2017 discharge: European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

2018/2208(DEC) - 23/10/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to refuse discharge to the Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office in respect of the implementation of the Office's budget for the 2017 financial year. It also pointed out that a proposal for the closure of the accounts of the Office for the 2017 financial year would be presented at a subsequent part-session.

In a resolution adopted by 694 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions, the European Parliament justified its unfavourable opinion on the legality and regularity of the payments underlying the accounts for the financial year 2017 by recalling that, according to the Court of Auditors' report, the material and systematic instances of non-compliance of payments with the EASO Financial Regulation and other applicable rules and provisions mainly relate to public procurement and recruitment procedures underlying payments.

Parliament deeply regretted that the combined error from non-compliant payments amounts to at least EUR 7.7 million or 10.3 % of the total payments made by the Office in 2017. The systematic nature of non-compliances demonstrates an inadequate internal control system.

The outcome of the investigation of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

Parliament deplored the findings of OLAF as regards irregularities surrounding the breach of procurement procedures, misappropriation of Union funds, mismanagement, abuse of position in human resources issues, breaches of data protection rules, harassment and inappropriate behaviour towards staff in 2017. The Office is called on to report to the discharge authority on the follow-up of the measures proposed by OLAF.

Members recognised the commitment of the new Executive Director appointed on 16 June 2019 to deliver significant reforms ensuring solid governance and his intention for future close cooperation with the Parliament in the future.

Follow-up to the 2016 discharge and to the 2017 first discharge report

Parliament recalled the European Parliament reasoned decision of 24 October 2018 refusing to grant the Office’s Executive Director discharge for the 2016 financial year, as well as the European Parliament decision to postpone the decision on the 2017 discharge of the Office.

Members welcomed the follow-up report by the Office on the observations of Parliament for the 2017 financial year, in particular corrective measures taken by the Office’s Management Board, the ad interim Executive Director and the new Executive Director in order to improve the governance structure and efficiency of the Office, restore transparency and build trust. The Office is urged to regularly and publicly report to the discharge authority on the implementation of that Action Plan.

Parliament acknowledged the efforts and appreciates the progress made on the implementation of internal control systems, including controls on procurement and expenditure operations. Payments under irregular procurement processes, and the completion of new open procedures, which were audited by the Court without raising any comments.

Members noted with satisfaction the implementation of new measures aimed at preventing harassment, increasing staff well-being and reducing turnover. The Office is urged to quickly finalise the recruitments in full compliance with the relevant legal procedures and to provide a regular follow up on the results achieved.

Parliament also welcomed the measures intended by the new Office leadership to encourage and protect whistleblowers and called for a rapid adoption of internal rules and guidelines concerning whistleblowing.