2018 discharge: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

2019/2068(DEC) - 13/05/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) for the financial year 2017 and to approve the closure of the accounts for the financial year in question.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2017 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 460 votes to 225 with 7 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations, which form an integral part of the decision on discharge and which add to the general recommendations set out in the resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies:

Agency's financial statements

The final budget of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for the financial year 2018 was EUR 22 960 429, representing a slight increase of 0.47 % compared to 2017.

Budget and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2018 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 100 %, the same rate as in 2017. The payment appropriations execution rate was low at 76.20 %, this represented a slight increase of 4.09 % compared to 2017.

Parliament noted that according to the Court's report, carry-overs of committed appropriations were high for operating expenditure, mainly due to the nature of the activities which include financing studies that span several months and often beyond year-end. The Agency has introduced planning procedures to monitor the inevitable delays between the signing of contracts, deliveries and payments. Budget planning should be improved according to Parliament.

Other observations

Members also made a series of observations regarding performance, procurement, conflicts of interest and internal controls.

In particular, they noted that:

- in 2018 a new operational unit was established to strengthen interdepartmental cooperation on projects and enhance capacity for real-time responses;

- a feasibility study should be conducted in order to assess the possibility of, at the very least, setting up shared synergies with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), if not fully merging them;

- the Agency is encouraged to intensify its cooperation with international organisations, such as the Council of Europe and the United Nations, in order to find and use synergies, whenever possible;

- on 31 December 2018 the establishment plan was 98.61 % executed, with 71 temporary agents appointed out of 72 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget;

- the Agency completed a revision of the anti-fraud strategy which was adopted at a meeting of the management board in December 2018 and complemented by a specific action plan

- the remit of the Agency's competences should extend to all rights protected under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, to include, *inter alia*, matters of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, and that the Agency should be able to issue opinions on legislative proposals on its own initiative.