

2019 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Data Protection Supervisor

2020/2148(DEC) - 28/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 635 votes to 27, with 36 abstentions to **grant discharge** to the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) in respect of the implementation of the EDPS budget for the financial year 2019.

In the resolution accompanying its discharge decision (adopted by 627 votes to 30, with 34 abstentions), the European Parliament made a series of comments:

Parliament welcomed the conclusion of the Court of Auditors, according to which the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2019 for administrative and other expenditure of the European Data Protection Supervisor were free from material error and that the examined supervisory and control systems for administrative and other expenditure were effective. It also noted with satisfaction that in its annual report for 2019, the Court observed no serious weaknesses in respect of the audited topics related to the EDPS' human resources and procurement activities.

Budgetary and financial management

In 2019, the EDPS had a total allocated budget of EUR 16 638 572 (compared to EUR 14 449 068 in 2018), which represented a 15.15 % increase compared to the 2018 budget. The budget implementation rate in terms of commitments was 91.97 % (compared to 93.7 % in 2018). The resolution recognised the positive trend in terms of the payment implementation rate which was 80.69 % (compared to 75.2 % in 2018) with a payment appropriation carry-over rate of 12.18 %.

The overall budget increase was mainly due to the impact of the new tasks resulting from the General Data Protection Regulation, (GDPR), which lays down the data protection obligations for the Union institutions and bodies in relation to the processing of personal data and the development of new policies) and the necessary growth of the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) that was created on 25 May 2018 and for which the EDPS was entrusted to provide an independent secretariat. 2019 was the first full year of operation of the EDPB Secretariat and of the implementation of the GDPR, which justifies the increase.

Parliament appreciated the diligent and proactive action of the EDPS in monitoring the EU institutions' respect for data protection.

Human resources

The resolution noted that at the end of 2014, the EDPS comprised 55 members of staff (compared to 96 at the end of 2019), which signifies almost a doubling in the number of staff. A substantial increase in the number of contact agents was also noted.

The EDPS's staff comprises 19 EU nationalities and had a gender representation of 39 % male staff and 61 % female staff in 2019.

The resolution underlined efforts made relating to wellbeing noting that the EDPS provides staff with contacts and information concerning psychosocial as well as medical support which was strongly implemented in the period of the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, informal mid-term appraisals give staff the opportunity to voice concerns.

Parliament encouraged the Supervisor to complete the existing flexible working arrangements with a protection of the staff members' right to disconnect.

Ethics and integrity policy

The resolution appreciated that the ethics framework of the EDPS was revised on 12 November 2019 with the formal establishment of the position of ethics officer with a clear mandate.

All newcomers to the EDPS are provided with an awareness-raising session on the ethical framework and the new code of conduct for staff.

Moreover, the EDPS equal opportunities clause is considered to be an excellent initiative.

Complaints and inquiries

The resolution concluded that in 2019, the EDPS received 59 admissible complaints seeking an in-depth inquiry, and that the EDPS issued 48 complaint decisions. It also received 151 inadmissible complaints, the majority relating to data processing at national level as opposed to processing by a Union institution or body. The EDPS replied to all inadmissible complaints, directing the complainant to the relevant authority.