2021 discharge: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol)

2022/2121(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 Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) 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 594 votes to 17 with 21 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations which form an integral part of the discharge decision and which complement the general recommendations contained in the resolution on the performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

Europol's financial statements

The Agency's final budget for the financial year 2021 was EUR 178 310 917, representing an increase of 12.41% compared to 2020.

Budget and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 98.72%, representing a decrease of 0.72% compared to 2020. Payment appropriations execution rate was 83.51%, indicating a decrease of 1.58% compared to 2020.

The late payment rate was 7.8%, compared to 32.8% in 2020. Appropriations related to the current budget carried over from 2021 to 2022 are at a relatively high level of 15.20% or EUR 25.7 million.

Other observations

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

In particular, it noted that:

- the Agency monitored, in total, 44 corporate performance indicators, of which 33 reached or exceed the set targets;

- the number of operations was 2519, i.e. 9% higher than in 2020;

- the Agency achieved outstanding results in several areas such as the use of EIS (Europol Information System) and QUEST (Query Europol System), in which, in 2021, more than 12 million searches were recorded, representing a 20% increase compared to 2020;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 99.80% implemented, with 614 temporary agents appointed out of 615 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (same as in 2020). Once again, gender imbalance is reported for senior and middle management;

- in 2021, the implementation of the Agency’s annual procurement plan reached 79%, including 10 procurement procedures for contracts above EUR 15 000 for a total value of EUR 58 314 000;

- regarding digitalisation, the Agency uses e-procurement tools such as eNotices, eSubmission and eTendering, the latter also applying to middle-value procedures as of 2022;

- the Agency should focus on disseminating the results of its operations to the general public and to reach out to the public via the social media and other media outlets.