2016 discharge: Eurojust, European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit

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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 Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust) for the financial year 2016.

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the Administrative Director of Eurojust discharge in respect of the implementation of Eurojust'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 Eurojust 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 its 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:

- **Eurojust's financial statements**: Eurojust's final budget for the financial year 2016 was EUR 43 539 737, representing an increase of 28.75 % compared to 2015.
- **Budget and financial management**: Members noted with satisfaction that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year of 2016 resulted in a budget **implementation rate of 99.89 %,** including EUR 6 980 000 that is ring-fenced for the new building. They deplored the fact that Eurojust faced budgetary availability issues due to known structural problems with its funding and that yet again they were forced to resort to **mitigation measures subject to an amending budget**, leading to the postponement of some of its ongoing activities and the deferral of valuable technological developments.
- **Carry-overs**: Eurojust demonstrated a significant improvement in carry-overs from 2015, with much lower cancellations (5.6%) than in previous years. The carryovers were mainly related to works beyond year-end and purchases ordered in preparation of Eurojust's move to new premises in 2017. Members called on the Court to keep the volume to be carried over to the next year as low as possible.
- **Building policy**: Members noted that Eurojust successfully completed the move to its new premises in June and July 2017. The redelivery of the former building to the host state took place on 31 August 2017 and that the host state will determine the costs related to the redelivery to be borne by Eurojust.

Members also made a series of observations regarding procurement and staff policy, the prevention and management of conflicts of interest, internal audits and controls.

Lastly, they noted with concern that for the time being there is no information exchange between Eurojust and the Commission with regard to the preparation for carrying out Eurojust's future activities after **Brexit** . They called on both Eurojust and the Commission to ensure an efficient flow of the necessary information bearing in mind that a cooperation agreement with the United Kingdom will need to be put in place.