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

2017/2155(DEC) - 18/04/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Administrative Director of the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust) in regard to the implementation of Eurojust's budget for the 2016 financial year and to approve the closure of the accounts for the financial year in question.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Eurojust's annual accounts for the financial year 2016 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are **legal and regular**, Parliament adopted by 556 votes to 127 with 10 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations, which form an int egral 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:

- **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.

Parliament also made a series of observations regarding procurement and staff policy, the prevention and management of conflicts of interest, internal audits and controls. Eurojust implemented the third wave of post reductions (1 % - 3 posts) to achieve the **5 % target** agreed by Parliament and the Council. Parliament regretted that in the entire number of posts occupied on 31 December 2016, the **gender balance ratio** was 69 % female to 31 % male

Eurojust was called upon to intensify its efforts to finalise clear internal rules on the protection of **whistleblowers**. Members emphasised the need to establish an independent body with sufficient budgetary resources to support whistleblowers wishing to disclose information on possible irregularities negatively impacting on the Union's financial interests, while ensuring their confidentiality is protected.

Members 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.

Lastly, Parliament welcomed the strengthening of the Eurojust’s position as the centre for judicial cooperation and coordination against cross-border crime and as a centre for judicial expertise within the Union.