Basic information

2022/2134(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2021 discharge: General Budget of the European Union Agencies **Subject** 8.70.03.11 2021 discharge	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	CHASTEL Olivier (Renew)	14/07/2022

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
INTA International Trade	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	TOMC Romana (EPP)	19/09/2022
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

TRAN Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
REGI Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH Fisheries	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT Culture and Education	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
JURI Legal Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	BRICMONT Saskia (Greens/EFA)	10/10/2022
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

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		
13/04/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0144/2023	Summary
09/05/2023	Debate in Parliament		
10/05/2023	Decision by Parliament	T9-0190/2023	Summary

10/05/2023	Results of vote in Parliament		
29/09/2023	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2022/2134(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/9/09807

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE737.507	20/01/2023	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE736.612	24/01/2023	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE742.597	21/02/2023	
Committee opinion	LIBE	PE739.531	01/03/2023	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0144/2023	13/04/2023	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0190/2023	10/05/2023	Summary

European Commission

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

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Budget 52023BP1946
OJ OJ L 29.09.2023

2021 discharge: General Budget of the European Union Agencies

2022/2134(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted, by 556 votes to 72 with 4 abstentions, a resolution on the discharge for the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2021: performance, financial management and control. The resolution includes, for the EU agencies, the cross-cutting observations accompanying the discharge decisions.

Members welcomed the agencies' efforts to maintain high standards of work and high-quality outputs despite the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Main risks identified by the Court of Auditors

According to the Court's report, the **overall risk** to the reliability of the agencies' accounts is generally **low**. The Court reports that the overall risk to the legality and regularity of the payments underlying the agencies' accounts is considered to be medium, although the risk varies from low to high from one budget title to another. It also reported a medium risk for sound financial management.

Parliament is pleased to note that, despite the risk associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Court nevertheless carried out its work by means of documentary checks and remote interviews with staff at the audited entities. It welcomed the Court's statement that, in most cases, the agencies had taken corrective action in response to audit observations made in previous years.

Budgetary and financial management

The cumulative total of the 2021 budgets for the 33 decentralised Union agencies amounted to around **EUR 3 206 million in commitment appropriations** , representing an increase of approximately 5% compared to 2020, and amounted to EUR 3 090 million in payment appropriations, an increase of 6.88% compared to 2020. Of the EUR 3 090 million in payment appropriations, approximately EUR 2 477 million were financed from the general budget of the Union, representing 77.27% of the agencies' total financing in 2021 (compared to 72.83% in 2020). Approximately EUR 728 million were financed by fees and charges and by direct contributions from participating countries (a decrease of 12.15% compared to 2020).

The resolution noted with concern that the final budgets of some agencies have been frozen in nominal terms for 6 years and, due to accumulated inflation, the real purchasing power of the budget decreases.

Parliament noted that the Court delivered an **unqualified audit opinion** on the reliability of the accounts was issued for all agencies except for the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA).

Members also noted the Court's observation of excessive levels of carry-overs, and numerous payment delays for ten agencies, with weaknesses in particular for the European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), eu-LISA and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), as well as the Court's recommendation that the agencies concerned should further improve their budget planning and implementation cycles.

Performance

Members note the **achievements and successes of all agencies in 2021**, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic with particular challenges for the agencies operating in justice and home affairs, transport, and medical related areas. They appreciated the high-quality expertise and work performed by CEDEFOP, Eurofound, EU-OSHA, ETF and ELA, the agencies working in the area of employment, social affairs and inclusion and reiterated the need to equip the agencies (in particular the EU agencies responsible for justice and home affairs) at a level commensurate to the assigned tasks, with a sufficient number of staff, employed in a stable manner and having sufficient material resources.

EU agencies should focus on tasks with clear European added value and the organisation of these tasks should be optimised to avoid duplication, in the interests of EU taxpayers. Agencies should continue developing synergies as well as cooperation and exchange of good practices with other Union agencies with a view to improving efficiency, in particular in the context of inflationary strains.

Staff policy

In 2021, the 33 decentralised agencies reported employing 9 631 members of staff, representing an increase of 7% compared to 2020. Burnout cases (in total 23) were registered in 5 agencies and overtime was taken by some employees in 13 agencies in 2021.

Recurrent shortcomings concern several agencies regarding the **use of external staff and interim workers**. The report notes an improved gender balance in 2021, compared to 2020, at the level of senior management, with 68% men and 32% women and for staff overall with 50.26% men and 49.73% women. The geographical balance of staff should be improved.

In 2021, the EU agencies network created a working group dedicated to issues in the area of diversity and inclusion for all ages.

Public procurement

The report noted with concern that the Court found 34 weaknesses in public procurement in 2021 (compared with 18 in 2020) and that the number of agencies affected is increasing, with 19 agencies affected in 2021 (compared with 9 in 2020). The increased use of online procurement tools by EU agencies is welcomed.

Prevention and management of conflicts of interest and transparency

Members noted that, with the exception of one agency, all the agencies have put in place a policy for preventing and managing conflicts of interest. They deplored the ineffective and inadequate monitoring of compliance with requirements and restrictions on ‘revolving doors’ by current and former agency staff. They stressed the need to introduce or regularly update systematic rules on transparency, incompatibilities, conflicts of interest and situations of 'revolving doors', illegal lobbying and strategies to combat fraud. All the agencies have implemented a whistleblowing policy.

Parliament stressed the need for effective management and control systems to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

2021 has been a key year for most agencies in terms of the various measures taken to strengthen agencies' cybersecurity and the protection of digital documents in their possession. However, these measures are not harmonised between agencies.

Members reiterated the importance of improving the digitalisation of the agencies' internal operations and management, including speeding up the digitalisation of procedures. They regretted that shortcomings in the use of standardised IT tools (for e-procurement and for the preparation of accounts and financial reports) represent major obstacles preventing the Court from extending the use of digital audit techniques to other areas and to all agencies.

2021 discharge: General Budget of the European Union Agencies

2022/2134(DEC) - 13/04/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Olivier CHASTEL (Renew Europe, BE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2021: performance, financial management and control.

This report includes, for the EU agencies, the cross-cutting observations accompanying the discharge decisions.

Members welcomed the agencies' efforts to maintain high standards of work and high-quality outputs despite the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. They stressed that the pandemic has demonstrated that agencies play a key role in EU policy, controlling the number of infections across Member States, authorising vaccines and treatments, issuing guidelines on workplace adaptation and worker protection, publishing recommendations on teleworking, online shopping and e-health services.

Main risks identified by the Court of Auditors

According to the Court’s report, the overall risk to the legality and regularity of revenue underlying the agencies’ accounts to be low for most agencies, and to be medium for the partly self-financed agencies where specific regulations are applicable to collection of fees and other revenue contributions, as was the case in 2020. The Court reported a low risk to budgetary management, as the Court's audit showed high carry-overs of committed appropriations, which were however justified.

The report notes the Court’s mention of an ‘other risk’ related to the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected the Court’s work as travel restrictions prevented it from carrying out on-the-spot checks, obtaining original documents and interviewing auditees’ staff in person.

Budgetary and financial management

The cumulative total of the 2021 budgets for the 33 decentralised Union agencies amounted to around EUR 3 206 million in commitment appropriations, representing an increase of approximately 5% compared to 2020, and amounted to EUR 3 090 million in payment appropriations, an increase of 6.88% compared to 2020. Of the EUR 3 090 million in payment appropriations, approximately EUR 2 477 million were financed from the general budget of the Union, representing 77.27% of the agencies’ total financing in 2021 (compared to 72.83% in 2020). Approximately EUR 728 million were financed by fees and charges and by direct contributions from participating countries (a decrease of 12.15% compared to 2020).

The report notes with concern that the final budgets of some agencies have been frozen in nominal terms for 6 years and, due to accumulated inflation, the real purchasing power of the budget decreases.

Members note with satisfaction that, according to the Court's annual report, **an unqualified audit opinion on the reliability of the accounts was issued** for all agencies. They also note that the Court issued an unqualified opinion on the legality and regularity of the payments underlying the accounts for all agencies except for the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA).

Members also noted the Court's observation on excessive levels of carry-over, in particular for ACER, eu-LISA, the Euratom Supply Agency (ESA), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the Court's recommendation that the agencies concerned should further improve their budgetary planning and implementation cycles.

Performance

Members note the achievements and successes of all agencies in 2021, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic with particular challenges for the agencies operating in justice and home affairs, transport, and medical related areas. The report appreciates the high-quality expertise and work performed by CEDEFOP, Eurofound, EU-OSHA, ETF and ELA, the agencies working in the area of employment, social affairs and inclusion and reiterates the need to equip the agencies at a level commensurate to the assigned tasks, with a sufficient number of staff, employed in a stable manner and having sufficient material resources.

Agencies should continue developing synergies as well as cooperation and exchange of good practices with other Union agencies with a view to improving efficiency, in particular in the context of inflationary strains.

Staff policy

In 2021, the 33 decentralised agencies reported employing 9 631 members of staff, representing an increase of 7% compared to 2020. Burnout cases (in total 23) were registered in 5 agencies and overtime was taken by some employees in 13 agencies in 2021.

Recurrent shortcomings concern several agencies regarding the use of external staff and interim workers. The report notes an improved gender balance in 2021, compared to 2020, at the level of senior management, with 68% men and 32% women and for staff overall with 50.26% men and 49.73% women. The geographical balance of staff should be improved.

Procurement

The report notes with concern that the Court observed 34 weaknesses in public procurement in 2021 (compared to 18 in 2020) and that the number of agencies concerned is increasing with 19 agencies concerned in 2021 (compared to 9 agencies in 2020). The increased use of e-procurement tools by Union agencies is welcomed.

Prevention and management of conflicts of interests, and transparency

Members note that, with the exception of one agency, all agencies have a policy for prevention and management of conflicts of interest in place. They insist on the need to put in place or regularly update systematic sets of rules on transparency, incompatibilities, conflicts of interest and ‘revolving door’ situations, and illegal lobbying, as well as anti-fraud Strategies. 2021 was a key year for most agencies regarding various measures taken in order to strengthen the agencies’ cybersecurity and protection of the digital records in their possession. However, those measures are not harmonised across agencies.

Lastly, most agencies made further progress with regard to digitalisation and optimisation of their workflows and procedures, in particular in the fields of HR, financial and procurement procedures.