Basic information

2022/2113(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2021 discharge: European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) **Subject** 8.70.03.11 2021 discharge	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	CHASTEL Olivier (Renew)	14/07/2022
	Shadow rapporteur SARVAMAA Petri (EPP) MANDA Claudiu (S&D) EICKHOUT Bas (Greens /EFA) CZARNECKI Ryszard (ECR) KUHS Joachim (ID) OMARJEE Younous (The Left)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
TRAN Transport and Tourism	FALCĂ Gheorghe (EPP)	07/10/2022

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Budget	HAHN Johannes

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
23/06/2022	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2022)0323	
13/09/2022	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/03/2023	Vote in committee		

31/03/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0100/2023	
09/05/2023	Debate in Parliament		
10/05/2023	Decision by Parliament	T9-0163/2023	Summary
10/05/2023	Results of vote in Parliament		
29/09/2023	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2022/2113(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/9/09879

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE737.494	18/01/2023	
Committee opinion	TRAN	PE737.397	31/01/2023	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE742.585	21/02/2023	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0100/2023	31/03/2023	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0163/2023	10/05/2023	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	06248/2023	13/02/2023	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2022)0323	23/06/2022	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N9-0002/2023 OJ C 412 27.10.2022, p. 0012	27/10/2022	

Additional information		
Source	**Document**	**Date**
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act
Budget 2023/1910 OJ L 242 29.09.2023, p. 0377

2021 discharge: European Union Agency for Railways (ERA)

2022/2113(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Union Agency for Railways in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2021 and to approve the closure of the accounts for that year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2021 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 570 votes to 36 with 20 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations which form an integral part of the discharge decision and which complement the general recommendations contained in the resolution on the performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

Agency's financial statements

The Agency's final budget for the financial year 2021 was EUR 31 827 678, representing an increase of 3.45 % compared to 2020.

Budgetary and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation rate of current year appropriations of 99.82 %, representing a slight decrease of 0.16 % compared to 2020. Payment appropriations execution rate was 93.54 %, representing an increase of 4.25 % compared to 2020. Budget outturn in 2021 was EUR 69 638, down from EUR 114 225 in 2020.

Parliament acknowledged the challenges which the Agency faced in budget execution in 2021, including with regard to the efforts made to absorb as fast and effectively as possible the IT security budget of around EUR 1.3 million assigned by the Commission in May 2021 to strengthen the Agency’s IT security capabilities. The agency is commended for: (i) the implementation of around 81 % of that budget despite the limited timeframe; (ii) taking measures taken to mitigate the effects of understaffing by increasing the hourly rate applied by the Agency for authority tasks-related activities.

Other observations

Parliament also made a series of observations concerning performance, staff policy, procurement and internal control.

In particular, it noted that:

- the Agency reported a 76.41 % achievement of its 2021 annual programme (compared to 59.35 % in 2020). While most key performance indicators have been achieved, some important ones have still not been achieved, such as those related to gender equality audit, to the closure of pre-2021 audit findings (12 out of 14 actions opened at the beginning of 2021 having been postponed to 2022) and the presence of women in the transport sector;

- 2021 was the European Year of rail, and highlighted rail as one of the most sustainable, innovative, and safest transport modes available;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 98 % implemented, with 148 temporary agents appointed out of 151 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 148 authorised posts in 2020). Once again, the lack of gender balance is of concern in senior management;

- the original procurement plan has been updated throughout the year by adding EUR 350 000 for a new call for tenders and EUR 228 000 for an amended framework contract. The Agency carried out 4 open calls for tenders, 4 negotiated procedures and 2 reopening of competition in 2021;

- the Agency should participate in the newly established interinstitutional agreement on a mandatory transparency register for interest representatives, signed by the Commission, the Council and Parliament;

- the Internal Audit Service of the Commissions (IAS) carried out a risk assessment to identify areas for prospective audits for the Agency in the next years (2021-2023);

- an internal investigation has been opened by OLAF in 2021, which is still ongoing;

- the Agency introduced valuable measures to strengthen its cybersecurity following attacks in 2021;

- the Agency should concentrate its operations in one location only. Parliament noted the Agency's commitment not to renew the contract lease for the premises in Lille and to limit the travels to Lille to mandatory meetings. Due to the Agency's evolution into an Union authority, the current Agency headquarters' building in Valenciennes no longer satisfies the necessary requirements for accommodating the Agency's staff and activities.