# 2023 discharge: General budget of the EU - European External Action Service

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

The European Parliament decided by 519 votes to 126, with 16 abstentions, to **grant discharge** to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European External Action Service for the financial year 2023.

***Budgetary and financial management***

In its resolution (adopted by 475 votes to 136, with 53 abstentions), Parliament noted that the total budgetary amount managed by the EEAS in 2023 amounted to **EUR 1 198.2 million** (commitment appropriations), which represents an increase of 4.8% compared to the previous year. The implementation rate for commitments reached 100%, but the payment rate was 91.9%. The EEAS made 11 autonomous transfers for a total value of EUR 55.7 million, mainly for expenditure related to delegations.

In 2023, the EEAS faced **increasing political and financial difficulties**, as well as human rights and rule of law challenges, including due to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and inflation in third countries that led to drastic cuts.

Parliament welcomed the role played by the EEAS in gathering evidence against Russian state-backed, EU-sanctioned bodies involved in disinformation and information manipulation to justify Russia's war of aggression. It called for the EEAS to be provided with sufficient resources to **effectively counter disinformation campaigns** by authoritarian and illiberal regimes.

Members encouraged the EEAS to redouble its efforts to safeguard EU funding and to monitor the implementation of the milestones set out in the April 2024 EU-UNRWA agreement, which provides for EU audits and strengthened internal oversight within UNRWA. They stressed the need for the Palestinian Authority to align educational materials into line with UNESCO standards, removing any content containing anti-Semitism or incitement to violence, and encouraged diplomatic efforts for a **comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**. The EU is called upon to call for regional de-escalation, address humanitarian needs, and support regional peace efforts.

Regarding **public procurement**, Parliament asked the EEAS to investigate the reasons for the relatively high number of failed procurement procedures and to propose solutions to ensure their effective implementation, while maintaining the standards set by the Union. It welcomed the increase in the number of co-locations of Union delegations with Member States and other Union partners and noted that the budget for missions amounts to EUR 18 948 650 in 2023, which represents a limited increase of 1.46% compared to the previous year.

Members called for **an increase** in the budget for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) actions and other appropriate instruments for peace, conflict and crisis response, as well as for information technology and security protocols.

***Internal management, performance and internal control***

Parliament noted that, following an internal reorganisation, the EEAS established a new Internal Governance Service in October 2023, comprising three divisions: Inspections, Internal Audit, and Planning, Reporting, and Compliance, to enable the EEAS to ensure greater accountability, improve

management, and strengthen monitoring of activities. It also established specialist divisions for cybersecurity, hybrid threats, and maritime security. The importance of conducting internal audits diligently and regularly was highlighted.

Parliament asked the EEAS to:

- intensify monitoring of the state of democracy in different countries and to strengthen logistical and technological support to human rights defenders and indigenous people, paying particular attention to women;

- strengthen support for human rights, democracy and development in third countries through NDICI – Global Europe;

- continue to increase the resources allocated to the Union's digital diplomacy and to strengthen ‘green diplomacy’ and the ecological transition towards third countries;

- play a central role in defending peace and stability in the Middle East and to increase funding to ensure humanitarian aid in Lebanon, Gaza and Syria;

- accelerate progress towards achieving the objectives of the third action plan on equality between men and women (GAP III);

- place children's rights at the centre of its concerns given the extreme vulnerability of children in the world.

***Human resources, equality and staff well-being***

Parliament noted that a total of 5 252 people worked at the EEAS at the end of 2023, employed either directly by the EEAS or through external contractors. Although all Member States are represented among the EEAS staff, significant imbalances persist. Women are significantly underrepresented in senior positions. The EEAS is called upon to ensure a good geographical balance throughout its organisation and at all levels.

***Ethical framework and transparency***

In 2023, the European External Action Service (EEAS) strengthened its ethics framework with new instructions aimed at limiting externally funded missions and preventing conflicts of interest. It also focused on organising specific training on ethics, conflicts of interest, internal control, and the fight against fraud. The EEAS adopted a new anti-fraud strategy in October 2023. It did not receive any whistleblowing files. Furthermore, the Ombudsman did not find any partial or total malpractice and did not make any recommendations to the EEAS.

Parliament considered it appropriate for the EEAS to adopt transparency measures, notify them to the **Transparency Register** 's Management Board, and join the register. It called on the EEAS to publish a list of all meetings held with interest groups of all kinds.

In addition, Parliament commented on digitalisation, cybersecurity and data protection, buildings and security, environment and sustainability, interinstitutional cooperation and communication.