2021 discharge: General budget of the EU - Court of Justice of the European Union

2022/2084(DEC) - 24/03/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Mikuláš PEKSA (Greens/EFA, CZ) on the discharge for implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2021, Section IV - Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

The committee responsible recommended that Parliament **give discharge** to the Registrar of the Court of Justice in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Court of Justice of the European Union for the financial year 2021.

Budgetary and financial management

Members note that the overall budget allocated to the CJEU for 2021 was approximately **EUR 444 million** , higher than the EUR 436 million for 2020 and the EUR 429 million for 2019. They note the **high budget implementation rate** of 98.69% in 2021.

For some budget lines, the net impact of the COVID-19 crisis was a reduction in the use of appropriations, while for others, the crisis required additional expenditure. In terms of figures, the additional expenditure due to the COVID-19 pandemic can be estimated at EUR 1.7 million while the savings are estimated at EUR 6 million.

Internal management, performance and control

In 2021, the measures to counter the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic enabled the CJEU to maintain a high level of performance.

The report notes the increase in 2021 in the total number of cases brought before the two courts (1 720 in 2021 compared with 1 584 in 2020), as well as in the number of cases closed (1 723 in 2021 compared with 1 540 in 2020). This increase mainly concerns the Court of Justice and is essentially linked to the significant increase in the number of appeals against decisions of the Court of First Instance, which in turn is due to the increase in the Court's activities.

The average duration of proceedings before the Court of Justice increased from 15.4 months in 2020 to 16.6 months in 2021, while at the General Court it reached 17.3 months in 2021 compared to 15.4 months in 2021. The number of cases pending before both courts remained stable in 2021.

Human resources, equality and staff well-being

In 2021, a significant partial renewal of the CJEU occurred with the arrival of nine new judges at the Court of Justice and five new judges at the General Court.

Members note that, since July 2022, the General Court has two judges per Member State, while the Court of Justice is still composed of one judge per Member State. They encourage the CJEU to continue its analysis on how to rebalance the workload between the two courts.

The report maintains that it is important to **address the lack of gender balance** in the panel of judges. In 2021, the proportion of men and women in staff and management positions is the same as in the previous

year. By the end of 2021, women will represent 60% of the staff. Members note with satisfaction that the CJEU is seeking to achieve geographical balance by encouraging applications from people from under-represented Member States.

The report commends the CJEU for taking specific measures to ensure the physical and mental well-being of staff in the context of the particular teleworking conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. It encourages the CJEU to continue its policy of providing guidance to and involving management in safeguarding the well-being of staff.

Ethical framework and transparency

Members welcome the adoption of the new code of conduct for members of the Court of Justice and the General Court, which entered into force on 7 October 2021 and which focuses on the declaration of interests of members. They regret that the new code of conduct for staff members is still in the process of adoption and therefore call on the CJEU to conclude the procedure as soon as possible. They underlined the importance of providing staff with comprehensive and up-to-date references on many sensitive issues such as revolving doors, outside activities and professional activities after leaving the service.

The report also welcomed:

- the efforts made by the CJEU to accelerate and broaden the digitalisation of its activities and procedures, both in the judicial and administrative fields. The CJEU has played an active role in supporting initiatives to strengthen cybersecurity in all EU institutions, bodies and agencies;

- the detailed report to the Budgetary Authority on the CJEU's building investment plans;

- the adoption by the CJEU of an environmental policy, which is publicly available on its website. By 2021, the CJEU achieved a significant reduction of electricity, water and paper consumption, of canteen and office waste and of greenhouse gas emissions;

- the commitment of the CJEU to inter-institutional cooperation.