

2013 Agency Discharge

WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO THE AGENCIES

Hearing on 26 January 2015

I. QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY ALL OF THE AGENCIES AND/OR BY THE AGENCIES' NETWORK

Budget and financial management

1. According to the reports available to the Parliament, a general sense of difficulties can be identified in improving and strengthening the Agencies budget implementation. Could you inform the Parliament on how the Agencies are planning to improve on this issue? Which actions has the Commission programmed in order to analyse the issue and support the Agencies in better implementation of budgetary planning?

Procurement and recruitment procedures

2. Many Agencies still have problems in monitoring the status of procurement procedure and of the contracts implementation. Has the Commission provided a parameter table to help the Agencies to implement this issue? Which practices are the Agencies improving to better manage the procurement procedures?

Prevention and management of conflicts of interests and transparency

3. Which measures have been taken by the agencies to become more visible with the citizens in Europe?
4. Have specific initiatives been taken to increase the input from citizens in general in setting priorities for the activities of the agencies? What are the ideas of the agencies with regard to democratic accountability beyond the regular supervisory structure?
5. Which measures have been taken by the agencies to ensure balanced representation of all stakeholders? What are their policies with regard to experts, in particular experts who render their advice in a personal capacity?
6. Have specific initiatives been taken to increase transparency on contacts of the agencies with lobbyists?
7. In several cases, a lack of transparency in recruitment procedures was identified, with certain Agencies having difficulties providing the signed Declaration on the absence of conflict of interests. Could each Agency

provide information about the recruitment procedures and inform the Parliament whether the declarations were provided where necessary?

Performance

8. To what degree were agencies allocated new tasks in 2013 without having additional resources to deliver them? Which tasks were required by the legislation and which were required by other initiatives or calls for action from, for example, the European Parliament? How are “new tasks” defined and which agencies were most affected in this way? What was the consequence on performance for those agencies in terms of old and newer tasks?
9. How is the issue of efficiency gains being measured and what evolution was there in this area in 2013?
10. Commissioner Georgieva has undertaken to establish an Inter Institutional working Group on Performance. How will the agencies network be enabled to feed in relevant proposals to this work which should establish a commonly understood concept of what constitutes good performance and improved performance in what is actually delivered?
11. Some operational activities of Agencies are externalised. How are the Agencies verifying the performances of externalised activities? Have all the externalised activities been subject to a procedure call?

Staff

12. Staff cuts which apply to all EU institutions also apply to the agencies. How has the Commission been ensuring that the newest agencies which are still in their “growth” phase will have the capacity they need to carry out the tasks allocated to them? As not all agencies are in the same state of maturity, what allowance is made for this?
13. Can each Agency provide the Parliament with a table indicating all missions undertaken by the Director of the respective Agency in the year 2013, including information about the duration of days of each mission and the total costs incurred to the Agency for each mission?
14. What were the costs in 2013 respectively for away days, closed conferences or similar events for staff in each agency? Could you inform the Parliament on how many staff members have participated in these events, where did they take place and for how many hours? Could you please list the above mentioned events?

15. How many interim staff was working for each respective agency in 2013? What are/were the longest time frames (with interruptions) an employee is/was working for your agency?
16. What is the number of women working in managerial and higher positions compared to number of men broken down by nationality?
17. What are the total costs for external employees (those who are neither officials nor temporary agents in their respective agency) broken down by the type of service they provide?
18. What is the highest and the lowest income grade granted to employees within the respective agency?

Other comments

19. Which initiatives have been taken to avoid overlap between the works of individual agencies?
20. Agencies further improved their procedures by taking corrective action in response to the Court's comments from previous years. Nevertheless, there is considerable room for improvement, as indicated by the high number of comments made in respect of 2013. What future steps will therefore be considered?
21. When will the Agencies network be in a position to present a response on behalf of all agencies on how they have addressed the points raised by the Roadmap which emerged at the conclusion of the work of the last Inter Institutional Working Group?
22. How many official cars including drivers does each agency provide for personal use only? What were the costs in 2013 for each of these official cars including the driver?
23. How many of these personal official cars are allocated respectively to Members of the agency and official, respectively?
24. Which rules are in place for the private use of these cars?
25. Which rules exist for the drivers if they are off duty?
26. How many personally assigned drivers run private errands for their VIP or for the family of their VIP?
27. What internal measures are in place to ensure cost-effective and environment-friendly working place?

II. QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES

ACER:

1. In 2012 audited recruitment procedures revealed shortcomings affecting transparency and equal treatment of candidates. In the 2013 Court of Auditors Report the status of corrective action is listed as on-going. What progress has been made?
2. The Agency drafted a new Policy for the Prevention and Management of Conflicts of Interest. In its follow-up report on the measures taken in light of the European Parliament recommendations on the 2012 Discharge, the Agency stated that the policy was in the internal consultation process and was to be adopted by the Agency's Administrative Board. Has the new policy been adopted by the Administrative Board? If this is not the case, please inform the Parliament on the reasons and expected calendar for adoption/implementation.

BEREC:

1. BEREC has not yet adopted and implemented all the internal control standards recommended in 2012. Can the office please provide a progress update?

CDT:

1. On the basis of the Commission's Guidelines on the Prevention and Management of Conflict of Interest, the Centre has prepared a policy which was to be presented to the Management Board on 29 October 2014. Has the new policy been adopted by the Administrative Board? If this is not the case, please inform the discharge authority on the reasons and expected calendar for adoption/implementation.

CEPOL:

1. The College has scheduled a review of the arrangements in place aiming to develop a specific conflict-of-interest policy. Other categories of stakeholders directly collaborating with the College but not employed by it, such as members of Governing Board and working groups will be considered within the scope of this exercise scheduled to be finalised during 2014. Has the review been finalised and which are the preliminary/final results? Which measures will be implemented following the review?

EASA:

1. Why is it that EASA has 14 'AD 14' posts in the Establishment plan, but only has filled 6 of them?
2. EASA has 700 staff members, of which 182 are said to be doing 'support activities'. What kind of tasks does this include? Is it necessary to have as much as a quarter of all staff doing support work, rather than being on regulation or product safety oversight units?

EBA:

1. Can the Authority provide an update on what is being done about education contributions which are not covered by the staff regulations? Has there been progress in this area?
2. The Agency informed the discharge authority that the CVs and declarations of interests of the Management Board and the Board of Supervisors, as well as the declarations of interests of the Chairperson, Executive Director and senior management will be published by the end of 2014. At present, only the CVs of the Chairperson and Executive Director are publicly available. When does the Agency intend to publish the remaining missing information?

ECDC:

1. The Court identified that 38% of committed 2013 appropriations for operational meetings (amounting to 594 758 euro) were carried over to 2014. How will the ECDC monitor operational meeting expenses to avoid unnecessary carry-overs in future?

ECHA:

1. ECHA operates in implementing the Union's chemicals' legislation (REACH). Which of the problems that occurred during the implementation do still exist? Which problems have been solved? Which stakeholder meetings took place in 2013?

EEA:

1. While the EEA has intensified its checks on the eligibility and accuracy of staff costs claimed under the grant programmes, the Court of Auditors report notes that on the spot verifications of costs at beneficiary level are still rare. The EEA's response to the COA report indicates that two verification missions have been performed regarding the 2013 final cost claims covering approximately 18% of total staff costs at the level of the beneficiary. What percentage of the checks turned up ineligible or inaccurate claims? And, if ineligible or inaccurate claims were identified, what steps have been taken to prevent these in future?

EFCA:

1. The Agency drafted a comprehensive policy on the prevention and management of conflict of interests and submitted it to the Administrative Board on 17 October 2014. Has the new policy been adopted by the Administrative Board? If this is not the case, please inform the discharge authority on the reasons and expected calendar for adoption/implementation.

EIT:

1. In 2013 the overall level of committed appropriations was 97 %, indicating that overall commitments were made in a timely manner. The budget implementation rate was low, however, at 74 % of the EU contributions for title I (staff expenditure), which is mainly related to the high turnover of staff and the outstanding adoption of the regulations on salary adjustments. Can the Institute identify why staff turnover is so high and what can be done to prevent this in future?

EMCDDA:

1. The Agency reviewed its policy on the prevention and management of conflict of interests which is to be submitted to the Management Board in December 2014. Has the new policy been adopted by the Management Board? If this is not the case, please inform the discharge authority on the reasons and expected calendar for adoption/implementation.

ENISA:

1. With regards to the Court's comments on the need to carry out a comprehensive physical inventory (which in 2012 hadn't been done since 2009, and is still listed as an on-going concern), can the Agency please provide an update?
2. The Agency proposed a discussion for decision on the publication of CVs and declaration of interests of the Management Board members during the Management Board Ordinary meeting on 28 October 2014. Which were the results of this discussion?

ERA:

1. The Court's report mentioned specifically the number of employees being engaged by the Agency on temporary contracts, sometimes indefinitely. With regards to job security and business continuity, please specify why it is necessary to have so many staff on temporary contracts?
2. Please specify the conditions attached to temporary contracts as opposed to permanent contracts?
3. Costs could be reduced if operations were centralised in one location. Please provide an update as to why this hasn't been pursued.
4. In 2014, the Agency reviewed its policy on the prevention and management of conflict of interest for all staff. The Agency stated that the updated policy will

be adopted by the Executive Director by the end of 2014. Has the new policy been adopted by the Executive Director? If this is not the case, please inform the discharge authority on the reasons and expected calendar for adoption/implementation.

5. The Agency stated that together with the Administrative Board it will deal with the issue of the publication of the CVs and declarations of interest of the members of the Management Board in November 2014. When will the Agency publish the CVs and declarations of interest of the members of the Management Board as well as of the Executive Director's declaration of interest and the CVs and declarations of interest of the senior management staff?

EU-LISA:

1. Can the Agency assure the Parliament that insurance coverage for fixed tangible assets has now been secured?
2. In its 2011 Report on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies, the European Parliament insisted on the fact that all agencies should develop and implement comprehensive independence policies and procedures, inter alia establishing a breach of trust mechanism and clear sanctions or changing those already in place on the basis of lessons learned and recommendations of Special Report No 15/2012. Although the Agency was not directly subject to EP 2011 discharge recommendations as EU-LISA started its operations on 1 December 2012 only, which policies has the Agency put in place in this area regarding the prevention and management of conflict of interests?

EU-OSHA:

1. The Court of Auditors report identifies acceptable reasons why carried over appropriations were high. However, the Court's comment from 2012, which is listed as an on-going issue, notes delays have resulted from the decentralised organisation of procurement procedures which prevents effective monitoring of the implementation of the procurement plan. What steps have been taken to rectify this?
2. The Agency has prepared a Conflict of interest policy which was to be presented to the Governing Board in November 2014. Has the new policy been adopted by the Governing Board? If this is not the case, please inform the discharge authority on the reasons and expected calendar for adoption/implementation.

EUROFOUND:

1. What progress has been made with regards to negotiations with the Irish Government to establish a comprehensive headquarters agreement?

EUROJUST:

1. Can Eurojust provide an update on progress towards solving an on-going issue identified by the court in 2011 regarding the overlap of responsibilities between the Director and the College of Eurojust?
2. The Agency confirmed its intention to review its arrangements for the prevention and management of conflicts of interests on the basis of the Commission's Guidelines on the Prevention and Management of Conflict of Interest in EU Decentralised Agencies. Has the review been finalised and which are the preliminary/final results? If so, which measures will be implemented following the review? If not, when will the review be launched?

EUROPOL:

1. Can Europol update the Parliament on the outcome of its organisational-wide review of the overall procurement process? How will this review ensure the effectiveness of procurement procedures in future?

FRA:

1. The European Agency for Fundamental Rights contributes monitoring and assisting EU-wide efforts to implement the EU's plan for Roma integration. What kind of data is your agency collecting to assess the progress on Roma integration measures? What are the results of the assessment of the progress on EU's Roma integration plan?

FRONTEX:

1. Could the Agency provide an update on the on-going issue of weaknesses in the system for reconciling supplier's statements with the corresponding records at the Agency identified by the COA in 2012? The recent ECA report notes that supplier's statements at year-end were reconciled with considerable difficulty. What steps has Frontex taken to monitor supplier balances more regularly and to analyse differences in a timelier manner?
2. The Parliament notes that Frontex plans to launch an additional reconciliation exercise in summer 2014 to improve the quality of the reconciliation. What steps can be taken to avoid an additional conciliation process being required in future?