

2016 discharge: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)

2017/2163(DEC) - 12/09/2017 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE: presentation of the EU Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) for the financial year 2016, together with the Agency's reply.

CONTENT: in accordance with the tasks conferred on the Court of Auditors by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Court presents to the European Parliament and to the Council, in the context of the discharge procedure, a Statement of Assurance as to the reliability of the annual accounts of each institution, body or agency of the EU, and the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them, on the basis of an independent external audit.

This audit focused on the annual accounts of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL). The Agency's task is to function as a network and to bring together the national police training institutes in the Member States to provide training sessions, based on common standards, for senior police agents.

Statement of Assurance: pursuant to the provisions of Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Court has audited:

- the annual accounts of the College, which comprise the financial statements and the reports on the implementation of the budget for the financial year ended 31 December 2016;
- the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts.

Opinion on the reliability of the accounts: in the Court's opinion, the College's annual accounts present fairly, in all material respects, its financial position as at 31 December 2016 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with the provisions of its Financial Regulation and the accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer.

Opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts: the Court considers that the transactions underlying the annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016 are legal and regular in all material respects.

The report made a series of observations on the budgetary and financial management of the College, accompanied by the latter's response. The main observations may be summarised as follows:

The Court's observations:

- **budgetary management:** the Court noted that the carry-overs of committed appropriations were high for expenditure for support activities at EUR 140 055. They mainly refer to IT consulting and IT related goods and services ordered late in the year;
- **staff policy:** it also noted a high staff turnover which may impact business continuity and the Agency's ability to implement the activities foreseen in its work programme. In 2016, 11 staff members left the Agency, while 21 were recruited. The low number of applications, particularly from Member States other than the host state, puts at risk the Agency's ability to recruit suitable

candidates. Possible reasons for the limited number of applications from other Member States are the salary correction coefficient applied for the host state (69 %) and competition with another EU body located in Budapest.

CEPOL's reply:

- **budgetary management:** the Agency took note of the Court's comments on the carry-over rate for support activities. CEPOL further improved its budget management and commits to maintain compliance with the budgetary principle of annuality provided in the Financial Regulation;
- **staff policy:** the Agency has taken note of the Court's comments as regards the move to Hungary. The low grading of posts combined with low correction coefficient, does not encourage foreigners (especially from West and Northern Europe) to move to Hungary, therefore the geographical balance cannot be always ensured during the recruitment process. CEPOL will continue to implement staff retention and business continuity measures, however as long as the Agency cannot positively amend the grades, the **staff turnover may keep its high trend**.

Lastly, the Court of Auditors' report also contained a **summary of the College's key figures in 2016:**

- **Budget:** EUR 10.3 million.
- **Staff:** 41 including officials, temporary and contract staff and seconded national experts.