

**RESOLUTION (EU) 2019/1477 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 Institute for Gender Equality 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 Institute for Gender Equality 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 Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0150/2019),
- A. whereas, according to its statement of revenue and expenditure ⁽¹⁾, the final budget of the European Institute for Gender Equality ('the Institute') for the financial year 2017 was EUR 7 722 898, representing an increase of 1,24 % compared to 2016; whereas the entire budget of the Institute derives from the Union budget;
- B. whereas the Court of Auditors ('the Court'), in its report on the annual accounts of the European Institute for Gender Equality for the financial year 2017 ('the Court's report'), states that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Institute's annual accounts are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;

Budget and financial management

1. Acknowledges that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2017 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 98,92 %, representing a slight increase of 0,5 % compared to 2016; notes that the payment appropriations execution rate was 80,95 %, representing a notable increase of 8,12 % compared to the previous year; observes that, after analysing the advantages and disadvantages of differentiated appropriations, the Institute decided not to adopt them as a measure to address the multiannual nature of its operations; calls on the Institute to remain aware of the situation at hand, and to report to the discharge authority on any developments in that regard;

Cancellation of carry-overs

2. Welcomes the fact that the cancellations of carry-overs from 2016 to 2017 amounted to EUR 34 865, representing 1,79 % of the total amount carried forward, showing a decrease of 0,07 % in comparison to 2016;

Performance

3. Recalls that the Institute was established in order to contribute and to strengthen the promotion of gender equality in the Union, including gender mainstreaming in all relevant Union policies and the resulting national policies, the fight against discrimination based on sex, and raising Union citizens' awareness of gender equality, and welcomes the prioritising of the work on several areas with outputs of high quality and high visibility, without losing focus on gender mainstreaming;
4. Welcomes the fact that the Institute uses certain Key Performance Indicators in relation to operational objectives and management of financial and human resources to assess the added value provided by its activities and to improve its budget management;
5. Notes with satisfaction that the Institute implemented its work programme effectively and fulfilled 98,75 % of the single programming document activities in 2017; notes furthermore that the Institute has released the third edition of the Gender Equality Index to monitor the progress of gender equality in the Union;
6. Welcomes that the outreach of the Institute's communication activities grew significantly in 2017 and its publications have received positive feedback from users, which contributed to spreading the messages of gender equality and raising the citizen's awareness in the Union;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 84, 17.3.2017, p. 148.

7. Appreciates the work of the Institute on the topic of digitalisation and welcomes its project focusing on work-life balance, the gender pay and pension gap, and the development of a gender-sensitive parliament tool;
8. Welcomes the ongoing cooperation between the Institute and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and welcomes the Institute's contribution to the ongoing efforts of the Committee including on the study and promotion of gender budgeting and on gender aspects of Trafficking in Human Beings; welcomes in this respect in particular EIGE's contribution to integrate to the Anti-Trafficking Directive and the Victims' Rights Directive a gender perspective;
9. Supports the work of the Institute, which, by means of studies and research, enables the FEMM Committee to obtain data that is indispensable in order for it to do its work properly by providing official, high-quality data free from any ideological influence;
10. Welcomes the Institute's participation and its valuable contributions of gender aspects in the European Justice and Home Affairs Agencies' network;
11. Notes with satisfaction that the Institute proactively initiated a joint activity with other agencies in 2017 consisting of training and experience-sharing workshops on preventing harassment; notes furthermore that the Institute supported the European Institute of Innovation and Technology in mainstreaming a gender perspective in its operations and contributed to a joint publication with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions;
12. Notes that the Institute has advanced on some recommendations of the External Evaluation (2015); welcomes the Institute's effort to shift toward a project-led organisation which will increase internal synergies and promote knowledge sharing across the units; appreciates that the Institute has started to implement an action plan addressing the recommendations and calls on the Institute to further continue this process to improve governance and efficiency;

Staff policy

13. Notes that, on 31 December 2017, the establishment plan was 96,30 % executed, with 26 temporary agents appointed out of 27 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared with 28 authorised posts in 2016); notes that, in addition, 15 contract agents and 4 seconded national experts were working for the Institute in 2017;
14. Regrets the gender imbalance within the Institute's management board members, with 26 out of 32 members being female, 6 being male; asks in this regard the Commission and the Member States and other concerned parties to take into account the importance of ensuring gender balance when presenting their nominations for members of the Board;
15. Notes that the Vilnius City District Court issued on 21 February 2019 its judgment in the case brought by five former interim staff workers of the Institute against the Institute's temporary staffing agency on unequal remuneration; regrets that the interim staff have been remunerated less than the Institute's statutory staff; notes from the Institute that according to the Institute's applicable rules interim staff cannot perform all the tasks assigned to the Institute's statutory staff; notes the possible reputational damage caused to the Institute; calls on the Institute to report to the discharge authority on the measures taken by the temporary staffing agency as regards the ruling of the Vilnius City District Court and in order to mitigate such risks in the future;
16. Notes that the Institute has in place a policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing harassment; notes that the Institute organised training sessions and enabled confidential counselling;
17. Notes that there has been a follow-up by the Institute on the reports related to sexual harassments of female workers and trainees in the agency; underlines that the agency must be a role model in combating sexual harassment and ensuring safety and dignity for all its members of staff; supports the Institute in implementing its zero tolerance policy on sexual harassment;

18. Takes note of the court ruling in which the Lithuanian court decided that Manpower violated the principle of equal remuneration of temporary agency workers enshrined in Article 75 of the Lithuanian Labour Code; expresses its deep concerns regarding the working conditions of the temporary agency workers at the Institute; urges the Director to take a far more active role in ensuring that the Institute offers better remuneration to the temporary agency workers; urgently requests the Institute to inform Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on the requirements for tenders;
19. Welcomes the suggestion of the Court to also publish vacancy notices on the website of the European Personnel Selection Office in order to increase publicity; notes from the Institute's reply that, in addition to the financial constraints, it is of the opinion that the channels it currently uses ensure proper transparency and publicity;

Procurement

20. Notes with concern that, according to the Court's report, the Institute was brought to court by unsuccessful tenders, claiming a total of EUR 700 000 in damages (amounting to up to 9 % of the Institute's annual budget) and the annulment of the award decision; observes that the Institute is already preparing to financially address the potential losses; notes from the Institute's reply that it will adjust the procurement procedures regardless of the final judicial decision; calls on the Institute to report to the discharge authority on developments in that regard;
21. Notes with concern that, according to the Court's report, the Institute issued and finalised a tender process to obtain a supplier for travel services without guaranteeing the best value-for-money; notes from the Institute's reply that it has internal controls in place to check and control the prices of services provided by the selected supplier; notes furthermore that the Institute is intending not to renew this contract but to participate in a joint procurement procedure organised by the Commission; calls on the Institute to report to the discharge authority on the progress made in that regard;
22. Notes that, according to the Court's report, the Institute had not yet, by the end of 2017, introduced the tools launched by the Commission aimed at introducing a single solution for the electronic exchange of information with third parties participating in public procurement procedures (e-procurement); notes from the Institute's reply that the Institute is implementing e-submission and e-invoicing in compliance with the timelines set by the Commission by the end of 2018; calls on the Institute to report to the discharge authority on the progress made in that regard;

Prevention and management of conflicts of interests and transparency

23. Notes the Institute's existing measures and ongoing efforts to secure transparency, prevention and management of conflicts of interests, and whistleblower protection; points out with concern, however, that the Institute publishes only the CV of its director but not the CVs of its senior management on its website; calls on the Institute to report to the discharge authority on the measures taken in this regard;

Internal audit

24. Notes that in 2017, the Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS) carried out an audit on stakeholder management and external communication, concluding that the internal controls of the Institute are adequate; notes that in order to address the three recommendations of the IAS graded as 'important', an action plan has been set up and is to be completed by the end of 2018; calls on the Institute to report to the discharge authority on the implementation of the three recommendations;
25. Notes the Institute's efforts to ensure a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly working place; observes that the Institute does not have any specific measures in place to reduce or offset CO₂ emissions, but notes that it encourages its staff to use public transport or bicycles for commuting;
26. Refers, for other observations of a cross-cutting nature accompanying its decision on discharge, to its resolution of 26 March 2019 ⁽²⁾ on the performance, financial management and control of the agencies.

⁽²⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0254. See page 361 of this Official Journal.