2017 discharge: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

2018/2201(DEC) - 18/09/2018

PURPOSE: presentation of the EU Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Institute for Gender Equality for the year 2017, together with the Institute's reply.

CONTENT: the Court of Auditors carried out the audit on the annual accounts of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

In brief, the Institute's task is to collect, analyse and disseminate information as regards gender equality and to develop, analyse, evaluate and disseminate methodological tools in order to support the integration of gender equality into all Union policies and the resulting national policies.

Statement of assurance and reliability of the accounts

The Court considered that:

- the Institute'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 Institute, accompanied by the latter's response. The main observations may be summarised as follows:

The Court's observations

Procurement

At the end of financial year 2017, the Institute was a defendant in four cases related to three procurement procedures which were brought to the General Court by unsuccessful tenderers. In each of these cases, the applicant requested the annulment of the award decision and the award of damages. Total damages claimed in those four cases amount to EUR 700 000 or 9 % of the Institute's yearly budget. The rulings of the General Court in each of these cases will decide on the legality and regularity of the procurement procedures for these contracts and the future payments.

Performance

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 Institute had introduced e-invoicing for certain procedures, but not e-tendering and e-submission.

The Institute's replies

Procurement

The EIGE examined the weaknesses and, irrespective of the General Court's decisions in these cases, will adjust the procurement procedures to minimise the risk of future legal cases and potential dissatisfaction among unsuccessful tenderers.

Performance

E-submission and e-invoicing modules are planned to be fully implemented in 2018.

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

Budget

EUR million.

Staff

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