

2015 discharge: European Police Office (Europol)

2016/2184(DEC) - 27/04/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director of the European Police Office (Europol) in respect of the implementation of its budget of 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 Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2015 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 500 votes to 103 with 16 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:

- **Financial statements of Europol:** Parliament noted that the final budget of the European Police Office for the financial year 2015 was EUR 94 926 894, representing an increase of 12.55 % compared to 2014.
- **Commitments and carry-overs:** It took note of the carry-overs of committed appropriations for administrative expenditure reached EUR 42 million (41 %), compared to EUR 1.9 million (27 %) in 2014. It noted that these carry-overs mainly concerned building works for which the invoices had not been received or were still ongoing by the end of 2015. The Office stated that it will continue its efforts to ensure efficient and compliant budget implementation.

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

It observed that the competent authorities of the Netherlands, where the headquarters of the Office are based, have assessed the **current threat as substantial** (level 4 out of 5). It acknowledged that the Office is in close contact with the competent authorities of the Netherlands with a view to continuously assessing the related implications for the Office, including **situational security measures** as well as the adjustment of business continuity arrangements.

Parliament also noted that the Office's evolving capabilities, in particular the European Cybercrime Centre and, since 2016, the European Counter Terrorism Centre, have increased its cyber threat profile.

As regards **IT security**, Parliament noted that in 2016 the Office updated its ICT network architecture with a view to strengthening the protection of its core business data and related systems, including information exchange capabilities with the Member States and third parties. It noted in addition that, as part of these measures, the network hosting core business data and systems was classified at the level CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL. It also noted with satisfaction that the Office's new legal framework, which will become applicable in May 2017, provides for additional measures in terms of providing the discharge authority with dedicated information about the Office's work, including **sensitive operational matters**.

Parliament noted with concern the use by the Office of the controversial private database **WorldCheck**, which often links individuals and organisations to terrorism only on the basis of public resources, without any proper investigation, transparency or provision of effective means of redress. It called on the Office to explain to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs the way it uses this private database in its work in order to assess the relevance of the use of public funds for acquiring licences for WorldCheck.

Budgetary increase for Europol: lastly, Parliament highlighted that, in response to terrorist attacks and the migration crisis and in light of the Commission's Agenda on Security and Migration, the Office's mandate was strengthened, its budget increased and its staff reinforced. It welcomed the successful efforts of the Office in setting up the EU Internet Referral Unit, the European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) and the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC). It encouraged the Office to focus on the development of these three new instruments.