2019 discharge: European Training Foundation (ETF)

2020/2159(DEC) - 28/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 614 votes to 78, with 6 abstentions, to **grant discharge** to the Director of the European Training Foundation (ETF) for the financial year 2019 and to approve the closure of the accounts for that year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors had 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 601 votes to 85 with 5 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations which form an integral part of the discharge decision and which complement the general recommendations set out in the resolution on the performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

Foundation's financial statements

The Foundation's final budget for the year 2019 was EUR 20 546 000, an increase of 2.00% compared to 2018.

Budgetary and financial management

Members welcomed the budget monitoring efforts during the 2019 financial year which resulted in a budget execution rate of 99.96%, which represents a slight increase of 0.03% compared to the 2018 financial year. The implementation rate of payment appropriations was 95.91%, thus registering a decrease of 2.16% compared to 2018.

Other observations

Members also made a series of observations concerning performance, staff policy, public procurement, conflict of interest management and internal controls.

In particular, they noted that:

- the Foundation assisted the Commission in supporting the reform of vocational training in the Union neighbouring countries, enlargement countries and central Asian countries. Members welcomes in particular the Foundation's initiative ‘Skills for Enterprise Development’ addressing the need for skills adaptation and enhancement enabling enterprises to respond and manage challenges, including those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic;

- the Foundation achieved a 91 % activity completion rate with a timely completion rate of 85 %, and that it succeeded in reaching its targets for 14 out of 15 key performance indicators; there is a need to ensure sufficient human and financial resources for the Foundation to continue to implement its work programme with a very high completion rate;

- on 31 December 2019, the establishment plan was 100 % implemented, with 86 temporary agents appointed out of 86 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget. The Foundation achieved a near gender balance in senior management and on the Board;

- the declarations of interest and CVs of the members of the Governing Board and senior management are available on the Foundation's website. The Foundation identified a potential conflict of interest in a selection procedure in 2019 and the Director took the decision to modify the composition of the jury accordingly;

- the Foundation addressed the majority of the observations made by the discharge authority in the 2018 discharge procedure, but still needs to take action to address the Court's observations on non-competitive award elements in the award criteria;

- 2018 was the first full year that the Foundation implemented its 17 internal control principles. The results of the annual assessment of the internal control principles for 2019 were positive;

- the Foundation strengthened its presence on social networks targeting the general public and introduced a new knowledge-sharing platform which helps to achieve strategic objective of being a global knowledge hub for skills and employment policies in developing and transition countries.