# 2019 discharge: European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust)

2020/2158(DEC) - 28/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 639 votes to 47, with 12 abstentions, to grant discharge to the Administrative Director of the European Union Agency for Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (Eurojust) for the financial year 2019 and to approve the closure of the accounts for that year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2019 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 628 votes to 54 with 9 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations which form an integral part of the discharge decision and which complement the general recommendations contained in the resolution on the performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

***Eurojust's financial statements***

Eurojust's final budget for the financial year 2019 was EUR 38 954 265, an increase of 0.90% compared to 2018.

***Budgetary and financial management***

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2019 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99.88%, which represents a slight decrease of 0.05% compared to the financial year 2018. The execution rate for payment appropriations was 90.61%, an increase of 3.70% compared to 2018.

In 2019, the Agency's budget amounted to EUR 38 100 000, which is EUR 3 000 000 less than the Agency's request for 2019. The Agency therefore submitted a request to the Commission for an amending budget to cover the shortfall in resources. Pending the outcome of this request, mitigation measures have been put in place, delaying a number of activities. The Commission should intensify its discussions with the Agency before any future annual budget allocations.

***Other comments***

Members also made a number of observations concerning performance, staff policy, procurement and internal controls.

In particular, they noted that:

- the Agency uses key performance indicators (KPIs), to assess the added value of its activities, as well as various other tools to improve its budgetary management, including increasing the number of references to the Agency in EU texts, the percentage of formal and informal written contributions to draft EU legislation accepted by the institutions, as well as budget execution; the relevance of KPIs will be reassessed in future annual work programmes;

- in 2019, the Agency's assistance was required in 7804 cross-border criminal investigations, an increase of 17% compared to 2018, of which 3892 were new cases opened in 2019, an increase of 9% compared to 2018;

- working together through the Agency in 2019, national judicial and law enforcement authorities brought trade in illicit drugs worth EUR 2.7 billion to a halt, and about EUR 2 billion in criminal assets were seized or frozen; the workload is expected to increase further due to the new strengthened mandate, which entered into force in 2019;

- the Agency continues to cooperate closely at operational level with the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), with other partners in the field of justice and home affairs and with third countries. It also cooperates with the European Anti-Fraud Office and the European Union Intellectual Property Office;

- on 31 December 2019, the establishment plan was 98.08 % implemented, with 204 temporary agents appointed out of 208 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget. Member States should take into account the importance of ensuring gender balance when appointing members of the Agency's College;

- the Agency should fully comply with the rules governing public procurement and implement the Court's observations which have not yet been implemented;

- the Agency should publish the CVs and declarations of interest of the members of the Executive Board, the Agency's Chair and the Administrative Director and inform the discharge authority of the measures taken in this respect; Members called for the creation of a common ethical framework for all EU institutions and agencies;

- as regards environmental management, the Agency’s building received the sustainability label “very good”.

With regard to cooperation with the UK after the entry into force of the withdrawal agreement, the Agency monitored the negotiations and identified the areas of impact and possible scenarios. The UK was the country with the fifth largest number of cases assisted by the Agency.