



2019/2088(DEC)

13.1.2020

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 the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) for the financial year 2018
(2019/2088(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. Underlines the important role of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation ('Europol' or 'the Agency') in supporting Member States with criminal investigations; emphasises also the extension of Europol's tasks and its growing role in the prevention and combating of serious and organised crime and terrorism across Europe;
2. Welcomes the fact that the Court of Auditors ('the Court') has declared the transactions underlying the annual accounts of Europol 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; highlights the fact that the Agency's budget increased from EUR 118 million to EUR 137 million (representing an increase of 16 %) and its staff increased from 804 to 826 (representing an increase of 2,7 %);
3. Notes that the current proportion of women on Europol's Management Board is 11 out of 55 members (20 %); asks the Agency to take measures to ensure better gender balance within its senior management;
4. Notes that the number of operations that Europol supported grew from 1 496 in 2017 to 1 748 in 2018 (representing an increase of 16,8 %) and that operational meetings funded by Europol increased from 403 in 2017 to 427 in 2018 (representing an increase of 5,9%); highlights the importance and the added value of Europol, in particular of the Joint Investigation Teams (JITs), in the fight against organised crime across Europe; takes note, in that regard, that the JITs supported by Europol increased from 64 in 2017 to 93 in 2018 (representing an increase of 45 %), with 27 of the JITs requiring coordination amongst more than 20 countries¹; notes that the increase in Europol's budget corresponds to an intensification of all its operations, including supporting cooperation in the field of cybercrime and the fight against terrorism online; underlines the importance of adequate funding and resources for JITs in line with the sharp increase in their levels of activity;
5. Regrets the Court's finding that there were weaknesses in contract management and ex ante controls linked to the fact that the Agency irregularly prolonged the duration of a framework contract for the provision of business travel services by signing an amendment after the contract had expired; notes that the amendment introduced new price aspects not covered by the competitive public procurement procedure and that the irregular payments in relation to the contract amounted to EUR 22 188 in 2018; notes the Court's finding regarding contract management and ex ante controls and Europol's reply that it had exerted due diligence and adhered to the principle of financial management in extending the framework contract to save costs; calls upon the Agency to ensure compliance with the Financial Regulation in order to strengthen its internal

¹ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europolinbrief2019.pdf>

financial management controls accordingly in order to avoid future irregularities;

6. Welcomes the conclusion of the audit report of the Commission's Internal Audit Service on 'Human Resources Management and Ethics in EUROPOL' that the Agency's processes for managing HR and anti-fraud and ethics-oriented policies and procedures are adequately designed and effective and that they comply with the existing regulatory and legal framework; welcomes the preparation of an action plan by the Agency to address the areas for improvement identified in that report; invites the Agency to report back to Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on the issues identified and the corresponding follow-up measures;
7. Notes that the Court has identified a horizontal trend across agencies in the use of external staff hired in IT consultancy roles; calls for the dependence on consultancy services in this important area to be addressed; requests the Agency to take note of the observations of the Court and to act on its recommendation to publish its vacancy notices on the website of the European Personnel Selection Office; strongly encourages Europol to develop cooperation further between the other institutions, agencies, offices and bodies of the Union with a view to internalising IT roles in the area of Justice and Home Affairs;
8. Requests the Agency to make financial resources for translations available to the extent possible and urges the budgetary authority to provide sufficient financial resources to allow for the translation of Europol's official reports into all official languages of the Union, given the importance of its work for Union citizens, the obligation to ensure transparency with regard to its activities and the fact that the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group composed of national and European parliamentarians from all Member States should be able to do its work properly; invites the Commission and Europol to establish a cooperation framework with the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union in order to reduce the financial burden regarding translation;

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	13.1.2020
Result of final vote	+: 43 -: 5 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Konstantinos Arvanitis, Malik Azmani, Nicolas Bay, Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Damien Carême, Caterina Chinnici, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Clare Daly, 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, 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
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

43	+
PPE	Vladimír Bilčík, Vasile Blaga, Jeroen Lenaers, Lukas Mandl, Roberta Metsola, Kris Peeters, Emil Radev, Paulo Rangel, Loránt Vincze, Maria Walsh, Tomáš Zdechovský
S&D	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, Michal Šimečka
VERTS/ALE	Damian Boeselager, Patrick Breyer, Damien Carême, Alice Kuhnke, Terry Reintke, Tineke Strik
ECR	Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Patryk Jaki, Assita Kanko, Beata Kempa, Nicola Procaccini
GUE/NGL	Konstantinos Arvanitis, Clare Daly, Cornelia Ernst, Miguel Urbán Crespo

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ID	Nicolas Bay, Tom Vandendriessche
ECR	Robert Roos
NI	Kostas Papadakis, Ann Widdecombe

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Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention