



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

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*Committee on Foreign Affairs*

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**2013/2205(DEC)**

11.2.2014

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on Discharge 2012: general budget - European External Action Service  
(2013/2205(DEC))

Rapporteur: María Muñoz De Urquiza

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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 in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes that in its second financial year, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has continued to implement its budget without material errors being identified by the Court of Auditors and that most of the problems identified in last year's report as result of the setting-up process have not reoccurred;
2. Remains concerned about the disproportionately large number of high-grade posts in the EEAS and the persistent lack of balance in staffing; notes that in particular women are underrepresented in top-level posts in the EEAS and urges the HRVP to improve the gender balance; also urges the HRVP to more carefully consider the issue of geographical balance in recruitment, including in the recruitment for top-level posts; emphasises that competence in the field of foreign affairs must remain the main criterion for hiring decisions; requests that the EEAS develop a coherent human resources strategy that can achieve these goals;
3. Recalls its demand for a human resources policy in EU Delegations that takes into account the European Union's political priorities in a given region and the flexibility required for reacting to crises; urges the EEAS and Commission to find a common approach to delegation staff and to an allocation of tasks in accordance with these principles and to ensure appropriate coordination among the services to enhance the coherence of EU policy and contribute to budgetary synergies;
4. Urges the Commission to come up with a solution for the management of administrative expenditure in EU Delegations, so as to ease the administrative burden of Heads of Delegation, in particular in smaller Delegations, by enabling sub-delegation also to Commission staff, in line with Parliament's report on the 2013 review of the organisation and the functioning of the EEAS;
5. Reiterates the importance of continuing efforts to identify opportunities for long-term savings and synergies, both between EEAS and Commission and with Member States, to ensure the sustainability of the EEAS budget in a time of budgetary restraints;
6. Emphasises the need to exploit economies of scale that could be created by synergies between the EEAS delegations, HQ and Member States' diplomatic services; urges, therefore, to maximise opportunities for co-location and shared provision of services; notes, however, that Member States should pay their fair share of the costs involved in such colocation and service provision;
7. Reiterates its call to save money on travel costs through innovative solutions in the areas of training and job interviews, for example by making increased use of videoconferencing;
8. Points to the urgent need for strengthening the ability of the EEAS and of EU delegations to defend themselves against spying activities from third countries, including by

strengthening the security of their IT networks and by building systems of secure communication, and insists that an assessment of related budgetary needs is made without delay;

9. In the context of the EU-Central America Association Agreement, emphasises the need for the Union to create a delegation in Panama, an important partner and the only country in the region without its own delegation, and calls on the EEAS to take action to this end as soon as possible as already requested last year;
10. Notes the problems the Court of Auditors has identified with regard to the management of social allowances and urges the EEAS to implement all recommendations made; welcomes the steps the EEAS has taken with regard to the issue so far and encourages it to speed up the roll-out of its new programme to resolve it;
11. Reemphasises the need to ensure that local agents in delegations are subject to a comprehensive security check prior to employment;

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	11.2.2014
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 39 -: 3 0: 4
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Sir Robert Atkins, Bastiaan Belder, Hiltrud Breyer, Elmar Brok, Marietta Giannakou, Andrzej Grzyb, Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Richard Howitt, Tunne Kelam, Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, Andrey Kovatchev, Paweł Robert Kowal, Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, Eduard Kukan, Vytautas Landsbergis, Krzysztof Lisek, Sabine Lösing, Marusya Lyubcheva, Willy Meyer, Francisco José Millán Mon, María Muñoz De Urquiza, Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Norica Nicolai, Raimon Obiols, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Justas Vincas Paleckis, Ioan Mircea Pașcu, Tonino Picula, Bernd Posselt, Hans-Gert Pöttering, Cristian Dan Preda, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Werner Schulz, Sophocles Sophocleous, Laurence J.A.J. Stassen, Davor Ivo Stier, Charles Tannock, Eleni Theoharous, Geoffrey Van Orden, Sir Graham Watson, Boris Zala
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Kinga Gál, Doris Pack, Janusz Władysław Zemke
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Ivari Padar, Dubravka Šuica