2017 discharge: EU general budget, Court of Justice

2018/2169(DEC) - 27/02/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Arndt KOHN (S&D, DE) recommending the European Parliament to give discharge to the Registrar of the Court of Justice in respect of the implementation of the Court's budget for the financial year 2017.

Members noted with satisfaction that the Court of Auditors observed that no significant weaknesses in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

The payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2017 for administrative and other expenditure of the Court of Justice were free from material error.

Budgetary and financial management

Members noted that in 2016, the CJEU had appropriations amounting to EUR 399 344 000 (EUR 380 002 000 in 2016) and that the implementation rate was 98.69 % (98.23 % in 2016) in 2017.

Noting that the CJEU overestimated its commitments for various budget lines and reduced its request for appropriations for Members' missions when drawing up its 2019 estimates.

Members called on the CJEU to pursue its efforts to ensure sound financial management in order to avoid significant discrepancies between commitments and payments.

Court cases

The report noted that the total number of cases brought before the CJEU in 2017 (1656 cases) was higher than in 2016 (1604 cases) and that the number of cases completed in 2017 remained at a high level (1594 cases as compared to 1628 cases in 2016). The average duration of proceedings decreased from 16.7 months in 2016 to 16.3 months in 2017). Members acknowledged the efforts of the CJEU to improve efficiency in the handling of cases while not compromising the quality, efficiency and independence of its judgements.

Staff

Staff reductions have put significant pressure on some support services such as the internal linguistic production capacity which has led to an increased collaboration with freelance translators.

Brexit

Members noted that the British members of the Court of Justice and the General Court will cease to exercise their functions when the United Kingdom withdraws from the European Union. The volume of litigation could increase in the short and medium term in view of legal problems which may be generated by a withdrawal agreement and the corresponding provisions of United Kingdom law.

The report noted that they had 63 British members of staff in 2017, among which 36 officials, 24 temporary agents and three contract agents. Members welcomed the intention of the CJEU to follow a

case by case approach when deciding on the extension of contracts for British contract and temporary agents after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union.