



Plenary sitting

A9-0099/2022

7.4.2022

REPORT

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European
Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2020
(2021/2124(DEC))

Committee on Budgetary Control

Rapporteur: Tomáš Zdechovský

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1. PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DECISION

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2020 (2021/2124(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the final annual accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2020,
- having regard to the Court of Auditors' annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2020, together with the agencies' replies¹,
- having regard to the statement of assurance² as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the Court of Auditors for the financial year 2020, pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Council's recommendation of 28 February 2022 on discharge to be given to the Centre in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2020 (06003/2022 – C9-0079/2022),
- having regard to Article 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012³, and in particular Article 70 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control⁴, and in particular Article 23 thereof,
- having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 of 18 December 2018 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁵, and in particular Article 105 thereof,

¹ OJ C 439, 29.10.2021, p. 3. ECA annual report on EU agencies for the 2020 financial year: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=59697>.

² OJ C 439, 29.10.2021, p. 3. ECA annual report on EU agencies for the 2020 financial year: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=59697>.

³ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 142, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 122, 10.5.2019, p. 1.

- having regard to Rule 100 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0099/2022),
1. Grants the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control discharge in respect of the implementation of the Centre's budget for the financial year 2020;
 2. Sets out its observations in the resolution below;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this decision, and the resolution forming an integral part of it, to the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors, and to arrange for their publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

2. PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DECISION

on the closure of the accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2020 (2021/2124(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the final annual accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2020,
- having regard to the Court of Auditors' annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2020, together with the agencies' replies¹,
- having regard to the statement of assurance² as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the Court of Auditors for the financial year 2020, pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Council's recommendation of 28 February 2022 on discharge to be given to the Centre in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2020 (06003/2022 – C9-0079/2022),
- having regard to Article 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012³, and in particular Article 70 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control⁴, and in particular Article 23 thereof,
- having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 of 18 December 2018 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁵, and in particular Article 105 thereof,
- having regard to Rule 100 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,

¹ OJ C 439, 29.10.2021, p. 3. ECA annual report on EU agencies for the 2020 financial year: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=59697>.

² OJ C 439, 29.10.2021, p. 3. ECA annual report on EU agencies for the 2020 financial year: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/DocItem.aspx?did=59697>.

³ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 142, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 122, 10.5.2019, p. 1.

- having regard to the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0099/2022),
1. Approves the closure of the accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2020;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this decision to the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors, and to arrange for its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

3. MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

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 2020 (2021/2124(DEC))

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 2020,
 - having regard to the Court of Auditors' Review No 01/2021 on 'The EU's initial contribution to the public health response to COVID-19',
 - having regard to Rule 100 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0099/2022),
- A. whereas, according to its statement of revenue and expenditure¹, the final budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (the 'Centre') for the financial year 2020 was EUR 62 490 000, representing an increase of 5,55 % compared to 2019; whereas the inflation rate was 0,7 % in the Union in 2020; whereas approximately 97,62 % of the Centre's budget derives from the Union budget;
- B. whereas the Court of Auditors (the 'Court'), in its report on the Centre's annual accounts for the financial year 2020 (the 'Court's report'), states that it has obtained reasonable assurance that the Centre's annual accounts are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;

Budget and financial management

1. Notes that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 96,77 %, representing a decrease of 2,46 % compared to 2019; notes that the payment appropriations execution rate was 75,26 %, also representing a decrease of 6,15 % compared to the previous year;

Performance

2. Welcomes the fact that the Centre paid 96 % of invoices within the time limits of the Centre's financial regulation;
3. Observes that the mission of the Centre is to identify, assess and communicate current and emerging threats to human health from communicable diseases; stresses that the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 and the subsequent pandemic have been the most serious

¹ OJ C 114, 31.3.2021, p. 39.

public health event that the Centre has had to respond to since it became operational in 2005; notes that supporting the Union's response to COVID-19 became the Centre's principal activity; recognises that the Centre activated its public health event operations plan on 9 January 2020 and, specifically, that teams working on public health emergencies contributed positively to the Union and national governance frameworks for the COVID-19 pandemic; notes, moreover, that the Centre started operating at Public Health Event (PHE) level 2, acute phase, on 31 January 2020 and continued to operate at that phase for the remainder of the year;

4. Notes that, according to the Court's report, the Centre, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, activated its public health event operations plan on 9 January 2020, which guided the organisation through the emergency situation, and allowed it to redirect the resources needed to tackle the pandemic; notes that teams responsible for public health emergencies within the Centre produced the main outputs concerning COVID-19, such as, inter alia, data and surveillance updates, including rapid risk assessments, scientific guidance to support public health decision-making, information on disease and response measures for health care practitioners and the general public, and provided responses to ad hoc requests from Union institutions and agencies;
5. Notes that the Centre gave assistance to Member States and the Commission with laboratory-related support and expanded testing, strengthening Member States' preparedness through the establishment of operational indicators and provision of support in the assessment of health services' surge capacity;
6. Highlights the 24 COVID-19 related risk assessments carried out by the Centre, the 159 COVID-19 formal scientific requests from the Commission and Members, and the more than 100 formal scientific requests from Member States; furthermore notes that the number of downloads of rapid risk assessments increased by 1 086 % when compared with 2019 figures;
7. Expresses its belief that a rapid, effective, informed and coordinated response across Member States is essential, both to deal with the current situation and to address possible future health threats;
8. Is convinced that the Centre's work in providing timely, accurate, science-based information to legislators, health professionals and the general public is essential for dealing with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other potential health threats; welcomes the Centre's sharing of information with various media in that regard;
9. Highlights the fact that growing antimicrobial resistance still poses a threat to public health, despite the fact that overall Union consumption of antimicrobials has continued to decline; welcomes the Centre's continued activity in this area;
10. Notes that the Centre delivered 56 % of the outputs initially planned in its single programming document 2020–2022, and 90 % of the outputs of the COVID-19 work programme approved in May 2020; notes that 35 % of the Centre's initially planned outputs were postponed to 2021 or cancelled; notes that an external strategic and performance review of the Centre's COVID-19 response shows that the Centre has to improve its functioning in order to be able to provide a more effective and efficient response in a future public health crisis, while maintaining its core functions and essential outputs; calls on the Centre to report on the measures taken in this regard;

11. Notes with concern the conclusion of the Court's Review No 01/2021, on 'The EU's initial contribution to the public health response to COVID-19' (the 'Court's review'), that it was challenging for the Centre to manage the timeliness, quality and completeness of information received from Member States; draws particular attention, however, to the Court's observation that the different surveillance and testing strategies used by the Member States make comparisons and assessments difficult, and that, more generally, the Union's public health competences are limited, which means that the Centre is to a considerable degree dependent on Member States for its effectiveness; notes that it took for instance almost a year after the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe before Member States used a common colour code system, and showed commitment to submitting their data to the Centre; notes that the Centre responded to the Court's review by cautioning that considerable work still needs to be done to establish robust population-based surveillance of COVID-19, and remarks that since then the Centre has taken steps to address this matter;
12. Acknowledges the reasons for the cancellation or postponement of 35 % of the Centre's planned outputs in 2020, while highlighting the fact that the Centre achieved a 90 % success rate in meeting the work programme output plan adopted additionally in May 2020; thanks the Centre's staff for their dedicated work in difficult circumstances;
13. Welcomes the fact that, separately from the Court's review, the Centre initiated its own strategic analysis, through an external contractor, on the Centre's response to COVID-19 from January to September 2020; notes that that strategic analysis shows that the Centre provides high-quality surveillance data that are widely relied upon, and that its guidance is a critical input for decision makers, but that simultaneously, there is clear potential for the Centre to be more effective; notes the recommendations of the strategic analysis, stating that the Centre should place larger emphasis on the practicality of recommendations and on forward guidance, and should more systematically support learning and exchange of experience between Member States; notes the recommendations of the strategic analysis for a senior strategic lead function to be created, better differentiation of internal processes for the production of technical outputs, and the enhancement of the Centre's capabilities; calls on the Centre to report on the measures taken in this regard and inform the discharge authority about the progress made;
14. Notes that the Centre's external strategic assessment indicates that, in the long term, there are important questions about the role that the Centre should play in the wider European public health security landscape; notes that those questions relate to the appropriate degree of European coordination of public health policies and data, the relevant roles of various actors and the strategic focus of the Centre; notes that the Commission has discussed those questions in its review of the Centre's role, and that, since then, changes in the European public health security landscape have been made;
15. Notes that the Centre is developing an entirely new European surveillance system with the aim of progressively covering COVID-19 and all other diseases and health conditions under the Union's surveillance, thus reducing the reporting burden for Member States; further notes that several technology assessment projects to ensure that the Centre takes advantage of technical innovations in the most cost-effective manner are ongoing; calls on the Centre to report on the developments in this regard;

16. Notes that the institutional context in which the Centre operates is changing as a consequence of the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic; calls upon the Court to expand, in its audit for the next financial year, on how the Centre is operating within this adjusted institutional context, and whether, within the adjusted institutional setting, the Centre has enough resources to implement its mandate effectively;
17. Notes that the Centre's action plan to implement the recommendation of the third external evaluation was developed and approved by the Centre's management board; calls on the Centre to provide information regularly to the discharge authority on the implementation of that plan;
18. Welcomes the fact that the Centre shares best practices and regularly works with other Union agencies and bodies; welcomes the actions taken by the Centre to extend its cooperation with other Union institutions in areas such as the use of artificial intelligence, machine learning and crowdsourcing; further welcomes the efforts by the Centre to enhance inter-institutional collaboration in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
19. Stresses that the Centre should continue promoting cooperation with other Union agencies and international organisations, and fostering dialogue with stakeholders and citizens; welcomes the way in which the Centre worked together with other decentralised Union agencies in 2020, in particular in close cooperation with the European Medicines Agency in developing the joint Union-level monitoring system for COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness and adverse effects, as well as in providing public health information for the technical guidance on COVID-19 infection control for air travel, trains and cruise ships;

Staff policy

20. Notes that, on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan was 96,1 % implemented, with 173 temporary agents appointed out of 180 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 180 authorised posts in 2019); notes that, in addition, 121 contract agents and 5 seconded national experts worked for the Centre in 2020;
21. Notes the gender balance within the Centre's senior management, with four out of six (66,67 %) being men; notes the gender balance among the Centre's overall staff, with 170 out of 271 (62,73 %) being women;
22. Notes that the Centre has adopted a policy on protecting the dignity of the person and preventing harassment; observes that two cases of alleged harassment have been reported and one case was brought to the Court of Justice of the European Union in 2020; calls on the Centre to ensure that continuous measures aimed at strengthening the ethical framework at the workplace and at preventing burnout and harassment are taken; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the developments in this regard;
23. Notes that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workload in the Centre significantly increased in 2020; notes that the Centre was provided with increased short-term capacity in 2020 and, at the end of 2020, the Centre was also granted a number of long-term staff posts to be filled during the period 2021 to 2024 due to the prolonged sanitary crisis;

24. Is concerned about the large size of the Centre's management board which makes decision-making difficult and generates considerable administrative costs;
25. Welcomes the efforts made in the Centre's staff policy to promote teleworking and a healthy lifestyle and continues to encourage the Centre to pursue the development of a long-term human resources policy framework that addresses work-life balance, lifelong guidance and career development, gender balance, teleworking, geographical balance and the recruitment and integration of people with disabilities;
26. Welcomes the proposal to extend the Centre's mandate, but expresses concern that the addition of new tasks and its increasing workload has not been accompanied by sufficient corresponding increases in the Centre's staff and resources, and that such a shortage of staff puts the continuity of its operations under significant pressure and threatens the quality of the Centre's work;

Procurement

27. Notes that the Centre concluded a total of 130 contracts in 2020, covering 10 framework contracts, 14 direct contracts and 106 specific contracts; notes that the Centre conducted 79 procurement procedures during the year, which comprised nine open calls, 48 negotiated procedures and 22 competitions reopened; notes that the Centre also concluded 15 framework partnership agreements and 44 specific grant agreements in 2020;

Prevention and management of conflicts of interest, and transparency

28. Welcomes the Centre's existing measures and ongoing efforts to secure transparency, and for the prevention and management of conflicts of interest, and whistle-blower protection;
29. Welcomes the improvement in the percentage of management board members, advisory forum members and their alternates that submitted the required annual declarations of interest in 2020 compared to the figures for 2019; calls on the Centre to ensure that appropriate experts are engaged in the Centre's work and that a high level of compliance with conflict of interest rules is maintained;
30. Notes that the Centre has developed and is in the process of implementing its internal procedure on conflicts of interest for staff; notes that, according to the Centre's replies, this practice will provide an opportunity to further develop processes and to facilitate additional scrutiny; calls on the Centre to report on the developments in this regard;
31. Notes that the Internal Audit Service (IAS) performed an audit on human resource management and ethics in the Centre in 2020, in accordance with the strategic internal audit plan; notes that the audit resulted in four recommendations, two of which were classified as very important and two as important; notes that the Centre developed an action plan to take into account those recommendations, which included organising training and raising awareness in the area of ethics; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the implementation of the actions planned;
32. Notes that, according to the replies to the standard questionnaire, the Centre identified and investigated 22 potential conflicts of interest in 2020; further notes that in all cases

the Centre put in place mitigation measures, in particular the screening of experts' inputs by the Centre's independent staff for any potential bias, exclusion from being chair or vice-chair of a meeting, suspension of participation in agenda items and the ending of voting rights;

33. Takes note of the European Ombudsman's decision of 5 February 2021 in strategic inquiry OI/3/2020/TE on 'how the ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 crisis' and welcomes the conclusion that no maladministration was found; notes, however, that despite the acknowledgement of the Ombudsman of the efforts made by the Centre during the COVID-19 crisis to conduct its scientific assessment in a transparent manner, the Ombudsman considers that the mandate of the Centre prevents an independent collection of data, which limits in a significant way its tasks and, furthermore, that there is room for the Centre to improve how it communicates information to the public offering their translations in the largest number of official languages possible; asks the Centre to report to the discharge authority about measures taken for such an improvement;

Internal control

34. Notes that the Centre has implemented all the recommendations from the IAS on 'Preparedness and Response in the ECDC' and submitted them to the IAS for review; notes that the IAS has reviewed the implementation of those recommendations and the Centre is currently awaiting the final conclusions; calls on the Centre to inform the discharge authority of the results;
35. Notes that the Centre's self-assessment regarding the implementation of the internal control framework showed that the internal control system is present and functioning, but some improvements are needed; notes that the Centre's management needs to better define and document the materiality criteria of risk tolerance for the Centre's activities; notes that a new section will be introduced in the Centre's internal control framework to explicitly consider the control activities to be performed and their follow-up, in order to ensure that objectives are achieved; notes that an internal communications policy is to be developed, including communication on the objectives and responsibilities of internal control; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the developments in this regard;

COVID-19 response and business continuity

36. Welcomes the Centre's commitment to providing the Union's citizens with timely and accurate information, and expresses its thankfulness to the staff and management of the Centre for the work done under difficult circumstances in 2020; notes that the Centre's guidance and outputs were highly valued by stakeholders, due to their high quality and scientific robustness; notes in particular the Centre's statement that the amount and quality of the results achieved are a reflection of the vast expertise and commitment of the staff involved in the Centre's response to the pandemic; further welcomes the Centre's cooperation with WHO Europe in the establishment of case-based surveillance of COVID-19 for the entire WHO European Region;
37. Welcomes the fact that the Centre reported an unprecedentedly high number of outputs in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and had the highest visibility since its creation; notes that the Centre's main activities during this period were related to the

support of vaccination strategies, the dissemination of evidence-based information, the application of surveillance and epidemic intelligence, the implementation of guidance for scientific and technical topics, and the establishment of networking and exchange practices across Europe;

Other comments

38. Notes that the Centre has developed a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving cost-effectiveness and environmental protection; notes that the Centre is currently in the implementation phase of its environmental management system, which is based on the European eco-management and audit scheme; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the developments in this regard;
39. Notes that the Centre increased its outreach significantly in 2020 in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic; notes that the Centre's website had 32 million page views, compared to 9 million between 2011 and 2019 in total; notes that the Centre's press and media team handled 1 917 media requests, as opposed to approximately 100 the year before; notes that the Centre observed an increase of 146 % in the number of followers on Twitter, a 232 % increase in the number of page-likes on Facebook, and a 107 % increase in the number of followers on LinkedIn in 2020;
40. Highlights the importance of increasing the digitalisation of the Centre in terms of internal operation and management but also the importance of speeding up the digitalisation of procedures; stresses the need for the Centre to continue to be proactive in this regard in order to avoid, at all costs, a digital gap between the Union agencies;
41. Stresses the need for the Centre to ensure that there is full transparency when publishing scientific studies and by enhancing its external communications capacity towards the general public, and to ensure that all key information related to public health emergencies is available in all official languages of the Union and easily accessible to Union citizens;
42. Notes that, regarding the follow-up to the Court's report for the financial year 2019, the Centre is preparing a new and updated cyber-security policy in anticipation of the entry into force of a Union Regulation on common cybersecurity rules; notes that, as part of its efforts to strengthen cyber-security, the Centre is considering investment in an information security project and a cyber-security awareness and training programme from 2022 onwards; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the developments in this regard;
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43. Refers, for other observations of a cross-cutting nature accompanying its decision on discharge, to its resolution of [...] 2022² on the performance, financial management and control of the agencies.

² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2022)0000.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for
Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2020
(2021/2124(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Pascal Canfin

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Observes that the mission of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (the 'Centre') is to identify, assess and communicate current and emerging threats to human health from communicable diseases; stresses that the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 and the subsequent pandemic has been the most serious public health event that the Centre has had to respond to since it became operational in 2005; notes that supporting the Union's response to COVID-19 became the Centre's principal activity; recognises that the Centre activated its public health event operations plan on 9 January 2020 and, specifically, that teams working on public health emergencies contributed positively to the Union and national governance frameworks for the COVID-19 pandemic; notes, moreover, that the Centre started operating at Public Health Event (PHE) level 2, acute phase, on 31 January 2020 and continued to operate at this phase for the remainder of the year;
2. Notes that the Centre gave assistance to Member States and the Commission with laboratory-related support and expanded testing, strengthening Member States' preparedness through the establishment of operational indicators and provision of support in the assessment of health services' surge capacity;
3. Acknowledges the reasons for the cancellation or postponement of 35 % of the Centre's planned outputs in 2020, while highlighting the fact that the Centre achieved a 90 % success rate in meeting the work programme output plan adopted additionally in May 2020; thanks its staff for their dedicated work in difficult circumstances;
4. Highlights the 24 COVID-19 related risk assessments carried out by the Centre, the 159 COVID-19 formal scientific requests from the Commission and Members of the European Parliament, and the more than 100 formal scientific requests from Member States; furthermore notes that the number of downloads of rapid risk assessments increased by 1 086 % when compared with 2019 figures;
5. Highlights the significant volume of outputs produced in the context of the ongoing

COVID-19 pandemic, in relation to which 24 risk assessments were carried out and 159 formal scientific requests from the Commission and Members of the European Parliament, as well as more than 100 formal scientific requests from Member States, were handled;

6. Notes that the Centre's budget for 2020 was EUR 62 490 000 and that 96,0 % of that budget derived from the Union budget;
7. Notes that, during the year 2020, the overall budget execution in terms of commitment appropriations was 96,77 % (representing a decrease of 2,46 percentage points compared to 2019), while, in terms of payments, budget execution decreased by 6,15 percentage points to 75,26 %;
8. Welcomes the fact that the Centre paid 96 % of invoices within the time limits of the Centre's financial regulation;
9. Notes that the Centre employed 271 staff as of 31 December 2020, with a vacancy rate of 3,9 %, including offers accepted;
10. Welcomes the proposal to extend the Centre's mandate but expresses concern that the addition of new tasks and its increasing workload has not been accompanied by sufficient corresponding increases in the Centre's staff and resources, and that such a shortage of staff puts the continuity of its operations under significant pressure and threatens the quality of the Centre's work;
11. Notes that, in June 2020, the Centre's management board approved the Centre's strategy for 2021-2027 and its recommendations on the third independent external evaluation of the Centre;
12. Welcomes the improvement in the percentage of management board members, advisory forum members and their alternates that submitted the required annual declarations of interest in 2020 compared to the figures for 2019; calls on the Centre to ensure that appropriate experts are engaged in the Centre's work and that a high level of compliance with conflict of interest rules is maintained;
13. Stresses that the Centre should continue promoting cooperation with other Union agencies and international organisations, and fostering dialogue with stakeholders and citizens; welcomes the way in which the Centre worked together with other decentralised Union agencies in 2020, in particular in close cooperation with the European Medicines Agency in developing the joint Union-level monitoring system for COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness and adverse effects, as well as in providing public health information for the technical guidance on COVID-19 infection control for air travel, trains and cruise ships;
14. Stresses the need for the Centre to ensure that there is full transparency when publishing scientific studies and by enhancing its external communications capacity towards the general public, and to ensure that all key information related to public health emergencies is available in all Union languages and easily accessible to Union citizens;
15. Expresses its belief that a rapid, effective, informed and coordinated response across Member States is essential, both to deal with the current situation and to address

possible future health threats;

16. Highlights the fact that growing antimicrobial resistance still poses a threat to public health, despite the fact that overall Union consumption of antimicrobials has continued to decline; welcomes the Centre's continued activity in this area;
17. Is convinced that the Centre's work in providing timely, accurate, science-based information to legislators, health professionals and the general public is essential for dealing with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and other potential health threats; welcomes the Centre's sharing of information with various media in that regard;
18. Welcomes the fact that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurance that the Centre's annual accounts for 2020 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;
19. Recommends, based on the facts available, that discharge be granted to the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in respect of the implementation of the Centre's budget for the financial year 2020.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	13.1.2022
Result of final vote	+: 67 -: 7 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	Bartosz Arłukowicz, Margrete Auken, Simona Baldassarre, Marek Paweł Balt, Traian Băsescu, Aurélie Beigneux, Monika Beňová, Sergio Berlato, Alexander Bernhuber, Malin Björk, Simona Bonafè, Delara Burkhardt, Pascal Canfin, Sara Cerdas, Mohammed Chahim, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé, Esther de Lange, Christian Doleschal, Bas Eickhout, Cyrus Engerer, Eleonora Evi, Agnès Evren, Pietro Fiocchi, Andreas Glück, Catherine Griset, Jytte Guteland, Teuvo Hakkarainen, Anja Hazekamp, Martin Hojsík, Pär Holmgren, Jan Huitema, Yannick Jadot, Adam Jarubas, Petros Kokkalis, Ewa Kopacz, Joanna Kopcińska, Peter Liese, Sylvia Limmer, Javi López, César Luena, Fulvio Martusciello, Liudas Mažylis, Joëlle Mélin, Tilly Metz, Giuseppe Milazzo, Silvia Modig, Dolors Montserrat, Alessandra Moretti, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Ville Niinistö, Ljudmila Novak, Grace O'Sullivan, Jutta Paulus, Stanislav Polčák, Jessica Polfjård, Luisa Regimenti, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Sándor Rónai, Rob Rooken, Silvia Sardone, Christine Schneider, Günther Sidl, Ivan Vilibor Sinčić, Linea Sjøgaard-Lidell, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Nils Torvalds, Edina Tóth, Petar Vitanov, Alexandr Vondra, Mick Wallace, Pernille Weiss, Emma Wiesner, Tiemo Wölken, Anna Zalewska
Substitutes present for the final vote	Danilo Oscar Lancini

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

67	+
ECR	Sergio Berlato, Pietro Fiocchi, Joanna Kopcińska, Giuseppe Milazzo, Alexandr Vondra, Anna Zalewska
NI	Edina Tóth
PPE	Bartosz Arłukowicz, Traian Băsescu, Alexander Bernhuber, Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé, Christian Doleschal, Agnès Evren, Adam Jarubas, Ewa Kopacz, Esther de Lange, Peter Liese, Fulvio Martusciello, Liudas Mažylis, Dolores Montserrat, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Ljudmila Novak, Stanislav Polčák, Jessica Polfjård, Luisa Regimenti, Christine Schneider, Pernille Weiss
Renew	Pascal Canfin, Andreas Gluck, Martin Hojsík, Jan Huitema, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Linea Sogaard-Lidell, Nils Torvalds, Emma Wiesner
S&D	Marek Paweł Balt, Monika Beňová, Simona Bonafè, Delara Burkhardt, Sara Cerdas, Mohammed Chahim, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Cyrus Engerer, Jytte Guteland, Javi López, César Luena, Alessandra Moretti, Sándor Rónai, Günther Sidl, Petar Vitanov, Tiemo Wölken
The Left	Malin Björk, Anja Hazekamp, Petros Kokkalis, Silvia Modig, Mick Wallace
Verts/ALE	Margrete Auken, Bas Eickhout, Eleonora Evi, Pär Holmgren, Yannick Jadot, Tilly Metz, Ville Niinistö, Grace O'Sullivan, Jutta Paulus

7	-
ECR	Rob Rooker
ID	Aurélia Beigneux, Catherine Griset, Teuvo Hakkarainen, Sylvia Limmer, Joëlle Mélin,
NI	Ivan Vilibor Sinčić

3	0
ID	Simona Baldassarre, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Silvia Sardone

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	31.3.2022
Result of final vote	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">+:</div> <div>26</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">-:</div> <div>4</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 10px;">0:</div> <div>0</div> </div>
Members present for the final vote	Matteo Adinolfi, Gilles Boyer, Olivier Chastel, Caterina Chinnici, Lefteris Christoforou, Corina Crețu, Ryszard Czarnecki, José Manuel Fernandes, Raffaele Fitto, Luke Ming Flanagan, Isabel García Muñoz, Monika Hohlmeier, Jean-François Jalkh, Pierre Karleskind, Mislav Kolakušić, Joachim Kuhs, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Claudiu Manda, Alin Mituța, Jan Olbrycht, Younous Omarjee, Markus Pieper, Michèle Rivasi, Petri Sarvamaa, Angelika Winzig, Lara Wolters, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes present for the final vote	Bas Eickhout, Tsvetelina Penkova, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

26	+
ECR	Ryszard Czarnecki, Raffaele Fitto, Ryszard Antoni Legutko
PPE	Lefteris Christoforou, José Manuel Fernandes, Monika Hohlmeier, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Petri Sarvamaa, Angelika Winzig, Tomáš Zdechovský
Renew	Gilles Boyer, Olivier Chastel, Pierre Karleskind, Alin Mituța
S&D	Caterina Chinnici, Corina Crețu, Isabel García Muñoz, Claudiu Manda, Tsvetelina Penkova, Lara Wolters
The Left	Luke Ming Flanagan, Younous Omarjee
Verts/ALE	Bas Eickhout, Michèle Rivasi, Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel

4	-
ID	Matteo Adinolfi, Jean-François Jalkh, Joachim Kuhs
NI	Mislav Kolakušić

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention