

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

2017/2164(DEC) - 18/04/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency 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 529 votes to 145 with 13 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 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.
- Parliament deplored the significant delay of the procurement procedure for a **EUR 50 million framework contract** to charter aircraft and related services for the Agency return operations had not been started by the year end while the launch of this procurement procedure was planned for March 2016. This delay continues to affect the number of return operations arranged by the Agency
- On 22 December 2015, the Commission and the Agency, as co-beneficiary and coordinator of three other co-beneficiaries - the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) - 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 these 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.

The resolution indicated that, in 2017, the Agency is **revising its entire financial scheme aiming at simplifications**, switching from grants to service contracts and introducing flat rates. Parliament called on the Agency to report to the discharge authority on the implementation of the new scheme and the results achieved.

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

The Agency's staff will more than double from 365 in 2016 to 1 000 in 2020 following the extension of its mandate. However, the Agency traditionally experiences difficulties in finding staff with the required

profile, partly because of the salary **correction coefficient** (66.7%). Parliament called on the Agency to reflect on possible mitigating measures and that it reports on its reflections to the discharge authority. It also calls on the Agency to provide the discharge authority with an answer as to whether meetings with lobbyists had been registered and made public

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