# 2017 discharge: European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

2018/2208(DEC) - 31/01/2019 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

Having examined the revenue and expenditure accounts for the financial year 2017 and the balance sheet as at 31 December 2017 of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), as well as the Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the Office for the financial year 2017, accompanied by the Office's replies to the Court's observations, the Council recommended the European Parliament to give a discharge to the Executive Director of the Office in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2017.

The Council noted with great concern the Court's adverse opinion on the legality and regularity of the payments underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017.

However, the Council welcomed the Court's opinion that, in all material respects, the Office's annual accounts present fairly its financial position as at 31 December 2017 and the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with the provisions of the Office's Financial Regulation, and that the revenue underlying the accounts for 2017 is legal and regular in all material respects.

In this regard, the following observations were made:

- ***financial management and performance***: while acknowledging the unprecedented expansion of tasks and activities of the Office since 2016, mirrored by a budget increase and a substantial rise in the number of procurement procedures and payments in the context of the migration crisis, the Council is deeply concerned that the payments underlying the accounts are materially affected by error due to systematic instances of non-compliance, mainly related to public procurement and recruitment procedures. The Council regretted the numerous weaknesses found by the Court in different areas of the Office's activities. The Council, therefore, urged the Office to implement the Court's recommendations in a timely manner, and in particular to: (i) take comprehensive measures to rebuild the internal capacity and remedy the challenging human resources situation of the Office; (ii) reinforce the internal controls framework by establishing an internal audit capability within the Office, covering also support operations in other countries, as well as an internal legal service and systematic internal review of legal documents; (iii) strictly follow and respect the procurement procedures; (iv) deploy continuous efforts to address the serious deficiencies identified by the Court regarding the Office's payments for staff expenditure, for rent and related works, for travel expenditure and other payments;

- ***action plan***: the Council welcomed the first positive steps undertaken by the Office, aimed at overcoming the irregularities found by the Court, especially the Office's Governance Action Plan. The Council called on the Office to pursue rigorously the implementation of its corrective actions in line with the Court's recommendations, in order to achieve swift improvement in the areas of recruitment, internal controls and procurement.