2012 discharge: European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

2013/2245(DEC) - 20/03/2014 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Petri SARVAMAA (EPP, FI) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Asylum Support Office for the financial year 2012 and called on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office discharge in respect of the implementation of the Office's budget for the financial year 2012.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the annual accounts of the Authority for the financial year 2012 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Members approve the closure of the Office's accounts. However, they made a number of recommendations that need to be taken into account when the discharge is granted, in addition to the general recommendations that appear in the draft resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies:

Financing, budget and financial management: Members noted that the Office was granted financial autonomy on 20 September 2012, its budget having been implemented by the Commission until that date. Furthermore, the Office's budget for the financial year 2012 was EUR 10million, and budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2012 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 69%.

Carryovers: the committee noted that the budgetary needs for 2012 were considerably overestimated as only EUR 4.8 million out of EUR 7 million transferred upon receiving financial autonomy were committed. It expressed concern that the committed appropriations of EUR 3.2 had been carried over, representing 65.13 % of the total committed appropriations for the period of financial autonomy. Members reminded the Office that a **high level of carry-overs was at odds with the budgetary principle of annuality** and invited the Office to improve its performance in this regard. They acknowledged, however, that the carry-overs were mostly related to invoices not yet received or paid at the end of the year and to pending reimbursements for costs relating to experts. They also acknowledged that approximately EUR 800 000 concerned refurbishment work carried out at the Office's premises in 2012. Members went onto note with concern that a carry-over of EUR 2 000 00 was not covered by a legal commitment (contract) and was therefore irregular. They called on the Office to inform the discharge authority on the steps taken to prevent similar situations in the future.

Members also made a series of observations on transfers, procurement and recruitment procedures as well as comments on internal controls.

Lastly, they acknowledged from the Office that it had adopted a policy on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest, which aimed at setting out a number of principles, procedures and tools intended to prevent, identify and manage situations of conflicts of interest. However, they called on the Office to make publicly available the Declarations of Interests of certain members.