2021 discharge: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)

2022/2096(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Union Law Enforcement Training Agency (CEPOL) 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 Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2021 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 578 votes to 42 with 17 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 30 044 194, representing a decrease of 1.82 % compared to 2020.

Budgetary and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 96.78 %, representing an increase of 5.09 % compared to 2020. Payment appropriations execution rate was 72.26 %, representing a decrease of 1.93 % compared to 2020.

The cumulated payment appropriations execution rate in the first two years (2020 and 2021) of the implementation of the four on-going multi-annual international law enforcement cooperation projects (Union External Assistance funds) was 22.25 %.

Parliament noted that a budgetary amendment was adopted whereby the Agency's 2021 budget was reduced by EUR 800 000, which was returned to the Commission.

Other observations

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

In particular, it noted that:

- the implementation rate of the Agency's work programme was impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, mainly with regard to onsite activities. A majority of targets set were achieved or exceeded;

- despite the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Agency continued to increase its outreach with the number of training participants increasing by 17 % compared to 2020;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 91 % implemented, with 30 temporary agents appointed out of 33 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (the same number of authorised posts as in 2020). In the absence of additional human resources, the Agency is using contract agents on a

number of tasks that would normally be executed by temporary agents. Staff turnover rates remained high in 2021, at 11,8 %;

- the Agency is urged to consider with utmost priority geographical balance in its recruitment procedures;

- regarding procurement, in 2021, the Agency made payments in connection with activities that took place in certain countries outside the Union. Such activities were not included in the scope of the framework contract based on which related payments were made;

- weaknesses were also found in the Agency's internal control system, in particular in relation to procurement procedures and the management of budgetary commitments;

- the Agency does not have a formalised policy on cybersecurity.