2019 discharge: European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

2020/2161(DEC) - 28/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 635 votes to 41, with 12 abstentions, to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) for the financial year 2019 and to approve the closure of the accounts for that year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurance 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 624 votes to 54 with 13 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.

Agency's financial statements

The Agency's final budget for the financial year 2019 was EUR 196 411 375, which represents a decrease of 0.74% compared to 2018. EUR 103 214 000 of the budget was financed by fees and charges and EUR 37 643 000 by the EU budget.

Budgetary and financial management

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2019 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 96.69%, which represents a decrease of 1.62% compared to 2018. The implementation rate for payment appropriations was 89.06%, a decrease of 1.20% compared to 2018.

Members noted that the cancellation rate for carry-overs continued to increase to 3.7% (1.8% in 2018), but remains below the 5% limit set by the Commission.

Through industry-funded activities over the years, the Agency has accumulated a surplus. The resolution pointed out that this surplus could be valuable in ensuring a balanced budget for the Agency in the light of the severe economic crisis in the aviation sector, which could have an impact on the fee-related activities.

Other comments

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

In particular, they noted that:

- the Agency uses some measures as key performance indicators to assess the added value of its activities and other measures, such as timely processing of occurrence reports, timely maintenance of agency accreditation and timely progress on bilateral agreements, to improve its budget management;

- the Agency's programme Data4Safety, which will provide a big data platform and an improved analysis capability at European level, made progress in 2019;

- the Agency shares resources for overlapping tasks with other agencies, including the European Food Safety Agency, the European Training Foundation and the European Securities and Markets Authority, in the areas of surveys, e-learning, cloud computing and LinkedIn services and environmental awareness training;

- the Agency should continue to develop a long-term human resources policy framework covering work-life balance, lifelong guidance and career development, gender balance, teleworking, geographical balance and the recruitment and integration of people with disabilities;

- staff shortages remain one of the main obstacles to efficiency and the priority should be to support staff with additional resources;

- on 31 December 2019, the establishment plan had been 94.56 % implemented, with 643 temporary agents appointed out of 680 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 680 authorised posts in 2018);

- in 2019, the Agency identified several cases of potential conflict of interest in most cases, the risk of conflict of interest was resolved. The Agency is invited to publish the CVs and declarations of interest of all Board members and to inform the discharge authority of the measures taken in this respect;

- since January 2018, the Agency has given all its suppliers the possibility to submit electronic invoices;

- the Agency's integrated management system was recertified to the ISO 9001:2015 standard in 2019; the auditors found no non-conformities.

Parliament noted the measures taken by the Agency to mitigate all risks associated with the UK's withdrawal from the EU, including the establishment of a contingency plan in coordination with the Commission. The Agency cooperated closely with the European Commission during the negotiations with the UK and the risk of disruption to aviation activities was removed with the conclusion of the withdrawal agreement, which entered into force on 1 February 2020.