2021 discharge: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

2022/2123(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) for the financial year 2021 and to approve the closure of the accounts for the financial year in question.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2021 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 509 votes to 122 with 2 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations, which form an integral part of the decision on discharge and which add to the general recommendations set out in the resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies:

Agency's financial statements

The final budget of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for the financial year 2021 was EUR 24 860 491, representing an increase of 2.87 % compared to 2020.

Budget and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 100 %, the same rate as in 2020. The payment appropriations execution rate was 70.95 %, representing a slight increase of 0.1% compared to 2020.

Parliament noted that, according to the Court´s report, the Agency carried over EUR 7 million (27%) of 2021 commitment appropriations to 2022, 96% of which related to operational activities. It also noted that the high level of carry overs is indicative of structural issues in the Agency's implementation of the budget and contradict the budgetary principle of annuality. This is a recurring issue. In this regard, Parliament welcomed the Agency's efforts to improve its budget planning by establishing a monitoring tool on planned carry overs from one year to the next. Without adequate financial and staff resources, the Agency will not be able to carry out all the tasks assigned to it and fully implement its new mandate, creating a situation that could affect the quality of work that the Agency provides.

Other observations

Parliament made a series of observations regarding performance, digitalisation and internal controls.

In particular, it noted that:

- a revision of the Agency's performance measurement framework and KPIs was completed in 2021 to better align with the requirements and needs of programming documents and activity reports;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 93% executed, with 67 temporary agents appointed out of 72 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (the same number of authorised posts as in 2020);

- in 2021, the Agency established a new human resources management plan;

- the Agency makes use of eNotices, eTendering and eSubmission in its procurement procedures;

- the Agency adopted an updated version of its anti-fraud strategy based on a specific risk assessment, which includes fraud prevention training, raising awareness of staff through information sessions and fraud risk assessments;

- no cases of conflicts of interest and whistleblowing were reported in 2021;

- as regards visibility, references to the Agency in the media increased by 35%.