

# Discharge 2024: Agencies

2025/2156(DEC) - 29/04/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** on the implementation of the budget of all agencies for the financial year 2024.

The resolution adopted by Parliament by 475 votes to 107, with 71 abstentions, covers 31 of the 33 decentralised agencies and two of the four other organisations (EIT – European Institute of Innovation and Technology, and ESA – Supply Agency) and includes, for each organisation, cross-cutting observations accompanying discharge decisions.

## *General context*

Parliament stressed that the **establishment or expansion of EU agencies** must be guided by thorough evaluations, impact assessments and a clear demonstration of added value so that lessons can be learned and consideration can be given to terminating their mandate if necessary.

Members stressed the importance of **transparency**, not only as a compliance obligation but also as a condition for public trust. Agencies were urged to publish their documents proactively, while respecting the principle of proportionality and complying with data protection laws.

Members reiterated that each agency should be **evaluated every five years**. They urged the Commission to explore further **synergies** and a deeper consolidation of activities, as well as the possibility of merging agencies with complementary activities. They also believe that only agencies that fully respect their **fundamental rights** obligations can be considered to have achieved satisfactory results, regardless of their budget execution rates.

Parliament criticised **the increased workload** assigned to agencies without sufficient resources, leading to greater dependence on external providers, particularly in technological fields, and posing risks to sovereignty and institutional continuity. It called for strengthening internal staffing levels.

Members stressed that rigorous controls on **conflicts of interest** and clear rules governing interactions with stakeholders are essential safeguards for the independence, institutional credibility, and accountability of the EU's decentralised agencies. They recommended regular independent reviews of conflict of interest frameworks. Parliament acknowledged that decentralised agencies' exposure to **lobbying risks** varies depending on their mandate and operational context. It considered that, while a one-size-fits-all model would be neither proportionate nor operationally relevant, establishing common minimum standards would enhance coherence and accountability.

In 2024, the 33 decentralised agencies reported employing a total of **11 491 staff members**, compared to 10 580 in 2023 (including civil servants, temporary and contract staff, and seconded national experts), representing an 8.61% increase compared to 2023. While **the gender balance** in the EU's decentralised agencies is improving, significant disparities remain. The EU's commitment to promoting gender equality in leadership positions has not yet been fully realised.

**Staff turnover rates** exceeded 5% in 16 of the 33 agencies (namely the BEREC Office, CdT, Cedefop, CEPOL, ECDC, EEA, ELA, eu-LISA, EU-OSHA, Eurofound, Eurojust, Europol, and the FRA), and two of them exceeded 10% (namely the EIT and the ETF). Staff turnover and precarious employment pose

risks to institutional integrity, internal controls, and sound financial management. Members called on the Commission and Member States to allow these agencies to recruit contract staff for longer periods or to authorise a greater number of temporary staff.

Parliament believes that agencies should appoint independent and professionally trained **ethics or complaints officers** to ensure impartial handling of complaints under Article 90 of the Staff Regulations, harassment complaints, conflicts of interest and whistleblower reports.

Members stressed the need for robust **cybersecurity** measures and the prudent use of artificial intelligence (AI), highlighting both the opportunities they offer and the financial and operational risks they present. They urged agencies to assess financial, procurement, and decision-making processes that rely on AI. Lastly, they noted that the lack of early termination clauses for leases continues to pose a financial risk to EU agencies.

### ***Financial and budgetary management***

The budget for the EU's 33 agencies has increased from EUR 3.6 billion in 2023 to **EUR 4.1 billion in 2024**. The Commission is asked to analyse the cumulative costs over five years and to justify any further increases with demonstrable added value. The budget increase must be accompanied by strengthened governance, internal controls, staffing levels, and absorption planning to prevent irregularities, carryovers, and inefficient spending.

Parliament underlined that the increase in revenue between 2023 and 2024 was significant in some agencies, notably the EEA, EIT, ELA, ENISA, and EUDA, with budget increases exceeding 21%.

Acknowledging the progressive expansion of **Europol's** mandate, Members stressed that the effective implementation of these additional tasks requires a corresponding increase in Europol's human resources, as well as robust internal safeguards, sufficient capacity for compliance, and strengthened oversight mechanisms. They also called for an increase in **Eurojust's** staffing levels, given its enhanced mandate, extended to third countries, particularly following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine since 2022.

Members believe that strengthening transparency in budget preparation and activity-based reporting would help improve oversight and accountability, particularly for agencies funded from multiple revenue sources. They noted that in 2024, 11 agencies (ACER, ECDC, EEA, EFCA, EIGE, ENISA, EU-OSHA, Eurofound, EUSPA, FRA, and Frontex) had **carryover rates exceeding 15%** across all combined budget lines. In the case of Frontex and the EEA, carryovers reached over 40% and 30%, respectively. The agencies are urged **to improve multi-annual planning**, procurement programming, and commitment forecasting to ensure the best possible execution of appropriations during the financial year for which they are authorised.