2020 discharge: European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust)

2021/2143(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Administrative Director of the European Union Agency for Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (Eurojust) for the financial year 2020 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 2020 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 571 votes to 26 with 36 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 2020 was EUR 41 700 000, an increase of 7.05% compared to 2019.

Budgetary and financial management

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99.99%, representing an increase of 0.11% compared to 2019. The execution rate of payment appropriations was 58.07%, representing a decrease of 5.54% compared to 2019.

Other observations

Parliament also made a number of observations concerning performance, staff policy, procurement, internal controls and Covid-19.

In particular, it noted that:

- the Agency supported an increase in the total number of cases in the past five years and that the recent trend of cases referred to the Agency are becoming more and more complex, requiring support over longer periods of time;

- further operational cooperation with Frontex had been agreed;

- the Agency defined 50 KPIs in its annual working plan for 2020, a reduction of 44 % compared to the annual working plan for 2019;

- it also continued to strengthen operational cooperation and the increase of case referrals by the liaison prosecutors, resulting in 291 new cases in 2020 and representing a 17 % increase compared to 2019;

- the Agency has stepped up its cooperation on criminal matters between the Union and its South partner countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia) by becoming the host of the new phase of the EuroMed Justice Programme;

- prosecutors from across the Union and beyond turned to the Agency for assistance in 8 799 cross-border criminal investigations, an increase of 13 % compared to 2019, and that 4 200 were new cases opened during 2020,164 of which were related to the COVID-19 pandemic;

- the Agency provided legal, financial and operational support to 268 joint investigation teams in 2020 and facilitated the execution of 1 284 European Arrest Warrants;

- on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan was 99 % implemented, with 204 temporary agents appointed out of 207 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 208 authorised posts in 2019);

- gender balance was achieved with 5 men and 5 women in senior and middle management, however, there is a lack of gender balance with 17 men and 9 women in the Agency's executive board and the overall staff with 71 men and 152 women;

- the Agency offered refresher training on psychological and sexual harassment to all staff;

- a number of weaknesses were detected in the Agency's audited public procurement procedures. Parliament called on it to step up efforts to address such weaknesses;

- the CVs of senior management, external experts and in-house experts of the Agency are not published on its website and should be done so immediately;

- the Agency maintained full operational continuity during the Covid-19 crisis;

- lastly, it established a dedicated team to monitor security logs and respond to potential cyber security incidents.