2016 discharge: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

2017/2149(DEC) - 18/04/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director of the European Un ion Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in regard to the implementation of the agency'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 agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2016 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are **legal and regular**, Parliament adopted by 551 votes to 136 with 5 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:

- **Agency's financial statements**: the final budget of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for the financial year 2016 was EUR 21 603 000, approximately the same amount as in 2015.
- **Budget and financial management**: Members noted with satisfaction that budget monitoring efforts in the financial year 2016 resulted in a **budget implementation rate of 100 %**, which is the same rate as the previous year, and that the payment appropriations execution rate was 73.21 %, representing an increase of 1.59 % compared to the previous year.
- **Commitments and carry-overs**: the level of committed appropriations carried over to 2017 for operating expenditure was again **very high** at EUR 5.2 million (68 %), compared to EUR 5.7 million (70 %) for the previous year. These carry-overs mainly reflect the nature of activities of the Agency which involve financing studies that span over many months, often beyond year-end. Carry-overs are often justified and do not necessarily indicate weaknesses in budget planning and implementation.

Members also made a series of observations regarding, transfers, procurement and staff policy and internal audits and controls.

The report noted that 49.3 % of the Agency's temporary agents are female and 50.7 % are male. Members regretted, however, the significant imbalance in the Agency's six senior management positions, with a ratio of one woman to five men. The Agency is called on to aim for a **more gender-balanced staff composition** at the level of senior posts.

With regard to preventing conflicts of interest, 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.

In addition, Members noted that the Agency recognises the **financial risks due to Brexit** as the potential loss of financial resources could impact the Agency's operational activities. The Agency also noted the operational risks due to Brexit and the resulting potential loss of competition as a number of operational related contractors are based in the United Kingdom and loss of skilful British national staff members. The Agency is called to work in close cooperation with the Commission regarding Brexit negotiations in order to be sufficiently prepared to minimise any negative operational or financial impact that may occur.

Lastly, Members welcomed the fact that the Agency continued its research on the situation of the Roma in the Union.

Enfin, les députés se sont félicités que l'Agence poursuive ses recherches sur la situation des Roms dans l'Union.