# 2020 discharge: European Environment Agency (EEA)

2021/2126(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Environment Agency (EEA) for the financial year 2020 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 2020 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 549 votes to 76 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.

***Agency's financial statements***

The Agency's final budget for 2020 was EUR 89 649 723, representing an increase of 18.48 % compared to 2019 due to an increase in external assigned revenue. The Agency's budget derives mainly from the Union budget (75.29 %) and the contributions under specific agreement for the Copernicus programme (22.68 %).

***Budgetary and financial management***

Parliament welcomed the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 which resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99.96 %, representing a slight decrease of 0.04 % compared to 2019. The payment appropriations execution rate was 86.12 %, representing a decrease of 3.71 % compared to the previous year.

***Other observations***

Parliament also made a series of observations concerning performance, staff, conflicts of interest, internal controls and Covid-19.

In particular, it noted that:

- the Agency has achieved what it had set out to do by exceeding the expectations of its key performance indicators in 2020 despite the risks and challenges the organisation had to manage due to the Covid-19 pandemic;

- concerning its IT network, the Agency had initiated digitalisation initiatives prior to the pandemic in 2020 and that, since March 2020, those initiatives were accelerated by the lockdown situation. Parliament called on the Agency to continue to monitor the cybersecurity threat landscape and take the appropriate measures;

- the Agency presented the '2020 Air quality in Europe report', documenting the impact of lockdown measures on air quality in European cities, using the unique situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic;

- on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan was 96.92 % filled, with three permanent officials and 123 temporary agents appointed out of 130 posts authorised under the Union budget. However, there is no gender balance in senior management and the Management Board;

- the Agency focuses on converting to electronic administration processes (procurement, finance and human resources), which has delivered efficiency gains and supported it to switch quickly and effectively to a working-from-home environment at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic;

- ongoing efforts have been made to secure transparency to prevent and manage conflicts of interests, and to provide whistleblower protection;

- even though the Agency's staff managed to adapt quickly to the Covid-19 situation and delivered the work programme envisaged for 2020, the internal control framework needs to be improved;

- the Agency should increase its digitalisation in terms of internal operation and management but also in order to speed up the digitalisation of procedures;

- all necessary security measures should be taken to avoid any risk to the online security of the processed information.