

PRESS CONFERENCE with MARTIN SCHULZ
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Jens
Geier

2009 Budget Discharge Reports

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Tuesday, 10 - May 2011

Member States are responsible for management of 80% of the EU's budget, and through the Commission discharge process, Parliament has successfully obtained undertakings on improved controls and earlier intervention where EU funds have been used incorrectly. This will mean a more rigorous system of interruption or recovery of payments to ensure that funds can be re-allocated in line with the EU's policy goals in areas such as Cohesion, R&D, and agriculture. The report approved by the Budget Control Committee emphasises the importance of continuing to improve the quality of spending and grants discharge to the Commission.



Georgios
Stavrakakis

2009 discharge: European Agencies

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The European Union's decentralised Agencies* and Joint Undertakings have been established to support the Member States and their citizens and they bring a real added value to the EU. For these reasons, the procedure for their budget discharge aims to increase transparency, create a tighter management discipline, improve their overall situation and ensure that the EU budget, i.e. taxpayers' money, is used properly and effectively. Parliament is likely to postpone discharge for both the Police College (CEPOL) and the European Medicines Agency so that outstanding questions about 2009 can be properly dealt with.



Arlene
McCarthy

Proposed interim measures for the freezing and disclosure of debtors' assets in cross-border cases

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The report requests the Commission to submit a proposal to Parliament on interim measures for the freezing and disclosure of debtors' assets in cross-border cases. Millions of citizens make use of their right to live, work or do business anywhere in the European Union. It is therefore essential to ensure they also have the right to legal protection. It is still too easy for fraudulent traders to take people's money and escape the long arm of the law by moving their assets to another EU country. The S&D Group therefore calls for quick and effective measures so that victims of fraud, non-payment or non-delivery can have the assets of those who owe them money frozen and disclosed and are not denied recompense.



Roberto
Gualtieri

Development of the common security and defence policy following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty

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The report was highly endorsed by the other main political groups and was widely approved in AFET on 13 April 2011 by an absolute majority of 55 votes in favour and only 9 against. The S&D Group received the support needed from the other political groups for calling on the EU to become an autonomous strategic actor and to stress on the need to review the concept and structure of the battle groups to be deployed, even in conflicts entailing mixed civilian-military tasks. The S&D rapporteur also received huge support for calling on the EU to urgently improve its planning process for preventing any delays in deploying humanitarian assistance on the ground, as happened in the current crisis in Libya.



Judith
Merkies

Innovation Union: transforming Europe for a post-crisis world

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The European Union needs to boost creativity and stimulate risk taking if it wants to stay competitive in the future global economy. However, innovation is not just technology. It is also about more dynamic workplaces, about empowering employees to improve processes, and about facing our societal challenges - including the ageing population and our ever scarcer resource. Finding better and faster solutions to provide better care for geriatric diseases and diseases of affluence and to promote mobility in old age - these are a few examples which will benefit from better cooperation in Europe. Not only the future of our industry, but our future jobs depend upon Europe's capability to innovate.



Maria Muniz de Urquiza

The EU as a global actor: its role in multilateral organisations

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The EU is the largest contributor of development aid and the most important trade bloc but the representation of the Union as such in the multilateral organisations remains fragmented. On the other hand, the EU Member States are over-represented in all multilateral organisations, with the exception of the WTO. This over-representation - particularly in the Bretton Woods institutions – often results in a dissonance of European voices and is perceived as hugely problematic by the emerging powers, considering the status quo to be unfair. The report in this respect suggests that in cases of exclusive competences, the EU should be the pre-eminent actor with full membership while the EU Member States may also - but not necessarily - be present as members, however usually not with an independent roll.



Hannes Swoboda

The annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 2009

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The report was adopted in AFET by overwhelming majority. It has achieved a balanced approach to the most pressing issues of the organization and activities of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and key issues of CFSP, such as the promotion of the values of democracy, human rights and rule of law, promotion of gender equality, energy security, situation in Iran, Afghanistan, EU's response to the democratic changes in Southern Mediterranean, relations with major players, such as Russia, China, Japan, India. The report strikes the right balance on the civilian-military cooperation in crisis resolution and the EU-NATO interactions: on the one hand, it avoids relegating the EU to purely trade, development and humanitarian issues, as pursued by the ECR, and on the other, it rejects the GUE insistence on excluding any military component from the CFSP.



Kader Arif

Transitional arrangements for bilateral investment agreements between Member States and third countries

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This report deals with international investment treaties with third countries. The main objective of these treaties is to provide a high level of protection for investments and investors against arbitrary actions of governments of states receiving the investment. Before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the Member States were in charge of negotiating signing these investment agreements. Member States have negotiated more than 1000 investment treaties in total. With the Lisbon Treaty, foreign direct investment has become an exclusive competence of the EU and an integral part of the EU's external trade policy. Based on this new situation, the Commission has adopted a draft regulation which is aimed at taking care of the transition period that is linked with the transfer of competence to the European level. This regulation will be adopted by the ordinary legislative procedure.



Udo Bullman

Stress tests 2011 to the EU banking sector

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This year's stress tests for the EU banking sector will be conducted by the newly created European Banking Authority. Even if there are some improvements compared to last year when the tests failed to expose the weakness of several EU banks, it is key that - for the credibility of the new European Financial institutional framework - the European Commission explains to the European Parliament the main features and characteristics of the stress tests.



Vital Moreira

Further macro-financial assistance for Georgia

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Georgia has experienced a severe economic downturn since the eruption of the military conflict with Russia in August 2008 that caused both direct and indirect damage as well as a large internally displaced population. In addition, the global financial crisis that broke out in the fall of 2008 further aggravated Georgia's economic situation. The proposed assistance aims at supporting Georgia's recovery in the aftermath of the armed conflict with Russia and also contributes to helping Georgia address the consequences of the global economic and financial crisis.

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