

# European Parliament confirms that the 2017 EU budget was well-managed

The European Parliament today gave its final approval, known as 'discharge', to the way in which the European Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, managed and implemented the EU budget in 2017. The positive vote follows from the European Court of Auditors' decision to give the EU annual accounts [a clean bill of health for the 11th year in a row](#), finding them true and fair.

Commissioner Günther H. **Oettinger**, in charge of budget and human resources said, *"The European Parliament has once again confirmed that the EU budget has been managed in line with the rules, generating great added value for our citizens. The EU's achievements are numerous and the discharge exercise gives us yet another opportunity to look at them. Looking ahead, the next long-term EU budget for the 2021-2027 is the next big opportunity to show that we are learning from the past. In its proposal, the Commission has put forward ideas how to make sure the EU budget generates an even greater added value for the EU citizens, while being more flexible and simpler. We are now working hand in hand with the European Parliament and the Council towards timely adoption of the various proposals, including the 37 specific spending programmes, so that beneficiaries from across the Union will be able to benefit from EU funding as of January 2021."*

For the first time ever, this year's discharge report of the European Parliament highlights some of the EU budget's key achievements. For example, the report underlines that by the end of 2017, the EU budget programme for small and medium sized companies supported over 275,000 businesses in 25 countries. By the end of 2016, the money under the Cohesion Fund (CF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) led to better healthcare services for 2.7 million people, improved water supply for 156,000 citizens and improved wastewater treatment for some 73,000 EU residents. In 2017 alone, the EU budget – through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) – supported the creation of over 7,000 additional places in reception centres, while the number of places adapted for unaccompanied minors increased from only 183 in 2014 to over 17,000 in 2017. These figures confirm once again that the EU budget has delivered on the EU citizens' expectations. The report also outlines key recommendations for the future. In the coming months, the Commission will report to the European Parliament on the actions that it will take in response to the European Parliament's recommendations.

## **Background**

The annual budget discharge is the European Parliament's final approval of how the European Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, has implemented the EU budget in a given year. The discharge vote is therefore the formal closure of the budget year in question. The European Parliament grants discharge on a recommendation from the Council. The procedure therefore allows the European Parliament and the Council to exercise

democratic control over the way taxpayers' money is being spent. Before taking its decision, the Parliament examines the accounts, the balance sheet and the report on the management of the budget as prepared by the Commission as well as the European Court of Auditors' annual report and any relevant special reports. The European Commission also provides additional information to the Parliament through the ongoing exchanges in the context of the discharge procedure.