2016 discharge: EU general budget, European External Action Service (EEAS)

2017/2145(DEC) - 03/10/2018 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European External Action Service (EEAS) for the financial year 2016.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision (EU) 2018/1327 of the European Parliament on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016, Section X — European External Action Service.

CONTENT: the European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European External Action Service for the financial year 2016.

This decision is accompanied by a resolution of the European Parliament containing the observations which form an integral part of the discharge decision in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2016 (*please refer to the summary dated 18.4.2018*).

The final EEAS budget of **EUR 636.1 million** for 2016 was executed at 99.7 % in commitments and 87.5 % in payments as at the year-end.

Parliament regretted that, as in 2015, the Court again found **weaknesses in the procurement procedures** organised by EU delegations for contracts below the EUR 60 000 threshold. It invited the EEAS to continue its efforts to support and monitor the implementation of procurement rules and procedures in delegations. It encouraged it to consider the possibility of introducing global or regional procurement procedures to cover several European Union delegations, as an alternative to individualised low value contracts.

The EEAS is also encouraged to take measures to reduce the high rate of anomalies detected during **ex-ante** verifications of financial transactions, such as the unavailability of supporting documents or the ineligibility of expenditures.

The resolution stressed that **geographical balance**, i.e. proportional relationship between the members of staff of a particular nationality and the size of the relevant Member State, should remain one of the guiding principles of resources management, particularly with respect to the Member States that acceded to the Union in or after 2004.

Parliament reaffirmed its concern about **gender imbalances** in EEAS staff at senior levels of administration. It called on the EEAS to continue to improve its policy in order to prevent all forms of psychological or sexual harassment, as well as cases of conflict.

The EEAS is requested to fulfil its legal obligation to send to the European Parliament, without delay and without request, **all relevant documents** related to negotiations on international agreements, including negotiating directives, agreed texts and minutes of each round of negotiations.