2021 discharge: European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

2022/2097(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - 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 2021 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 2021 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 585 votes to 21 with 26 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 2021 was EUR 203 802 000, representing an increase of 11.34 % compared to 2020.

Budgetary and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation rate of current year commitment appropriations of 96.31 %, representing a decrease of 2.31 % compared to 2020. Payment appropriations execution rate was 87.34 %, showing a decrease of 5.30 % compared to 2020.

The Agency ended the year with a fees and charges surplus of EUR 11.2 million and the 'fees and charges' surplus is added to the accumulated surplus, increasing it from EUR 60.9 million to EUR 72.1 million.

The rate of cancelled appropriations relating to commitments carried over to 2021 decreased to 1.55 % (5.46 % in 2020), below the 5 % ceiling set by the Commission.

Other observations

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

In particular, it noted that:

- despite the continued effects of the COVID-19 crisis, the Agency had a good performance, with a 84 % implementation rate of its 2021 Annual Work Programme and 76 % of KPIs on-track. It made good progress regarding green solutions and digitalisation;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 92.94 % implemented, with 632 temporary agents appointed out of 680 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 680 authorised posts in 2020). Parliament noted the Agency's estimation with regard to an upcoming increase in the number of retirements;

- measures were taken to improve procurement practices that aim to maximise fair competition and value for money, increase transparency, and reduce the need for exceptions, including through awareness raising trainings for its financial actors;

- the Agency should continue the optimisation and modernisation of its digital solutions to further streamline the procurement processes;

- the Agency updated its management and prevention of conflict of interests policy by adopting a “Code of Conduct for the staff of EASA” (CoC), that includes a requirement for all the Agency’s staff members to fill in a declaration of conflict of interests, rules regarding gifts and hospitality, and mandatory trainings on the CoC and its annexes for all the Agency’s staff;

- several European Partnerships were approved to accelerate the green and digital transition, including on Single European Sky ATM Research 3 with the aim of accelerating the digital transformation of ATM in line with the European ATM Master Plan;

- the Agency should put remote and hybrid working methods into practice, in order to better organise meetings that could be carried out more efficiently remotely than in-person in the future;

- the Agency is urged to continuously monitor aviation safety, including cabin crew fatigue.