



2022/2096(DEC)

2.3.2023

OPINION

of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) for the financial year 2021
(2022/2096(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Saskia Bricmont

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SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Welcomes the fact that the Court of Auditors ('The Court') declared the transactions underlying the annual accounts of the European Union Agency of Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) for the financial year 2021 to be legal and regular in all material respects; recalls that according to its statement of revenue and expenditure, CEPOL's budget decreased in 2021 to 30 million (1.82% compared to 2020), while members of staff increased from 84 to 95 (+13,09%) within the same period;
2. Reiterates its concern over the recurring high staff turnover rate figures, measuring at 11.8% in 2021; notes with appreciation the efforts undertaken by CEPOL in 2021 to address this issue and better identify the root causes through the introduction of a new structured exit interview; highlights that the low grading of posts was one of the main reasons identified behind the decision of former staff to leave CEPOL; underlines that in addition to low grading, the current salary correction coefficient has an extremely negative impact on CEPOL's recruitment and staff retention efforts; further highlights that among the main difficulties encountered during the recruitment process figured not only the low number of applications, but also a high number of successful candidates refusing the job offers; calls on the Commission to reconsider the salary correction coefficient it applies to the host city of CEPOL in order to better reflect the economic needs and realities on the ground, as well as to make available additional facilities to staff in order to make CEPOL more attractive to highly skilled candidates;
3. Welcomes the fact that in spite of the continuation of the pandemic situation in 2021 CEPOL effectively adapted by converting its activities online learning and carried out 396 training activities, which saw the participation of 46 340 law enforcement officers, representing an increase of 17% compared to 2020; welcomes that in 2021 the CEPOL training activities focused on key thematic areas of organised crime; notes with satisfaction the particular attention paid by CEPOL to the area of cybercrime; notes the collaboration of CEPOL with specialised cybercrime knowledge hubs;
4. Welcomes the creation of the Expert Group on Fundamental Rights with the aim to integrating a fundamental rights dimension in all CEPOL training and events; welcomes the signature of the working Arrangement with the Fundamental Rights Agency; further welcomes the Expert Group suggestion to add Fundamental Rights as a cross cutting issue to the trainings offered by CEPOL to Member States and third countries;
5. Highlights that the law enforcement training at EU level needs to reflect the EU security threats in line with CEPOL's mandate; reinstate the importance of law enforcement training on strategies to fight racism and discrimination, and to prevent racial and ethnic profiling and violence; underlines the urgent need for specialised training focusing on dangers and the proper use of AI technologies by police authorities as a key to ensure safety and security of citizens;
6. Highlights CEPOL's working arrangements with Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, the

European Judicial Training Network, the European Commission, and ongoing negotiations with European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and the European Union Agency for Asylum; notes CEPOL's ongoing cooperation with partners from third countries, and that in 2021 CEPOL started the implementation of 4 new law enforcement training projects with partners in the Middle East and North Africa;

7. Recalls that the Court observed weaknesses in CEPOL's internal control environment other than those concerning procurements in relation to the management of budgetary commitments, and welcomes CEPOL taking concrete steps to address those errors including regular contract management training for project managers and other relevant staff to increase awareness and reduce occurrence of such cases; calls on CEPOL to report to the discharge authority about its progress in this matter;
8. Regrets the Court's findings of irregularities in payments which contravened the Financial Regulation in relation to expenses covering the organisation of CEPOL events in non-EU countries; recognises that such irregularities are linked to the unprecedented challenges that arose from the COVID-19 pandemic; takes note of CEPOL's reply that in order to ensure transparency the agency formalised the use of an exception note to reduce the use of a previous framework contract in project activities in third countries, thus covering only urgent business needs, ensuring business continuity until the signature of the new framework contract in January 2022; welcomes that in January 2022 CEPOL signed a new framework contract covering events in those countries; notes that any weaknesses identified in relation to the CEPOL procurement procedure may compromise the principle of transparency and expose the agency to reputational and legal risks;
9. Recalls that the agency shall ensure full transparency and full respect with fundamental rights in all its activities, including those with third countries.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	1.3.2023
Result of final vote	+: 63 -: 1 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Magdalena Adamowicz, Abir Al-Sahlani, Malik Azmani, Katarina Barley, Pietro Bartolo, Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Ioan-Rareș Bogdan, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Patrick Breyer, Saskia Bricmont, Patricia Chagnon, Caterina Chinnici, Clare Daly, Lena Düpont, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Maria Grapini, Sylvie Guillaume, Andrzej Halicki, Evin Incir, Sophia in 't Veld, Patryk Jaki, Marina Kaljurand, Assita Kanko, Fabienne Keller, Łukasz Kohut, Moritz Körner, Alice Kuhnke, Jeroen Lenaers, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Erik Marquardt, Nuno Melo, Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Karlo Ressler, Diana Riba i Giner, Birgit Sippel, Sara Skyttedal, Vincenzo Sofo, Tineke Strik, Ramona Strugariu, Annalisa Tardino, Tomas Tobé, Yana Toom, Milan Uhrík, Tom Vandendriessche, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Javier Zarzalejos
Substitutes present for the final vote	Susanna Ceccardi, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Loucas Fourlas, Beata Kempa, Philippe Olivier, Dragoș Tudorache, Petar Vitanov, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Gheorghe Falcă, Jean-François Jalkh, Petra Kammerevert, Marisa Matias, Martina Michels, Ljudmila Novak, Stanislav Polčák, Mick Wallace, Bernhard Zimniok

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

63	+
ECR	Patryk Jaki, Assita Kanko, Beata Kempa, Vincenzo Sofo, Jadwiga Wiśniewska
ID	Susanna Ceccardi, Patricia Chagnon, Jean-François Jalkh, Philippe Olivier, Annalisa Tardino, Tom Vandendriessche, Bernhard Zimniok
PPE	Magdalena Adamowicz, Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Ioan-Rareș Bogdan, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Lena Düpont, Gheorghe Falcă, Loucas Fourlas, Andrzej Halicki, Jeroen Lenaers, Nuno Melo, Ljudmila Novak, Stanislav Polčák, Karlo Ressler, Sara Skyttedal, Tomas Tobé, Javier Zarzalejos, Tomáš Zdechovský
Renew	Abir Al-Sahlani, Malik Azmani, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Sophia in 't Veld, Fabienne Keller, Moritz Körner, Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Ramona Strugariu, Yana Toom, Dragoș Tudorache
S&D	Katarina Barley, Pietro Bartolo, Caterina Chinnici, Maria Grapini, Sylvie Guillaume, Evin Incir, Marina Kaljurand, Petra Kammerevert, Łukasz Kohut, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Birgit Sippel, Petar Vitanov
The Left	Clare Daly, Marisa Matias, Martina Michels, Mick Wallace
Verts/ALE	Patrick Breyer, Saskia Bricmont, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Alice Kuhnke, Erik Marquardt, Diana Riba i Giner, Tineke Strik

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NI	Milan Uhrík

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Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention