2020 discharge: European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

2021/2121(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) 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 560 votes to 19 with 46 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 2020 was EUR 183 042 000, representing a decrease of 6.81 % compared to 2019. EUR 37 954 000 of the Agency’s budget derives from the Union budget and EUR 90 000 000 is revenue from fees and charges. The Covid-19 crisis led to a significant reduction in the Agency’s revenue from fees and charges of EUR 18 000 000 (-15 %).

Budgetary and financial management

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 98.62 %, representing an increase of 1.93 % compared to 2019. Payment appropriations execution rate was 92.65 %, showing an increase of 3.59 % compared to 2019.

The Agency ended the year with a fees and charges surplus of EUR 9.4 million and the ‘fees and charges’ surplus is added to the accumulated surplus, increasing it from EUR 51.5 million to EUR 60.9 million.

Members noted that the rate of cancelled appropriations relating to commitments carried over to 2020 increased to 5.46 % (3.7 % in 2019), above the 2.5 % target set by the Agency in its 2020 performance indicators and slightly above the 5 % ceiling set by the Commission. This was

mainly due to the COVID-19 crisis and to the cancellations related to global travel restrictions, confinement measures, reduction in activities and cancellation of events. Parliament recommended that measures are taken to reach the 2.5% target;

Other observations

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

In particular, it noted that:

- the Agency monitored 59 key performance indicators, including targets to enhance budget administration such as a budget implementation rate equal to or greater than 95 %, commitment carry-over implementation rate equal to or lower than 5 %, fees and charges (F&C) revenue project implementation rate, and F&C outsourcing performance;

- the Agency, as an aviation sector regulator, has been widely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic;

- due to withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union, the Agency had to take back oversight of 129 third country organisations that were previously outsourced to the UK Civilian Aviation Authority;

- the Agency's swift response to the COVID-19 crisis, which provided the basis for a clear and harmonised approach across Europe was welcomed;

- on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan was 94.26 % implemented, with 641 temporary agents appointed out of 680 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 680 authorised posts in 2019);

- in response to the Covid-19 crisis and its impact on the aviation industry, the Agency has taken a more conservative approach towards recruitment, striving to achieve the right balance between business needs and available resources, favouring internal mobility and temporary sharing of resources between units;

- the Agency´s response to the Covid-19 crisis focused on providing regulatory flexibility to the European aviation industry, ensuring the health safety of the passengers and front-line personnel, coordinating with international organisations to implement adequate measures to fight the spread of Covid-19, and adjusting priorities and working methods to the new realities and emerging challenges of the pandemic.