations rather than merely as a target; highlights that cybersecurity requires a comprehensive strategy that encompasses all aspects of digital governance within Parliament; calls for a review of Parliament's IT governance structures, advocating for a

³ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2023/2841 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2023 laying down measures for a high common level of cybersecurity at the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union (OJ L, 2023/2841, 18.12.2023, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2841/oj>).

more robust and adaptable approach to cybersecurity that considers the full lifecycle of information systems, in view of the increasing number of applications — currently more than 20 — that are directly accessible via the internet; highlights that this situation requires enhanced oversight to minimise vulnerabilities and protect institutional data from external threats;

125. Calls for continued investments in cybersecurity infrastructure, as well as ongoing education and resources for staff, to reinforce a culture of security consciousness that strengthens Parliament's resilience against potential digital threats.
126. Highlights that support to Members has been expanded to include non-working hours and office closing days; notes that DG ITEC reports that this initiative has been met with enthusiasm from Members using the service and will be expanded further; notes that to meet the evolution of Members' needs and working practices, based on user surveys and on direct requests of the Governing Bodies, a new set of dedicated IT support services have been deployed for Members' private MacOS and iOS devices; highlights that technical assistance for social media is being promoted, together with a full range of services related to the technical aspects of audiovisual creation;

Directorate-General for Security and Safety

127. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Security and Safety (DG SAFE) seeks to anticipate, prevent and mitigate security risks and threats to Parliament and its Members and staff by using a risk-based approach that takes into due consideration the democratic nature of the institution and the values it embodies, in particular openness and transparency; notes that by 31 December 2023, there were 893 members of staff, of which 178 were officials, 32 were temporary agents, 682 were contract agents and 1 was a seconded national expert;
128. Notes that DG SAFE's final appropriations amounted to EUR 30 229 000 in 2023, representing 1,4 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 29 846 003 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;
129. Commends DG SAFE's role in the provision of continuous security and safety services in all places of work, without interruption, including also the protection of large-scale events, such as the open days and the European Youth Event; notes that for DG SAFE, 2023 was marked by the consolidation of its structures in an increasingly volatile and unstable geopolitical situation; recalls that the security environment in Europe's immediate neighbourhood further deteriorated during 2023; remarks that two wars are now raging at the Union's borders, with immense consequences for Europe and the surrounding area; recalls that terrorism returned to the top of the agenda when attacks took place in Belgium and France; notes that hybrid threats continued to play a major role; considers that DG SAFE is well equipped to deal with those threats;
130. Remarks that, during 2023, the reorganisation of DG SAFE was consolidated, with new colleagues hired and trained; notes that this has led to a strong output, in particular in the field of information and analysis, with the products of the new Directorate for Technologies and Information now widely used throughout DG SAFE and beyond; notes that the events related to alleged corruption cases concerning Members and employees in December 2022, also had an impact on DG SAFE, putting a renewed emphasis on transparency, integrity, and accountability, and boosting projects that aim

to improve issues related to accreditation and access; notes that, in 2023, DG SAFE launched a new project aiming to upgrade the Need-to-Know cell into an "early security warning tool";

131. Welcomes the achievements of DG SAFE in 2023, including the full deployment of the new radio network in the three places of work, the completion of the review of the security organigram of posts throughout Parliament requiring a personal security clearance, and the increase in the percentage of such posts for which a clearance has been requested or given 70 %, the introduction of V-PASS software for a more streamlined and more secure accreditation process for visitors, as well as its integration with other DG SAFE tools and with new automated stands ("kiosks") which are to be installed in 2024, equipping all car parks with RFID antennas, and the distribution of close to 14 500 RFID tags to car owners, as well as the roll-out of the IZIX application for car park management;
132. Welcomes the improvement of harmonisation in operational security between the three places of work with the creation of a new coordination cell and the enhancement of coordination with EPLOs and Europa Experiences with the implementation of the security and safety concept for public spaces; welcomes the further expansion of cooperation with other Union institutions and Member States' authorities, both within the established frameworks and with new activities; notes with satisfaction the organisation of a full day conference organised in the Parliament with the participation of security services of national parliaments from all over the Union and the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada and a visit to Parliament by generals and national military representatives based at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe;

Horizontal issues with implications on Parliament's budget for the 2023 financial year

Harassment and Whistleblowing

133. Notes that, in 2023, DG PERS played a pivotal role in the successful implementation of major improvements to staff policy, in particular by preparing the proposals to the Bureau on the establishment of a mediation service in Parliament, for new internal rules on whistleblowing, and for changes to the rules for the Advisory Committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning Members;
134. Notes that the updated whistleblowing rules are designed to protect members of staff who report possible serious misconduct, against retaliation; highlights that those new rules underscore the importance of training and awareness raising, ensuring that all managers within Parliament receive training on handling whistleblowing notifications; notes that, in 2023, only one case of whistleblowing was recorded;
135. Highlights that the new mediation service, accessible to all Members, will be dedicated to identifying and resolving workplace conflicts at an early stage, fostering a more harmonious work environment;

Voluntary Pension Fund (VPF)

136. Notes that, at its meeting on 12 June 2023, the Bureau decided on a combination of measures to change the conditions of the voluntary pension scheme to address the situation; highlights that these measures included the reduction of the nominal pension

by 50 % not only to future beneficiaries holding pension rights in the process of being acquired but also to current beneficiaries already holding acquired pension rights, that the yearly indexation of the pension amounts be frozen, and that the retirement age is increased from 65 to 67 for the beneficiaries not yet in pension; highlights that the effects have been estimated by the actuaries to decrease the pension obligation of the voluntary pension as of 1 July 2023 with actuarial assumption on 1 July 2023;

137. Notes that the Bureau also introduced a “hardship clause” allowing beneficiaries to submit a request to the Quaestors for an increase in the pension amount in cases where the reduction is substantial; notes that the Bureau further introduced the possibility of a voluntary and definitive withdrawal from the voluntary pension scheme in the form of a one-off final lump sum; notes that 56 beneficiaries used this possibility and that for 26 of those 56 beneficiaries the one-off final lump sum had not been paid by 31 December 2023;
138. Notes that the actuarial pension obligation of the voluntary pension scheme amounts to EUR 134,1 million as of 31 December 2023 compared to EUR 362,7 million in 2022; notes that the planned assets as of 31 December 2023, based on the net asset valuation of the fund as of the end of 2023, amounted to EUR 35,1 million; remarks that the voluntary pension scheme was thus underfunded by EUR 99,0 million as at 31 December 2023 compared to EUR 310,0 million in 2022;
139. Notes that the Bureau decision of 12 June 2023⁴ has been challenged by a number of voluntary pension scheme beneficiaries and that they have filed a complaint in the European Court of Justice; asks the administration and the Bureau to address the matter once again only after the legal assessment of the CJEU is delivered in order to consider the future of the voluntary pension fund;

PMO and JSIS

140. Notes with strong concern that the Paymaster's Office (PMO) and the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme (JSIS) do not meet the requirements to effectively ensure the health and well-being of Members, staff, and all persons covered by the system; underlines the fundamental importance of prioritising the health of all beneficiaries of the system and safeguarding their right to health protection in line with international standards; stresses that the PMO, in its function as a role model, must adhere to the most recent and modern health standards when providing services to Members, staff and all others covered by the system;
141. Stresses the urgent need to guarantee robust data and privacy protection for all users of JSIS; emphasises the importance of striking the right balance between obtaining necessary information for effective coverage and avoiding overly detailed, unnecessary or even impossible data collection that might infringe privacy rights, create an undue administrative burden or even cannot be determined in advance; stresses that JSIS must accommodate the personal circumstances of older former Members who might not be

⁴ Decision of the Bureau of the European Parliament of 12 June 2023 amending the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament (OJ C 227, 29.6.2023, p. 5).

able to fully provide all required information online anymore, as well as the need for a permanent contact person;

142. Calls for a comprehensive review of the list of medical procedures covered under JSIS to ensure alignment with the latest medical developments and advancements, ensuring beneficiaries have access to high-quality treatments aligned with the latest research developments; highlights the need for a responsive mechanism to approve coverage for procedures endorsed by qualified medical professionals, particularly in cases where such procedures are deemed medically necessary; highlights the need to recognise qualified medical expert opinions for treatments from third parties, in particular those coming from Members' general practitioners and only question their relevance in cases of serious doubts; stresses the need for regular exchanges with medical professionals and medical researchers to include new treatments and drugs; calls on the PMO to reimburse costs for the latest laboratory testing methods and genetic testing which help prevent illnesses, pain, and eventually save costs;
143. Urges the PMO to regularly assess and adapt reimbursement ceilings for medical procedures to reflect changing medical costs and ensure fair and adequate coverage; reiterates that these ceilings should be periodically adjusted to prevent financial barriers in accessing essential healthcare services for all beneficiaries;
144. Emphasises the importance of simplifying rules and procedures under JSIS and the PMO to reduce the administrative burden on Members, former Members, and staff, ensuring that processes are user-friendly, clear, and efficient; calls for efforts to avoid the unnecessary "gold plating" of procedures that may add complexity without clear benefits; highlights the need to improve cost-effectiveness and operational efficiency while maintaining high standards of service and coverage for all beneficiaries;
145. Reiterates the need to place the health and well-being of Members, staff, and beneficiaries at the centre of JSIS's and the PMO's policies, ensuring equitable access to healthcare services, modernised coverage, and respect for the dignity and privacy of all individuals involved;

Annual report on contracts awarded

146. Recalls that the Financial Regulation specifies the information to be provided to the budgetary authority and to the public concerning the award of contracts by Parliament; notes that the Financial Regulation requires publication of contracts awarded with a value greater than EUR 15 000, a value that corresponds to the threshold above which a competitive tendering procedure becomes compulsory; notes that, of a total of 242 contracts awarded in 2023, 98 were based on an open procedure, with a value of EUR 785 million, and 3 on a restricted procedure, with a value of EUR 1 432 000; notes that 135 contracts were awarded by negotiated procedures, with a value of EUR 187 million;
147. Notes that the total amount of contracts awarded significantly increased in 2023 (242) compared to 2022 (194); notes that, correspondingly, the number of open and negotiated procedures and their values are higher than in 2022;
148. Notes the following breakdown of contracts by type awarded in 2023 and 2022, including building contracts:

Type of contract	2023		2022	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Buildings	5	3,6 %	2	1 %
Services	199	79,6 %	169	87 %
Supplies	31	12,2 %	17	9 %
Works	7	4,5 %	6	3 %
Total	242	100 %	194	100 %

Type of contract	2023		2022	
	Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage
Buildings	125 577 430	17 %	27 804 776	7 %
Services	533 298 026	62 %	283 779 269	69 %
Supplies	377 495 862	13 %	47 817 885	12 %
Works	168 293 993	8 %	50 642 975	12 %
Total	1 204 665 311	100 %	410 044 905	100 %

149. Notes the following breakdown of contracts awarded in 2023 and 2022 by type of procedure used, in terms of number:

Type of procedure	2023		2022	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Open Procedure	98	40,5 %	63	32,5 %
Negotiated Procedure	135	56 %	126	65 %
Restricted Procedure	3	1 %	1	0,5 %
Exception	1	0,5 %	1	0,5 %
CEI list	0	0 %	1	0,5 %
DPS	5	2 %	0	0 %
Innovation Partnership	0	0 %	0	0 %
OP Accelerated	0	0 %	1	0,5 %
Design Contest	0	0 %	1	0,5 %
Total	242	100 %	194	100 %

Political groups (budget item 400)

150. Notes that, in 2022, the appropriations entered under budget item 400, attributed to the political groups and non-attached Members, were used as follows⁵:

⁵ All amounts in thousands of EUR.

Group	2023					2022				
	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
European People's Party (EPP)	16 812	10 841	21 898	130,25 %	5 755	16 739	12 640	18 651	111,42 %	10 729
Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	13 672	9 168	16 513	120,78 %	6 326	13 804	10 258	15 016	108,78 %	9 046
Renew Europe (former Alliance of Liberal and Democrats for Europe (ALDE))	9 741	5 469	12 214	125,39 %	2 996	9 799	6 950	11 384	116,18 %	5 365
The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)	6 961	4 173	8 860	127,28 %	2 274	6 941	5 196	7 964	114,74 %	4 173
Identity and Democracy (ID)	6 076	4 561	8 318	136,91 %	2 319	6 348	5 157	6 958	109,61 %	4 547
European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	6 350	3 126	7 054	111,09 %	2 421	6 184	3 847	6 960	112,55 %	3 071
The Left - European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)	3 734	1 396	5 071	135,78 %	60	3 858	2 036	4 498	116,59 %	1 396
Non-attached Members	2 654	1 520	1 232	46,44 %	1 207	2 326	861	994	42,72 %	1 520
Total	66 000	40 254	81 161	122,97 %	23 358	66 000	46 945	72 426	109,74 %	39 846

151. Welcomes the fact that independent external auditors for the political groups only issued unqualified opinions for the financial year 2023;
152. Recalls that these appropriations are intended to cover activities in connection with the Union's political activities, and that political groups are responsible to Parliament for their use;

European political parties and European political foundations

153. Highlights that the preservation of democratic integrity and the establishment of a fair environment for European political parties and European political foundations are crucial for the effective functioning and credibility of the Union; remarks that the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (the Authority), an independent Union body, has been actively involved in this endeavour since its establishment on 1 September 2016 and as of 1 January 2017 when it achieved its full operational status; remarks that the Authority is tasked by the Union legislator with registering, monitoring compliance, and where necessary, imposing sanctions on European political parties and European political foundations;
154. Notes with satisfaction that the Authority has been proactively reaching out and raising awareness among a network of bodies and institutions relevant to the common defence of European democracy; highlights that, in particular, the Authority worked with Parliament, which provides the secretariat of the Committee of Independent Eminent Persons, to maximise procedural efficiency; notes that cooperation on the operational aspects was also strengthened with several other Union stakeholders, including the European External Action Service and the European Data Protection Board; notes that the Authority has strengthened its cooperation with Europol by signing a Memorandum of Understanding on strategic information exchange concerning cyber-enabled unlawful interference in Union democracy;
155. Notes that in order to further boost operational preparedness for the 2024 European Elections, the Authority organised a table-top exercise with the support and participation of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats for the Article 10a interlocutors of the Member States and other relevant experts and stakeholders at Union level (the latter participating as observers in the exercise);
156. Takes note that, in 2023, the Authority issued several preventive compliance recommendations to address compliance risks before they materialise, especially pertaining to requirements concerning governance provisions and internal structures; remarks that the Authority provided preliminary input on possible statutory amendments envisaged by European political parties and European political foundations; welcomes that following the Authority's advice, seven entities have introduced amendments in their statutes and internal regulations with the objective of mitigating compliance risks, in particular to prevent potential threats of foreign interference;
157. Notes that the Authority has, in five cases, given the European political parties and European political foundations the opportunity for corrective measures regarding matters subject to verification, as required by Regulation (EU, Euratom) No

1141/2014¹; notes that these were cases relating to reporting requirements, replies to requests for information by the Authority and provision of documents; takes note that the Authority reports that early scrutiny indicates that the relevant corrective measures were implemented by the European political parties and European political foundations concerned in all but one of these cases; welcomes that the Authority continues to monitor if corrective measures with long-term effect are ensuring sustained compliance in the areas concerned; notes that the Authority adopted one sanction decision in the course of 2023 that is currently subject to Court proceedings;

158. Welcomes that the Authority also continued publishing extensive guidance on its website referring to the most commonly identified risk areas and potentially problematic structures in the governance of European political parties and European political foundations; welcomes that it also communicated its findings and guidance of general interest to all European political parties and European political foundations;
159. Notes that, during 2023, the Authority's compliance controls team carried out compliance controls taking into account, in particular, the annual submissions of European political parties' and European political foundations' financial documentation concerning the year 2022; notes that in addition to this regular annual process, the Authority also carried out ad hoc compliance controls, such as in cases of advance notifications of donations exceeding EUR 12 000 or when the Authority became aware of other potential instances of non-compliance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014; notes that where the Authority identified horizontal compliance risks, corresponding action points were communicated to the European political parties and European political foundations; notes that in 2023, the Authority gave European political parties and European political foundations a right to be heard as well as the opportunity to take corrective measures in accordance with Articles 29 and 34 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 in 10 cases relating to financial compliance controls;
160. Notes that pursuant to Article 10a of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014, preventing threats of foreign interference in the European Union democracy is a key task of the Authority in the run-up to the 2024 European Elections, in close cooperation with national competent authorities as required by legislation; takes note of the activities carried out by the Authority in this regard, and detailed in its Annual Activity Report;
161. Notes that the Authority reports that it is facing constrained human resources; remarks that this creates multiple human, managerial and procedural challenges since the corresponding work cycles are partially overlapping, and it is exacerbated whenever off-cycle investigations or procedures occur;
162. Notes that, in 2023, the appropriations entered under budget item 402 were used as

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations (OJ L317, 4.11.2014, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/1141/oj>).

follows²:

Party (2022)	Abbreviation	Own resources	EP final contribution (1)	Total revenue	EP contribution as % of reimbursable expenditure (max. 90 %)	Revenue surplus (transfer to reserve or loss)
TOTAL						

163. Notes that, in 2023, the appropriations entered under budget item 403 were used as follows³:

Foundation (2023)	Abbreviation	Affiliated to party	Own resources	EP final grant	Total revenue	EP grant as % of eligible costs (max. 95 %)	Revenue surplus (transfer to reserve or loss)

² All amounts in thousands of EUR. Data will be added after the Bureau Decision, which is currently scheduled to be taken on March 2025.

³ All amounts in thousands of EUR. Data will be added after the Bureau Decision, which is currently scheduled to be taken on March 2025.

TOTAL							
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