2021 discharge: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

2022/2100(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in respect of the implementation of the Centre's budget for the financial year 2021 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 Authority's annual accounts for the financial year 2021 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 556 votes to 73 with 1 abstention, 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.

Centre's financial statements

The Centre's final budget for 2021 was EUR 168 115 000, representing an increase of 169.03 % compared to 2020, due to new activities assigned to the Centre with the launch of the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA).

Budgetary and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation rate of current year commitment appropriations of 99.35 %, representing an increase of 2.58 % compared to 2020. Payment appropriations execution rate was 64.08 %, representing a decrease of 11.18 % compared to the previous year.

The implementation of the Centre’s Strategy 2021-2027 was slow due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to the new obligations imposed on the Centre in the context of the establishment of HERA. The Commission is called on to grant the Centre the necessary resources to fulfil the objectives of the Strategy 2021-2027 and to implement the Centre’s mandate.

Other observations

Parliament also made a number of observations concerning performance, staff policy, procurement, conflicts of interest, greening and digitalisation.

In particular, it noted that:

- the Centre delivered 74 % of the outputs planned in its Single Programming Document 2021–2023. 16 % of the Centre’s planned outputs had not yet started at the end of 2021 or were delayed due to the high COVID-19 pandemic-related workload of the Centre;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 95.2 % implemented, with 198 temporary agents appointed out of 208 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 180 authorised posts in 2020);

- the Centre was provided with 73 additional posts to be recruited during the period 2021 to 2024 (compared to 46 posts for 2021) due to the prolonged sanitary crisis and the impact of the large HERA grant that the Centre received in 2021;

- the Centre concluded a total of 257 contracts in 2021, covering 21 framework contracts, 14 direct contracts and 131 specific contracts;

- no actual conflicts of interest were reported in 2021;

- more systematic rules on transparency, incompatibilities, conflict of interests, illegal lobbying and revolving doors should be put in place. The Authority should also strengthen its internal control mechanisms, including the setting up of an internal anticorruption mechanism;

- the Centre’s electricity is 100 % provided by hydro-powered energy;

- the digitalisation of procedures should be accelerated;

- the Centre continued to have a high level of attention in the media, social media and through its websites in 2021, in connection with the natural evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic;

- the Centre should increase its commitment to addressing security threats.