

Press release – Budgetary Control Committee asks for stronger measures to protect EU spending



The Budgetary Control Committee recommends granting discharge of the Commission's accounts for 2018 (corresponding to 97% of the whole EU budget) by 20 votes in favour and four against. In the accompanying resolution, adopted by 22 to 3 and 3 abstentions, MEPs ask for stronger protection of EU spending against fraud, corruption, conflict of interest, intentional misuse and organised crime, as well as for EU money to be distributed more fairly.

Subsidy ceilings to protect EU funds from oligarchs

To avoid fraud and an unfair distribution of EU subsidies, the Commission should propose a maximum amount of direct payment per natural person, making it impossible to receive subsidies of hundreds of millions of Euros in one MFF-period. The Commission should also come up with rules to disclose who benefits from agricultural funds.

Mechanism to help farmers fight organised crime

Quoting recent cases in Italy and Slovakia, the committee wants an EU complaint mechanism enabling farmers to inform the Commission when land-grabbing malpractices, misconduct of national authorities, pressure from organised crime and forced labour occur.

Conflict of interest

MEPs ask the Commission to table guidelines to fight conflicts of interest of high-profile politicians and ask the Council to adopt common ethical standards in this regard.

Enable the EU Prosecutor to do their job

The committee stresses that the newly created EU Public Prosecutor's Office (EPP0) needs at least 76 additional posts and EUR 8 Million in order to deal with an estimated 3000 cases per year.

No EU money if rule of law is violated

The committee insists that adopting the regulation enabling EU funds for EU countries to be restricted when the rule of law is violated should be prioritised – this regulation is [currently blocked in the Council](#).

Concerns for Czechia

MEPs are especially concerned about the situation in Czechia and ask the Commission to supervise payments to companies directly and indirectly owned by the Czech Prime Minister or other members of the Czech Government.

Quote

"One of the most worrying issues observed in some Member States is land grabbing or the misuse of EU funds by organised crime. The discharge report we voted on today includes a call to establish a mechanism whereby farmers can issue complaints directly. Furthermore, we ask for a fairer distribution of EU subsidies. It is unacceptable that individual beneficiaries can receive up to three-digit million sums. We also call for EU-wide rules to avoid conflicts of interests of high-level politicians and emphasise the need for common ethical standards", said the rapporteur for the Commission discharge Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, DE).

Next steps

The Commission discharge, along with the other EU bodies, has to be backed by the full Parliament, with a vote scheduled during the March II session.

Background

The Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) prepares the [EP discharge decision](#) for each budgetary year and scrutinises how the Commission and other EU bodies are managing the EU budget. With the assistance of the Court of Auditors, CONT checks the regularity as well as the cost-effectiveness of how taxpayers' money is used to achieve the EU's objectives.