2017 discharge: EU general budget, European Committee of the Regions

2018/2173(DEC) - 26/03/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 508 votes to 125, with 7 abstentions, to grant discharge to the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of the EU's general budget for the 2017 financial year, Section VII – Committee of the Regions.

It welcomed the fact that the Court of Auditors observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Committee. The Court concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2017 for administrative and other expenditure of the institutions and bodies were free from material error.

Budgetary and financial management

In 2017, the Committee had an approved budget of EUR 93 295 000 (compared with EUR 90 500 000 in 2016), of which EUR 91.5 million (compared with EUR 89.4 million in 2016) comprised commitment appropriations with an implementation rate of 98.0 % (98.7 % in 2016) and of which EUR 83.9 million were payment appropriations with an implementation rate of 89.9 %. Members called on the Committee to extend the performance-based budgeting methodology to relevant parts of its budget.

They also noted the fact that the overall execution rate for payments at the end of December 2017 was 89.9 %.

Staff

The resolution noted that the Committee reduced the overall number of posts in its establishment plan by 48 from 537 to 489 between 2013 and 2017 mainly due to the 5 % staff cuts. It welcomed that despite the staff cuts the Committee managed to reinforce its political work by reallocating more human resources from support services to the core business areas related to political and legislative activities.

The number of members of contract staff increased from 34 posts in 2013 to 54 in 2017, while temporary staff increased from 64 posts in 2013 to 71 in 2017. This increase of temporary and contract staff is mainly related to security issues prompted by the situation in Brussels.

Members welcomed the inter-institutional administrative cooperation with Parliament and the mid-term evaluation results on the implementation of the cooperation agreement between the Committee and the Economic and Social Committee, which highlights the successful implementation of several measures. They noted that in the context of a redeployment exercise, 70 translators have been transferred to other services. They also welcomed the results of the mid-term evaluation on the implementation of the cooperation agreement between the Committee and the European Economic and Social Committee which highlights that the governance and administrative structure was successfully simplified.

Members regretted that the share of women in middle management has not seen any significant improvement in 2017 with around 38 % (compared to 37 % in 2015 and 33 %in 2016). The share of women in senior management positions further decreased from 33 % in 2016 to around 25 % in 2017. The Committee is encouraged to significantly improve its performance in this regard.

Brexit

Lastly, Parliament noted that the Committee estimates that the financial impact of the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the Union amounts to EUR 373 666 in 2019 and EUR 576 559 in 2020 due to the reduction of its membership by the 24 seats currently attributed to the United Kingdom. It welcomed the establishment of a group to reflect about maintaining close relations with regional and local authorities in the United Kingdom after its departure from the Union.