

2017 discharge: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)

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PURPOSE: presentation of the EU Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training for the financial year 2017, together with the Agency's replies.

CONTENT: the Court of Auditors carried out the audit on the annual accounts of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL).

In brief, the Agency's task is to function as a network and to bring together the national police training institutes in the Member States to provide training sessions, based on common standards, for senior police agents.

Statement of assurance and reliability of the accounts

The Court considered that:

- the Agency's annual accounts present fairly, in all material respects, its financial position as at 31 December 2017 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with the provisions of its Financial Regulation and the accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer;
- the transactions underlying the annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017 are legal and regular in all material respects.

The report also makes a series of observations on the budgetary and financial management of the Agency, accompanied by the latter's response. The main observations may be summarised as follows:

The Court's observations

Financial management and performance

In December 2016, the Agency signed a four-year framework contract of EUR 1.6 million for the provision of temporary staff with one economic operator. The only competitive criterion for the procurement procedure was price. A framework contract with multiple suppliers selected on the base of price and quality criteria would have been preferable to support the timely delivery of high quality services.

On 29 March 2017, the United Kingdom notified the European Council of its decision to withdraw from the European Union (Brexit). The Agency did not carry out any analysis of the likely Brexit impact on its organisation, operations and accounts, as most of the other agencies did.

Agencies should introduce a single solution for the electronic exchange and storage of information with third parties participating in public procurement procedures (e-procurement). As the same requirement exists for all EU Institutions, the Commission is developing a comprehensive IT solution covering all phases of public procurement procedures. The Commission launched tools for electronic invoicing (e-invoicing), for the electronic publication of documents related to contract notices (e-tendering) and for the

electronic submission of tenders (e-submission). By the end of 2017, the Agency had introduced e-invoicing and e-tendering, but not e-submission.

The Agency's replies

Financial management and performance

As regards the framework contract, the choice to award a single framework contract was based on prior experience and specificities of the national labour market. Nevertheless, CEPOL will give due consideration to the Court's recommendations for future procurements, as applicable.

The Agency took note of the Court's comments on Brexit. Discussions were held on the matter. The risks for CEPOL were assessed as limited, although not formally documented. It also took note of the Court's comments and confirmed progress is made in cooperation with DG DIGIT to introduce e-submission.

Lastly, the Court of Auditors' report also contained a summary of the College's key figures in 2017:

Budget

EUR 9 million.

Staff

53 including officials, temporary and contract staff and seconded national experts.