



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Foreign Affairs

2012/2176(DEC)

8.2.2013

OPINION

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2011, Section X – European External Action Service
(C7-0235/2012 – 2012/2176(DEC))

Rapporteur: José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Points out that 2011 was the first financial year for the European External Action Service (EEAS) and therefore takes the view that a positive emphasis must be placed on the fact that the Court of Auditors found no material errors;
2. Agrees with the Court of Auditors' recommendations concerning the improvements that need to be made with regard to the gathering of staff-related information and to strict compliance with the legislation in force as regards non-contract staff;
3. Emphasises the need for a greater gender and, as much as possible, geographical balance in the recruitment and the appointment of staff; calls on the HR/VP to develop appropriate mechanisms to ensure these balances are met in due time;
4. Reiterates its wish to see, as soon as possible, the establishment of a human resources policy that reflects the political priorities of the Union and the actual requirements on the ground; points out in this connection that a concerted approach with the Commission is vital in order to optimise the profile of delegation staff¹;
5. Reiterates its comments on the relative surfeit of high-grade posts, which is seriously disproportionate in comparison with the other institutions; takes the view that the explanations the EEAS has provided on this matter are partly legitimate, and calls on the relevant departments to establish, for the medium and long term, a roadmap and appropriate methods with a view to correcting this relative imbalance;
6. Notes the observations on some weaknesses relating to the procurement procedure and tendering and calls on the EEAS to correct them without undue delay;
7. Calls on the EEAS to identify and consider, in accordance with its political and contractual obligations, every possible option for making major savings in the long term so as to ensure that the variation in its annual budget – the increase in which, for legitimate reasons, is proportionally greater than that of the other institutions' budgets – can have a multiplier effect;
8. Emphasises the difficult situation faced by the delegations with the fewest members of staff as a result of the complex and rigid rules governing the delegation of payment authorisation between EEAS and Commission staff; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to consider how the procedure for authorising funds might be made easier whilst ensuring that financial control rules are complied with;
9. Urges the EEAS to maximize the benefits of economies of scale by creating new synergies within the EEAS HQ and delegations as well as in cooperation with Member

¹ See also the recommendations set out in Court of Auditors Special Report No 16/2012, 'European Union assistance to Kosovo related to the rule of law'.

States and national diplomatic services, in the spirit of a true Union's external policy and services; in that respect, emphasises the need to seek, as much as possible, co-location of services in third countries, for the sake of enhanced exchange of information and savings;

10. Welcomes the savings already made by using innovative solutions like videoconferencing for job interviews; calls on the EEAS to come up, as much as possible, with similar proposals also for the training of staff;
11. Reminds the EEAS of the responsibility to deliver concrete results and emphasizes the reciprocity between deliverables and the overall budget;
12. In the context of the forthcoming entry into force of the EU-Central America Association Agreement, emphasises the need for the Union to have a delegation in Panama, an important partner and the only country in the region without such a delegation, and calls on the EEAS to take action to this end as soon as possible.
13. Draws attention to the need to guarantee a comprehensive security check for local agents in the delegations.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	7.2.2013
Result of final vote	+: 56 -: 1 0: 6
Members present for the final vote	Pino Arlacchi, Sir Robert Atkins, Bastiaan Belder, Franziska Katharina Brantner, Jerzy Buzek, Arnaud Danjean, Michael Gahler, Ana Gomes, Andrzej Grzyb, Richard Howitt, Anna Ibrisagic, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Jelko Kacin, Tunne Kelam, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Maria Eleni Koppa, Andrey Kovatchev, Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, Eduard Kukan, Vytautas Landsbergis, Ryszard Antoni Legutko, Krzysztof Lisek, Sabine Lösing, Ulrike Lunacek, Mario Mauro, Francisco José Millán Mon, María Muñoz De Urquiza, Norica Nicolai, Raimon Obiols, Pier Antonio Panzeri, Ioan Mircea Pașcu, Mirosław Piotrowski, Bernd Posselt, Hans-Gert Pötering, Cristian Dan Preda, Libor Rouček, Tokia Saïfi, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Nikolaos Salavrakos, György Schöpflin, Werner Schulz, Marek Siwiec, Sophocles Sophocleous, Laurence J.A.J. Stassen, Inese Vaidere, Geoffrey Van Orden, Kristian Vigenin, Sir Graham Watson, Boris Zala
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Charalampos Angourakis, Marije Cornelissen, Andrew Duff, Diogo Feio, Kinga Gál, Elisabeth Jeggle, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Doris Pack, Marietje Schaake, Indrek Tarand, László Tőkés, Ivo Vajgl
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	Mark Demesmaeker, Georgios Papanikolaou