



2023/2182(DEC)

13.11.2023

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Agencies for the financial year 2022: performance, financial management and control (2023/2182(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Romana Tomc

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SUGGESTIONS

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

- having regard to the European Court of Auditors' Annual report on the implementation of the EU budget for the 2022 financial year;
 - having regard to the European Court of Auditors' Annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2022;
1. Stresses the valuable role played by Union agencies in helping Union institutions to design and implement policies, especially in carrying out specific technical, scientific, operational and managerial tasks; appreciates the high quality expertise and work performed by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions (Eurofound), the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), the European Training Foundation (ETF) and European Labour Authority (ELA), the agencies working in the area of employment, social affairs and inclusion; reiterates in this regard the need to equip the agencies at a level commensurate to the assigned tasks, with a sufficient number of staff, employed in a stable manner and having sufficient material resources; reiterates therefore the need of ensuring adequate human and financial resources allowing them to continue implementing their work programmes with a very high activity completion rate; stresses the importance and added value of each agency in their field of expertise and their autonomy; reiterates that the proper functioning of the agencies also requires a high-quality social dialogue;
 2. Welcomes the fact that in its Annual report on Union agencies for the financial year 2022, the European Court of Auditors issued unqualified audit opinions on the reliability of all agencies' accounts; notes that the Court issued unqualified audit opinions on the legality and regularity of the revenue underlying all agencies' accounts; notes further that the Court issued unqualified audit opinions on the legality and regularity of the payments underlying the accounts of the agencies working in the area of employment, social affairs and inclusion;
 3. Recalls that the yearly exchange of views in the EMPL committee regarding the annual work programmes and the multiannual strategies of the agencies is instrumental in ensuring that the programmes and strategies are aligned to the actual political priorities, especially in the context of the implementation of the principles enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights and the achievements of the Porto targets;
 4. Welcomes the fact that, following a formal decision by the Management Board of Eurofound, the Executive Directors of ETF, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) participated in person or were represented at the Management Board meeting for the first time, joining colleagues from EU-OSHA and Cedefop, who already joined the meetings in the past; notes that such participation is in line with the reinforced cooperation foreseen in the Commission's 2019 staff working document on the

evaluation of the EU agencies working in the employment and social affairs policy field;

5. Recalls that the agencies are the most qualified at assessing the use of resources and play a crucial role in supporting the right sustainable projects in line with the European Green Deal; calls on the Commission to ensure funding supporting the EU agencies in securing the social dialogue; notes that EU agencies have a crucial role in securing social dialogue with the EU institutions;
6. Highlights that transparency and citizens' awareness of the existence of the agencies are essential for their democratic accountability;
7. Notes that one observation regarding legality and regularity of transactions, and one regarding budgetary management were made to Cedefop; notes that two observations regarding legality and regularity of transactions, three observations on management and control systems, and two observations on budgetary management were made to ELA, notes that two observations regarding legality and regularity of transactions were made to ETF, notes that one observation related to budgetary management was made to EU-OSHA, notes that two observations regarding management and control systems were made to Eurofound; urges the EU agencies to undertake the necessary measures to address the observations and to improve their internal procedures to ensure compliance with applicable rules;
8. Welcomes the corrective actions undertaken by the agencies to address the Court's observations related to the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2021 and calls on the agencies to complete the identified actions that remain open;
9. Recalls that gender balance must be ensured within the Agencies in accordance with the basic regulations establishing them; regrets the fact that gender equality is absent in the multiannual strategy 2021-2027 for the EU Agencies Network (EUAN); reiterates its call on the EUAN to integrate gender equality in their strategies, on the Agencies to collect and present data on gender balance for all categories of management staff and to align their ambition with the aim of the Commission to reach a gender balance of 50 % at all levels of its management by the end of 2024 and to pursue gender mainstreaming in all fields.