2021 discharge: European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)

2022/2098(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Asylum Support Office in respect of the implementation of the Office'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 Institute's annual accounts for the financial year 2021 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 492 votes to 111, with 22 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.

Office's financial statements

The final budget of the Office for the financial year 2021 was EUR 152 743 528, representing an increase of 8.5 % compared to 2020. whereas the budget of the Office derives mainly from the Union budget. The Office's growing role was highlighted in the Commission's new pact on migration and asylum, which was published in September 2020. The Office's operational footprint has increased in past years.

Budgetary and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 96.67 %, representing a slight increase of 1.53 % compared to 2020 (95.14 %). Payment appropriations execution rate was at 90.91 %, representing an increase of 10 % compared to 2020 (80.91 %). The measures put in place by the Office to resolve the long-standing late payments issue, with a high rate (96.5 %) of payments made on time in 2021.

The Court declared payments made by the Office in 2021 of a total amount of EUR 362 204 irregular because they were related to procurement errors in procedures carried out in 2016 and in 2020 for rented premises in Rome and Lesbos. The corrective actions taken by the Office, whereby moves to new premises in Lesbos and Rome are expected in the first or second quarter of 2023.

Other comments

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

In particular, it noted that:

- the Office implemented its 2021 annual work programme, with 78 % of its annual indicators and 85 % of its multi-annual indicators being achieved or exceeded, despite the continuous challenges due to the COVID-19 global pandemic;

- upscaled its technical and operational assistance to Member States and for its readiness to react swiftly to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the increased number of asylum seekers crossing the border from Belarus and the challenges stemming from the war in Ukraine;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 86.61 % executed (92.35 % including 21 posts offered), with 317 temporary agents appointed out of 366 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 366 authorised posts in 2020). The Office stressed the need for 68 additional posts, over a period of three years, in its establishment plan to meet the requirements of the new mandate. Allegations of staff-related irregularities caused by the Office's entire senior management team was reported;

- the Office launched 83 procedures in 2021, compared to 65 in 2020, 42.17 % of which were negotiated procedures with one candidate and 31.33 % of which were open calls;

- the Office made efforts to increase its public visibility in 2021 through various communication campaigns, including a campaign regarding the fact that the Office has become the European Union Agency for Asylum and the Office's new corporate identity.