2019 discharge: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

2020/2152(DEC) - 28/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 563 votes to 85, with 50 abstentions, to grant discharge to the Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) for the financial year 2019 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 2019 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 557 votes to 92 with 42 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 22 871 576.30, representing a slight decrease of 0.39 % compared to 2018.

Budget and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2019 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 100 %, the same rate as in 2018. The payment appropriations execution rate was low at 78.20 %, representing an increase of 2.51 % compared to 2018.

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 and its implementation cycle should be improved according to Parliament.

Other observations

Parliament made a series of observations regarding performance, conflicts of interest and internal controls.

In particular, it noted that:

- the performance measurement system and Key Performance Indicators should regularly review and updated with a view to improving its strategy and activity planning;

- the Agency should increase cooperation and exchanges of good practices with other EU agencies with a view to improving efficiency (human resources, building management, IT services and security);

- the Agency should be able to offer opinions on legislative proposals on its own initiative and to all areas of rights protected under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, including issues of judicial and police cooperation in criminal matters;

- on 31 December 2019, the establishment plan was 98.61 % implemented, with 71 temporary agents appointed out of 72 temporary agents authorised under the EU budget (compared to 72 authorised posts in 2018);

- gender balance was achieved among senior managers (3 men and 3 women) and staff in general (50 % male and 50 % female);

- a code of good administrative behaviour has been put in place for its staff as well as a practical guide on the management and prevention of conflicts of interest. Compulsory training is also provided on anti-harassment, ethics and integrity.