2020 discharge: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)

2021/2120(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Union Law Enforcement Training Agency (CEPOL) 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 577 votes to 59 with 10 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 30 602 017, representing an increase of 67.52 % compared to 2019, caused by an increase of title 5 'other projects'.

Budgetary and financial management

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 91.70 %, representing a decrease of 6.28 % compared to 2019. The payment appropriations execution rate was 74.19 %, representing a decrease of 2.32 % compared to the previous year.

Other observations

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

In particular, it noted that:

- despite the Covid-19 outbreak, the Agency continued to increase its outreach with the number of training participants increasing by 13%;

- the Agency showed commitment to enhancing its international presence through the successful implementation of two international projects, namely the EU/MENA Counter-Terrorism Training Partnership 2 and the Financial Investigation In-Service Training programme in the Western Balkans, as well as through the negotiation of a EUR 23.5 million project portfolio in the EU enlargement and neighbourhood policy areas;

- on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan was 94% implemented, with 31 temporary agents appointed out of 33 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 32 authorised posts in 2019). Gender balance seems to balanced at senior management level but not among the overall staff. Parliament noted that there were 16 resignations in 2020 (versus 6 in 2019) due to the closure of the Western Balkans project or to new job opportunities in and outside the Agency;

- regarding internal control, several weaknesses in the Agency’s internal control system were noted, notably in relation to the management of budgetary commitments;

- the Agency does not have a policy regarding cyber security and the protection of the digital records;

- the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) launched an investigation in 2020 into a case of external fraud in the Agency;

- the Agency created a Covid-19 task force to support to the Member States and partner bodies, offices and agencies during the pandemic.