Discharge 2024: General budget of the EU - European External Action Service

2025/2150(DEC) - 29/04/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the implementation of the budget of the European External Action Service for the financial year 2024.

In its resolution adopted by 429 votes to 145, with 76 abstentions, Parliament recalled that the European External Action Service (EEAS) is responsible for managing the administrative expenditure of its headquarters in Brussels and the network of the Union's 145 delegations and offices. It noted that the budget managed by the EEAS, amounting to approximately EUR **1,239 billion**, represents roughly 9.54% of the Union's total administrative expenditure in 2024. It observed that 16 (or 23%) of the 70 transactions examined contained errors, but that the Court considers the level of error to be below the materiality threshold.

Budgetary and financial management

The total budget managed by the EEAS in 2024 amounted to **EUR 1,239.3 million** (commitment appropriations), representing an increase of 4.43% compared to the previous year. The budget execution rate for commitment appropriations in the current year was 100%, while the execution rate for payments was 88.4%, compared to 91.9% in 2023.

The budget of approximately EUR 1,239 billion managed by the EEAS represents approximately 9.54 % of the total administrative expenditure of the Union in 2024.

The EEAS faced **several challenges** in implementing its 2024 budget due to the significant impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, inflationary pressures, unfavourable exchange rates, and the 2% cap on non-salary spending, resulting in a EUR 33 million shortfall for EU delegations. Members noted with satisfaction that the EEAS overcame these difficulties through a combination of strategic savings and budgetary reallocations/transfers.

Parliament called on the EEAS to prioritise **actions that deliver clear added value for the Union** and its citizens, while avoiding activities and projects that risk undermining effectiveness and staff well-being. It urged the EEAS to address staff shortages in EU delegations, particularly for postings in locations facing complex security or geopolitical challenges, and to strengthen the transparency and accountability of recruitment procedures.

The Court is invited to conduct a **comprehensive audit** of the EEAS's performance in order to evaluate the effectiveness of its activities compared to the diplomatic services of OECD countries. This audit should identify the areas where the EEAS provides specific and irreplaceable added value and the areas where its activities overlap those of Member States.

The financial ceiling for the **European Peace Facility** has been increased from EUR 12 billion in 2023 to EUR 17 billion in 2024, with the additional EUR 5 billion allocated to military support for Ukraine. Members stressed that the significant increase in funding for the European Peace Facility necessitates enhanced transparency and parliamentary oversight.

Internal management

In 2024, the EEAS continued to face increasing political and financial difficulties, as well as **human rights and rule of law** challenges in an increasingly unstable geopolitical context marked by the intensification of hybrid threats to democratic systems. Members noted that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its geopolitical consequences continued to be a major problem in 2024. In this regard, they stressed the need for the EEAS to **play a central and key role in building the Union's strategic autonomy**, resilience, and security, which should also be safeguarded by systematically combating **foreign information manipulation and interference**, as well as disinformation campaigns.

Members called for the modernisation of the EU delegation network, notably by strengthening the European Union Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN) and the EEAS Crisis Response Centre. Welcoming the establishment of the European Democracy Shield and the creation of a Centre for Democratic Resilience, they urged the Commission and the EEAS to deepen their cooperation on information resilience, cybersecurity, and hybrid threats with vulnerable enlargement candidate countries.

Parliament insisted on:

- the continuation of the Union's political, military, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine as a strategic priority;

- strengthening support for human rights, democracy and development in third countries through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe financial framework;

- strengthening administrative and analytical capacities in increasingly strategically important regions, such as the Arctic;

- the central role of the EEAS in defending peace and stability in the Middle East, with unimpeded access and sustainable distribution of large-scale humanitarian aid, particularly in Gaza;

- the importance of supporting political, economic and social reforms in the southern neighbourhood region, while ensuring no Union funds are allocated to public institutions, individuals or associations linked to any kind of terrorist movements;

- the need to open an investigation into any allegation of infiltration and influence within Union-funded projects and to suspend or recover funding granted by the Union if breaches are confirmed;

- the need to demonstrate balanced strategic attention, coordination and responsibility in the fight against all forms of religious hatred and intolerance, and in particular hatred towards Christians, Muslims and Jews;

- the continuation of efforts by the EEAS in favour of feminist diplomacy and the strengthening of the budget line reserved for Union foreign policy actions specifically dedicated to equality between men and women;

- the need to guarantee adequate resources for the Union's election observation missions;

- the creation of a European Diplomatic Academy;

- the strengthening of digital and ecological diplomacy.

Regarding **human resources**, the EEAS 2024 report indicates that at the end of 2024, out of a total of 5 355 people working for the EEAS, 47% were employed at EEAS headquarters and 53% in EU delegations, including 1 622 local staff in EU delegations. Members expressed concern about the alleged

dismissal of local staff in certain EU delegations, in violation of local labour law. Gender balance in middle and senior management positions, both at headquarters and in EU delegations, has still not been fully achieved. Members also deplored the persistent lack of geographical balance and regional diversity within the EEAS.