



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2021)0187

2019 discharge: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

1. European Parliament decision of 28 April 2021 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2019 (2020/2163(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the final annual accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2019,
- having regard to the Court of Auditors' annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2019, together with the agencies' replies¹,
- having regard to the statement of assurance² as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the Court of Auditors for the financial year 2019, pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Council's recommendation of 1 March 2021 on discharge to be given to the Centre in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2019 (05793/2021 – C9-0060/2021),
- having regard to Article 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012³, and in particular Article 70 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the

¹ OJ C 351, 21.10.2020, p. 7. ECA annual report on EU agencies for the 2019 financial year: https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AGENCIES_2019/agencies_2019_EN.pdf.

² OJ C 351, 21.10.2020, p. 7. ECA annual report on EU agencies for the 2019 financial year: https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AGENCIES_2019/agencies_2019_EN.pdf.

³ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control¹, and in particular Article 23 thereof,

- having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 of 18 December 2018 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council², and in particular Article 105 thereof,
 - having regard to Articles 32 and 47 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1271/2013 of 30 September 2013 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies referred to in Article 208 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council³,
 - having regard to Rule 100 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0104/2021),
1. Grants the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control discharge in respect of the implementation of the Centre's budget for the financial year 2019;
 2. Sets out its observations in the resolution below;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this decision, and the resolution forming an integral part of it, to the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors, and to arrange for their publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

¹ OJ L 142, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

² OJ L 122, 10.5.2019, p. 1.

³ OJ L 328, 7.12.2013, p. 42.

2. European Parliament decision of 28 April 2021 on the closure of the accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2019 (2020/2163(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the final annual accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2019,
- having regard to the Court of Auditors' annual report on EU agencies for the financial year 2019, together with the agencies' replies¹,
- having regard to the statement of assurance² as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions provided by the Court of Auditors for the financial year 2019, pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Council's recommendation of 1 March 2021 on discharge to be given to the Centre in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2019 (05793/2021 – C9-0060/2021),
- having regard to Article 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012³, and in particular Article 70 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control⁴, and in particular Article 23 thereof,
- having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/715 of 18 December 2018 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies set up under the TFEU and Euratom Treaty and referred to in Article 70 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁵, and in particular Article 105 thereof,
- having regard to Articles 32 and 47 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1271/2013 of 30 September 2013 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies referred to in Article 208 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European

¹ OJ C 351, 21.10.2020, p. 7. ECA annual report on EU agencies for the 2019 financial year: https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AGENCIES_2019/agencies_2019_EN.pdf.

² OJ C 351, 21.10.2020, p. 7. ECA annual report on EU agencies for the 2019 financial year: https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AGENCIES_2019/agencies_2019_EN.pdf.

³ OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 142, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 122, 10.5.2019, p. 1.

Parliament and of the Council¹,

- having regard to Rule 100 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0104/2021),
1. Approves the closure of the accounts of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2019;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this decision to the Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors, and to arrange for its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

¹ OJ L 328, 7.12.2013, p. 42.

3. European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2021 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2019 (2020/2163(DEC))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2019,
 - having regard to Rule 100 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0104/2021),
- A. whereas, according to its statement of revenue and expenditure¹, the final budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (the ‘Centre’) for the financial year 2019 was EUR 59 206 000, representing an increase of 2,03 % compared to 2018; whereas 97,68% of the Centre’s budget derives from the Union budget;
- B. whereas the Court of Auditors (the ‘Court’), in its report on the Centre’s annual accounts for the financial year 2019 (the ‘Court’s report’), states that it has obtained reasonable assurance that the Centre’s annual accounts are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;

Budget and financial management

1. Notes with satisfaction that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2019 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99,23 %, representing an increase of 0,71 % compared to 2018; notes that the payment appropriations execution rate was 81,41 %, representing a slight increase of 0,19 % compared to the previous year;

Performance

2. Notes that the Centre uses several of the key performance indicators (KPIs) contained in its Single Programming Documents 2020-2022 and 2021-2023 to evaluate the added value provided by its activities and the list of KPIs contained in the Commission Staff Working Document of 2015, among other indicators, to improve its budget management; notes that the KPIs were slightly revised and that the list was completely revised for the Single Programming Document 2021-2023; notes that 90,30 % of the activities of the work programme for 2019 were implemented;
3. Observes that the Centre describes the status as ‘ongoing’ in relation to the discharge authority’s recommendation from last year on the Centre’s role in developing tools for the digitalisation of healthcare in the Union, in particular in the context of tackling a pandemic; calls on the Centre to inform the discharge authority in a timely manner on the action plan’s status, especially in the context of the current pandemic and mitigation

¹ OJ C 192, 8.6.2020, p. 6.

of its negative effects;

4. Welcomes the fact that the Centre shares best practices and regularly works with other Union agencies and bodies, most notably the European Food Safety Authority, the European Medicines Agency, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and the Commission, more specifically, the Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety; notes, furthermore, that the Centre participates in interinstitutional procurement procedures and use of shared services, mainly IT services and staff surveys; notes that the Centre is also using shared services offered by the European Union Intellectual Property Office for disaster recovery business continuity purposes; welcomes the use of KPIs to assess the Centre's collaboration and cooperation;
5. Notes that an external evaluation for the period 2013-2017 was concluded in 2018-2019 and the recommendations from the evaluation were adopted in 2020; welcomes the fact that the evaluation concluded that the Centre successfully provided support in the Union and national policy priority areas and demonstrated the capacity to successfully adapt to policy developments; notes with satisfaction that the Centre was positively evaluated regarding the coherence of its actions and coordination with other relevant bodies; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the status of the development of an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations stemming from the evaluation; is, however, of the opinion that the evaluation of the Centre's work should be done by the Commission instead of by the Centre's management board;
6. Notes that the Centre, as a Union agency, has a budget which is denominated in euro; however, since its seat is outside the euro area (in Sweden), many of its expenses are incurred in Swedish krona (SEK); furthermore, acknowledges that the Centre is exposed to exchange rate fluctuations, since not only does it have bank accounts in Swedish krona, it also carries out certain transactions in other foreign currencies;
7. Is of the opinion that the Centre has a longstanding issue with the lack of necessary competences and the right to coordinate; considers that, without the proper competences and without a right to better coordinate with national bodies, the Centre will not be able to fulfil the expectations which called for its establishment; welcomes the Commission's proposal of 11 November 2020¹ to amend Regulation (EC) No 851/2004² and to reinforce the Centre's mandate;
8. Commends the Centre for its pro-active engagement with media to develop greater visibility in the media, on the internet and in the social media, in order to increase awareness of its work;
9. Recalls that the Centre's mission is to identify, assess and communicate current and emerging threats to human health from communicable diseases; stresses that in 2019 the Centre responded to 34 formal scientific requests from the Commission (of which 10 were forwarded from Members), and published a total of 219 reports, including 24 rapid

¹ COM(2020)0726.

² Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for disease prevention and control (OJ L 142, 30.4.2004, p. 1).

risk assessments addressing disease threats;

10. Underlines that the Court, in its Special Report No 21/2019¹, found that the Centre's actions provided valuable support to the Commission and Member States in fighting antimicrobial resistance;

Staff policy

11. Notes that, on 31 December 2019, the establishment plan was 95,56 % implemented, with 172 temporary agents appointed out of 180 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared to 180 authorised posts in 2018); notes that, in addition, 96 contract agents and one seconded national expert worked for the Centre in 2019;
12. Notes that the Centre has reported a relatively good gender balance for 2019 with regard to senior managers (4 men and 2 women) and its management board (12 men and 15 women); praises the staff's geographical representation within the Centre;
13. Is concerned about the large number of members on the Centre's management board, which makes decision making difficult and generates considerable administrative costs;
14. Encourages the Centre to pursue the development of a long-term human resources policy framework which addresses work-life balance, lifelong guidance and career development, gender balance, teleworking, geographical balance and the recruitment and integration of people with disabilities;
15. Acknowledges the Centre's existing measures and ongoing efforts to prevent harassment; welcomes the fact that no harassment cases were reported in 2019;

Sustainability

16. Regrets that the Centre has not set CO₂ reduction targets; welcomes, however, the efforts made by the Centre to create an environment-friendly workplace and all the measures taken by the Centre to reduce its carbon footprint and its energy consumption, and to develop a paperless workflow;

Procurement

17. Acknowledges that the use of electronic workflows for procurement, based on the Commission's DG DIGIT application e-PRIOR, was used to launch 11 procurement procedures in 2019; notes that the Centre's new internal electronic workflows, which cover procurement, legal processes and personnel change notifications, have ensured that processes are more efficient and that there is increased compliance; notes that the Centre has moved to a new system for ex-ante publications and the Union survey tool has been implemented;
18. Notes that two out of three observations of the Court have been implemented, one regarding ex-ante controls performed as regards the IT framework contract and one regarding conference and multimedia equipment service contracts; calls on the Centre to

¹ Special Report No 21/2019 'Addressing antimicrobial resistance: progress in the animal sector, but this health threat remains a challenge for the EU' (OJ C 392, 19.11.2019, p. 7).

report on the status of the actions taken to respond to the third observation, namely regarding the structure and documentation of checks and reconciliations as regards order forms, deliverables and invoices;

Prevention and management of conflicts of interest, and transparency

19. Notes with concern the absence of some declarations of interest and CVs of the management board and of the advisory forum; calls on the Centre to publish the declarations of interest and the CVs of all the members of the management board and of the advisory forum and to report to the discharge authority on the measures taken in this regard; notes that the Centre has adopted an independence policy that routinely requires the collection and inspection of declarations of interests by its senior management team, key staff members and external experts who participate in the Centre's scientific activities;
20. Notes that the Centre registered and closed one whistleblowing case in 2019 and that the appropriate measures have been put in place, and notes that, as a result, a written reminder was issued to members of staff about their duties under the Staff Regulations; notes that 29 relevant potential conflicts of interest were identified and further investigated in 2019, and that mitigation measures were applied in relation to 21 of those conflicts of interest; notes that the Centre has registered meetings with lobbyists and that they are made public upon request; stresses that the Centre must further improve its ethics framework by adopting whistleblowers protection measures;
21. Underlines the fact that the current ethical framework applying to Union institutions and agencies suffers from considerable drawbacks due to its fragmentation and the lack of consistency between existing provisions; highlights that these issues should be addressed by setting up a common ethical framework, ensuring the application of high ethical standards for all Union institutions and agencies;
22. Underlines that certain officials fill in declarations of absence of conflicts of interest and provide self-assessments with regard to respect for ethical standards; highlights, however, that such self-declarations and self-assessments are not sufficient and that additional scrutiny is therefore needed;

Internal controls

23. Notes that the Centre's current audit plan covers the 2018 to 2020 period; notes that all previous observations and recommendations have been taken into account and appropriate action plans have been developed; notes that, following the 2019 audit of the Internal Audit Service on 'Preparedness and Response in the ECDC', five recommendations were issued, two classified as very important and three as important, of which one very important and one important recommendation have already been implemented; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the status of the remaining recommendations;
24. Notes that in 2019 the Centre registered 46 cases in the register of exceptions that were analysed accordingly, and that an action plan has been developed to reduce the number of exceptions;
25. Notes that, in 2019, the management board approved the Centre's updated internal

control framework and its code of conduct as well as the Centre's independence policy for staff and its financial regulation;

Other comments

26. Welcomes the fact that the Centre has developed a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving cost-effectiveness and at environmental protection; calls on the Centre to pay due attention to the energy mix of its sources of electricity and encourages the Centre to procure electricity generated by renewable energy;
27. Welcomes the Centre's new measures on the dissemination of the results of its research to the public, and to reach out to the public via the social media and other media outlets; welcomes the website changes for the various stakeholders; notes that the Centre does not have a specific cyber-security policy, but does have several security policies in place which include a policy on cyber-security;

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28. Refers, for other observations of a cross-cutting nature accompanying its decision on discharge, to its resolution of 29 April 2021¹ on the performance, financial management and control of the agencies.

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0215.