2013 discharge: EU general budget, European External Action Service

2014/2086(DEC) - 31/03/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Ryszard CZARNECKI (ECR, PL) and called on Parliament to grant the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European External Action Service for the financial year 2013.

Members welcomed the fact that in its third financial year, the European External Action Service ('EEAS') has continued to implement its budget without major errors.

Budgetary and financial management: the report noted that the final budget for the year 2013 for EEAS Headquarters was EUR 508.8 million, representing a 4.09 % increase. In addition to the EEAS' own budget, the Commission contributed EUR 272.4 million. At EEAS Headquarters, 69 % of the budget is intended for the payment of salaries and other entitlements of statutory and external staff and 10 % for buildings and associated costs. For the Union Delegations 34 % related to the remuneration of statutory staff, 19,9 % for external staff and 31,8 % for buildings and associated costs.

EEAS actions: Members made a series of observations on the daily management of the EEAS and asked for:

- more rigorous controls on **staff allowances**;
- continuous support provided to Delegation staff in order to reduce the inherent risk exposure in **public procurement**, in particular for sensitive tenders and contracts;
- due care in terms of the **traceability of operations** and access to accurate and comprehensive management and administrative information;
- strengthening the new **Anti-fraud Strategy** covering third countries;
- adoption and implementation of the **internal whistleblowing** rules;
- inclusion in annual activity reports, in compliance with the existing rules on confidentiality and data protection, of the **results and consequences of closed OLAF cases** where the institution or any of the individuals working for it were the subject of the investigation;
- rationalisation of **EEAS top management** and streamlining decision-making processes;
- improvement in **geographical balance** in the recruitment and the appointment of staff;
- an **equal opportunities plan** to be set in motion, particularly as regards management positions;
- integration into EEAS of Union **Special Representatives** to improve clarity and proper monitoring;

- a concerted approach in place to **optimise the profile** of Delegation staff;

- reduction in the **cost of away days** for staff;

- introduction of a requirement by the EEAS that newly appointed EEAS staff gave a declaration of honour stating that they had not worked for **intelligence services** in the past;

- simplification of the budget scheme for supporting Delegations;

- clarification about inequality of treatment and a detailed comparison of payments and benefits for Union Delegation staff and Union staff on CFSP missions;

- clarifications on EEAS's **buildings policy**;

- setting-up a **Shared Services Centre** that would result in important cost savings by providing centralised logistical, procurement and administrative support to the CSDP missions and to the Union Special Representatives and their offices.

Lastly, Members urged the EEAS to maximise the benefits of economies of scale by creating new synergies within the EEAS Headquarters and Delegations, as well as in cooperation with Member States and national diplomatic services in the spirit of a true Union external policy and services.