Discharge 2023: Agencies

2024/2030(DEC) - 07/05/2025 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** for the implementation of the budget of all agencies for the financial year 2023, with the exception of the EU Asylum Agency, for which discharge has been postponed.

The resolution adopted by Parliament by 503 votes to 121, with 26 abstentions, covers 31 of the 33 decentralised agencies and two of the other four bodies (EIT – European Institute of Innovation and Technology, and ESA – Supply Agency) and includes, for each body, the cross-cutting observations accompanying the discharge decisions.

Members stressed that the Union's decentralised agencies and the Euratom Supply Agency should focus on missions with **clear European added value** and that the organisation of these tasks should be optimised to **avoid overlaps**, in the interest of EU taxpayers. Strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the Union's institutions requires increased **transparency and accountability**, as well as **performance-based budgeting** and sound human resources management.

The resolution recalled that according to the ‘common approach’ agreed between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, each EU agency should be **evaluated every five years**. Parliament called on the Commission to explore **further synergies** and consolidation of activities, as well as the possibility of merging agencies with complementary activities, in order to ensure cost-effectiveness and streamline agency functions, including possible mandate reviews in cases of inefficiencies or duplication.

Members stressed the need for **sufficient resources** for agencies to be able to carry out the new tasks assigned to them under the new legislation. It is also important for agencies to strengthen their presence in the media, on the internet, and on social media.

Budgetary and financial management

Parliament noted that the total final revenue for 2023 for the 33 EU agencies amounted to **EUR 3.741.954.189** (compared to EUR 3.605.018.178 in 2022). The increase in revenue between 2022 and 2023 was significant in some agencies, by 54.59% for the EFA, 20.86% for Eurojust, 19.65% for Frontex and 19.15% for ACER.

Members stressed the need for agencies **to improve their financial reporting and internal control mechanisms** . They asked agencies to provide a detailed breakdown of their spending each year, including disaggregated data on external contracts, consultancy services, and subcontractors. They stressed the need for real-time digital reporting tools that improve financial oversight and accountability to the European Parliament and the public.

Audit results

Parliament noted the conclusion that the Court's audit recorded similar results to those of the previous year (2022). According to the Court's report, common issues identified across agencies were: (i) weaknesses in **public procurement**, which remained the main source of irregular payments; (ii) budget management issues, such as excessive carry-overs and late payments; and (iii) weaknesses in internal control, particularly in ensuring compliance with financial regulations and procedural guidelines.

Although an unqualified opinion was issued on the legality and regularity of the payments underlying the accounts for all agencies, exceptions were identified for four agencies: the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), the European Labour Authority (ELA), the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) and the European Union Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA).

Governance

Parliament acknowledged the progress made by EU agencies in improving financial management and governance structures, while recognising the need to further improve efficiency and accountability. It highlighted the **crucial role of management boards**, which should be composed of representatives of Member States, two representatives of the Commission, one Member of Parliament and a fairly limited number of stakeholders.

It is noted that some agencies, such as Eurofound, Cedefop, and EU-OSHA, have a tripartite structure that includes employers and trade unions, which offers advantages but makes decision-making more complex. According to the evaluation, alternative governance models allow for more effective involvement of social partners. Members highlighted the increased potential for savings and synergies in the activities of these agencies, as well as the need for rigorous financial oversight of EU agencies to **ensure cost-effectiveness** and prevent the misuse of public funds.

Regarding **Frontex**, although its regulation is considered fit for purpose, challenges persist in its governance and internal processes. Efforts are acknowledged, including a new structure adopted at the end of 2023, but **simplifications** are still needed, particularly to reduce unnecessary burdens on national authorities.

Parliament called on Frontex to continue to strengthen transparency, cooperate fully in investigations and implement measures ensuring the protection of fundamental rights in all its activities. It also stressed the importance of a **balance between border security and respect for fundamental rights**, with continuous training for Frontex officers on these rights.

It should be noted that Members **postponed granting discharge to the European Union Asylum Agency** due to ‘very concerning conclusions’ from an investigation by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) into nepotism and other issues affecting the agency's financial management.