2016 discharge: European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)

2017/2164(DEC) - 26/03/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Bart STAES (Greens/EFA, BE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) for the financial year 2016.

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the Agency discharge in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2016.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the annual accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2016 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Members called on Parliament to approve the closure of the Agency'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:

- **Agency's financial statements**: Members noted that the final budget of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency for the financial year 2016 was EUR 232 757 000, representing an increase of 62.43 % compared to 2015. In response to the migration crisis faced by the Union, the mandate of the Agency was considerably extended in 2016.
- **Budget and financial management**: Members welcomed that the budget-monitoring efforts during the financial year 2016 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 97.90 %. They noted that under the Agency's **extended mandate**, high importance is attached to return operations and EUR 63 million had been assigned to that in its 2016 budget. However, EUR 23 million was repaid to the Union budget since fewer return operations were carried out than envisaged. On 22 December 2015, the Commission and the Agency signed a **grant agreement amounting to EUR 5.5 million** on regional support to protection-sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey for a three year period starting on 1 January 2016. However, cooperation agreements with those three partners which amounted to EUR 3.4 million were only signed between August and November 2016. Members noted from the Agency's reply that in order to document the fact that the legal commitment for all three project partners was made prior to the budgetary commitment, the Agency duly documented this as an exception.

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

Lastly, they noted that the Agency sees no financial risks influencing its operations caused by the Brexit.