

RESOLUTION (EU) 2019/1462 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**of 26 March 2019****with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2017**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

- having regard to its decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2017,
 - having regard to Rule 94 of and Annex IV to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control and the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A8-0134/2019),
- A. whereas, according to its statement of revenue and expenditure ⁽¹⁾, the final budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (the 'Centre') for the financial year 2017 was EUR 58 042 653, representing a slight decrease of 0,35 % compared to 2016; whereas 97,80 % of the Centre's budget derives from the Union budget;
- B. whereas the Court of Auditors (the 'Court'), in its report on the annual accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2017 (the 'Court's report'), states that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Centre's annual accounts are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;

Budget and financial management

1. Notes with satisfaction that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2017 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99,78 %, representing an increase of 1,76 % compared to 2016; notes that the payment appropriations execution rate was 81,71 %, representing an increase of 2,45 % compared to the previous year;
2. Recalls that, as a Union agency, the Centre has a budget which is denominated in euro; however, since its seat is outside the Euro-zone (in Sweden), a lot of its expenses are incurred in Swedish krona (SEK); furthermore, the Centre is exposed to exchange rate fluctuations since not only does it have bank accounts in Swedish krona, it also carries out certain transactions in other foreign currencies;

Cancellation of carry-overs

3. Notes with concern that the cancellations of carry-overs from 2016 to 2017 amounted to EUR 953 754, representing 8,73 % of the total amount carried over, showing however a decrease of 3,11 % compared to 2016;

Performance

4. Notes with satisfaction that the Centre uses several key performance indicators (KPIs) in order to evaluate the added value provided by its activities and the list of KPIs comprised in the Commission Staff Working Document of 13 March 2015 ⁽²⁾ among others to improve its budget management;
5. Acknowledges that the Centre finalised the roadmap for the reengineering of its disease surveillance systems, published evaluations addressing new health threats in the Union, and continued to support the monitoring of microbiology laboratories capabilities in the Union;
6. Recalls that the Centre's mission is to identify, assess and communicate current and emerging threats to human health from communicable diseases; stresses that in 2017 the Centre responded to 59 formal scientific requests, 35 of which came from Parliament, and published a total of 210 reports (compared to 158 in 2016), including 38 rapid risk assessments addressing new disease threats in Europe, and 78 surveillance reports;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 108, 22.3.2018, p. 213.

⁽²⁾ Commission Staff Working Document of 13 March 2015, 'Guidelines on key performance indicators (KPI) for directors of EU decentralised agencies', SWD(2015)0062.

7. Notes that the Centre also launched the EPHESUS project, aimed at evaluating all infectious disease surveillance systems in the Union/EEA public health sector, and started evaluating its disease programmes;
8. Welcomes that the Centre has prioritised activities addressing the threats posed by antimicrobial resistance and the rise of vaccine hesitancy in the Union;
9. Notes with satisfaction that the Centre shares best practice and regularly works with other agencies, most notably the European Food Safety Authority, the European Medicines Agency and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction; acknowledges furthermore that the Centre participates in inter-institutional procurements organised by other agencies; stresses that the Centre should continue promoting cooperation with other Union agencies and international organisations, and foster dialogue with stakeholders and citizens;
10. Takes note that an external evaluation for the period 2013-2017 will be carried out in 2018-2019; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on its outcome;

Staff policy

11. Notes that, on 31 December 2017, the establishment plan was 91,21 % executed, with 166 temporary agents appointed out of 182 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared with 186 authorised posts in 2016); notes that in addition, 97 contract agents and three seconded national experts worked for the Centre in 2017;
12. Notes that the Centre has adopted a policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing harassment; acknowledges that it offers confidential counselling as well as training sessions; notes that two cases of harassment were reported and investigated in 2017;

Procurement

13. Acknowledges that the use of electronic workflows for procurement, based on the Commission's DG DIGIT application e-PRIOR, in addition to the improvements in procurement monitoring, improved the Centre's procurement processes; acknowledges furthermore that the Centre completed 316 procurement procedures in 2017;

Prevention and management of conflicts of interest and transparency

14. Notes that the declaration of interest and the CV of the Director are published on the Centre's website; notes with concern that some declarations of interest and CVs of the management board and of the advisory forum are missing; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the measures taken in this regard;
15. Acknowledges the Centre's existing measures and ongoing efforts to secure transparency, prevention, management of conflicts of interest, and whistle-blower protection; notes that, according to the Centre, the European Anti-Fraud Office closed one case of whistleblowing in 2017 without further action; notes that six potential conflicts of interest were identified and further investigated in 2017, out of which one conflict of interest was identified, resulting in a person being asked to abstain from discussion on a specific agenda point;

Internal controls

16. Notes with concern that 26 overrides of controls and deviations from established processes and procedures occurred in 2017, representing however 14 fewer than in 2016; acknowledges that an action plan to reduce the number of such overrides was adopted; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the results of the corrective actions taken in this regard;
17. Observes that, in addition to the internal procedure on meetings with the pharmaceutical industry, an internal procedure on the conclusion of memoranda of understandings and collaboration agreements with third parties is under development; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the progress made in this regard;

Other comments

18. Notes that in July 2016, the Centre signed a new lease agreement for its new premises, that took effect at the end of February 2018, and that the duration of the new lease agreement is 15 years; notes that the Centre moved to the new premises in April 2018;
 19. Refers, for other observations of a cross-cutting nature accompanying its decision on discharge, to its resolution of 26 March 2019 ⁽³⁾ on the performance, financial management and control of the agencies.
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⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0254 (see page 361 of this Official Journal).