2021 discharge: European Labour Authority (ELA)

2022/2108(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Labour Authority in respect of the implementation of the Authority's budget for the financial year 2021 and approve the closure of the Authority's accounts.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurance that the Authority's annual accounts for the financial year 2021 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 511 votes to 74, with 43 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.

Authority's financial statements

The Authority's final budget for the financial year 2021 was EUR 24 219 500. The Authority's budget derives from the Union budget. EUR 1 838 391 was implemented under the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and EUR 22 381 110 was managed directly by the Authority after its financial autonomy.

Budgetary and financial management

As a reminder, the Authority started operations on 17 October 2019 and achieved financial autonomy on 26 May 2021. Following the finalisation of the Headquarters Agreement with the Slovak Republic, commenced its activities in its premises in Bratislava in September 2021. This is its first discharge procedure.

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation rate of current year commitment appropriations of 95.80 % and that the execution rate of current year payment appropriations was 30.38 %.

Other observations

Parliament also made a number of observations concerning performance, staff, public procurement and the prevention of conflicts of interest.

In particular, it noted that:

- the project dedicated to the development of a structured performance management system that will support the development of coherent key performance indicators, initially planned for 2021, was delayed and is currently under implementation;

- achievements were reported on the initiative focusing on the rights of mobile workers and their employers in the field of seasonal work, its action plan and related campaign, implemented in cooperation with the Member States, social partners and other stakeholders, and bringing together all of the Authority' s operational tasks;

- the Authority supported in 2021 the first ten concerted and joint inspections, with the participation of 11 Member States. The European Platform tackling undeclared work was smoothly integrated into the Authority in 2021. In addition, the Authority took over some specific responsibilities of the European network of employment services (EURES) from the Commission, particularly the EURES network governance and training and communication activities, and the ownership of the EURES portal;

- all the activities planned in the 2021 work programme were implemented except the staff exchanges and mutual assistance projects under the European Platform tackling undeclared work;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 84.21 % implemented, with 32 temporary agents appointed out of 38 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget;

- the Authority has the highest proportion of seconded national experts posts (60 out of 144 members of staff, in the establishment plan 2023) compared to all Union decentralised agencies. The lack of gender balance was noted;

- the Authority concluded a total of 106 procurement procedures and signed six service-level agreements;

- the Authority is in the process of developing a comprehensive policy on conflicts of interest;

- 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 digitalisation of procedures should be accelerated.