2015 discharge: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

2016/2175(DEC) - 27/04/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Centre for disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2015.

The vote on the decision on discharge covers the closure of the accounts (in accordance with Annex IV, Article 5 (1) (a) to Parliament's Rules of Procedure).

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Centre's annual accounts for the financial year 2015 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 520 votes to 103 with 5 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations, which form an integral part of the decision on discharge and which add to the general recommendations set out in the resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

These recommendations may be summarised as follows:

- **Centre's financial statements**: the final budget of the Centre for the financial year 2015 was EUR 58 451 950 representing a decrease of 3.36 % compared to 2014.
- **Legality and regularity of transactions**: Parliament noted that various weaknesses were found affecting the transparency of the Centre's procurement procedures, including a lack of a clear link with the Centre's annual work programme, insufficient substantiation of the estimated contract value or absence of a financial benchmark to assess the tenderer's financial capacity. It acknowledged that prior to the launch of any procurement procedure above EUR 25 000, the Centre now requests a substantiation of estimated contract values.
- **Procurement and recruitment procedures**: the Centre's revised procedure on procurement, contracts and grants is providing an additional quality control mechanism. The Centre was called upon to carry out careful checks on conflicts of interest in relation to tenders, procurement, recruitment and contracts in order to strengthen transparency. The Centre was asked to apply strictly the measures pertaining to discretion and exclusion in public procurement, with proper background checks being carried out in every instance, and to apply the exclusion criteria so as to debar companies in the event of any conflict of interest.

Parliament also made a series of observations regarding commitments and the budgetary and financial management, commitments and carry-overs, the prevention and management of conflicts of interests and internal audits and controls.

Ebola and other epidemics: Parliament stressed that the **Ebola epidemic** provided a test case for the Union's preparedness arrangements and legal framework and that the Health Security Committee met regularly to discuss appropriate measures based on rapid risk assessments and guidance from the Centre. It recalled that the Decision No 1082/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council provides the framework to address, coordinate and manage serious cross-border health threats in cooperation with Member States, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Centre and other international partners.

It also noted that in 2015, there were 88 notifications, which resulted in 280 messages and information exchanges, and **37 different events were addressed**, for example, the Ebola epidemic, the influx of

refugees, the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), poliomyelitis, the shortage of medical countermeasures, the Zika virus, and the explosion of a chemical factory in China.

Communication: Parliament noted that the Centre's target of 10 % more web visitors in 2015 was not reached, mainly due to an unprecedented increase of web visitors in 2014 during the Ebola crisis. It underlined that the Centre should continue promoting dialogue with stakeholders and citizens and incorporate it as part of the priorities and activities to be implemented.