



2019/2074(DEC)

21.1.2020

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 Eurojust for the
financial year 2018
(2019/2074(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Roberta Metsola

PA_NonLeg

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. Stresses the fundamental role of the European Judicial Cooperation Unit ('Eurojust') in assisting competent authorities of the Member States in the investigation and prosecution of serious cross-border and organised crime;
2. Welcomes the fact that the Court of Auditors ('the Court') has declared the transactions underlying the annual accounts of Eurojust for the financial year 2018 to be legal and regular in all material respects and that its financial position on 31 December 2018 is fairly represented;
3. Welcomes also the fact that the Court recognised that all the recommendations from previous years were correctly implemented by Eurojust;
4. Deplores the fact that Eurojust was faced with a significant decrease in its budget from EUR 48 to 38 million (-21%) and a reduction in staff from 242 to 238 (-1.6%) despite a 19% increase in workload compared to 2017; notes that this decrease was linked to the completion of the building housing Eurojust's new premises in the Hague, for which more than EUR 11 million had been earmarked in the 2017 budget; recalls that the number of new cases and also of ongoing cases (i.e. cases requiring complex investigations that can last several years) has grown over the past years and that the workload is expected to increase further due to the new mandate which will enter into force at the end of 2019, bearing in mind also the additional resources required to allow the Eurojust to support the work of the European Public Prosecutor's Office; underlines that, in addition to arrests, successful prosecutions in the area of serious cross-border crime are essential for the security of citizens in the Union; further recalls that the number of coordination centres held in 2018 was 17, the same amount as in 2017, demonstrating the popularity and utility of this operational tool; stresses the essential role that Eurojust plays in the Union security chain and that its budget should match its tasks and priorities in order to enable it to fulfil its mandate; is therefore extremely concerned by the severe budgetary cuts proposed by the Commission for the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 which would undermine the work of Eurojust and therefore present security risks within Member States; calls on Parliament's competent committees to invite the Administrative Director of Eurojust to present the anticipated long-term funding needs of Eurojust, including the extent to which anticipated future tasks could be covered through gains in efficiency, operational gaps which would result from insufficient funding and their anticipated impact on the fight against cross-border crime;
5. Takes note of the Court's finding that all payments pertaining to a three-year IT framework contract, as well as related specific contracts (EUR 40,821 in 2018) are irregular since the contract (worth EUR 450,000 in total) was signed with a company which had provided the same services under a previous framework contract following a negotiated procedure but without prior publication of a contract notice; recalls that the Financial Regulation allows for the use of a simplified procedure only under specific

circumstances which were not substantiated here; acknowledges the response of Eurojust which stressed the need to use a negotiated procedure given that a change of supplier would have resulted in technical and operational difficulties; calls on Eurojust to take actions to prevent an over-dependency on a single IT supplier with a view to awarding future contracts in line with procedures envisaged by the Financial Regulation;

6. Welcomes the adoption by the College of an updated Anti-Fraud Strategy and Action Plan in November 2018;
7. Highlights the reorganisation of Eurojust's governance structure, including a clear separation of executive and operational matters, which was initiated at the end of 2018 with a view to compliance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹ (the new Eurojust Regulation) when that Regulation enters into force in December 2019; notes that the proposal for implementation of the revised Internal Control Framework should be adopted by the end of 2019 and implemented by the end of 2020;
8. Notes that the Court has identified a horizontal trend across agencies in the use of external staff hired for IT consultancy roles; calls for this dependency on external recruitment in this important area to be addressed; encourages Eurojust to act upon the single outstanding recommendation of the Court regarding the publication of vacancy notices on the European Personnel Selection Office website; strongly encourages Eurojust to further develop cooperation with other Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, with a view to internalising IT roles in the field of justice and home affairs.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), and replacing and repealing Council Decision 2002/187/JHA (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 138).

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	13.1.2020
Result of final vote	+: 45 -: 6 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Konstantinos Arvanitis, Malik Azmani, Pietro Bartolo, Nicolas Bay, Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Saskia Bricmont, Damien Carême, Caterina Chinnici, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Clare Daly, Lena Düpont, Cornelia Ernst, Sylvie Guillaume, Evin Incir, Sophia in 't Veld, Patryk Jaki, Assita Kanko, Fabienne Keller, Alice Kuhnke, Jeroen Lenaers, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Roberta Metsola, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Kostas Papadakis, Nicola Procaccini, Emil Radev, Paulo Rangel, Terry Reintke, Michal Šimečka, Birgit Sippel, Sylwia Spurek, Tineke Strik, Tom Vandendriessche, Bettina Vollath, Ann Widdecombe, Elena Yoncheva, Javier Zarzalejos
Substitutes present for the final vote	Damian Boeselager, Patrick Breyer, Delara Burkhardt, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Beata Kempa, Ondřej Kovařík, Kris Peeters, Robert Roos, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Loránt Vincze, Petar Vitanov, Maria Walsh, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Lukas Mandl

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

45	+
PPE	Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Lena Düpont, Jeroen Lenaers, Lukas Mandl, Roberta Metsola, Kris Peeters, Emil Radev, Paulo Rangel, Loránt Vincze, Maria Walsh, Javier Zarzalejos, Tomáš Zdechovský
S&D	Pietro Bartolo, Delara Burkhardt, Caterina Chinnici, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Sylvie Guillaume, Evin Incir, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Birgit Sippel, Sylwia Spurek, Petar Vitanov, Bettina Vollath, Elena Yoncheva
RENEW	Malik Azmani, Sophia in 't Veld, Fabienne Keller, Ondřej Kovařík, Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Michal Šimečka
VERTS/ALE	Damian Boeselager, Patrick Breyer, Saskia Bricmont, Damien Carême, Alice Kuhnke, Terry Reintke, Tineke Strik
ECR	Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Patryk Jaki, Assita Kanko, Beata Kempa, Nicola Procaccini
GUE/NGL	Cornelia Ernst

6	-
ID	Nicolas Bay, Tom Vandendriessche
ECR	Robert Roos
GUE/NGL	Clare Daly
NI	Kostas Papadakis, Ann Widdecombe

2	0
GUE/NGL	Konstantinos Arvanitis, Miguel Urbán Crespo

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention