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<Commission>{ENVI}Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety</Commission>

<RefProc>2022/2100(DEC)</RefProc>

<Date>{13/02/2023}13.2.2023</Date>

<TitreType>OPINION</TitreType>

<CommissionResp>of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety</CommissionResp>

<CommissionInt>for the Committee on Budgetary Control</CommissionInt>

<Titre>on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2021</Titre>

<DocRef>(2022/2100(DEC))</DocRef>

Rapporteur for opinion: <Depute>Pascal Canfin</Depute>

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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. Notes that the core budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (the ‘Centre’) for 2021 was EUR 168 115 000 and that 98,73 % of this budget derives from the Union budget;

2. Notes that the Centre’s initial budget of 65,6 million for 2021 was increased throughout the year with EUR 122 473 000 in order to support Member States in setting up and/or expanding their whole genome sequencing capacities and capabilities as part of the establishment of the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA);

3. Notes that during the year 2021, the overall budget execution in terms of commitment appropriations was 99,35 % (representing an increase of 2,58 percentage points compared to 2020), while, in terms of payments, budget execution decreased by 11,2 %, compared to 2020 and reached 64,08 % of the total 2021 budget.

4. Welcomes the extension of the Centre’s mandate[[1]](#footnote-1) 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; notes with concern that budgetary and staff increase for the Centre during the pandemic did not appropriately respond to the enormous workload increase during the global pandemic;

5. Notes that in 2021 the Centre maintained its public health emergency (PHE) plan in response to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic at the maximum level of alert; underlines, in this context, that the Centre conducted and published 22 rapid risk/outbreak assessments and responded to over 600 requests from stakeholders; notes that the Centre also continued the production of the weekly COVID-19 policy briefs and the publication of maps in support of the Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach to travel measures in the EU;

6. Welcomes the steps taken by the Centre following the EU Ombudsman's six-month inquiry into its performance during the COVID-19 crisis[[2]](#footnote-2) (concluded on 5 February 2021), namely by putting in place measures to make it easier for the public to follow the evolution of its scientific advice and to see the data underlying its scientific assessments, and by committing to more transparency around its exchanges with international partners, such as the World Health Organisation; calls on the Centre to ensure full transparency in publishing scientific studies and to enhance its external communications capacity towards the general public by ensuring that all key information, especially related to public health emergencies, including COVID-19 and antimicrobial resistance, is available in all EU languages and easily accessible to EU citizens;

7. Notes that, in 2021, the Centre finalised the implementation of the recommendations from ‘The external strategic and performance review of the ECDC response to COVID-19’ carried out by the Centre in 2020;

8. Notes that in 2021 the implementation of the Centre’s Strategy 2021-2027 was slow due to the COVID pandemic and to the new obligations assigned to the Centre in the context of the establishment of HERA; calls on the Commission to grant to the Centre the necessary resources to fulfil the objectives of the Strategy 2021-2027 and to implement the Centre’s revised founding Regulation;

9. Calls on the Centre to follow the recommendations made by the Court of Auditors (the ‘Court’) in its special report on Cybersecurity of EU institutions, bodies and agencies (EUIBAs)[[3]](#footnote-3), asking EUIBAs to have an IT security risk management framework covering the entirety of their IT infrastructure and carry out regular risk assessments, and to provide systematic awareness training for all staff, including management; in this context welcomes the recently adopted cybersecurity policy covering all aspects from business needs and wants, to people skills and awareness and to technical security, processes and tools;

10. Notes that the Court, in its Special Report No 13/2022[[4]](#footnote-4), found that the Centre does not comprehensively assess the usefulness and impact of its guidance and calls on the Centre to obtain regular feedback from its stakeholders to fill this gap;

11. Calls on the Centre to ensure that all management board members, advisory forum members and their alternates have dutifully submitted the required annual declarations of interest; calls on the Centre to ensure that appropriate experts are engaged in the Centre’s work throughout its activities and that a high level of compliance with conflict of interest rules is maintained;

12. Welcomes that the Court has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Centre's annual accounts for 2021 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;

13. 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 2021.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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| **Date adopted** | 9.2.2023 |  |  |  |
| **Result of final vote** | +:  –:  0: | 68  6  1 | | |
| **Members present for the final vote** | Mathilde Androuët, Traian Băsescu, Aurélia Beigneux, Hildegard Bentele, Alexander Bernhuber, Michael Bloss, Delara Burkhardt, Pascal Canfin, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé, Bas Eickhout, Cyrus Engerer, Agnès Evren, Heléne Fritzon, Malte Gallée, Andreas Glück, Catherine Griset, Teuvo Hakkarainen, Anja Hazekamp, Martin Hojsík, Pär Holmgren, Jan Huitema, Petros Kokkalis, Ewa Kopacz, Joanna Kopcińska, Peter Liese, César Luena, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Liudas Mažylis, Tilly Metz, Silvia Modig, Dolors Montserrat, Ljudmila Novak, Jutta Paulus, Stanislav Polčák, Erik Poulsen, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Sándor Rónai, Christine Schneider, Ivan Vilibor Sinčić, Maria Spyraki, Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, Achille Variati, Petar Vitanov, Alexandr Vondra, Pernille Weiss, Emma Wiesner, Michal Wiezik, Tiemo Wölken, Anna Zalewska | | | |
| **Substitutes present for the final vote** | João Albuquerque, Eric Andrieu, Nicolás González Casares, Robert Hajšel, Billy Kelleher, Ska Keller, Sara Matthieu, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Manuela Ripa, Robert Roos, Massimiliano Salini, Christel Schaldemose, Sarah Wiener, Jadwiga Wiśniewska | | | |
| **Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote** | Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Clare Daly, Ilan De Basso, Jarosław Duda, Jens Geier, Helmut Geuking, Niclas Herbst, Beata Kempa, Karsten Lucke, Jörgen Warborn | | | |

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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| 68 | + |
| ECR | Beata Kempa, Joanna Kopcińska, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Anna Zalewska |
| PPE | Traian Băsescu, Hildegard Bentele, Alexander Bernhuber, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Nathalie Colin-Oesterlé, Jarosław Duda, Agnès Evren, Helmut Geuking, Niclas Herbst, Ewa Kopacz, Peter Liese, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Liudas Mažylis, Dolors Montserrat, Ljudmila Novak, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Stanislav Polčák, Massimiliano Salini, Christine Schneider, Maria Spyraki, Jörgen Warborn, Pernille Weiss |
| Renew | Pascal Canfin, Andreas Glück, Martin Hojsík, Jan Huitema, Billy Kelleher, Erik Poulsen, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, Emma Wiesner, Michal Wiezik |
| S&D | João Albuquerque, Eric Andrieu, Delara Burkhardt, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Ilan De Basso, Cyrus Engerer, Heléne Fritzon, Jens Geier, Nicolás González Casares, Robert Hajšel, Karsten Lucke, César Luena, Sándor Rónai, Christel Schaldemose, Achille Variati, Petar Vitanov, Tiemo Wölken |
| The Left | Clare Daly, Anja Hazekamp, Petros Kokkalis, Silvia Modig |
| Verts/ALE | Michael Bloss, Bas Eickhout, Malte Gallée, Pär Holmgren, Ska Keller, Sara Matthieu, Tilly Metz, Jutta Paulus, Manuela Ripa, Sarah Wiener |

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| 6 | - |
| ECR | Robert Roos |
| ID | Mathilde Androuët, Aurélia Beigneux, Catherine Griset, Teuvo Hakkarainen |
| NI | Ivan Vilibor Sinčić |

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| 1 | 0 |
| ECR | Alexandr Vondra |

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

1. Regulation (EU) 2022/2370 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 amending Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 establishing a European centre for disease prevention and control, OJ L 314, 6.12.2022, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Strategic inquiry OI/3/2020/TE on how the ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 crisis [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Special Report No 05/2022 ‘Cybersecurity of EU institutions, bodies and agencies: Level of preparedness overall not commensurate with the threats’, p. 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Special Report No 13/2022 ‘Free movement in the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic: Limited scrutiny of internal border controls, and uncoordinated actions by Member States’, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)