

2023 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Public Prosecutors Office (the 'EPPO')

2024/2029(DEC) - 01/04/2025 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Tomáš ZDECHOVSKÝ (EPP, CZ) on discharge for the implementation of the budget of the European Public Prosecutor's Office for the financial year 2023.

The committee called on the European Parliament to **grant discharge** to the Administrative Director of the European Public Prosecutor's Office for the implementation of the budget of the European Public Prosecutor's Office for the financial year 2023.

Budgetary and financial management

The report noted that the final overall budget allocated to the European Public Prosecutor's Office for 2023 was **EUR 65.9 million**, a significant increase (14.7%) compared to the EUR 51.2 million allocated in 2022. The budget of the European Public Prosecutor's Office includes the reinforcement of EUR 500 000, granted by the budgetary authority at the request of the European Public Prosecutor's Office in June 2023. Members welcomed the increase in the budget implementation rate, which stood at 99.6% in 2023 (compared to 98.1% in 2022 and 97.4% in 2021). The overall payment execution rate increased in 2023 to 85.3% (compared to 76.6% and 71% in 2022 and 2021).

Members called for **additional funding** for the European Public Prosecutor's Office and for its staff to be strengthened to enable it to effectively combat organised crime, protect the Union's financial interests, and uphold the rule of law. They called for a specific increase in its funding under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to ensure it can continue to achieve its objectives and fulfil its obligations. Members are aware that, after obtaining financial autonomy in June 2021, the EPPO prioritised operational expenditure related to investigations, prosecutions, and security measures, leading to a limitation of non-operational expenditure for essential support services. The remuneration of European Delegated Prosecutors reached EUR 14.5 million (compared to EUR 8.7 million in 2022), representing the largest operational expenditure due to the increase in the number of European Delegated Prosecutors in office during 2023.

The report recognised the need for sufficient budgetary flexibility to respond to unforeseen operational needs, such as the war in Ukraine, inflationary pressures, or other global challenges in 2023. It maintained that the **budgetary and human resources** allocated to the EPPO should be sufficient and called on the Commission to allocate additional resources justified by the growing number of complex cases.

Internal management, performance, and internal control

Members noted that the EPPO has continued its efforts to implement a system for monitoring efficiency gains and cost savings and welcome the adoption on 1 March 2023 of an updated version of the EPPO's Anti-Fraud Strategy for the period 2023-2025. The report noted an **increase in the number of crime reports** submitted to the European Public Prosecutor's Office (4 187 in 2023 compared to 3 318 in 2022 and 2 832 in 2021) and, consequently, an increase in the number of investigations opened (1 371 in 2023 compared to 865 in 2022 and 567 in 2021) and estimated damages (EUR 19.27 billion in 2023 compared to EUR 14.1 billion in 2022 and EUR 5.4 billion in 2021). Compared to 2022, the number of cases before the European Public Prosecutor's Office has almost doubled in 2023, reaching 1 927 ongoing investigations. In 2023, 48 cases resulted in a judicial conviction (compared to 20 in 2022) and the

confiscated amount was EUR 60 million (compared to EUR 2 million in 2021). Members stressed the importance of systematically monitoring these cases in terms of the financial measures adopted (confiscation and/or recovery) in order to better understand the impact of the EPPO's actions. They welcomed the EPPO's participation in international networks to further advance its asset recovery operations.

Concerned by the increasing number of EPPO investigations concerning the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs), Members called on the EPPO to systematically analyse and identify fraud patterns in Member States where several RRF-related cases have been detected and to communicate these patterns to the Member States, the Commission, and the Recovery and Resilience Task Force.

The committee responsible makes the following observations, *inter alia*:

- there is an upward trend in the number of staff, from 58 in 2020 to 122 in 2021, to 217 at the end of 2022, and to 238 at the end of 2023. By the end of 2023, geographical and **gender balance** will be achieved among the 238 staff members (137 men and 101 women). However, Members are concerned about the gender imbalance in senior management positions. It was decided in 2023 to implement a diversity and inclusion strategy, which is planned to be further developed in 2024;
- the European Public Prosecutor's Office is gradually implementing its **ethics framework**. No proven cases of conflict of interest were detected in 2023. The EPPO must strengthen its internal integrity framework by requiring public disclosure of all financial interests and outside activities of senior officials. A more robust policy regarding public-private cross-border work must be implemented;
- the **EPPO's IT autonomy** requires additional human and financial resources, which have not yet been provided. Members welcomed the Commission's temporary extension of the provision of IT services until June 2025, but maintain that outsourcing these services is not optimal in the current situation. They reiterated their call on DG Digital Services not to interrupt its support to the EPPO until it has its own reliable IT system;
- the Luxembourg authorities providing the EPPO's headquarters should review the building's **sustainability** and energy performance. The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) is invited to engage in discussions with the Luxembourg authorities to explore specific measures to improve the environmental footprint of its premises;
- Members welcomed the initiatives launched by OLAF and the EPPO to intensify and streamline their **operational cooperation** and to share knowledge between stakeholders. They encouraged the continuation and strengthening of cooperation between the EPPO and OLAF, as well as with the Court of Auditors.