2020 discharge: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)

2021/2141(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Interim Executive Director of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2020.

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 559 votes to 56 and 25 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 final budget of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work for the financial year 2020 was EUR 16 058 100, representing an increase of 2.03 % compared to 2019.

Budgetary and financial management

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 96.8 %, representing a decrease of 1.04 % compared to 2019. Parliament regretted that the payment appropriations execution rate was at 62.15 %, representing a decrease of 14.18 % compared to 2019. The low rate of payment appropriations is related to a slow-down of activities of the Agency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other observations

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

In particular, it noted that:

- the Agency achieved almost all its targets with a part of the work programme not achieved as the pandemic had an impact on traveling and events. Parliament stressed the need to ensure adequate human and financial resources allowing the Agency to continue implementing its work programme with a very high activity completion rate, in particular in the light of the implementation of the new EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work (2021-2027) and the forthcoming legislation on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work and carcinogens and mutagens directive;

- on 31 December 2019, the establishment plan was 97.5 % implemented, with 39 temporary agents appointed out of 40 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget. Further efforts are needed to achieve gender balance at senior management level and in the Management Board;

- concern has been expressed regarding the long and non-transparent procedure for appointing the Agency' s new executive director;

- the Agency developed a consolidation strategy of its finance and procurement function. However, its implementation was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic ;

- 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;

- the Agency started a cooperation with CERT-EU via a service level agreement in order to ensure cyber protection for the Agency;

- the management board revised the prevention and management of conflicts of interest policy and that the management board members are requested to provide a declaration of absence of conflicts of interest in addition to a declaration of interests;

- the Agency performed an assessment of the internal control framework for the reporting year 2020 that concluded that the framework is present and functions adequately concerning all internal control components;

- remote working arrangements for staff were put in place with the launch of new electronic internal procedures to facilitate business continuity during the Covid-19 pandemic.