2015 discharge: European Police College (CEPOL)

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The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Inés AYALA SENDER (S&D, ES) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Police College for the financial year 2015.

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the Director of the College discharge in respect of the implementation of the College's budget for the financial year 2015.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the annual accounts of the College for the financial year 2015 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Members called on Parliament to approve the closure of the College's accounts. They made, however, a number of recommendations that needed 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:

- **College's financial statements**: Members noted that the final budget of the European Police College for the financial year 2015 was EUR 8 471 000, representing an increase of 1.22 % compared to 2014.
- **Commitments and carry-overs**: Members noted that, following the signature of the grant agreement with the Commission on the EU/MENA Counter-Terrorism Training Partnership, a budget of EUR 2.5 million was agreed, out of which EUR 300 000 was inscribed in the College's budget as assigned revenue in 2015 with the remaining EUR 2.2 million being transferred during 2016 and 2017. They requested a thorough evaluation of this project and its added value for the security of the Union, and if beneficial, requests the continuation and extension of the project in the coming years.
- **Relocation of CEPOL to Hungary**: Members noted that the cost of the relocation from Bramshill, UK to Budapest, Hungary was estimated at approximately EUR 1 006 515, to be spent during 2014 and 2015. They noted moreover that in accordance with the agreement between the Commission and the UK, the amount of EUR 570 283 was financed with 50 % from the UK authorities and with 50 % from the Commission. They acknowledged the fact that the UK contribution to the relocation funds was inscribed in the College's budget as assigned revenue, which was fully used. They welcomed the fact that the remaining relocation funds corresponding to 35 % of the final relocation budget were financed with the College's budget by **savings deriving from the lower correction coefficient applied to staff entitlements in Hungary**. A number of staff members initiated a legal dispute against the College concerning the conditions in which the relocation had been carried out and its financial impact on their income. Members acknowledged that the final amount for the cost of relocation needs to cover the financial obligation arising from the Court's judgement and invites the College to report on the outcome and the final financial figure of the relocation.

Members also made a series of observations regarding budgetary and financial management, transfers, procurement and recruitment procedures, the prevention and management of conflicts of interests and internal audits and controls.

On performance, Members stated that in 2015 the College's training portfolio encompassed 151 training activities, including 85 residential activities and 66 webinars, 428 exchanges in the framework of the European Police Exchange Programme (EPEP), 24 online modules, one online course, and nine common curricula. They noted with satisfaction that for the fifth year in a row the outreach of the College has increased, resulting in the College training 12 992 law enforcement professionals in 2015 compared to 10 322 in 2014.

Lastly, Members noted that, with regard to the College's expanded responsibilities and increased mandate, the current resource levels are insufficient. There is a significant need for reinforcement in both human and financial resources. Therefore, the Commission is called upon to take this into account in its budget proposals for the College.