Basic information

2023/2134(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure completed
2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European External Action Service **Subject** 8.70.03.12 2022 discharge	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CONT Budgetary Control	HOHLMEIER Monika (EPP)	22/02/2024
	Shadow rapporteur STAVROU Eleni (EPP) RÓNAI Sándor (S&D) MITUȚA Alin (Renew) PEKSA Mikuláš (Greens/EFA) CZARNECKI Ryszard (ECR) KUHS Joachim (ID)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs	CSEH Katalin (Renew)	20/09/2023
DEVE Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Budget	HAHN Johannes

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
28/06/2023	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2023)0391	
12/09/2023	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/02/2024	Vote in committee		
12/03/2024	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0102/2024	Summary
10/04/2024	Debate in Parliament		
11/04/2024	Decision by Parliament	T9-0236/2024	Summary
11/04/2024	Results of vote in Parliament		
10/10/2024	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2023/2134(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/9/12831

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE753.482	14/12/2023	
Committee opinion	AFET	PE755.025	31/01/2024	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE758.201	31/01/2024	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0102/2024	12/03/2024	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0236/2024	11/04/2024	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document	06179/2024	12/03/2024	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2023)0391	28/06/2023	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Court of Auditors: opinion, report	N9-0060/2023 OJ C 000 04.10.2023, p. 0000	04/10/2023	

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

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency

Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives
FLANAGAN Luke Ming	Rapporteur	CONT	22/11/2023	Chief Governance officer Deputy head of Division, in charge of Discharge Acting head of Division, Parlimentary affairs

Final act

Budget 2024/2247
OJ OJ L 10.10.2024 — Summary

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European External Action Service

2023/2134(DEC) - 10/10/2024 - Final act

PURPOSE: to grant discharge to the European External Action Service (EEAS) for the financial year 2022.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision (EU) 2024/2247 of the European Parliament on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section X – European External Action Service.

CONTENT: the European Parliament decided 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 2022.

This decision is in line with the European Parliament's resolution adopted on 11 April 2024 and comprises a series of observations that form an integral part of the discharge decision (please refer to the summary of the opinion of 11 April 2024).

The budget for 2022 for the EEAS was **EUR 786 947 220**, representing an increase of 2.5 % from 2021. The EEAS also received additional contributions to cover common costs of European Development Fund staff in Delegations and other amounts bringing the total available budget for the EEAS (in commitment appropriations) to EUR 1 143.6 million, which represents an increase of 4.8 % from 2020. Members regretted that the EEAS administrative budget for 2022 was under budgeted despite the important role of the institution for the early 2022 broader international context and the increased costs that implied.

The final budget for the EEAS HQ after transfers amounted to EUR 308.1 million in 2022, which represents an increase of 4.4 % from 2021, whereas the final budget for the EEAS delegations after transfers amounted to EUR 478.9 million in 2022, which represents an increase of 1.3 % from 2021.

The total paid mission costs for the EEAS was EUR 24.065 million in 2022, which represents a significant increase from EUR 6.128 million in 2021. It called on the EEAS to inform Parliament about how many times the High Representative/Vice President travelled with commercial planes and how many times charter planes were used.

Furthermore, during 2022, the exceptional measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic were phased out and the institutions started to resume functioning normally. However, the EEAS was then affected by the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine as well as security crises in Afghanistan, Haiti and Sahel. Members noted with concern that the EEAS reports that the 2022 budget was especially challenging due to new tasks and increasing running costs. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine created budgetary pressures for the EEAS, including through rising inflation and salary adjustments.

Parliament welcomed that as a response to the different crises during the last couple of years, the EEAS created the Crisis Response Centre in July 2022.

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European External Action Service

2023/2134(DEC) - 11/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided, by 532 votes to 69, with 3 abstentions, to grant the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European External Action Service for the financial year 2022.

In its resolution, adopted by 419 votes to 153 with 19 abstentions, Parliament made the following observations:

The EEAS's budget of approximately **EUR 1.1 billion** represents around 9.4 % of the total administrative expenditure. Members noted that 14 of the 60 transactions contained errors but that the Court, based on the five errors which were quantified, estimate the level of error to be below the materiality threshold.

Budgetary and financial management

The budget for 2022 for the EEAS was **EUR 786 947 220**, representing an increase of 2.5 % from 2021. The EEAS also received additional contributions to cover common costs of European Development Fund staff in Delegations and other amounts bringing the total available budget for the EEAS (in commitment appropriations) to **EUR 1 143.6 million,** which represents an increase of 4.8 % from 2020. Members regretted that the EEAS administrative budget for 2022 was underbudgeted despite the important role of the institution for the early 2022 broader international context and the increased costs that implied.

The final budget for the EEAS HQ after transfers amounted to **EUR 308.1 million** in 2022, which represents an increase of 4.4 % from 2021, whereas the final budget for the EEAS delegations after transfers amounted to EUR 478.9 million in 2022, which represents an increase of 1.3 % from 2021.

Members noted with concern that the EEAS reports that the 2022 budget was especially challenging due to new tasks and increasing running costs. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine created budgetary pressures for the EEAS, including through rising inflation and salary adjustments. The resolution stressed the importance of establishing a robust and secure financial foundation for the EEAS, emphasising its pivotal role in effectively executing the Union's common security and foreign policy.

The total paid mission costs for the EEAS was EUR 24.065 million in 2022, which represents a significant increase from EUR 6.128 million in 2021. It called on the EEAS to inform Parliament about how many times the High Representative/Vice President travelled with commercial planes and how many times charter planes were used.

Internal management, performance and internal control

During 2022, the exceptional measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic were phased out and the institutions started to resume functioning normally. Members stressed , however, that the EEAS was affected by the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine as well as security crises in Afghanistan, Haiti and Sahel.

Members welcomed that as a response to the different crises during the last couple of years, the EEAS created the Crisis Response Centre in July 2022.

Procurement and recruitment procedures organised by Union Delegations continue to be a cause for concern. The report stressed that while certain flexibility might be justifiable, the differences between deadlines and rules for each of the host country might lead to further errors and inconsistencies in procurement procedures. It called on the EEAS to adopt necessary measures to ensure that the number of errors by Union delegations is reduced and report to Parliament about measures adopted.

Human resources

By the end of 2022, there were **5 188 people** employed by the EEAS, out of which 2 419 (46.6 %) were posted at the EEAS HQ and 2 769 (53.4 %) worked in Union Delegations and Offices, which represents an increase of 2.3 % from 5072 people working in the EEAS at the end of 2021 with 2 303 at the HQ and 2 769 in Delegations and Offices.

At the end of 2022, out of 1 715 officials and temporary agents, 881 (51.4 %) were men and 834 (48.6 %) were women, which represents a slight increase from 2021. Members noted that women are notably underrepresented in senior positions.

The resolution welcomed that all Member States are represented in the members of staff of the EEAS. It noted however that significant imbalances still persist with 25 Member States represented in all staff categories. Members regretted that the amount of Ambassador posts held by Member States that joined in 2004 or later (EU13) decreased to 17 % in 2022, compared to 18 % in 2021. Members welcomed that, during 2022, the EEAS intensified its efforts and launched a number of initiatives to raise awareness about harassment.

Members welcomed that the Commission and the HR/VP, in response to the calls from Parliament, has adopted a Gender Action Plan for 2021-2025 as a cross-cutting measure for all aspects of foreign policy as a first step towards a genuine feminist diplomacy. The expressed concern about the global status of LGBTIQ+ rights and the growing resistance to women's rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights in developing countries. The Commission and the EEAS are asked to address setbacks in recognising and protecting these rights.

Ethical framework and transparency

The EEAS plays an important role in EU legislation in relation to sanctions decisions and the negotiation of international trade agreements, which have considerable regulatory impact. Members should therefore consider it appropriate for the EEAS to join the **EU's transparency register**, on the basis of a service level agreement. They called on the EEAS, in the interests of transparency, to publish a list of all meetings held with interest groups of any kind, including those attended by heads of EU delegations. The EEAS should also monitor the positions held by former senior managers and Heads of Delegation and systematically review potentially problematic transitions to the private sector or to third country organisations.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the situation in Gaza

Parliament highlighted the key role of the EEAS and especially of its Delegations in the context of the geopolitical impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the resulting need to support partner countries around the world and strengthen global alliances. It called for more efficient use of available resources to be introduced to avoid putting the Union's effectiveness at risk on the international scene.

Members are extremely concerned about the continued engagement of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban with the Russian President despite Union sanctions and an International Criminal Court arrest warrant for war crimes. They invited him, against this backdrop, to report to Parliament on his consideration of the Hungarian Prime Minister's policy vis à vis Russia. Members welcomed that the HR/VP convened an extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council on 10 October shortly after the horrific Hamas terror attack on Israel. They also took note that the European Council established a common position on the situation in Israel and Palestine at its extraordinary meeting on 17 October 2023 including an action plan with several work strands.

Concerned by speculation that European taxpayers' money could be used by Hamas, rather than benefiting the Palestinian civilian population, Members noted with satisfaction that the review of EU aid to Palestine has shown that there is no evidence to date that funds have been diverted from their intended purpose. As regards the serious allegations by Israel that 12 UNRWA employees may have been involved in acts of terrorism, Parliament noted that UNRWA immediately terminated the contracts of the employees in question, launched a UN investigation and appointed an independent review group. Members noted the continued monitoring by the EEAS to prevent the misuse of EU funds by terrorist organisations such as Hamas, while recalling the irreplaceable role of UNRWA in the humanitarian response in Gaza.

Recalling that the consequences of **climate change** undermine global peace and security, while exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities and threatening human rights, Parliament urged the Commission and the EEAS to develop and implement a strong EU climate diplomacy.

Lastly, Parliament warned that 129 cyberattacks on the EEAS were confirmed in 2022. It invited the EEAS to continue to have a strong focus on cybersecurity and hybrid threats.

2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - European External Action Service

2023/2134(DEC) - 12/03/2024 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Monika HOHLMEIER (EPP, DE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section X – European External Action Service (EEAS).

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European External Action Service for the financial year 2022.

The EEAS's budget of approximately **EUR 1.1 billion** represents around 9.4 % of the total administrative expenditure. Members noted that 14 of the 60 transactions contained errors but that the Court, based on the five errors which were quantified, estimate the level of error to be below the materiality threshold.

Budgetary and financial management

The report stated that the budget for 2022 for the EEAS was **EUR 786 947 220**, representing an increase of 2.5 % from 2021. The EEAS also received additional contributions to cover common costs of European Development Fund staff in Delegations and other amounts bringing the total available budget for the EEAS (in commitment appropriations) to **EUR 1 143.6 million**. Members regretted that the EEAS administrative budget for 2022 was underbudgeted despite the important role of the institution for the early 2022 broader international context and the increased costs that implied.

Members noted with concern that the EEAS reports that the 2022 budget was especially challenging due to new tasks and increasing running costs. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine created budgetary pressures for the EEAS, including through rising inflation and salary adjustments. The report stressed the importance of establishing a robust and secure financial foundation for the EEAS, emphasising its pivotal role in effectively executing the Union's common security and foreign policy.

Members are also concerned by the extensive use of private leased jets for official trips by the HR/VP. They believe that transparency of work-related activities and sound financial management when using the Union's public funds should be at the core of the Union institutions.

Internal management, performance and internal control

During 2022, the exceptional measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic were phased out and the institutions started to resume functioning normally. Members stressed , however, that the EEAS was affected by the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine as well as security crises in Afghanistan, Haiti and Sahel.

Members welcomed that as a response to the different crises during the last couple of years, the EEAS created the Crisis Response Centre in July 2022, which liaises with external partners like the Union institutions and Member States and brings diplomatic, security and intelligence capabilities together internally.

Procurement and recruitment procedures organised by Union Delegations continue to be a cause for concern. The report stressed that while certain flexibility might be justifiable, the differences between deadlines and rules for each of the host country might lead to further errors and inconsistencies in procurement procedures. It called on the EEAS to adopt necessary measures to ensure that the number of errors by Union delegations is reduced and report to Parliament about measures adopted.

Human resources, equality and staff well-being

The report noted that, by the end of 2022, there were **5 188 people** employed by the EEAS, out of which 2 419 (46.6 %) were posted at the EEAS HQ and 2 769 (53.4 %) worked in Union Delegations and Offices, which represents an increase of 2.3 % from 5072 people working in the EEAS at the end of 2021 with 2 303 at the HQ and 2 769 in Delegations and Offices.

At the end of 2022, out of 1 715 officials and temporary agents, 881 (51.4 %) were men and 834 (48.6 %) were women, which represents a slight increase from 2021. Members noted that women are notably underrepresented in senior positions.

Members welcomed that the EU Ambassador for Gender and Diversity continues to promote the Union policy framework on Women, Peace and Security and to ensure the participation of women in all diplomatic and political dialogues. They expressed concern about the global status of LGBTIQ+ rights and the growing resistance to women's rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights in developing countries. The Commission and the EEAS are asked to address setbacks in recognising and protecting these rights.

The report welcomed that all Member States are represented in the members of staff of the EEAS. It noted however that significant imbalances still persist with 25 Member States represented in all staff categories. Members regretted that the amount of Ambassador posts held by Member States that joined in 2004 or later (EU13) decreased to 17 % in 2022, compared to 18 % in 2021. Members welcomed that, during 2022, the EEAS intensified its efforts and launched a number of initiatives to raise awareness about harassment.

Ethical framework and transparency

The report welcomed that the EEAS continues to provide ethics training in the framework of the Newcomer Welcome Sessions. It regretted that a limited number of fraud-related cases involving misappropriation of Union funds by members of staff at Union Delegation were investigated by OLAF during 2022. Members noted that it would be of great relevance for the EEAS to join the Union **Transparency Register** on the basis of a service-level agreement. They invited the EEAS to publish all meetings with all types of lobby organisations, including those of Heads of Union Delegations, in order to improve transparency.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the situation in Gaza

The report highlighted the key role of the EEAS and especially of its Delegations in the context of the geopolitical impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the resulting need to support partner countries around the world and strengthen global alliances. It called for more efficient use of available resources to be introduced to avoid putting the Union's effectiveness at risk on the international scene.

Members are extremely concerned about the continued engagement of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban with the Russian President despite Union sanctions and an International Criminal Court arrest warrant for war crimes. They invited him, against this backdrop, to report to Parliament on his consideration of the Hungarian Prime Minister's policy vis à vis Russia. Members welcomed that the HR/VP convened an extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council on 10 October shortly after the horrific Hamas terror attack on Israel. They also took note that the European Council established a common position on the situation in Israel and Palestine at its extraordinary meeting on 17 October 2023 including an action plan with several work strands.

Members are extremely concerned about reports that Union taxpayers' money could be used by Hamas, instead of benefitting the Palestinian civilian population. They urged the EEAS and Commission to insist on controls and audits of UNRWA conducted by ECA and Union-appointed independent external experts.

Lastly, the report warned that 129 cyberattacks on the EEAS were confirmed in 2022. It invited the EEAS to continue to have a strong focus on cybersecurity and hybrid threats.