

2009 discharge: European Parliament

1. European Parliament decision of 10 May 2011 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2009, Section I – European Parliament (C7-0212/2010 – 2010/2143(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Union general budget for the financial year 2009¹,
- having regard to the final annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2009 (SEC(2010)0963 - C7-0212/2010)²,
- having regard to the report on budgetary and financial management - financial year 2009, Section I - European Parliament³,
- having regard to the Internal Auditor's annual report for 2009,
- having regard to the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2009, together with the institutions' replies⁴,
- having regard to the statement of assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the Court of Auditors pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union⁵,
- having regard to Article 272(10) and Article 275 of the EC Treaty, Article 314(10) and Article 318 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and Article 179a of the Euratom Treaty,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities⁶ (the Financial Regulation), and in particular Articles 145, 146 and 147 thereof,
- having regard to Article 13 of the Internal Rules on the implementation of the European Parliament's budget⁷,
- having regard to Article 147(1) of the Financial Regulation, which requires each Union institution to take all appropriate steps to act on the observations accompanying the European Parliament's discharge decision,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 April 2008 on the guidelines for the 2009 budget

¹ OJ L 69, 13.3.2009.

² OJ C 308, 12.11.2010, p. 1.

³ OJ C 172, 30.6.2010, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 303, 9.11.2010, p. 1.

⁵ OJ C 308, 12.11.2010, p. 129.

⁶ OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1.

⁷ PE 349.540/Bur/Ann/fin.

procedure - Sections I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and IX¹,

- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2008 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2009²
 - having regard to Rules 77 and 80(3) of, and Annex VI to, its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A7-0094/2011),
- A. whereas the audit of the Court of Auditors stated that, as regards administrative expenditure in 2009, all the institutions satisfactorily operated the supervisory and control systems required by the Financial Regulation and the transactions tested were free from material error³,
- B. whereas the Secretary-General certified, on 2 July 2010, his reasonable assurance that Parliament's budget has been implemented in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that the control framework put in place provides the necessary guarantees as to the legality and regularity of the underlying operations,
1. Grants its President discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Parliament budget for the financial year 2009;
 2. Sets out its observations in the resolution below;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this Decision and the resolution that forms an integral part thereof to the Council, the Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the Court of Auditors, the European Ombudsman and the European Data Protection Supervisor, and to arrange for their publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

¹ OJ C 247 E, 15.10.2009, p. 78.

² OJ C 279 E, 19.11.2009, p. 163.

³ OJ C 303, 9.11.2010, p. 198.

2. European Parliament resolution of 10 May 2011 with observations forming an integral part of the Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2009, Section I – European Parliament (C7-0212/2010 – 2010/2143(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the European Union general budget for the financial year 2009¹,
- having regard to the final annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2009 (SEC(2010)0963 - C7-0212/2010)²,
- having regard to the report on budgetary and financial management- financial year 2009, Section I - European Parliament³,
- having regard to the Internal Auditor's annual report for 2009,
- having regard to the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2009, together with the institutions' replies⁴,
- having regard to the statement of assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the Court of Auditors pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union⁵,
- having regard to Article 272(10) and Article 275 of the EC Treaty, Article 314(10) and Article 318 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and Article 179a of the Euratom Treaty,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities⁶ (the Financial Regulation), and in particular Articles 145, 146 and 147 thereof,
- having regard to Article 13 of the Internal Rules on the implementation of the European Parliament's budget⁷,
- having regard to Article 147(1) of the Financial Regulation, which requires each Union institution to take all appropriate steps to act on the observations accompanying the European Parliament's discharge decision,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 April 2008 on the guidelines for the 2009 budget

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³ OJ C 172, 30.6.2010, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 303, 9.11.2010, p. 1.

⁵ OJ C 308, 12.11.2010, p. 129.

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⁷ PE 349.540/Bur/Ann/fin.

procedure - Sections I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and IX¹,

- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2008 on Parliament's estimates of revenue and expenditure for the financial year 2009²,
 - having regard to Rules 77 and 80(3) of, and Annex VI to, its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A7-0094/2011),
- A. whereas the audit of the Court of Auditors stated that, as regards administrative expenditure in 2009, all the institutions operated satisfactorily the supervisory and control systems required by the Financial Regulation, and the transactions tested were free from material error³,
- B. whereas the Secretary-General certified, on 2 July 2010, his reasonable assurance that Parliament's budget has been implemented in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that the control framework put in place provides the necessary guarantees as to the legality and regularity of the underlying operations,

Major changes in Parliament's budget management during 2009

1. Acknowledges that the current financial situation necessitates that the Parliament, along with all Union institutions, finds the most cost effective ways of using financial and staff resources, including possible savings, as well as electronic tools and methods, to provide efficient services;
2. Calls for a long-term review of the Parliament's budget; asks for future potential savings to be identified in order to reduce costs and create resources for the long-term running of the Parliament as part of the legislative authority;
3. Recalls that, in its resolution of 5 May 2010⁴, on discharge to Parliament for the financial year 2008, Parliament deplores the great number (88 out of 452) and significant proportion of outstanding actions in respect of the audit carried out by the Internal Auditor on the internal control framework; notes with satisfaction the replies by the Secretary-General to the discharge questionnaire according to which, in the opinion of the Directors General, considerable progress took place in the implementation of the action items adopted by them: by the end of 2010 they considered 51 actions to have been fully implemented (including all of the 4 critical actions), 31 actions to have been partially implemented, whilst for 6 actions most of the work still needed to be done; requests however that the assessment and validation by its Internal Auditor of these self-assessments be included in its forthcoming annual report; also requests the Secretary-General to report on a six monthly basis to the Committee on Budgetary Control on all outstanding actions;
4. Recalls that DG ITEC was the most concerned, with 22 open actions; notes with satisfaction that, according to the Internal Auditor, the Directorate for Information

¹ OJ C 247 E, 15.10.2009, p. 78.

² OJ C 279 E, 19.11.2009, p. 163.

³ OJ C 303, 9.11.2010, p.198.

⁴ OJ L 252, 25.9.2010, p. 3.

Technology within DG ITEC, has implemented 19 of the 22 open actions and, in the process, has made significant progress in developing its control framework; encourages all its Directorates general concerned to continue their efforts to improve their respective management and control procedures; calls on the Internal Auditor to set stricter timetables on actions to be implemented;

5. Notes that 2009 was the first year of implementation for the Statute for Members of the European Parliament and for the Statute for Accredited Parliamentary Assistants; observes a certain number of initial problems with the implementing measures for the Assistants' Statute, welcomes however the fact that a Temporary Evaluation Group, set up within the Bureau, on the Members' and Assistants' Statutes has proposed amendments to the implementing measures for the Members' Statute concerning (i) Members' travel, (ii) Members' sickness insurance and reimbursement of medical expenses, (iii) travel by assistants on mission, (iv) duration and renewal of assistants' contracts, (v) assistants' professional training, and (vi) rules concerning Members' trainees as well as other amendments to the Assistants' Statute, in particular on (i) use of the parliamentary assistance and general expenditure allowances, (ii) paying agents, and (iii) revision of the complaints and appeals procedure for Members; stresses that these amendments should be implemented at the latest by 30 November 2011;
6. Observes that current rules for payment of the General Expenditure allowance, which state that money is to be paid to a personal account of the Member but which do not require any proof of expenditure, have led to the creation of a division between those Members who account for the expenditure in full and publish details thereof and those who do not adopt such transparent procedures and who, thereby, risk the accusation that a proportion of the allowance is being used to supplement their personal income; calls on the Secretary-General to propose arrangements to ensure that expenditure of the allowance is transparent in all cases and used for the purposes intended;
7. Notes the significant increase in the workload registered by the administration, relating to the entry into force of the new Statutes; notes with concern the more complicated procedure as regards accredited assistants' missions outside the three places of work and considers that, in spite of a considerable increase in staffing, there are insufficient staff members in the Members' service and the services dealing with assistants and requests, hence, the redeployment by the administration of additional staff in order to cope with the increased workload; requests, moreover, that a comprehensive evaluation covering changes in staff as well as the development of expenditure in all areas concerned be made and forwarded to its competent committees by 30 September 2011 concerning the experience gained of the implementation of the two Statutes following the first full year of their implementation, together with an action plan and an assessment of the financial implications for Parliament's budget, including the provisions to be made for possible extra office space;
8. Notes with satisfaction the improvements in the management of Parliament's services; welcomes, in particular, the Bureau decisions of 1 April 2009 on the restructuring, from 1 January 2010, of the Directorate-General for Personnel and on the restructuring and reinforcing of the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics in order to enable it to start work immediately on improving the maintenance of Parliament's premises;
9. Notes the adoption by the Bureau on 24 March 2010 of the long-awaited medium-term

strategy in the IT and the buildings sectors and expects that the buildings strategy will be subject to an improved interinstitutional cooperation and that the organisations of local inhabitants will be consulted on a regular basis;

10. Notes especially the medium- and long-term property policy (buildings strategy) , which takes into account Parliament's increased responsibilities under the Treaty of Lisbon, the rules governing allocation of space, the need for accommodation of certain external staff and the need for maintenance/renovation of buildings; further, requests a detailed report on future accommodation needs and on where the funding for this may come from; calls further on the Secretary General to conduct negotiations with the Belgian authorities aimed at reducing the extra percentage (33 %) to be paid if Parliament purchases "State" owned property;
11. Notes with satisfaction the improvements in Parliament's Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) governance, the envisaged generalised use of open source software and the fact that urgent IT development to support both the procurement process and the management of contracts has been recognised in the recently adopted ICT Strategy, as well as the need for:
 - clear specifications at the start of projects;
 - a comprehensive management information system;
 - the avoidance of excessive outsourcing of ICT services;
 - a clearer separation of duties in the fields of development and maintenance; and
 - additional resources in DG ITEC in order to achieve tighter control of projects;
12. Asks for all Members of the European Parliament to be sent copies of key policies adopted by the Bureau during the course of this parliamentary term, such as, for example:
 - the buildings strategy,
 - the ICT strategy,
 - the Communication Action Plan;and for them to be sent such papers in the future;
13. Calls on the Bureau to send out draft papers on key subjects of common interest to all Members of the European Parliament in order to facilitate discussion within the political groups before any final decisions are taken;

Main remaining challenges

Security

14. Condemns the third consecutive robbery inside what should be Parliament's secure premises; strongly disapproves of the evident deficiencies in Parliament's security; calls on its administration to re-deploy the responsible manager to new tasks;
15. Finds it astonishing that around 900 people work in Parliament's security services, most of them as external contract staff and also points to the steady increase in total security

costs (some EUR 43 000 000 in 2009); requests, in the light of recent security incidents, the overhaul of these services in order to increase their efficiency; strongly suggests that the two major contracts for security services, both physical and technical, will not be concluded with the same firm as is now the case;

16. Welcomes in this respect the establishment, from 1 January 2010, of a new Directorate in charge of Security and requests the newly established Directorate to conduct an in-depth review of Parliament's security policy and to work on proposals to adopt security solutions for Parliament which are more technology-oriented and cheaper, resulting in considerable savings in terms of staff and would like to be informed on progress made;
17. Considers that the new security policy should aim to strike a balance which is cost effective between internal staff and external agents and between security concerns, on the one hand, and accessibility and openness, on the other hand, in order to enable Parliament to remain, as much as possible, an open and accessible institution; stresses that more video surveillance is not a desirable way to proceed;
18. Notes that one of the weak spots in the security of Parliament today is that Members can enter and exit the buildings without submitting their badges to electronic control; believes that it should be mandatory for Members to show their badges when going in and out of the Parliament;
19. Observes that the arrangements for signing in Members' visitors are slow and cumbersome by comparison to those of the European Commission and those of many national parliaments, where security is of equal importance, and that this results in unnecessary delays and inconvenience for visitors, Members and their assistants; invites the Secretary-General to study the practices of parliaments elsewhere and, subsequently, to recommend adoption of improved procedures;
20. Stresses the need for a clear security strategy offering a smart, modern, state-of-the-art security service with the following possible elements:
 - (i) electronic signature for Members (instead of the current, archaic and costly system of signatures on paper with data entered manually by staff), whilst making sure that the new system leaves no room for abuse; therefore asks the Secretary General to bring forward by 30 September 2011 different proposals for a more effective signing system including considerations about opening hours for signing;
 - (ii) technical solutions enabling security staff to deal efficiently with emergency situations by providing them with reliable data concerning the number and identity of people present on Parliament's premises;
 - (iii) an updated crisis management plan;
 - (iv) an internalised accreditation system for visitors, to provide an improved and more consistent service;
21. Notes the large quantity of cameras installed at Parliament's three places of work¹; requests the Secretary-General to provide the Committee on Budgetary Control by 30

¹ 1001 cameras in Brussels, 238 in Luxembourg and 364 in Strasbourg.

June 2011 with detailed information specifying:

- (i) how the video recordings are used;
 - (ii) how and for how long they are stored
 - (iii) who has access to the recordings; and
 - (iv) whether the many cameras and the video surveillance have helped to prevent, detect or resolve thefts or in general how they have helped to increase the level of security in the Parliament;
22. Notes with concern the increasing difficulties encountered by Members and staff in carrying out their work caused by a great number of visitors' groups entering Parliament's premises in the working areas, not originally intended for visitors; requests the Questors to apply the relevant rules more strictly, especially for periods where there is a heavy workload;
23. Deplores the lack of security in Parliament's vicinity and is of the opinion that improved communication and cooperation with local police forces would result in a more efficient use of resources; encourages the institutions to reach an agreement with the Belgian authorities on improving security within the EU district in Brussels by inter alia intensifying police patrols;

Job rotation

24. Requests information on any derogations of the common practice of job rotation, after seven years in the same job at the very latest, of staff, and in particular people in so-called "sensitive posts";

Internalisation vs. Externalisation

25. Notes with great concern the high number (some 990) of external members of staff who are accommodated in Parliament's offices; takes the view that the need for such accommodation should be written into the original specifications and the services should duly justify why they need to have external IT or buildings experts on site; is of the opinion that greater use should be made of open plan offices;
26. Deplores the overdependence on external (technical) expertise, especially in the IT and buildings sectors resulting from structural imbalances between internal and external resources and calls for a cost-effective balance to be struck between in-house and external expertise in each area of parliamentary activity; therefore considers that a cost-benefit analysis should be carried out to inform decisions regarding the hire of external expertise;

Buildings policy

27. Stresses the need to develop, in-house, the high-quality property expertise that is essential in order significantly to improve the planning and procurement of the future purchases and long-term leases of Parliament's buildings; points out the crucial importance of improved inter-institutional cooperation;
28. Asks for an estimate of the loss incurred by the sale of the old Parliament building in

Brussels to the Committee of the Regions, taking into account the price per square metre of the offices which are currently being purchased or leased;

29. Calls on the Secretary-General, with the assistance of DG INLO and all DGs to carry out a in-depth analysis of the actual use of Parliament's buildings and of the need for rules applicable to all categories of users and to develop, as a matter of priority, a single, reliable database containing all relevant information about all the persons accommodated in Parliament's buildings; observes that the Bureau decision on Parliament's medium- and long-term property policy constitutes a good starting point in this respect; calls on DG INLO to scrupulously implement the action plan agreed with the Internal Auditor; calls for a comparative analysis of capital, capital service and maintenance costs per square meter of office space occupied as against the current rental cost of office space in the 'European district' in Brussels; demands that, before any more office buildings are purchased, their value must be ascertained by means of discounted cash flow (DCF) analysis;
30. Notes that a second crèche in Brussels is a priority project and therefore, requires new floor space; asks, in the context of new office space, for a survey among Members to assess whether they consider a second assistant's office necessary with regard to the employment of further assistants;
31. Considers it preferable that the Parliament's buildings are located close to each other; recalls, however, that this preference is in contradiction with the fact that there are three official places of work; stresses in this context that there is sufficient office space available for rent in the immediate vicinity of the European Parliament in Brussels, which could satisfy office space needs in the medium term and at the same time comply with the Parliament's financial and operating efficiency and environmental objectives;
32. Encourages its administration to negotiate an inter-institutional agreement with the Commission on the financial arrangements for the purchase of 'Europe Houses' (EP Information Offices), which is to include clear paragraphs on cost reductions;

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector

33. Welcomes the more structured approach to ICT and the elaboration of a comprehensive strategy in this field; further welcomes the commitment by its administration in its answers to the questionnaire to launch a study on the possibility of replacement of external staff;
34. Highlights, in relation to the IT applications' development process, the structural problem of a high-degree of reliance on external experts which poses serious legal and operational risks; advocates therefore the need for significant changes to the management and control systems in the Directorate for Information Technologies, including the closer and earlier involvement of other DGs in all aspects of application development, which are capable of increasing users' ownership of and responsibility for each project's outcome;
35. Calls therefore on DG ITEC to scrupulously implement the action plan agreed with the Internal Auditor and to seek to achieve an adequate mix of Parliament staff and external resources as well as an appropriate balance between internal application development and deliverables-based contracting; takes note of the lack of qualified candidates on EPSO lists in the field of IT security; supports also the suggestion to urgently organise separate

AD7 competitions in this field;

36. Is appalled by the huge data roaming costs reimbursed to staff members who neglect spiralling costs when in Strasbourg and elsewhere outside Brussels; urges IT management to create a control tool whereby extremely high costs are prevented by the detection of sharp increases in an early stage;
37. Draws attention to the fact that, for Parliament, the increasing use of external companies for implementing IT projects, in addition to being financially detrimental, runs the risk that it will lose important parts of its know-how as well as its ability to manage and supervise projects delivered by external contractors; furthermore, calls for the decision to use external companies to be based on a cost-benefit analysis; moreover because of the increasing role and importance of ICT in the work of European Parliament, deems it to be important to raise the role of ICT management to a higher level, also to ensure higher security protection; strongly urges that DG ITEC provide information on the costs of externalising the computing centres in comparison to previous costs in its activity report for 2010;

Exceptional negotiated procedures

38. Recalls its view, expressed in its resolution of 5 May 2010, that the increase in the number and proportion of exceptional negotiated procedures registered between 2007 and 2008 clearly obliges the authorising officers to take measures to 'reverse the trend' and its invitation to the Secretary-General to report to its Committee on Budgetary Control on measures taken before 1 September 2010;
39. Is concerned to see the continuing upward trend in the number of exceptional negotiated procedures and reiterates its call to the Secretary-General and the Authorising Officers by delegation to take effective and efficient measures in order to reverse that trend and to report to its competent committee by 30 September 2011 on the measures taken; further urges its administration to continue the strict scrutiny of these procedures, in particular with respect to possible conflicts of interest, and to apply intensified and dissuasive sanctions for any irregularity found;

Rules of procedure

40. Notes that the internal organisation and distribution of powers between Parliament's internal structures is defined by its rules of procedure; stresses that this is a key element in the democratic process of good law-making;
41. Finds that the possibility of posing written questions to the other institutions should be improved by providing appropriate forms for each of the institutions as well as adapting Parliament's Rules of Procedure;

Report on budgetary and financial management

42. Notes that, in 2009, Parliament received revenue amounting to EUR 141 250 059 (151 054 374 EUR in 2008) which included EUR 27 576 932 in assigned revenue;

Presentation of Parliament's accounts

43. Takes note of the figures on the basis of which Parliament's accounts for the financial year 2009 were closed, namely:

(a) Available appropriations (EUR)	
appropriations for 2009:	1 529 970 930
non-automatic carry-overs from financial year 2008:	8 315 729
automatic carry-overs from financial year 2008:	196 133 738
appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue for 2009:	27 576 932
carry-overs corresponding to assigned revenue from 2008:	36 808 922
Total:	1 798 806 251
(b) Utilisation of appropriations in the financial year 2009 (EUR)	
commitments:	1 670 143 804
payments made:	1 466 075 267
appropriations carried forward automatically including those arising from assigned revenue:	201 826 738
appropriations carried forward non-automatically	10 100 000
appropriations cancelled:	120 804 246
(c) Budgetary receipts (EUR)	
received in 2009:	141 250 059
(d) Total balance sheet at 31 December 2009 (EUR)	
	1 709 216 709

44. Considers that an additional column should be added to the table containing the relevant data for the previous year in order to provide better transparency and facilitate comparisons;
45. Notes with satisfaction that for the first time in 2009 no mopping-up transfer took place at the end of the financial year, after a number of years when the possibility of mopping-up was used (mostly to purchase buildings by making advance payments against the annual lease payments), which suggests better budget planning and discipline and which is to be praised; encourages its administration to pursue this objective in the future as well and to avoid, as far as possible, using the technique of mopping up;

Statement of assurance by the Secretary-General

46. Welcomes the Secretary-General's statement dated 2 July 2010 in his capacity as Principal Authorising Officer by delegation, concerning the authorising officers' annual activity reports for 2009, in which he certifies that he has a reasonable assurance that Parliament's budget has been implemented in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that the control framework put in place provides the necessary guarantees as to the legality and regularity of the underlying operations;

Activity reports by the Directors-General

47. Notes that, currently, each Director-General (Authorising Officers by delegation) prepares his or her own Annual Activity Report, and that no overall Activity Report for the Institution as a whole is drafted and adopted; invites the Secretary-General to consider issuing a more readable, consolidated version (a summary) of the Annual Activity Reports for the 2010 discharge procedure, as is already the case with other institutions, whilst making sure that the annexes of the reports are not scanned but uploaded in such a way as to permit computer searches; takes the view that the report on budgetary and financial management is distinct from the suggested synthesis of the annual activity

reports;

48. Notes that Article 8(4) to (7) of the Internal rules on the implementation of the Parliament's budget requests Authorising officers by delegation (AODs) to report to the Principal authorising officer by delegation (PAOD), on the performance of his other duties by providing three reports over the course of the year (one at the start of the financial year, the second on 15 June and the third on 15 October) in addition to the annual activity report produced for the previous year; advocates the need to lessen this reporting burden with a view to simplification, so that DGs prepare only one version of their Annual Activity Report;
49. Stresses however, that this simplification in the AODs' reporting obligations should not affect their obligation of keeping the PAOD informed about any substantial transactions likely to have financial implications for the budget and about any significant event that might jeopardise the sound management of appropriations or prevent the objectives set from being achieved;
50. Notes some weaknesses in reporting regarding the minimum Internal Control Standards in the annual activity reports; proposes, in order to improve reporting, to review those standards and to establish an integrated internal reporting system;
51. Reiterates its request¹ that the Secretary-General inform the Committee on Budgetary Control of the precise measures, including the deadlines for implementation, that he has taken or will take in order to reinforce Parliament's internal control system; recalls that the provision of this information has been due since 31 December 2010;
52. Suggests that, in order to increase transparency within Parliament, the mission statements, the work programme and the organigramme of Parliament's administrative entities, including units and services, should be made available on Parliament's internal website as is already the case at the Commission;
53. Notes that finding out where the money from different budget headings is actually flowing or how it is being used, demands great extra efforts on the part of Members and the public; therefore, in order to increase transparency, proposes the creation of a user-friendly tool on the Internet showing money flows not only in figures, but also through lines of different sizes, reflecting those figures and making the necessary connections from one actor in the chain to another, at the various different levels of action, so that those money flows may be easily recognised and traced to as concrete a level of the usage of money as possible, whilst always taking into account the protection of privacy;

Annual report on contracts awarded

54. Notes that central services established, on the basis of information provided by authorising departments, the annual report² to the budgetary authority on contracts awarded in 2009 and the following breakdown of all contracts awarded in 2009 and 2008:

¹ Point 61 of its resolution of 5 May 2010 (OJ L 252, 25.9.2010, p. 11).

² Available at:
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201009/20100901ATT80830/20100901ATT80830FR.pdf>

Type of contract	2009		2008	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Services	157	62 %	241	67 %
Supplies	56	22 %	59	17 %
Works	34	14 %	44	12 %
Building	5	2 %	15	4 %
Total	252	100 %	359	100 %

Type of contract	2009		2008	
	Value (EUR)	Percentage	Value (EUR)	Percentage
Services	415 344 963	75 %	454 987 532	67 %
Supplies	34 980 727	6 %	22 868 681	3 %
Works	36 045 314	6 %	81 247 056	12 %
Building	70 394 138	13 %	123 429 315	18 %
Total	556 765 142	100 %	682 532 584	100 %

(Annual report on the contracts awarded by the European Parliament, 2009, pages 3-4)

55. Stresses that the value of procurement contracts amounts approximately to a third of Parliament's overall budget and that public procurement is the area most vulnerable to mismanagement; therefore repeats its request to regularly evaluate the procurement systems and in particular to perform internal controls on the contracts awarded in negotiated and restricted procedures;
56. Asks the Secretary-General to report whether the increase of the ceiling for low-value contracts from EUR 25 000 to EUR 60 000 in 2007 has facilitated access by small companies as intended, without substantially weakening scrutiny of the procurement process; notes that these contracts made up only 0,76 % in value but 39,29 % in number of the total contracts awarded;
57. Notes the breakdown of contracts awarded in 2009 and 2008 by type of procedure used as follows:

Type of procedure	2009		2008	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Open	73	29 %	126	35 %
Restricted	13	5 %	14	4 %
Negotiated	166	66 %	219	61 %
Total	252	100 %	359	100 %

Type of procedure	2009		2008	
	Value (EUR)	Percentage	Value (EUR)	Percentage
Open	415 996 418	75 %	345 415 316	51 %
Restricted	9 458 434	2 %	139 782 362	20 %
Negotiated	131 310 290	23 %	197 334 906	29 %
Total	556 765 142	100 %	682 532 584	100 %

(Annual report on the contracts awarded by the European Parliament, 2009, p. 5)

Exceptional negotiated procedures

58. Notes, in particular, the steady increase in 2009 (although at a slower pace than in 2008 as compared to 2007) in the number of exceptional negotiated procedures as shown in the following breakdown; expects that this trend will be substantially reversed in the coming years:

General Directorate	2009		2008	
	Number	% of DG's total contracts	Number	% of DG's total contracts
DG PRES (except DIT)	14	53,85 %	8	44,44 %
DG IPOL	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %
DG EXPO	1	50,00 %	3	75,00 %
DG COMM (except Library Dir.)	29	42,03 %	16	16,00 %
DG PERS	1	16,67 %	0	0,00 %
DG INLO (except Interpreting Dir.)	37	38,14 %	36	34,95 %
DG INTE (formerly Interpreting Dir.)	3	21,43 %	9	56,25 %
DG TRAD (except Publishing Dir.)	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %
DG ITEC (formerly Publishing and IT Directorates)	4	36,36 %	9	56,25 %
DG FINS	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %
Legal Service	0	0,00 %	0	0,00 %
Parliament, total	89	35,32 %	81	22,56 %

(Annual report on the contracts awarded by the European Parliament, 2009, p. 9)

Annual Report of the Court of Auditors for 2009

General findings

59. Notes that the audit of the Court of Auditors found the payments as a whole to be free from material error and that the Court of Auditors found no material weaknesses when assessing the compliance of supervisory and control systems with the Financial Regulation;

Engagement of temporary and contractual agents

60. Notes the finding of the Court of Auditors that, in five cases out of 20, documents providing evidence of compliance with the rules relating to the classification of staff as members of the temporary or of the contractual staff and to the fulfilment of linguistic, military and other obligations were not provided; takes note of the responses given by Parliament in the contradictory procedure with the Court of Auditors;

Allowances for staff

61. Notes that the Court of Auditors found¹ that in 16 cases out of 30, information available

¹ Point 9.14 of the 2009 Annual Report (OJ C 303, 9.11. 2010, p.199).

to Parliament's services in order to ensure that allowances provided for by the Staff Regulations are paid to staff in compliance with relevant Community regulations and national legislation was not up-to-date; agrees with the Court of Auditors that there is therefore a risk of making incorrect and undue payments if the circumstances of the individual have changed;

62. Notes with satisfaction the replies of Parliament's administration to the effect that, in 2009, a campaign was launched in order to verify whether the benefit of the household allowance to personnel not having dependent children was still justified and that it now proceeds to a regular verification of the situation of its staff and that, from 2010, this verification was automated (through use of a '*fiche électronique*') which makes at least an- annual verification of the staff personal and administrative data possible;

Organisation and functioning of political groups

63. Notes that Article 12(9) of the Parliament's Internal Rules for the implementation of the budget, adopted on 27 April 2005, provide that the Internal Auditor's area of competence does not include the appropriations from Parliament's budget managed by political groups; further notes that the specific rules on the use of those appropriations require each political group to establish its own internal financial rules and to implement an internal control system;
64. Stresses that all political groups have to have a yearly external audit and have to present an external audit certificate;
65. Stresses that it is the responsibility of the political groups to put in place their internal control system and that this should not be the responsibility of Parliament's Internal Auditor and calls on the Bureau to consult the political groups on how further audit provisions can be developed;
66. Welcomes the fact that the calculation of the carry forward was made in the same manner as for the election year 2004, when the 50 % rule was applied for the aggregated figures for the two six-month periods;

Follow-up by the Secretary General to the 2008 discharge resolution

67. Notes with satisfaction the good quality of written answers to the 2008 discharge resolution provided to the Committee on Budgetary Control on 19 November 2010; regrets however that it was not possible to receive those answers before the start of the 2009 discharge exercise; expects that for the 2010 discharge exercise an exchange of views between the Secretary-General and the Committee on Budgetary Control can take place before the end of October 2011;
68. Recalls its request, in its resolution of 5 May 2010, that the Secretary-General contact the other EU institutions in order to establish a central database for the studies that they are conducting and to make those studies available also for consultation by the wider public; encourages its Secretary-General to follow up on this request, in particular by proposing to the Commission that that institution establish such a central database; requests that it be duly informed of this initiative and expects, in the meantime, that the studies conducted by Parliament are published in full on Parliament's website;

69. Notes with satisfaction that the Secretary-General has sent letters reminding the Directors-General to implement the critical actions agreed between the Internal Auditor and their services;
70. Is satisfied with the actions taken following its criticism in its discharge resolution of 5 May 2010 of the skiing holidays organised by the Staff Committee; recalls that according to the new rules, Parliament's financial contribution can only be granted for children of officials in grades up to AST 4 and that the subsidy is now dependent on the number of children¹;

The Internal Auditor's annual report

71. Welcomes the fact that, with effect from 1 September 2009, the Internal Audit Service has been attached, for administrative purposes, to the Secretary-General; notes with satisfaction that this important change is in line with the professional standards on the organisational independence of the Internal Audit Service and it enhances both the effectiveness of the internal audit activity and the perception of its independent and objective role by the audited departments;
72. Notes that, at the competent committee's meeting held on 13 January 2011, the Internal Auditor presented his annual report and explained that, in 2009, he performed the following audit work:
- audits of the public procurement process in DG Presidency, DG Infrastructure and Logistics and DG Finance as well as follow-up of the central actions from Internal Audit Report No 05/02 adopted on 31 March 2006;
 - an audit of Building Policy: Planning, Assessment and Management of Accommodation Needs;
 - the second follow-up of the uncompleted actions from the audits of imprest accounts, inventory and budgetary management in certain Information Offices;
 - the third follow-up to the review of the Institution's Internal Control Framework;
 - an audit of the IT Applications' Development Process; and
 - the follow-up to the review of contributions to political parties at European level and New Review of political foundations and of the application of the rules on reserves and carry-over of surpluses;
73. Notes and supports the views expressed by the Internal Auditor as to:
- the general need to improve the preparation and planning of procurement procedures and the prior assessment of needs;
 - the fact that, in spite of improvements to the central guidance and support for the procurement process, and the useful tools and standard documents devised, departments are not using these systematically;

¹ Minutes of the meeting of the Bureau of 19 April 2010, PE 439.765/BUR.

- the fact that there is also a need for urgent IT development to support both the procurement process and the management of contracts;
 - the need, as a prerequisite for any IT project, for compulsory business process modelling by user departments, which would help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the departments' internal control frameworks and risk management processes;
 - the importance of risks associated with overdependence on external service providers of consulting and specialised technical expertise;
74. Is of the opinion that the internal audit reports should be made available, under specific conditions, to the Members of the Committee on Budgetary Control; urges the Chair of that committee to agree with the Secretary-General on those conditions;

Risk Manager

75. Notes with satisfaction that the Risk Manager took up his functions on 1 June 2010 and reports directly to the Secretary-General; understands that it is not possible to staff the service fully in 2011 and that the first risk profile is expected to be presented during the first half of 2011 and the approach and strategy for risk management will be developed under the authority of the Secretary-General by summer 2011; expects its competent committee to be fully informed of any new development and strategic document regarding Parliament's risk management and to be provided with the Risk Manager's annual activity report from the 2010 discharge exercise;
76. Takes the view that, even if there is no financial risk, Parliament should, as far as possible, aim to avoid reputational risks, to identify strategic risks (in particular in its IT and buildings sectors), to ensure that an effective risk management system is in operation at central level, with an agreed procedure to identify and assess risks, to formulate and to report on the responses to those risks, and to guarantee the oversight and decision-making bodies that risk management is effective and that all responses to risks, including internal controls, are appropriate;
77. Urges the Secretary-General to establish, with the assistance of the Risk Manager, a consistent institution-wide approach to the identification and management of sensitive posts;

MANAGEMENT OF PARLIAMENT'S ADMINISTRATION

DG Presidency

78. Notes the high cost of measures to prevent a possible H1N1 influenza outbreak implemented between mid-September 2009 and the end of March 2010, amounting to some EUR 1 261 000; stresses the need to evaluate the number of people who are likely to request the vaccine before purchasing vaccine in the future;

DG Internal Policies (IPOL) and External Policies (EXPO)

79. Points to the costs of parliamentary delegations (DG EXPO) in 2009 which amounted to some EUR 4 301 000;

80. Stresses the fundamental importance of specific knowledge management, in particular in the work of the committees, and the need for permanent and up-to-date knowledge in their fields of operation; recalls the high number of newly elected Members in recent parliamentary terms; asks the Bureau to reflect on the possibility of providing further specific information and training for Members including specific measures for the new additional 18 Members¹ and the future observers from Croatia;
81. Welcomes the establishment of a support system for the security of delegations outside the three places of work of which the main objective is to furnish Parliament's hierarchy with all the relevant information needed to provide assistance to delegation members in case of an emergency situation; points out the importance of the 24/7 Hotline, the post of Security Unit Duty Officer and appropriate security training and security briefings, as well as the creation of a future crisis cell; would like be informed of the total costs of this operation;

DG Communication

82. Notes that the human resources available to DG Communication consisted of 722 posts as at 31 December 2009 and the final appropriations managed amounted to EUR 80 935 000; asks to review the number and location of posts and give a detailed explanation of the underlying need for these posts with analysis of the effect and results by DG Communication;
83. Questions whether the DG needs a 'Performance and Strategic Management Unit', as well as both a 'Policy Unit' and 'Resources Unit'; requests the Secretary General to review these structures and to consider whether the creation of such a unit could be seen as the start of a process of establishing large and unnecessary 'cabinets' for Directors General;
84. Notes that most heads of Parliament's information offices have written a joint letter questioning aspects of the budgetary management of the DG and asks the Secretary General to investigate the situation and to ascertain whether the creation of central units in the DG such as the 'Performance and Strategic Management' and 'Policy' Units are removing staff from frontline activities such as budgetary management with a cost in terms of the effectiveness of the DG;
85. Insists that, within budget line 3242, specific activities and their associated costs should be clearly and transparently itemised;

Visitors centre

86. Deplores the very long delay in the opening of the Visitors' Centre (originally foreseen for the 2009 European elections) and the poor planning and insufficient support in the start phase from the administration; notes the opening date that is currently envisaged of October-November 2011; reiterates its request for a detailed explanation of the specific reasons, including a detailed analysis of the procurement procedures, for such a considerable delay and the precise increase in the cost of the project;

¹ Following the ratification of the Protocol amending the Protocol on transitional provisions annexed to the Treaty on European Union, to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and to the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, OJ C 263, 29.9.2010, p. 1.

87. Stresses the need to ensure an easy link (a corridor) for visitors groups between the Visitors' Centre, the Hemicycle and the future House of European History; requests the Secretary-General to provide its Committee on Budgetary Control, by 30 September 2011, with concrete plans to realise such a link, with an estimated maximum of the costs involved;

House of European History

88. Regrets that decisions with regard to the House of European History were only taken by the Parliament's Bureau; calls for the inclusion of the relevant committees of Parliament for further decisions on the concept of the House of European History; encourages the discussion on the possibility to hold exhibitions at different locations across Europe in a first phase; asks for the development of a concept for the House of European History as a separate and independent legal body with the least possible impact on the Parliament's administrative budget;
89. Would like to be informed about the total cost of the House of European History and requests the Secretary General to provide information on which measures will be taken to cope with the expected large increase of visitors for both projects in terms of parking space (busses, cars) and easy access to the Esplanade (*la dalle*);

Visitors' groups

90. Recalls that the costs of a sponsored group visit should be reimbursed to the group leader and that a study should be conducted by the Parliament to examine whether the system for the reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by official visitor groups is adequate in view of their different departure points and destinations for their visits;

EuroparlTV

91. Deplores the fact that EuroparlTV cannot be considered to be a success story in view of its very low number of direct individual users¹ (excluding viewers through partnership agreements with regional TVs) in spite of the considerable annual appropriations that it receives, amounting to some EUR 9 000 000; therefore, calls for a cost-benefit evaluation of EuroparlTV with a view to making savings in this area;

Prizes

92. Observes that, in the last few years, Parliament has greatly increased the number of, and the budget for, its prizes²; expresses doubts as to whether those prizes represent Parliament's core competences and the tasks which stem from its legislative, budgetary and budgetary control prerogatives at their best; calls on its Bureau to refrain from initiating the funding of new prizes and to prepare a review of existing prize schemes;
93. Deplores the fact that, in spite of its opinion, expressed in its resolution³, that the Prize for

¹ Between 25 000 and 30 000 visits monthly.

² Lux Prize: some EUR 321 000, Charlemagne Youth Prize: some EUR 24 000, European Journalist Prize: some EUR 105 500, Sakharov Prize: some EUR 300 000 (all amounts are from 2009).

³ Point 91 of its resolution of 5 May 2010 (OJ L 252, 25.9.2010, p. 15).

Journalism is inappropriate, as Parliament should not award prizes to journalists whose task is critically to examine the EU institutions and their work, DG COMM has already launched the procedure for the 2011 prize; calls for the prize for 2012 to be abolished;

94. Asks that all costs related directly and indirectly to the prizes of the European Parliament shall be presented openly and transparently;

2009 election campaign

95. Notes with concern the overall decline in turnout in the 2009 European Elections to 43,2 %, in spite of the considerable efforts made to reinforce Parliament's institutional election campaign which cost some EUR 5 676 000;

Washington Liaison Office

96. Notes that the total cost of setting-up the European Parliament Congressional Liaison Office in Washington in 2009 and 2010 is estimated to be some USD 400 000 annually as a result of an administrative arrangement with the Commission; notes that setting up the Office has not entailed the creation of any new posts, the postings being the result of redeployments, long-term missions and a system of one-year missions; is concerned about the possible future cost and requests that its competent committees be informed regularly and duly about any future plan having significant financial implication concerning this Office;

Information offices

97. Highlights the need for constant and even-distributed information over the European citizenship; therefore stresses the importance of well-balanced locations for its information offices;

DG Personnel

98. Notes that the level of outstanding commitments (a little less than EUR 6 000 000 or 1,4 %) for Item 1 2 0 0 (Remuneration and allowances) can be explained by the decision taken by the Council in December 2009 to award an annual salary adjustment of only 1.85 %, whilst the budget had been revised on the basis of the figure of 3.7 % as indicated and proposed by the Commission;
99. Notes that, following the introduction of the new rules governing accredited parliamentary assistants, DG Personnel had to deal with 1770 new contracts concluded under the new rules, the bulk of the work being concentrated in 2009; observes that, in overall terms, this operation can be said to have been a success;
100. Deplores the fact that the employment of family members as assistants is still permitted under the derogations to the Members' Statute adopted by the Bureau at its meeting of 23 November 2009; urges the administration to scrupulously assess the justification for the remaining cases of such employment; requests the Secretary General to consider whether there should be specific rules preventing Members employing each others family members as assistants;
101. Notes the significant presence of nationals from one particular Member State (13.5 %, the

highest for any nationality) in Parliament's General Secretariat; reminds that the General Secretariat shall serve Members from all Member States equally and that the staffing ought to reflect this better;

Missions to the three places of work

102. Stresses the need to further rationalise the missions between the three working places, justifying and monitoring them better in order to avoid unnecessary missions and costs, and in particular to take account of the forthcoming results of the Internal Audit Service's controls in the area of parliamentary assistance; asks the Secretary General to report, as part of the discharge procedure, on the total amount of savings that were made as a result of further rationalisation;

DG Infrastructures and Logistics (DG INLO)

103. Expresses its concern at the case of irregular invoicing where there is no evidence of fraudulent intent, since it shows the failure of DG INLO's internal control system to prevent such cases occurring; reiterates its call on DG INLO to scrupulously implement the action plan agreed with the Internal Auditor;

Transport of Members

104. Observes that the cost of Parliament's official car service amounted to EUR 1 272 932 in Strasbourg and EUR 2 352 756 in Brussels; further notes that Parliament signed a new contract for the official car service with an estimated total value of EUR 5 250 000 (over four years);
105. Calls on its Bureau to review the rules for the users of dedicated service cars, so as to end the current practice in which these cars are shuttled empty over long distances for the mere purpose of serving for short distance missions (from airports to final destinations in the city and back again); highlights the cost incurred by such practices; urges its Bureau to find less costly alternatives in order to provide the taxpayer with the best value for money;

Canteens and restaurants

106. Is of the opinion that services which are not required in connection with the Institution's activities but which are provided within Parliament's buildings by profit-orientated companies must be economically self-supporting and should not be financed directly or indirectly with subsidies from Parliament's budget and any exceptions for imputed costs must be shown separately in the budget and be duly motivated;
107. Believes that, with such a wide variety of locations available within the buildings of Parliament for canteens, bars, and retail space, a variety of competitive catering outlets, including established high street brands (coffee shops, sandwich outlets, restaurants, and so forth), could, if allowed to establish themselves inside Parliament, offer a better service to staff; calls for a plan to be prepared to indicate how the different catering facilities, could be offered for tender separately when current contractual arrangements come to an end;
108. Requests supplementary information concerning the operation of the canteens and

restaurants sector, in particular concerning the relationship between the annual subsidy and the profit/loss situation;

DG Translation and DG Interpretation and Conferences

109. Stresses that, while maintaining a high standard of work, it is also necessary to achieve a more efficient use of language resources and to control their costs by looking at the overall workload for each language section and by ensuring that costs generated by the late cancellation of meeting requests, delegation visits with interpretation and the non-respect of the translation deadlines laid down in the Code of Conduct are reduced; insists that committees, delegations and political groups which persistently ignore the deadlines set in the Code of Conduct should more strictly observe them;
110. Considers that the externalisation of translation can result in important cost savings, efforts should, however, be made to increase the quality of external translations; supports the increasing use of the Euramis database, common to all EU institutions, and other technological developments in the field of translation (such as a single integrated system of DocEP and Euramis/translation memories) which aim to avoid double translations and to lower the cost of translation; stresses, however, that no machine translation system can totally replace translators;
111. Is worried by the lack of available human resources in some languages and by the fact that new supplies of interpreters and translators may be put at risk by lack of university curricula in some Member States; also stresses the future problem of upcoming generation change concerning EU-15 languages interpreters/translators of which a great number are expected to retire in the next 5 to 10 years;
112. Expresses its great appreciation of the high quality of the Parliament's interpretation services, but regrets situations in which interpretation into certain languages is offered without being used; stresses the need for measures to decrease the costs of unneeded interpretation at meetings and therefore requests the development and urgent implementation of a system, which avoids the availability of interpretation into languages that are in practice not spoken at a given meeting;
113. Suggests that such a system could, for example, provide that, during working group meetings, interpretation into the six largest official languages (FR, DE, EN, PL, ES, IT) will automatically be available, while interpretation into any other official language will only be available at the request of a Member by specific notification of his or her presence in advance, thus guaranteeing the right of Members to speak their own language should they wish to do so, while avoiding unneeded interpretation and unnecessary costs;

DG Finance

114. Notes with concern the weaknesses in the procurement procedure in DG Finance identified by the Internal Auditor in the course of the procurement process audit according to which, in the case of procurement for banking services, a lack of sufficient prior-needs assessment led to problems with tender specifications and also pointed to substantial risks, although the audit also showed that current arrangements provided appropriate levels of protection against key risks; stresses the urgent need to improve the operation of controls so that they address the identified risks more effectively;

115. Takes the view that the services and procedures of DG Finance should be simplified and streamlined in order to speed up the handling of invoices from local assistants based in Member States and to reduce queues and bureaucratic procedures; takes the view that DG Finance should provide quicker electronic information to Members concerning remaining available funds; furthermore takes the view that DG Finance should organise training courses for the staff of Members regarding the procedures; takes the view that, for these purposes DG Finance, should elaborate an action plan by 30 September 2011 at the latest;
116. Notes with satisfaction that, in 2009, provision for pensions for MEPs are entered in the budget for the first time;

Travel Agency

117. Stresses the importance of ensuring business continuity in the case of bankruptcy or the end of contract of a travel agency; expects the introduction of electronic invoicing, which should result in important simplification and cost-savings;
118. Notes that Parliament has a contract with only one travel agency and sees a certain risk that such a monopolistic situation might prevent Members and Parliament obtaining the best available prices; requires an examination of the travel agency's ways of obtaining the tickets that are offered to Members and assistants on official missions or to Members travelling between the work places, notes that tickets offered are not always the cheapest on the market for a specific class of ticket;
119. Asks DG Finance to report on the development of prices charged by the new contractor as well as on complaints in connection to the transition from Carlsonwagonlit to BCD in its activity report for 2010; does not agree with the staff increase and additional payments of EUR 34 000 for 2010 shortly after the conclusion of the contract in December 2009; requires that, in future contracts, incentives be included to guarantee the lowest price for tickets;
120. Calls on the Secretary General to commission a study on reducing travel cost for Members and staff exploring, for example, the possibility of annual block bookings with airline companies instead of individual bookings and purchase of tickets or using tendering procedures for annual flight contracts; furthermore, calls for a system to be developed to use the collected air miles on flights reimbursed by Parliament to further reduce costs;

DG Innovation and Technological Support

121. Notes the Bureau decisions of 17 June 2009 and of 18 October 2010 to extend the areas with wireless network access (Wi-Fi) in the European Parliament covering the chamber, committee rooms, Members' offices and public spaces both in Brussels and Strasbourg;
122. Stresses the need for more and better IT tools to support the procurement process; welcomes in this context the launch by DG ITEC on 20 December 2010 of WebContracts Version 2.3 which supports the framework contracts, specific order forms and specific contracts for services linked to a framework contract;
123. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Committee on Budgetary Control with a note on the timetable envisaged for the implementation of the Knowledge Management

System as well as on the savings that it is envisaged will result from the rationalisation of information sources by 15 July 2011;

124. Notes with satisfaction the considerable reduction (49 %, from 8690 to 4446) during 2010 of IT items in stock (printers, PCs, portable computers, screens etc.) in the different DGs; calls, however, for a further reduction of this still large stock, which also represents a considerable residual value (some EUR 880 000); considers that the creation of a central storage place for printers, faxes and PCs should be seriously considered;

Political Groups (budget item 4 0 0 0)

125. Notes that, in 2009, the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 0 0 were used as follows:

Group	2009 first half-year					2009 second half-year		
	Annual appropriations*	Own resources and carried-over appropriations	Expenditure	Rate of use of annual appropriations	Amounts carried over to next period	Annual appropriations	Own resources and carried-over appropriations	Expenditure
EPP (formerly EPP-ED)	9.929	7.762	15.078	152 %	2.613	9.786	2.633	10.000
S&D (formerly PSE)	7.357	6.936	9.857	134 %	4.436	6.877	4.499	6.800
ALDE	3.382	3.034	4.750	140 %	1.667	3.058	1.698	2.500
Greens/EFA	1.453	1.049	1.953	134 %	548	1.907	554	1.200
GUE/NGL	1.432	1.484	1.649	115 %	1.267	1.240	1.270	1.400
UEN	1.417	1.251	2.473	174 %	195	-	201	790
IND/DEM	775	586	925	119 %	436	-	437	1200
ECR	-	-	-	-	-	1.788	3	1.400
EFD	-	-	-	-	-	1.113	1	700
Non-attached Members	601	349	512	85 %	204	568	204	4100
Total	26.348	22.450	37.196	141 %	11.367	26.338	11.500	25.000

(*) all amounts in thousand EUR

European Political Parties and European Political Foundations

126. Notes that in 2009 the appropriations entered under budget items 4 0 2 0 and 4 0 3 0 were used as follows:

Party	Abbreviation	Own resources*	EP grant	Total revenue	EP grant as % of eligible expenditure (max. 85 %)	Revenue surplus (transfer to reserves) or loss
European People's Party	EPP	1.486	3.486	4.971	68 %	-303
Party of European Socialists	PES	913	3.100	4.013	77 %	-71
European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party	ELDR	377	1.179	1.556	79 %	10
European Green Party	EGP	568	644	1.211	60 %	129
Party of the European Left	EL	165	562	728	76 %	-16
Alliance for Europe of the Nations	AEN	68	385	453	85 %	0
European Democratic Party	EDP/PDE	58	249	307	85 %	6
European Free Alliance	EFA	67	227	294	72 %	-21
EU Democrats	EUD	139	217	356	85 %	36
Total		3.841	10.048	13.890	73 %	-230

(*) all amounts in thousand EUR

127. Supports the Internal Auditor's conclusions and recommendations in its Audit Report No 09/10 ('follow-up to the review of contributions to political parties at European level and new review of the European Political foundations and of the rules on reserves and carry-over of surpluses') and urges the relevant services to implement the 27 required actions and, in particular, the critical actions, concerning:
- introduction of a compulsory model structure for reporting the implementation of the activities of the European Political Parties and the related eligible expenditure (two critical actions) in order to have adequate tools to assess eligibility of activities and/or costs;
 - correctly applying the rules on contributions in kind;
 - performing ex post controls on the spot, based on risk-assessment;
 - making the compulsory model structure obligatory for foundations too;
 - setting down criteria for the acceptance of contributions in kind;
128. Welcomes in this context the establishment of an internal working group with the task of examining the practical measures to be undertaken by DG Finance;
129. Stresses, moreover, the need for the parties and foundations to have a system of standard external auditing instead of the current free choice in the appointment of external auditors, as well as the need for the Parliament's administration to strictly apply

accounting rules in particular on contributions in kind, carry-overs and reserves; welcomes, therefore, the recent decision by the Bureau that an external auditor for the parties and the foundation will be provided and paid for by Parliament;

Voluntary Pension Fund

130. Notes that, at its meeting of 1 April 2009, the Bureau decided inter alia that Parliament would assume its legal responsibility to guarantee the right of members of the Scheme to the additional pension; welcomes the fact that:

- (i) the option of drawing a reduced pension from the age of 50 and the option of receiving a lump sum equivalent to 25 % of pension rights have been abolished in order to improve the liquidity of the Fund and avoid premature dissipation of the capital;
- (ii) the retirement age for the Scheme has been raised from 60 to 63;
- (iii) the managers of the Fund have been called upon to adopt a more prudent and balanced investment strategy and to avoid exposing the Fund to risks of fluctuations in exchange rates;

131. Observes that the huge actuarial deficit at the end of 2008 (some EUR 120 000 000) has been greatly reduced (although it was still some EUR 84 500 000 as at 31 December 2009) thanks to the improvements in the markets; stresses, however, that a new actuarial study should be carried out in order to assess the impact of the decisions made by the Bureau concerning the measures applicable to the members of the scheme;

132. Takes the view that the Secretary-General should provide the Committee on Budgetary Control with a note clarifying Parliament's role in the management and supervision of the Fund's assets; recalls that according to Pension Funds estimates, even after the implementation of the restrictive measures adopted in 2009 regarding the payment of entitlements, it will incur a considerable actuarial deficit and the Fund will exhaust its assets between 2020 and 2025; takes the view that this deficit should not be paid with tax payers' money, but by the Fund itself;

Places of work

133. Takes note of the budgetary constraints many Member States face as a result of the financial and economic crisis and the need to critically review potential savings at all levels including at Union level; in light of this situation, stresses that real savings could be achieved if Parliament only had one workplace in a single location;

Green Parliament

134. Reiterates its request that the Committee on Budgetary Control be provided with a copy of the EMAS annual report;

135. Asks the administration to speed up actions to radically reduce the consumption of paper in the House; takes the view that the full use of electronic devices is key to avoiding the more than 1000 tons of paper waste every year; further takes the view that Members should be given the opportunity to indicate that they do not need printed documents;

136. Considers that transport emissions contribute the largest share of Parliament's carbon footprint, which, according to its CO₂ action plan, it intends to reduce by 30 % by 2020; urges, therefore, that adequate measures be taken to reduce the carbon footprint; welcomes a study on offsetting in this respect; calls on the responsible Parliament services to systematically provide information about emissions caused by different modes of transport when making travel reservations;
137. Welcomes the proposal to install tap-water fountains in all Parliament meeting rooms and thus saving resources, as adopted by the Bureau in the CO₂ Action plan in February 2009;
138. Invites the responsible Parliament services to present measures to increase the energy efficiency of Parliament's buildings, especially concerning the retrofitting of glass surfaces and bridges;
139. Encourages Parliament's administration to replace official cars with environmentally friendly vehicles by constantly modernising its fleet with less polluting cars and organising grouped transport with VIP minibuses to airports in Brussels and Strasbourg in order to reduce Parliament's carbon footprint; reiterates its request, expressed in its resolution on discharge for 2008, that Parliament establish its own bicycle service in Strasbourg; strongly urges that this be realized by September 2011; observes that, as a consequence of the improved bicycle service, the fleet of cars could be smaller;
140. Encourages, within the context of a sustainable Parliament, the use of the charter train from Brussels to Strasbourg for plenary sessions; is concerned about the increasing use of other means of transport by accredited assistants who can not obtain a ticket for the charter train; states that Members, parliamentary officials and accredited assistants should have priority over external customers in obtaining tickets for the charter train;
141. Welcomes the agreement on a 'third-party payment system' with STIB¹ by which Parliament contributes 50 % to the cost of annual season tickets in Brussels for its staff as an environmental measure in order to reduce Parliament's carbon footprint by promoting the use by its staff of public transport; encourages its administration to negotiate similar agreements with the National Railway Company of Belgium (SNCB-NMBS) and the regional bus companies;
142. Suggests that accumulated air miles obtained through work related travel, be used to purchase tickets in order to reduce the significant travel costs of the House;
143. Considers that, as environmentally sound habits are learned from early age on, children in the European Schools should equally be encouraged to use school buses instead of private cars.

¹ *Société de transports intercommunaux de Bruxelles.*