2020 discharge: European Union Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA)

2021/2140(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Agency for the Management of Large-scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA) 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 581 votes to 20 with 41abstentions, 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 amounted to EUR 240 119 000, representing a decrease of 16.74 % compared to 2019.

Budgetary and financial management

Parliament regretted that budget-monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 75.61 % which, although it represents an increase of 31.10 % compared to 2019, this is still well below the target. The payment appropriations execution rate was 96.24 %, representing an increase of 3.96 % compared to 2019.

Concerns were expressed about the excessive amount of carry-overs which is indicative of various structural issues that affect compliance with the Agency's financial rules. Moreover, budgetary planning should be improved.

Other comments

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

In particular, it noted that:

- the Agency updated its corporate key performance indicators in 2020 with ten out of 30 indicators not changed or only changed editorially, one indicator deleted, one new indicator introduced and other indicators updated for various reasons, such as changes in the regulatory environment of the Agency, insights gathered from audits and availability of better metrics;

- it achieved its objectives for 2020 and progressed towards the goals and objectives established in the Agency's long-term strategy and delivered the results defined in its 2020 annual work programme, in terms of both outcomes and performance;

- new IT systems were put in place and the development of interoperability between the new and the existing systems, continued;

- the implementation of the new Entry/Exit System (EES) faced a delay of two months as the Justice and Home Affairs Council decided to postpone the entry into operation to allow the Member States more time to prepare;

- the Agency made significant progress on the project for building a second extension to its technical site in Strasbourg with the formal land transfer, from French authorities to the Agency, of the 20 000 m² plot adjacent to its current building complex that will serve as the site for the new extension;

- on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan of the Agency was 89.6 % implemented, with 181 temporary agents appointed out of the 202 temporary agents authorised under the establishment plan (compared to 172 authorised posts in 2019). Concerns about the total lack of gender balance were expressed;

- that shortage of dedicated administrative positions may have a negative impact on the functioning of the procurement procedures within the Agency;

- the CVs for the members of its management board have still not been presented on its website;

- despite these challenges of the pandemic, the Agency ensured the uninterrupted availability of the existing large-scale IT systems (Schengen Information System (SIS), Visa Information System (VIS) and European Asylum Dactyloscopy database (Eurodac)) and made further progress with respect to the implementation of EES, ETIAS and the interoperability package.