European Parliament
2024-2029

TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2026)0130

Discharge 2024: EU general budget - European External Action Service

1. European Parliament decision of 29 April 2026 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2024, Section X – European External Action Service (2025/2150(DEC))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2024[1],

– having regard to the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2024 (COM(2025)0359 – C10-0150/2025)[2],

– having regard to the European External Action Service's annual report to the discharge authority on internal audits carried out in 2024,

– having regard to the Court of Auditors' annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2024, together with the institutions' replies[3],

– having regard to the statement of assurance[4] 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 2024, pursuant to Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

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1 OJ L, 2024/207, 22.2.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/budget/2024/207/oj.
2 OJ C, C/2025/4944, 13.10.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/4944/oj.
3 OJ C, C/2025/5409, 8.10.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/5409/oj.
4 OJ C, C/2025/5407, 13.10.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/5407/oj.

– having regard to Article 314(10) and Articles 317, 318 and 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 966/2012[5], and in particular Articles 59, 118 and 260 to 263 thereof,

– having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union[6], and in particular Articles 59, 118 and 266 to 269 thereof,

– having regard to Council decision 2010/427/EU of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service[7], and in particular Article 8 thereof,

– having regard to Rule 102 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A10-0053/2026),

1. Grants the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European External Action Service for the financial year 2024;

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 European External Action Service, the Council, the Commission and the Court of Auditors, the European Ombudsman and the European Data Protection Supervisor, and to arrange for their publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (L series).

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5 OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1046/oj.
6 OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj.
7 OJ L 201, 3.8.2010, p. 30, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2010/427/oj.

2. European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2026 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2024, Section X – European External Action Service (2025/2150(DEC))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2024, Section X – European External Action Service,

– having regard to Rule 102 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A10-0053/2026),

A. whereas in the context of the discharge procedure, the discharge authority wishes to stress the particular importance of further strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the Union institutions by improving transparency and accountability, and implementing the concept of performance-based budgeting and good governance of human resources;

B. whereas the European External Action Service (the ‘EEAS’) is responsible for the management of the administrative expenditure of its headquarters in Brussels and for the network of the 145 Union delegations and offices;

C. whereas the EEAS’ responsibility has been extended to cover the administrative management of the Commission staff in Union delegations through a series of Service Level Arrangements (SLAs);

D. whereas the powers conferred by the Staff Regulations on the Appointing Authority are exercised by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (‘Vice-President/High Representative’) in respect of staff of the EEAS;

E. whereas the implementation of the budget is governed by the Financial Regulation and by the Internal Rules of implementation of the Budget of the EEAS (the ‘Internal Rules’);

F. whereas under the Internal Rules, the Secretary-General of the EEAS acts as authorising officer by delegation for the EEAS and the director-general for resource management has the role of principal sub-delegated authorising officer;

G. whereas the role of Union delegations is to represent the Union and its citizens around the world by building networks and partnerships, and to promote the values of the Union;

H. whereas the peculiarity of the EEAS remains in its nature and origin, as it was when it was formed by the merging of staff belonging to the former external relation departments of the Council and of the Commission, into which diplomats from the Member States have been integrated;

I. whereas the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the Union's external action depend on the close coordination with the diplomatic establishments and networks of the Member States, in particular in third countries where both the EEAS and the Member States maintain a permanent presence, in order to avoid duplication of structures and expenditure;

1. Notes that the budget of the EEAS falls under MFF Heading 7, 'European public administration', which amounted to EUR 13,3 billion in 2024 (representing 6,9 % of the total Union budget); notes that the budget of approximately EUR 1,239 billion managed by the EEAS represents approximately 9,54 % of the total administrative expenditure of the Union in 2024;

2. Notes that the Court of Auditors (the 'Court'), in its annual report for the financial year 2024 (the 'Court's report') examined a sample of 70 transactions under administration, a similar number to those examined in 2023; further notes that administrative expenditure comprises expenditure on human resources, including expenditure on pensions, which in 2024 accounted for about 69 % of the total administrative expenditure, and expenditure on buildings, equipment, energy, communications and information technology, and that the Court's work over many years indicates that, overall, this spending is low risk;

3. Notes that 16 (23 %) of the 70 transactions contained errors but that the Court, based on the three errors which were quantified, estimates the level of error to be below the materiality threshold;

4. Notes from the Court's report that the Court examined 15 payments made by the EEAS among which it found two quantifiable errors; whereas one error concerned one substantial contract amendment without a valid procurement procedure and without ex post publicity measures, the other error concerned one payment related to the use of an incorrect exchange rate when recording a rental payment; welcomes the measures taken by the EEAS to address these issues;

Budgetary and financial management

5. Notes that the final EEAS budget for 2024 was EUR 880 165 703, representing an increase of 7,09 % compared to 2023; notes that the

EEAS also disposed of an amount of EUR 359,1 million (including assigned revenues and carried over amounts) from the Commission to cover the administrative costs of Commission staff working in Union delegations; further notes that the EEAS received additional fixed-amount contributions to cover common costs of European Development Fund staff in Union delegations and co-locations, as well as other amounts received under co-location and other agreements; notes that the total budgetary amount managed by the EEAS in 2024 therefore amounted to EUR 1 239,3 million (commitment appropriations), which represented an increase of 4,43 % compared to the previous year;

6. Notes that, in 2024, the budgetary implementation rate of current year commitment appropriations (after transfers) stood at 100 %, whereas the implementation rate for payments was 88,4 % compared to 91,9 % in 2023; notes that the average time for payment was 13,43 days but 10,69 % of the total number of payments made in 2024 (corresponding to a total of EUR 57 357 324), represented late payments, which led to an amount of EUR 37 862,61 in late interest payments in 2024; calls on the EEAS to continue its efforts in improving the number of electronic payments and the digitalisation of workflows, in particular with regard to electronic invoices in Union delegations;

7. Notes that the EEAS informed the budgetary authority of two budgetary transfers in accordance with Article 29(1) of the Financial Regulation and made 10 autonomous transfers in accordance with Article 29(4), for an overall value of EUR 53,6 million; notes that the main purpose of the transfers was to increase budget line 3 0 0 3 on buildings and associate costs in Union delegations by EUR 33,78 million, budget line 2 0 0 2 on Fitting-out and security works by EUR 1,7 million, and budget line 1 2 0 5 on Military seconded national experts by EUR 1,37 million; notes that further to the transfers, the final budget for the EEAS headquarters amounted to EUR 349,2 million and the final budget for Union delegations amounted to EUR 530,9 million;

8. Notes that the EEAS faced several challenges with regard to the implementation of its budget in 2024 due to a heavy impact by the illegal Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, inflationary pressures, unfavourable currency exchange rates and the 2 % cap on non-salary related expenditure leading to a deficit of EUR 33 million for the Union delegations, which significantly constrained their operational capacity; notes with satisfaction that the EEAS addressed these challenges through a mix of strategic savings and reallocations/budgetary transfers; notes that reductions affected mainly the budgets for missions and representation, infrastructure and security; is concerned that budgetary constraints may have an impact on the EEAS's duty of care towards its staff, particularly with regards to maintenance of infrastructure and security standards in

delegations; welcomes the package of corrective measures but reiterates its call for a budget consistent with the EEAS's needs and objectives; invites the EEAS to set annual targets to reduce late payments and late-interest costs, and to standardise end-to-end e-invoicing and e-procurement workflows across delegations; acknowledges the need of all Union institutions to improve their budget management by also taking into account price volatility, especially in the energy sector, when concluding contracts with service providers;

9. Notes from the hearing of the Vice-President/High Representative at the meeting of Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) on 17 November 2025 (the ‘Hearing’) that the EEAS has faced significant budgetary constraints in the last few years, while the institution has been tasked with an increasingly expansive mandate and has incurred increased costs and needs for the 145 delegation-network; regrets that the underfunding of the EEAS is not structurally addressed; supports the EEAS view that there is a disparity between tasks and resources which poses a significant challenge for the EEAS’ ability to fully deliver on its objectives and effectively support the Union’s foreign and security policy agenda, thus undermining the performance of the Union´s foreign policy, in a moment of rapid geopolitical change, and the Union’s credibility as a global actor; calls on the EEAS to prioritise actions that deliver clear added value for the Union and its citizens, while avoiding activities and projects that risk undermining effectiveness and staff well-being; invites the EEAS to remedy staff shortages in Union delegations, particularly in postings facing complex security or geopolitical challenges, and to strengthen transparency and accountability in recruitment procedures;

10. Calls on the Court to conduct a comprehensive performance audit of the EEAS to evaluate the efficiency of its activities compared to the diplomatic services of OECD countries; requests that this audit identify areas where the EEAS provides unique, irreplaceable added value and areas where its activities overlap with those of Member States; simultaneously calls on the EEAS to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of its global network and to prioritise resources towards delegations in countries that clearly contribute to the Union's immediate interests, such as economic prosperity, energy security, border protection, and the prevention of irregular migration flows; insists on the establishment of clear, measurable performance indicators to demonstrate the 'value for money' delivered to Union citizens and demands that the EEAS discontinue any activities or missions that are evaluated as ineffective or redundant following these assessments;

11. Notes further that investments in real estate and IT projects were postponed and the number of trainees was reduced in 2024; notes the EEAS view that these limitations could ultimately impact the

Union’s global presence; warns that continued postponement of investments and staff reductions risk undermining the EEAS’ duty of care, particularly with regard to staff safety, mental health and security in high-risk postings; invites the EEAS to present an investment pipeline for critical IT, cybersecurity and duty-of-care infrastructure, including cost-benefit analysis and expected operational impact, in order to avoid repeated postponements that undermine efficiency and staff safety;

12. Notes that the financial ceiling of the European Peace Facility managed under the authority of the Vice-President/High Representative increased from 12 billion in 2023 to EUR 17 billion in 2024, whereas the additional EUR 5 billion are dedicated to military support for Ukraine; stresses that the significant increase in the European Peace Facility requires strengthened transparency and parliamentary oversight; calls for regular, structured reporting to the discharge authority on risk management, monitoring arrangements and compliance with Union values and international humanitarian law; calls on the EEAS to collaborate with the Commission’s Directorate-General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (DG Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood) to ensure effective oversight and monitoring of the projects funded by the European Peace Facility; recognises the European Peace Facility as a necessary tool for peace keeping, in an era of geopolitical competition, that aims at building stability and a unified European defence cooperation;

13. Notes from the replies of the EEAS to the CONT questionnaire for 2024 discharge (the ‘Questionnaire’) that the EEAS in 2024, both at its headquarters and in Union delegations, launched a total of 71 procurement procedures for high-value contracts, i.e. above the threshold of EUR 143 000 for supplies and services established by Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council[1]; notes that 63 of those procedures were successful with 63 contracts being signed, while 8 procedures failed; notes that, with the entry into force of the new Financial Regulation on 29 September 2024, the management of procurement procedures for Union delegations in third countries has been simplified by introducing a separate set of ceilings for very low-, low- and medium-value contracts, thereby addressing a longstanding issue related to the limited capacity of local operators to meet the complex requirements of the Union’s procurement rules; expects those simplifications to better meet the needs of both host countries and Union delegations with regard to procurement procedures without prejudice to compliance with the highest standards of transparency,

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[1] Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/24/oj).

competition and anti-fraud safeguards; invites the EEAS to assess and report on the impact of these changes on error rates and integrity risks;

14. Takes note of the fact that a dedicated Task Force was established in 2024 to improve EEAS procurement procedures both at headquarters and in delegations; is aware that the Internal Audit Division conducted an advisory engagement in 2024, with the aim to provide an independent review of the procurement process, whose results are currently discussed with the responsible services; calls on the EEAS to make public the conclusions of this review as well as the list of measures adopted to respond to the challenges identified;

15. Notes that the number of co-locations with Member States and other Union partners in Union delegations was 137 at the end of 2024, one less than in 2023; notes that, out of the total number of co-locations in 2023, 45 were concluded with Member States and partner countries, 92 with other Union partners, whereas co-location represented 9 % of the total office surface in Union delegations and involved more than half of the Union delegations (80), which can be seen as an example of successful optimisation of the EEAS building management, but also as an indicator of the increased interest of partners in sharing premises in third countries and the relevance of co-location in diplomatic affairs;

16. Notes from the Questionnaire that the budget for missions was EUR 21 582 843 in 2024, representing an increase of approximately 2,33 % compared to EUR 21 091 935 (updated figure) in 2023; notes that the EEAS does not have a separate budget line for missions and travel for the Vice-President/High Representative and that the missions and travel costs for the Vice-President/High Representative are shared between the EEAS and the Commission depending on the purpose of the mission; notes nevertheless from the follow-up report of the EEAS to the Parliament’s observations in the discharge resolution for 2023 (the ‘Follow-up report’) that the EEAS’ internal management system separates Vice-President/High Representative missions and the travel of colleagues accompanying her within a special allocation on the main mission budget line; notes further from the Questionnaire that in 2024 neither the outgoing Vice-President/High Representative nor the newly appointed Vice-President/High Representative undertook any missions financed by the EEAS; understands from the Follow-up report that the Vice-President/High Representative’s competing engagements and a very tight schedule, often dictated by the geopolitical situation, make it sometimes impossible for her to travel using regular flights or other means of transports to meet her professional obligations; underlines nevertheless that the leaders of the Union’s institutions should act as good examples to the public and citizens, especially when using Union resources in the performance of their duties; stresses that the flight options should be chosen on the basis of sound financial

management provided that such alternatives are available and in line with the agenda and venue of meetings; stresses that transparency and sound financial management in using the Union's public funds must remain a core principle for all Union institutions;

Internal management, performance and internal control

17. Notes that, in 2024, the EEAS continued to face growing political and financial challenges, as well as challenges with respect to human rights and the rule of law in an increasingly unstable geopolitical environment marked by intensified hybrid threats to democratic systems; notes that the Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its geopolitical consequences continued to be a key issue in 2024; highlights, in this regard, the importance and need for the EEAS to play a central and reinforced key role in building the Union's strategic autonomy, resilience and security, which should be safeguarded also via the systematic and robust fight against foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) and disinformation campaigns; notes that in 2024 the EEAS published its second report on FIMI threats, detailing 750 incidents and exposing the Operation False Façade (an information-laundering scheme by pro-Kremlin entities), thereby contributing to public attribution and strategic awareness of hostile state-sponsored interference, and utilised the Rapid Alert System as a central coordination mechanism on FIMI in the context of protecting the integrity of the European elections; notes the release of a toolkit for detecting identity-based FIMI, the organisation of the annual high-level FIMI conference, the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) handbook on FIMI to strengthen the capability of CSDP missions to detect and respond to FIMI attacks and the contribution to strengthening media resilience at the Connecting Media Communities event in Kosovo, which was attended by 130 journalists and fact-checkers; strongly commends the EEAS for its EUvsDisinfo campaign that has analysed and exposed Russia's FIMI efforts in 2024; notes with concern that pro-Kremlin disinformation cases exceeded 18 000 entries, confirming the scale, persistence and strategic nature of the threat posed in particular by Russia, alongside other hostile actors; notes that some Union delegations have a Strategic Communication Officer tasked with analysing and addressing FIMI, but intelligence collection capability remains Member States' responsibility; stresses, therefore, the need for reinforced coordination, structured information-sharing and closer cooperation with Member States and trusted partners; commends the EEAS for launching the FIMI Information Sharing and Analysis Centre to enhance cooperation and shared situational awareness; acknowledges that these efforts, supported by a reinforced budget for Strategic communication capacity of EUR 6,12 million in 2024, ensured a more robust, coordinated and comprehensive Union-wide response to FIMI threats; encourages the continued development and expansion of the network of 'FIMI defenders' through capacity-

building initiatives; underlines that sustained and predictable funding is essential to ensure continuity and effectiveness in countering hybrid threats and FIMI; considers therefore that efforts should be made to effectively combat anti-EU disinformation campaigns and narratives deployed strategically by authoritarian and illiberal regimes that seek to undermine Union external action in third countries;

18. Emphasises the need to modernise the Union delegation network, particularly by strengthening the European Union Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) and the EEAS Crisis Response Centre; highlights that enhancing analytical capacity and crisis preparedness requires adequate staffing, up-to-date IT security, and sufficient administrative resources;

19. Recalls the calls of the Strategic Compass and of the Parliament to strengthen the Union's intelligence and situational awareness capabilities; underlines that the Union's growing analytical and crisis-management needs call for a reinforcement of the resources allocated to the EU INTCEN and the EEAS Crisis Response Centre, to ensure that they are adequately equipped to fulfil their mandates in an increasingly complex and demanding geopolitical environment; underlines the central role of EU INTCEN in delivering integrated, all-source analytical assessments in support of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and CSDP decision-making and stresses the potential of the Union delegation network, without prejudice to Member States' competences, as a key contributor to situational awareness through the integration of relevant information already available at field level; considers that the establishment of a clearer and more visible budgetary allocation for EU INTCEN could facilitate enhanced transparency, democratic scrutiny and accountability within the discharge procedure;

20. Welcomes the establishment of the European Democracy Shield and the creation of a Centre for Democratic Resilience as important steps to strengthen the Union's capacity to counter FIMI; welcomes the intention to expand the proposed European Democracy Shield to the accession countries, thereby reinforcing their capacity to respond to threats such as FIMI and disinformation campaigns; calls on the Commission and EEAS to deepen cooperation with vulnerable enlargement countries, on information resilience, cybersecurity and hybrid threats; calls on the EEAS and Union delegations in third countries to further strengthen their respective capacities in fighting and countering disinformation and propaganda against the Union's CFSP, including by investing in communication campaigns to fight foreign influence;

21. Underlines the need to provide the Strategic Communication and Foresight Division of the European External Action Service (EEAS) with adequate resources to counter disinformation used by

authoritarian regimes, notably the Kremlin; recalls that in Moldova and Ukraine, Russian-linked actors have instrumentalised religion, including the Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchy, to undermine democratic resilience; stresses the importance of strengthening the Union’s faith-based diplomacy within its external action and calls for a dedicated EEAS budget line to support dialogue, promote interfaith tolerance and counter the geopolitical misuse of religion;

22. Reminds the Commission of Parliament's call to equip EEAS staff adequately to engage in dialogue on religious freedom and to make this an important priority in its external action[2] calls on the EEAS to respond resolutely to this call and to bring its resources up to the required level;

23. Calls on the Vice-President/High Representative to reinforce Union CSDP missions and operations with adequate personnel, resources and flexible mandates to respond effectively to security challenges;

24. Highlights the importance of maintaining the European Union Monitoring mission in Georgia to monitor the situation in the occupied territories and ensure early warning and reporting;

25. Calls on the EEAS to limit political contacts with the Georgian Dream authorities to matters of strict necessity, while maintaining and strengthening engagement with Georgian civil society, independent media, and academic institutions; stresses the importance of continuing to promote European norms, democratic values and the European path among the Georgian population and political forces committed to democratic principles;

26. Highlights that in 2024 the Union, with strong support from the EEAS, continued its comprehensive political, military, financial, diplomatic, humanitarian and economic support to Ukraine in response to Russia’s war of aggression; underlines that a key milestone was the signing of the EU-Ukraine joint security commitments in June 2024, with Union accession identified as the ultimate security guarantee to strengthen Ukraine’s resilience, deterrence and long-term stability; notes that the EEAS worked closely with Member States, the G7, NATO and international partners to maintain unity, enforce restrictive measures against Russia, prevent the circumvention of sanctions, and support accountability initiatives, while conducting extensive global outreach in support of a just and lasting peace in line with the UN Charter and international law, including follow-up to the Peace Summit in Switzerland, support for Ukraine’s Peace Formula, participation in the International Crimea Platform, support for the establishment of a

[2] resolution P10_TA(2025)0086, paragraph 83

Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression, and the Union’s accession in June 2024 to the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children;

27. Reaffirms that the Union's continued political, military, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine remains a strategic priority and a moral obligation in the face of Russia's illegal war of aggression; underlines, however, that the unprecedented scale of Union assistance to Ukraine must be accompanied by equally unprecedented controls, traceability and anti-fraud safeguards in order to maintain the long-term political and public support of Union taxpayers; calls on the EEAS, in close cooperation with OLAF, the EPPO and the Court, to ensure full, real-time access to information on the use of all Union funds disbursed in support of Ukraine, and to report annually to the discharge authority on detected irregularities, recoveries and corrective measures;

28. Recalls that is crucial to further strengthen our support for human rights, democracy and development in third countries through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe financial framework; highlights that maintaining specific funding for human rights and democracy, as well as a human rights-based approach and mainstreaming of human rights in our third-country support and partnerships, can serve to strengthen the Union’s standing globally and back up Union values; underlines that resources to the Union’s Digital Diplomacy should be further increased given the current context of rapid technological advancements and geopolitical competition, in particular to counter digital authoritarianism, foreign interference and the misuse of emerging technologies; invites the EEAS to systematically conduct risk assessments on civic-space restrictions in partner and third countries, in order to ensure that Union funding reaches relevant stakeholders; insists that the green transition should be backed by adequate financial and human resources in the EEAS and Union delegations, and be consistently integrated into political dialogues, partnerships and external spending, including in third countries, while ensuring coherence with competitiveness, energy security and economic resilience of partner countries;

29. Stresses the need for the EEAS to reinforce its administrative and analytical capacity in areas of growing strategic importance, including the Arctic; calls for strengthened staff training, improved inter-service coordination, and adequate resources to support risk assessment, situational awareness and engagement with relevant partners; underlines that such capacity-building must be fully aligned with sound financial management and existing budgetary constraints;

30. Notes with satisfaction from the Follow-up report the EEAS’ central role and actions in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East,

including by calling for the unimpeded access and sustained distribution of humanitarian aid at scale, in line with international humanitarian principles; underlines that humanitarian assistance must be delivered in a safe, effective and depoliticised manner, and must not be diverted or misused by terrorist or armed groups; notes that since the onset of the crisis in Gaza, the Union has deployed all available humanitarian instruments to ease the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, providing EUR 450 million in humanitarian aid since October 2023, including an initial aid package of EUR 120 million for 2025 and in the specific case of Union support in Palestine, according to the Commission mechanisms in place 'are solid and work effectively' as reaffirmed during the financial review of Union assistance in Palestine that took place in November 2023; further notes that in April 2025, the Commission adopted a comprehensive multi-annual programme for Palestine worth up to EUR 1,6 billion for 2025-2027 to support economic recovery, resilience and governance in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, with up to EUR 620 million of that funding in direct financial support to the Palestinian Authority; notes that in May 2024, the Commission announced a financial assistance package of EUR 1 billion to help Lebanon face domestic and regional challenges; welcomes in this context the Vice-President/High Representative's view expressed at the Hearing, whereby as a fundamental principle of the law, 'whoever causes the damage should also pay for it'; notes that any comprehensive assessment of damages remains premature as long as access to Gaza is not possible; stresses, however, the importance of establishing robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms, including reliable, independent and verifiable information, to enable an assessment of damages and needs as soon as access is allowed; invites the EEAS to continue using all available instruments, including humanitarian, diplomatic and financial tools, and, where appropriate, restrictive measures, in order to uphold the rules-based international order and promote lasting peace and security in the region;

31. Recalls its position on the Union Budget for 2026 and the importance of supporting political, economic and social reforms in the Southern Neighbourhood region, including addressing rising humanitarian needs, while ensuring that no Union funds are allocated to public institutions, individuals or associations linked to any kind of terrorist movements, and that are directly in opposition to the Union's fundamental values, including Islamist, antisemitic, anti-Christian and anti-Islam movements; recalls that the EEAS is responsible for providing political guidance and strategic oversight on the Union's external action, while the Commission retains full responsibility for the management, contracting and disbursement of Union budgetary resources provided to implementing partners and international organisations; recalls that there have been allegations that 19 of 13 000 UNRWA employees in Gaza were involved in the despicable terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel on 7 October 2023;

acknowledges the United Nations' response to those allegations including the investigations launched by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), after which 9 members of staff had their employment formally terminated in the interest of the Agency and the recommendations issued through the Colonna Report; notes that the Commission has been working with UNRWA, to enhance the neutrality processes and control systems in the Agency, in line with findings of the investigations by the UN OIOS and to monitor the application of the action plan presented by UNRWA; notes the Commission’s assessment that UNRWA remains committed to implementing the agreed recommendations as well as the fulfilment of all conditions agreed with the Union for continued funding in 2024; encourages, in this regard, the Commission’s continued engagement and close monitoring to ensure that funding is met with solid guarantees on neutrality, transparency and accountability; notes that the Union does not fund the Palestinian textbooks, and that neither are they the responsibility of UNRWA, which nevertheless reviews all issued textbooks to address any problematic content; recalls the necessity for the Palestinian Authority to remove all educational materials and content that fail to adhere to UNESCO standards, particularly those encouraging antisemitism and inciting violence, to which Palestinian children should not be exposed; recalls that no Union funds are to be allocated, directly or indirectly, to the above mentioned educational materials; stresses that financial support from the Union for the Palestinian Authority in the area of education should be provided on the condition that textbook content is aligned with UNESCO standards in line with the findings of the Georg Eckert Institute's report funded by the Union, which revealed a complex picture on the textbooks;

32. Expresses deep concerns over the report, on internal suspected Hamas documents, dated between 2018 and 2022, originally found by the Israel Defense Forces in the Gaza strip and later declassified and disseminated through NGO Monitor, which allegedly indicate attempts of Hamas’ infiltration and monitoring through so-called ‘guarantors’ of international NGOs including within Union-funded humanitarian projects in the Gaza Strip; recalls that, largely in response to the demands of Parliament, verification mechanisms have been further reinforced since 2023, including specific audits, risk analyses and additional external monitoring; stresses that any claim on any misuse of Union taxpayer funds should be carefully verified and urges the Commission to investigate all allegations of any type of undue infiltration and influence within Union-funded humanitarian projects and to suspend or recover Union funding where breaches are confirmed; underlines that any allegation of misuse of Union funds indirectly diverted to terrorist organisations undermines the integrity of Union assistance; warns that in armed conflicts, disinformation and information warfare pursued for strategic purposes are common practices;

33. Recalls that millions of people worldwide face discrimination, persecution or violence because of their religion or belief; encourages the Commission and the EEAS, within their respective competences, to continue ensuring balanced policy attention, coordination and transparency in addressing all forms of religious hatred and intolerance, including anti-Christian, anti-Islamism and anti-Semitism hatred, and to keep Parliament regularly informed about relevant measures taken and resources mobilised in this regard;

34. Notes from the Follow-up report the EEAS' ongoing efforts to support dialogue on the political, economic and social situation, the rule of law and anti-corruption fight and to strengthen democracy and human rights in various countries; welcomes the fact that the EEAS and Union delegations continue to engage with representatives of national administrations and institutions, civil society organisations, stakeholders specialised in democratic governance, human rights, media, social partners and international and regional organisations; notes that support for human rights and women defenders, including indigenous ones, is among the key priorities of the EEAS in line with the Union's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2027, and is advanced through a range of activities such as political dialogues, political reporting, public diplomacy, multilateral fora and annual reports on the implementation of human rights; calls on the EEAS and Union delegations to further strengthen their work in providing assistance, as well as logistical and technological support, and in engaging with human rights defenders, in line with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, with particular attention to women;

35. Notes from the Questionnaire that the Corporate Governance Service (CGS), established in 2023, plays an important role in improving EEAS management by supporting the preparation of the EEAS annual management plans and annual activity reports, strengthening risk management processes, addressing systemic corporate issues in Union delegations, and implementing the 'One Delegation' concept, which aims to reduce management and reporting fragmentation and to document recurring issues and best practices at both Headquarters and Union delegation; calls on the EEAS to swiftly address the weaknesses in internal controls and document management highlighted by the Court, with a view to improving the integrity of information management and ensuring consistent reporting across Union delegations;

36. Notes with satisfaction from the Follow-up report and the Questionnaire the efforts taken by the EEAS toward a feminist diplomacy, despite Member States having the main role in setting the Union external actions guidelines; in particular welcomes the action taken to accelerate the implementation of the Union's commitments under the Gender Action Plan (GAP) III; notes that the

Union’s Ambassador for Gender and Diversity engaged in efforts to integrate a gender perspective in human rights dialogues and key multilateral statements and resolutions; notes further that gender-responsive leadership continued being a key element in the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming; welcomes in this context the appointment of gender focal points in November 2024; notes that GAP III will expire in 2027 and urges the EEAS, to this end, to develop a more ambitious GAP IV that will ensure a stronger connection between women’s rights and empowerment and the Union’s foreign and security policy, ready for implementation as of 2028;

37. Underlines that the Union must increase funding to reinforce the dedicated budget line within the Union’s foreign policy actions specifically for gender equality and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, in order to ensure consistent financing for initiatives that promote gender-responsive leadership, protect women’s rights, and combat sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict and post-conflict settings; stresses that such funding is essential to support local civil society organisations, provide survivor-centred support, and integrate gender perspectives into Union diplomatic and security efforts;

38. Sees election observation mission as a practical and effective foreign policy instrument that remains central to the Union’s democracy support policies and strategies; notes from the Follow-up report that the EEAS has no prospect of extending observation work towards candidate and neighbouring countries, because observation missions adequately cover these countries led by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights which used a methodology similar to the Union’s and often sources experts from the same pool of professionals; reiterates nevertheless its call on the Union to ensure adequate resources, including expertise on the integrity of online information and interference risks in election observation methodologies to the Union’s election observation missions;

39. Notes with satisfaction from the Follow-up report the Union’s effort to protect children in conflict-affected regions through its delegations in 2024; welcomes the update of the Union’s Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict in 2024 that provide a framework to strengthen protection and prevent grave violations against children in times of war;

40. Recalls that in 2021 Parliament proposed a pilot project ‘Towards the creation of the European Diplomatic Academy’ with the objective to create a critical mass of European diplomats trained on Union’s foreign relations and security and a European diplomatic culture that aims at enhancing the Union’s role as an effective foreign policy actors; notes that in the first phase of that pilot project, which

covered the academic year 2022-2023, 42 young diplomats participated, while in the second phase, which covered the academic year 2023-2024, there were 50 participants; notes that the second phase ran over two identical 4-month course editions, followed by 1-month training assignment at EEAS Headquarters in Brussels; notes that courses and training programmes were implemented by an academic consortium formed by the College of Europe in Belgium (Bruges) and Poland (Natolin); notes from the Questionnaire that, in line with the service contract EEAS/2022/OP/0168-2023, the College of Europe produced a final report containing the assessment of the second phase of the pilot project; calls on the EEAS to provide the discharge authority with that report; notes from the EEAS report on the annual accounts for the years 2022, 2023 and 2024, with regard to budget implementation for the pilot phases of the EU Diplomatic Academy, that the EEAS paid EUR 831 000 in 2022, EUR 120 000 in 2023 and EUR 862 000 in 2024; asks the EEAS to provide Parliament in the context of discharge procedure with copies of all documentation with regard to procurement procedures carried out, contracts signed and payments made in connection with phase 1 and phase 2 of the EU Diplomatic Academy pilot project;

41. Notes further that on 21 May 2024, building on the experience and structure developed in the pilot phases, the Council adopted a decision to establish a fully-fledged EU Diplomatic Academy for four academic years starting with 2024-2025, whereas the course and training activities have been assigned to the College of Europe, while the EU Diplomatic Academy will operate under the responsibility of the Vice-President/High Representative who will receive guidance from a steering committee composed of a representative designated by each Member State, as well as representative of Parliament, the Council and the Commission; notes from that decision that an intended amount of EUR 1,72 million shall cover the period 1 July 2024-30 June 2025, whereas the management of the expenditure in connection with the EU Diplomatic Academy is supervised by the Commission through the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments;

42. Notes that, following the creation of the CGS in 2023, the EEAS updated its Internal Control Framework (ICF) in 2024 to reflect the role of the Chief Governance Officer and introduce a monitoring mechanism on internal controls; notes from the Questionnaire that the ICF of the EEAS is aligned with that of the Commission; notes that, in addition to the standard annual assessment of its internal control system, the EEAS carried out in 2024 a survey among 167 respondents/staff, all with Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation (AOSD) responsibilities, whereas the results of that survey are discussed at senior management level in the EEAS’ Internal Control Committee; notes that that survey highlighted 183 areas that need attention, especially with regard to challenges that Union delegations are facing such as awareness on internal controls and

risk management, recruiting and retaining qualified staff and IT services; welcomes the fact that the EEAS devised an action plan to rectify existing concerns and pro-actively address potential risks; invites the EEAS to keep the discharge authority updated on these matters;

43. Encourages the EEAS to strengthen internal controls and document management systems, addressing weaknesses identified by the Court, in particular those concerning information management and reporting from Union delegations;

44. Notes that the EEAS employs two ex ante verification modes with regard to financial transactions (commitments, payments and recovery orders); notes that one type ex ante verification is decentralised, i.e. carried out independently from the responsible AOSD, for payments linked to invoices whose amount is (as of 2024) below 15 000; notes that, for all other financial transactions, the ex ante verification is ensured internally by the operational divisions or by Union delegations; notes that for procurement procedures, there are also two ex ante verification modes: one mode for contracts whose value is equal or greater than Directive 2014/24/EU thresholds, ran independently from the AOSD of the department in charge of the procurement file and another mode ensured internally, by the department in charge, for (very) low and middle value contracts;

45. Notes that for financial errors, the detected error rate corresponds to errors detected by ex post controls (after the payment/recovery has been made) which feeds into a residual error that also reflects errors presumed to be affecting the non-controlled expenditure and revenue; notes that in 2024, the residual financial error rate for the EEAS expenditure was 0,03 % and for revenue 0,05 %; notes with regard to procurement errors, that the EEAS updated its ex post controls methodology in 2024, thus aligning it with the Commission’s approach with regard to the calculation of procurement errors, which discards the notion of a residual error, whereas the financial impact of procurement errors cannot be quantified the same way the financial errors are; notes that based on this new methodology, the value of procurement detected error was EUR 49 774 108 in 2024 (up from EUR 23 392 948 in 2023) or 4,32 % of the audited population in 2024 (up from 2,07 % in 2023);

46. Notes with appreciation that the EEAS made tangible progress in 2024 in implementing outstanding recommendations made by various bodies such as the EEAS’ Internal Audit Division (IAD), the Commission’s Internal Audit Service (IAS) and the Court; acknowledges the role of the EEAS Audit Progress Committee in ensuring the independence of IAD and monitoring the quality of the internal audit work and the progress made with regard to follow-up on internal and external audit recommendations;

47. Notes with regard audits carried out by the IAD that the number of open recommendations was reduced from four critical and 49 very important recommendations to three critical and 32 very important ones and three action plans were reviewed, one of which was accepted as satisfactory; notes that the remaining critical recommendations are linked to the audit on ‘Management of the EU Delegation building in Washington’ which was delayed by legal matters and 13 of the 32 remaining very important recommendations are linked to the audit on ‘Information flows between EEAS, DG HR and the PMO’; observes further that the IAD launched an advisory review of procurement processes at Headquarters, initiated a strategic risk assessment, conducted benchmarking with other Union institutions, updated its Mission Charter, thereby completing the 2022–2024 multiannual audit plan, and took the necessary steps to prepare its new strategic audit plan starting in 2025;

48. Observes that the IAS finalised two audits on human resources allocation and on the EEAS anti-fraud strategy, with action plans under implementation, and launched a new audit on ex post controls at the end of 2024, the operational work for which continued into 2025; invites the EEAS to inform the discharge authority of the progress made with regard to the implementation of IAS recommendations that are still open as follow-up to the ‘Audit on the procurement process and contract monitoring in the EEAS’ launched in 2022;

49. Notes from the Annual activity report of the EEAS (the ‘EEAS 2024 report’) for 2024 that the operations of each Union delegation are periodically evaluated (every 4-5 years) through inspection missions and strategic corporate exercises; notes that 26 Union delegations were inspected in 2024 which led to the formulation of 1 000 recommendations and advice to the Union delegations inspected and Headquarters services, including six critical recommendations and approximately 100 very important ones; notes with concern from the Questionnaire that two Union delegations received critical recommendations concerning internal management; welcomes the fact that the EEAS has applied strict follow-up in both cases and, although one inspection remains open due to its complexity, the EEAS is actively supporting the delegation to resolve the outstanding issues and implement the required corrective measures;

50. Notes that the EEAS is broadly on schedule to meet the Court’s deadline to implement the recommendations of the Court’s Special Report 02/2024 on ‘The coordination role of the European External Action Service’ by the end of 2025; acknowledges that all newly appointed Heads of Delegation received mission letters in 2024 and 2025, and that improved feedback mechanisms and the Annual Management Plan process have strengthened coordination between Headquarters and Union delegations; welcomes the ongoing implementation of the EEAS information management strategy,

including the full roll-out of the HIVE collaborative platform, used by over 16 500 staff; notes the continued work with the Commission, Council and Member States on enhancing interoperability and progressing discussions on a standardised security classification; further notes the completion of the Union delegations' workload assessment in September 2024, which informed the subsequent political agreement on the modernisation of the Union delegation network in May 2025; notes the EEAS status of 'associated service' in audits carried out by the Court, whereas four audits (Special Reports 17/2024, 18/2024, 06/2024 and 04/2025) were finalised in 2024 and two audits (Special Report 17/2025, 20/2025) were launched in 2024 and finalised in 2025; notes in this context with satisfaction the good cooperation of the EEAS with the Commission's directorate generals concerned by those audits;

Human resources, equality and staff well-being

51. Notes that the EEAS was employing, excluding local staff, a total of 2 902 members of staff, including 1 268 officials, 442 temporary agents, 619 contract agents and 573 seconded national experts in 2024, compared to 2 812 members of staff, including 1 245 officials, 450 temporary agents, 603 contract agents and 514 SNEs in 2023; recalls the importance of providing permanent contracts in order to maintain skills, continuity and productive working environment;

52. Notes from the EEAS 2024 report that, of a total of 5 355 people working in the EEAS, 47 % were working in the EEAS headquarters and 53 % in Union delegations at the end of 2024, with 1 622 as local agents in Union delegations; notes that, during the Hearing, Members raised concerns regarding the alleged dismissal of local staff in certain Union delegations without due respect for local labour law; notes that, following that hearing, CONT Members submitted additional written questions; notes from the EEAS replies to those questions (the 'Second questionnaire'), that on 14 May 2025 the Commissioners' Project Group on External Action endorsed a project for the modernisation of the Union delegations network; notes that the implementation of this project entails, inter alia, the centralisation of finance, contracts and audit functions for the six Western Balkans Union delegations at DG Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood headquarters, as well as a reduction in the number of staff working on finance and contracts in those Union delegations, based on assessments carried out in consultation with legal advisers; notes that, in relation to the redundancy package, the EEAS claims that all rights under the local law and the Union's internal rules have been respected, with financial packages for economic redundancy being the most favourable between the ones mandated by the local law and the Union ones, and this despite the concerns expressed by the local agents in the relevant Union delegations; further notes that the EEAS in collaboration with the Commission is partnering closely with local law firm who provide guidance on any local legal

requirements, thus ensuring the implementation of the redundancy process in full compliance with the applicable local labour laws; call on the EEAS to fully consult the local staff representative when designing the dismissal plan for local staff; notes with concerns from the answers from the Questionnaire that if a Union delegation is relocated to a different country, such as in the event of an evacuation (e.g. Sudan sub-office moving to Egypt), local agents employed in the origin country are made redundant, leaving them behind without security; calls on the EEAS to find viable solutions for the security and safety of local staff who have been working loyally in Union delegations;

53. Expresses serious concern regarding reports of insufficient social dialogue and the inclusion of protected staff representatives among local agents affected by redundancies in certain Union delegations; recalls that respect for local labour law, social dialogue obligations and the protection of staff representatives are essential elements of sound administration and the Union’s credibility as an employer;

54. Stresses that any restructuring, relocation or redundancy affecting local staff must be preceded by meaningful consultation with staff representatives and accompanied by concrete measures to safeguard the rights, security and dignity of local agents, in particular in crisis or evacuation contexts; calls on the EEAS to assess and report to the discharge authority on the cost-effectiveness of staff reductions compared to alternative organisational solutions, including the long-term financial, operational and reputational impacts of redundancies affecting local staff;

55. Calls on the EEAS to further improve the security of Union delegations, including cybersecurity, physical security and crisis evacuation capabilities, and to systematically report on progress and remaining vulnerabilities;

56. Notes that in 2024 46,60 % of all EEAS staff were women (compared to 46,80 % in 2023); notes with regard to women representation and the posts they occupied in the EEAS in 2024, that 40 % were administrators, 63,78 % were assistants, 73,25 % were assistant-secretaries, 56,70 % were contract agents and 26,87 % seconded national experts; notes with satisfaction from the EEAS 2024 report the institution’s efforts to achieve greater representation of women in management positions; notes in this context an upward trend with regard to senior management positions, with 37,30 % of women in 2024 (compared to 31 % in 2023), but a slight decrease with regard to middle management positions with 38,70 % of women in 2024 (compared to 40,40 % in 2023); welcomes an increase from 35,50 % in 2023 to 36,10 % in 2024 with regard to representation of women in Head of Delegation positions; welcomes the gradual increase in the number of women in management positions within the EEAS, while noting that women continue to be underrepresented at AD

level and overrepresented at AST level, and that gender balance in middle and senior management positions, both at headquarters and in Union delegations, has yet to be fully achieved; stresses that while equal opportunities must be ensured for staff within the institutions' bodies, excellence and professionalism within the EEAS must be preserved;

57. Notes from the Follow-up report the EEAS efforts to mobilise additional applications from underrepresented gender; welcomes in this context the organisation of four executive training activities on gender-responsive leadership (GRL) which reached 80 % of EEAS senior managers and a full 29 hours over four-month programme on GRL for 13 managers, including 4 from Union delegations in 2024; notes further that the EEAS established its new Gender Focal Point network and created a Task Force on Istanbul Convention which presented in 2024 a mid-term report with an action plan; notes the work of the Union's Ambassador for Gender and Diversity to integrate a gender perspective in human rights dialogues and key multilateral statements and resolutions; invites on the EEAS to continue providing updates on the latest developments of the GAP for 2021-2025, and the actions taken to further promote the participation of women in all diplomatic and political dialogues;

58. Notes the efforts made by the EEAS towards reaching a diverse and representative workforce; regrets however the persistent lack of geographical balance and regional diversity in the EEAS, including in management posts and in key headquarters functions; notes that at the end of 2024 three Member States (one Member State in 2025) continued having no Union Ambassador, while Ambassadors from five Member States occupied 56 % of all Union's Ambassadors posts, up from 54 % in 2023; stresses that an Union diplomatic service must reflect the Union's diversity to strengthen legitimacy, local knowledge and effectiveness; calls on the EEAS, in cooperation with the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) and the Commission services responsible for selection policy, to step up targeted outreach in under-represented Member States (including 'focus country' information and recruitment events), to widen the pipeline through traineeships, junior professional schemes and structured secondments, and to improve fairness in internal selection through diverse selection panels, transparent criteria and mentoring/sponsorship for under-represented groups; recalls that recruitment must remain merit-based and in line with Union law;

59. Notes that, at the end of 2024, the occupation rate of the EEAS establishment plan was at 95,3 % (compared to 96,7 % in 2023); notes moreover that the staff turnover at the EEAS reached 12,07 % in 2024 (10,15 % in 2023); observes that this increase reflects the specific structure of the EEAS as a diplomatic service, characterised by regular rotations of staff from Member State diplomatic corps and

other Union institutions, as well as the application of a stable staffing policy;

60. Notes that work is ongoing to update the 2014 decision on seconded national experts, with the revised text due to be published in 2025; observes that the EEAS continued its internship programmes by hosting 62 Blue Book interns at headquarters and 566 interns in 106 Union delegations in 2024; notes that 531 interns from the latter category were paid either by the EEAS or by other institutions, while for 35 students, who were not paid traineeship grants, the traineeship was compulsory as part of their academic programme; notes further that the EEAS also continued with the seventh round of the Junior Professionals in Delegations (JPD) programme for 2023-2025 with 67 JPDs placed in Union delegations;

61. Notes that in 2024 the EEAS continued to strengthen a safe, respectful and ethical working environment; welcomes the expanded accessibility of the mandatory e-learning on respect and dignity at work, recognising and addressing harassment with 1 900 members of staff having completed the training in 2024; welcomes the fact that 57 % of managers attended a similar mandatory training in 2024; commends the EEAS for offering training on resilience and trauma management for staff in crisis zones and for Regional Security Officers in 2024; further welcomes the adoption of a Decision extending protection against psychological and sexual harassment to local staff in Union delegations, who now have access to the EEAS formal procedures in case of harassment allegations;

62. Notes with satisfaction the actions taken by the EEAS in 2024 in the framework of its Diversity and Inclusion Agenda for 2023-2025, in particular targeted actions for gender, ethnicity, disability, age, and LGBTIQ+ groups; notes in this context the EEAS incorporated Diversity and Inclusion topics into training, provided information to LGBTIQ+ staff on legal and cultural situations in posting countries and reinforced its diversity recruitment efforts; commends further the EEAS for updating its Roadmap for Action on Disability, doing a survey on disability matters, producing accessibility factsheets for Union delegations conducting an accessibility assessment of its website and providing financial aid for non-medical costs to 26 staff members with children with disabilities; calls on the EEAS to continue to regularly train managerial and non-managerial staff on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging;

63. Notes from the Questionnaire that in 2024 the EEAS received 16 requests for assistance for allegations of psychological harassment, including several concerning the same member of staff, which led to the opening of four administrative inquiries, and that one alleged case involving a Commission member of staff was referred to the competent Commission authority; notes that four formal procedures were also initiated for local agents in Union delegation, but no prima

facie evidence was found to justify the opening of an administrative inquiry; notes that six cases were concluded during the year and that disciplinary or corrective measures were applied where appropriate, including disciplinary sanctions in two cases and a non-disciplinary warning in another case;

64. Notes from the Questionnaire that, according to the definition applied by the Commission Medical Service, long-term sick leave refers to absences exceeding 20 consecutive days; notes that in 2023, 323 staff members were on long-term sick leave with an average duration of 83 days, while in 2024 this increased to 338 staff members, with a reduced average duration of 77 days; notes further that, while the exact number of burnout cases is unknown, a significant proportion of sick leave was linked to mental health concerns such as depression and burnout in 2024; welcomes the Commission's initiative to develop a Mental Health Strategy in order to provide a structured and sustainable framework to address workplace mental health challenges, including the prevention of burnout and reintegration to work; encourages the EEAS to also establish a formal workload assessment mechanism;

65. Notes with appreciation from the EEAS 2024 report that the Roadmap for Action on Disability was updated in 2024 and a new decision was adopted in 2025 to extend EEAS provisions, such as reasonable accommodation for colleagues with disabilities, to local staff in Union delegations;

Ethical framework and transparency

66. Notes with concern the European Public Prosecutor's Office's (EPPO) investigation launched in 2025 into a potential procurement fraud, corruption, conflict of interest and violation of professional secrecy case, involving strong suspicions of breaches of competition rules in connection with the award by the EEAS to the College of Europe, in the period 2021-2022, of a tender procedure for a nine-month training programme related to the implementation of a pilot project for the creation of the EU Diplomatic Academy; underlines that the creation of the EU Diplomatic Academy represents a strategic step towards strengthening the Union's diplomatic capacity and developing a genuinely European diplomatic culture; notes that the investigation focuses on whether the College of Europe and/or their representatives were informed in advance about the selection criteria of the tender procedure and had sufficient reason to believe that they would be awarded the implementation of the project, prior to the official publication by the EEAS of the tender notice; further notes that following raids within the EEAS and the College of Europe, the Belgian police detained and then released several suspects in December 2025, i.e. a former Vice-President/High Representative, at the time Rector of the College of Europe and Director of the EU Diplomatic Academy, as well as at the time

director general of the Commission’s Directorate-General for the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf, and a former Secretary-General of the EEAS; notes with concern that the Rector of the College of Europe and Director of the EU Diplomatic Academy resigned in the context of the ongoing investigation linked to procurement irregularities and the EU Diplomatic Academy; notes that such a situation, in which a public tender may have been rigged in favour of a higher education institution, risks undermining trust in Union institutions, as allegations of irregularities in public procurement can cast doubt on transparency, fairness, and equal treatment of candidates; understands nevertheless that facts related to the EPPO investigations are under strict confidentiality rules and cannot be disclosed in the context of the discharge procedure and emphasises that no conclusions should be drawn before the judicial process is concluded; welcomes that the EEAS committed to make the relevant documents available once the judicial investigations are closed; requests that any suspicion of fraud be duly investigated, with the full cooperation by the EEAS; demands the EEAS, without prejudice to ongoing investigations, to draw systemic lessons from this case, in order to provide serious guarantees that such cases will not be repeated in the future; asks that the discharge authority be kept informed accordingly on the subsequent developments; notes that under the grant agreement entrusting the EU Diplomatic Academy to the College of Europe, the College has an obligation to provide an expenditure verification report with its final report, prepared by an external auditor and to be submitted shortly for 2024, ensuring full transparency over the EUR 1,8 million spent across 2022–2024; also takes note that at the end of December 2025, the EEAS initiated the review process of Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1472[3] establishing the EU Diplomatic Academy by launching an independent external evaluation of the EU Diplomatic Academy and of the performance of the College of Europe in implementing the education and training activities of the EU Diplomatic Academy; calls on the EEAS to share with the discharge authority both the expenditure verification report and the external evaluation, to ensure accountability and transparency; calls on the EEAS to provide Parliament with detailed information on the implementation of the Internal Audit Service's procurement-related recommendations; requests that the EEAS publish the findings and recommendations of the Task Force established in 2024 to strengthen procurement processes, in order to allow public scrutiny of their implementation and to enable other Union institutions to benefit from the lessons learned by the EEAS in improving procurement procedures; notes furthermore the decision of the Steering Committee of the EU Diplomatic Academy in its 18 December 2025 meeting to request the College of Europe to ensure a transparent and competitive

3 Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1472 of 21 May 2024 on a European Union Diplomatic Academy (OJ L, 2024/1472, 22.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/1472/oj).

recruitment process, based on the publication of a vacancy notice, for the appointment of a new Director of the EU Diplomatic Academy; welcomes that the Steering Committee further requested that the function of Director of the EU Diplomatic Academy be separated from that of Rector of the College of Europe; underlines the need for vigilant and effective parliamentary oversight to safeguard procurement integrity, ethical standards, and the protection of Union financial interests and reputation; reiterates that transparency and sound financial management in the use of Union public funds must remain a core principle for all Union institutions and bodies, including the EEAS, and that this principle is a cornerstone to maintaining citizens' trust in the Union's external action; believes that the EPPO investigation should not be used to undermine the role of the EU Diplomatic Academy, whose added value is to be fully recognised, in particular in views of the consistently positive feedback received from participants and Member States;

67. Notes the EEAS' reporting whereby the first full year of implementing the 2023 anti-fraud strategy led to a more robust and coherent anti-fraud architecture, strengthening the institution's overall integrity and transparency; notes that that strategy was operationalised through enhanced fraud awareness training and prevention measures that are better aligned with the specific responsibilities of different staff groups at headquarters and delegations, dissemination of internal guidelines and reinforcement of secure reporting channels; notes that EEAS staff has access to a learning path on anti-fraud developed by European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), as part of the implementation of the Commission anti-fraud strategy action on developing a joint ethics and anti-fraud training plan with the EEAS; welcomes the continued promotion of the 16 'principles of professional behaviour' during mandatory 'Ethics and integrity' and 'Anti-harassment policy' courses;

68. Notes from the Questionnaire that the EEAS registered two whistleblowing cases in 2024; notes that both cases were examined by OLAF and closed without recommendations, either following investigation or at the selection stage; notes with satisfaction from the EEAS 2024 report that the EEAS started working on developing its own whistleblower policy; asks that Parliament is updated on the progress made in this matter; insists that the EEAS whistleblower framework include confidential reporting, protection against retaliation for all categories of staff including local agents, and annual anonymised reporting on cases and outcomes;

69. Notes from the Questionnaire that, in 2024, the EEAS registered three declarations of conflicts of interest; observes that, in two cases related to procurement procedures, a potential risk of conflict of interest was identified and mitigated by relieving the members of staff concerned of some procurement-related duties; notes further

that, in the third case concerning reimbursement of expenses, no conflict of interest was found, as the member of staff had no discretionary role in the reimbursement calculation; notes that the EEAS received 16 notifications of post-service activities, including five involving moves to the private sector, and prohibited two revolving-door cases while imposing no cooling-off periods to former members of staff;

70. Notes that, in 2024, 11 suspected cases were referred to OLAF, of which 7 were dismissed at the selection stage and one was closed without recommendations; notes further that 3 cases - on potential misconduct or irregularities in the context of procurement procedures, contract implementation and human resources matters - remained under investigation; further notes that, of the 13 OLAF investigations opened in 2023 relating to the EEAS, ten cases remain ongoing, one of which is linked to a reservation made by the Union delegation to Sierra Leone with regard to a suspicion of fraud related to the administrative budget of that Union delegation; invites the EEAS to remain fully committed to cooperating closely with OLAF on ongoing cases and follow-up on all pending OLAF recommendations;

71. Notes that, in 2024, the EEAS handled 19 inquiries from the European Ombudsman, of which 10 concerned administrative matters (including delayed replies), 5 related to access to documents and four to human resources issues, in addition to several informal requests for information mainly linked to missions, operations and access to documents; notes with satisfaction that the European Ombudsman found no cases of maladministration in any of the inquiries opened and concluded in 2024;

72. Deplores the fact that the EEAS has failed to carry out proper reviews of the implementation of cooperation agreements with third countries, including the assessment of compliance with their conditions and human rights clauses; stresses that this failure is particularly evident in the case of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) with Cuba, which, ten years after its signature, has failed across all areas, from respect for human rights, including the imprisonment of over one thousand political prisoners by the end of 2025, to Havana's harmful impact on European security, including close political and military cooperation with the regimes in Moscow and Minsk, as manifested in particular by the fact that Cubans have become the largest group of mercenaries supporting Russian forces in their aggression against Ukraine and by their involvement in acts of sabotage on EU territory, as recently demonstrated in Lithuania; notes that, despite blatant violations of numerous provisions of the Agreement, neither the suspension nor the termination clauses have been activated, while Union financial resources have continued to flow to Cuba, where the communist regime controls the entire economy, misuses those funds, and derives political legitimacy from the ongoing cooperation under the

PDCA; considers that such regimes must not continue to benefit from privileged cooperation with the European Union and that Union taxpayers' money must not serve such regimes; therefore calls for the activation of Article 86 of the Agreement and for its termination; calls on the Court to urgently examine all Union support granted to Cuba since 2016;

73. Notes that, in her capacity as Vice-President of the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative is bound by the rules of the Transparency Register; stresses that while the EEAS is not an institution within the meaning of Article 13 of the Treaty on European Union and does not have a direct role in Union law, it does, however, have an important role in Union law with regard to decisions concerning sanctions and the negotiation of international trade agreements, which have a considerable regulatory impact; calls on the EEAS to adopt internal transparency measures aligned with the Transparency Register's standards, including proactive publication of high-level meetings of relevant top management where this does not compromise security-sensitive diplomacy for the EEAS; notes with satisfaction from the Follow-up report that the Vice-President/High Representative initiated a broader discussion on addressing the matter in external dimension with recommendations expected by the end of 2025; invites the EEAS to keep Parliament updated on the progress made in this matter;

Digitalisation, cybersecurity and data protection

74. Notes from the Questionnaire that IT-related expenditures, including projects, equipment, and cybersecurity, decreased by 6,1 % from EUR 26,04 million in 2023 to EUR 24,45 million in 2024; observes that IT spending for headquarters rose by 37,2 % in 2024, mainly due to major investments supporting the migration of the EEAS's applications, while spending in Union delegations was reduced significantly following substantial investments in hardware renewal and connectivity in Union delegations made in 2023;

75. Recalls that the EEAS began hosting and managing its own AI environment in 2023, which allowed to run proofs of concept such as briefings, minutes of meeting and an AI assistant; welcomes the adoption of the EEAS's Artificial Intelligence Strategy in 2024, which promotes a human-centric approach to AI in line with Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council[4], ensuring ethical and trustworthy systems and the

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[4] Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act) (OJ L, 2024/1689, 12.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj).

Guidelines on the use of third party generative AI; welcomes the fact that the EEAS expanded the collaborative and document-centred platform (HIVE) to external users e.g. from Member States and the management system (HR HUB) for local agents in Union delegations;

76. Stresses that the deployment of artificial intelligence tools in external action must be accompanied by strict safeguards on data protection, fundamental rights, transparency and human oversight, including in Union delegations and cooperation with third-country partners; calls for regular reporting to Parliament on implementation of the EEAS Artificial Intelligence Strategy;

77. Commends the EEAS for its actions to enhance cybersecurity preparedness, through regular security briefings covering a broad range of staff and affiliates, along with training sessions organised upon request from different user groups, including Regional Security Officers (RSOs) and Union Delegation Security Coordinators (DSCs) and phishing exercises; calls on the EEAS to provide regular mandatory cybersecurity training for all EEAS' members of staff; notes with satisfaction from the Questionnaire the tools - such as the EEAS' Security Operations Centre - with which the EEAS is equipped to monitor cyber threats and identify security vulnerabilities in real-time;

78. Commends the EEAS for the digital tools and systems it uses in the fight against FIMI, such as FIMI Information Sharing and Analysis Centre or the Rapid Alert System; further notes from the Questionnaire the launch of an e-learning course on countering disinformation, accessible to all Union institutions, and the completion of a CSDP handbook on disinformation designed to support field staff in Union military and civilian missions; welcomes the ongoing development of the EUvsDisinfo awareness-raising initiative and stresses the importance of further collaborations with Member States in order to tackle more efficiently hybrid threats on the ground;

79. Notes from the Questionnaire and the EEAS 2024 report that the EEAS detected approximately 27 000 alerts, of which 348 required further investigation; observes that 57 of the latter were confirmed as cyberattacks, and 5 had a significant impact on the EEAS operations; notes with satisfaction that the EEAS identified the attackers' tactics, techniques and procedures and used this analysis to strengthen its countermeasures; asks for clarification regarding the extent to which these attacks affected the institution's activities;

Buildings and security

80. Notes that in 2024 the EEAS had a global network of 328 Union delegation buildings used as offices and residences for Heads of Delegation and three office buildings at Headquarters in Brussels;

notes that, by the end of 2024, the EEAS occupied three buildings in Brussels with a total surface area of 87 506 m² and made use of 175 office buildings for Union delegations in third countries, amounting to 287 000 m² of space; further notes that the Union owned 23 % of these Union delegation premises, while the remaining 77 % were rented; notes with concern from the Questionnaire a shortage in resources limiting the implementation of the EEAS buildings policy, whereas the EEAS would need more infrastructure experts to increase its capacity to conduct real estate projects;

81. Notes with appreciation that the EEAS reaffirmed its commitment to preserving the network of 145 Union delegations and reinforcing the One Delegation principle; observes that ongoing modernisation seeks to enhance efficiency and align the network with Union's priorities while addressing budgetary constraints; underlines that, until financial conditions improve, strict savings measures, cost-sharing discussions with the Commission, and targeted reinforcement of key Union delegations will continue; calls on the EEAS to implement a periodic workload assessment and staffing-need methodology for delegations, linked to risk level and mandate expansion, to prevent burnout and improve retention; expresses concerns about the plan to implement new distinctions in terms of categories and resourcing among delegations; deplores that reducing the dimension of some Union delegations and cutting staff, in a shift from its original focus on development aid and economic cooperation to some strategic interests, risks undermining the operational activities and presence of the Union in third countries, and hampering the EEAS´ ability to fulfil its mandate and defend Union values, with particular incidence to Union relations with the Global South and the Southern Neighbourhood; calls on the EEAS to maintain its pivotal role and strategic priority in the Mediterranean region based on a comprehensive assessment of the Union's geopolitical challenges, while continuing its ongoing engagement with the Eastern neighbouring countries;

82. Reiterates that budgetary constraints could lead to excessive closures of Union embassies and postponing security installations in a number of Union delegations hampering the EEAS' ability to fulfil its mandate and defend Union values and properly ensure the duty of care to all staff in Union delegations; urges the Members States to provide enough financing to the EEAS and the Commission to ensure that the Union maintains its network of delegations untouched as a signal of its global engagement;

83. Calls on the EEAS to strengthen practical coordination mechanisms with the Member States' diplomatic missions in third countries, including through shared services, joint logistical arrangements and enhanced information-sharing, in order to maximise efficiency and ensure optimal use of the Union and national resources;

84. Notes from the Questionnaire that, in 2024, the EEAS continued implementing its collaborative space and new-ways-of-working policy, including Union-wide branding for its headquarters and delegations; highlights that the approach replaces individual offices with multi-purpose areas to improve space efficiency, support teamwork, and reduce environmental impact; notes further that these projects are discussed with staff representatives through the EEAS Staff Committee and that a dedicated staff survey was launched for the Belmont building;

85. Notes from the EEAS 2024 report that the EEAS successfully achieved its key 2024 real estate priorities, including completing the NEO building refurbishment, relocating crisis management and intelligence divisions to a more secure and energy-efficient site and good progress made in renovating of the Schuman building;

86. Notes from the Questionnaire that due to the decline in the level of security in the world, the EEAS had to strengthen security structures in 2024; welcomes the EUR 10 million increase in the 2025 budget to strengthen security infrastructure in Union delegations; observes the EEAS’ objective of reducing the number of Union delegations that are non-compliant with security standards by approximately 15 % through new installations and the replacement of obsolete systems;

87. Notes from the EEAS 2024 report that by the end of 2024, co-location arrangements increased to 137 (45 with Member States and partner countries and 92 with other Union partners); observes that co-location has grown rapidly, more than doubling in the past six years and increasing more than six-fold since 2011; underlines that co-location now accounts for 8 % of Union delegation office space and involves 80 Union delegations, with sustainability principles consistently applied across all shared working environments;

88. Welcomes the fact that the EEAS is focused on ensuring that its buildings are accessible to people with disabilities and reduced mobility; notes from the Questionnaire that in 2024 there were regular meetings held with the EEAS real estate division, security division and other Commission services to exchange best practices on, among others, accessibility and evacuation of buildings;

Environment and sustainability

89. Highlights the EEAS’s energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives in 2024, including LED re-lamping and ‘New Ways of Working’ renovations in the Schuman building, insulation of water and heating pipes, optimisation of HVAC systems, and standardised temperature set points; notes the progressive installation of central waste sorting stations in the Schuman building and full deployment in the Belmont and NEO buildings, alongside ongoing energy-saving measures; acknowledges the procurement of 100 % renewable

electricity (EUR 1,569 million) and on-site solar generation of 22,286 kWh, with the Schuman building's decarbonisation path towards 2050 combining short-term management and insulation measures with long-term upgrades such as photovoltaic installations and replacement of gas heating with heat pumps;

90. Notes the EEAS's first comprehensive assessment of its 2024 carbon footprint in the context of Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) registration; notes that that assessment covered headquarters buildings and centrally-managed Scope 3 activities, and showed zero market-based Scope 2 emissions due to 100 % renewable electricity purchases, reduction in carbon intensity from 4,6 tCO_2e/FTE in 2019 to 3,4 tCO_2e/FTE in 2024 (–28 %), with the footprint comprising approximately 20 % Scope 1 and 80 % Scope 3 emissions;

91. Welcomes the EEAS's strengthened commitment to sustainable mobility, including the adoption of the new Commuting Policy for Headquarters at the end of 2024, which increases public transport reimbursement to 90 % as of January 2025; acknowledges the implementation of measures to reduce environmental impact, achieving 64 % of air travel distances in economy class in 2024 (exceeding the EMAS target of 60 % by 2030), prioritising rail for short trips, projecting a reduction in staff commuting by car from 17 % in 2024 to 13 % in 2027, and promoting cycling and walking initiatives through improved facilities and awareness campaigns;

92. Appreciates that sustainability considerations are embedded into procurement through green public procurement (GPP) clauses in tender templates; notes that 38 % of high-value Headquarters contracts and 87 % of procurement templates included GPP clauses in 2024; notes with satisfaction that Union delegations applied green criteria in procurements for vehicles, IT equipment, and cleaning services, and further efforts are planned for 2025, including a dedicated GPP info hub, for Union delegations, on the HIVE platform; notes that 16 high-value tenders concluded with environmental performance indicators and 6 contracts were signed with relevance to GPP in 2024;

Interinstitutional cooperation

93. Notes from the Questionnaire that the EEAS continued its close cooperation with OLAF and the relevant Commission directorates-general in implementing the Commission anti-fraud strategy, notably through the development of joint training programmes and a shared anti-fraud training pathway, as well as through targeted actions to address specific fraud risks in Union delegations; notes with satisfaction that the EEAS strengthened its operational framework by signing working arrangements with the EPPO in June 2024;

94. Recalls that, in 2023, Parliament, the Council and the EEAS held technical discussions regarding the replacement of the 2002 Institutional Agreement between Parliament and the Council in the field of Common Foreign and Security Policy; notes with concern from the Follow-up report that no developments took place in this matter in 2024 due to the European Elections and the process of nomination of the new Commission;

95. Recalls that, in accordance with the Treaties, the Union's external action and the EEAS are intended to support, coordinate and complement the diplomatic action of the Member States; underlines the importance of close cooperation in order to avoid inefficiencies;

96. Welcomes the fact that EEAS communication actions are coordinated and harmonised with other institutions through the EU Communication Directors' network, interinstitutional platforms with Parliament and the Commission and the RELEX subgroup on Protection of Cultural Heritage and International Cultural Relations;

Communication

97. Notes from the Questionnaire that the EEAS allocated EUR 1 745 000 – supplemented by EUR 107 968,67 in C5 credits – for public information and events, with a 99,70 % implementation rate in 2024; highlights that this funding supported the procurement of digital services, communication and graphic products, and the organisation of public events such as Europe Day; further notes that the budget also financed the production and dissemination of online content, the management of corporate social media accounts, and assistance to Union delegations in strengthening their digital presence;

98. Notes from the Questionnaire and the EEAS 2024 report that the EEAS significantly expanded its strategic communication, public outreach and cultural diplomacy, combining global digital campaigns, major public events and strengthened International Cultural Relations activities; observes that digital campaigns reached broad audiences and promoted core Union priorities, including human rights, climate action and support for Ukraine, while innovative formats helped engage younger demographics; notes that public events such as the Europe Day Open Day and the EEAS Visitor Programme contributed to greater understanding of Union policies; highlights that the EEAS advanced cultural initiatives, including the Museum Cooperation Dialogue with Africa, workshops on cultural diversity, and a cultural heritage conference organised with the rotating Presidency of the Council, while preparing flagship projects such as the Union's participation in Expo Osaka;

99. Encourages the continuation of the process of increasing communication with third-country nationals on Union policy, as well

as increased coordination efforts to raise the profile of Union-funded projects, particularly in candidate countries, in order to counter attempts by actors acting in bad faith to undermine the Union’s efforts; reiterates, furthermore, its call on the Commission to ensure full visibility and public awareness of the Union’s support and investments in third countries with a clear signposting and the flag of the Union;

100. Notes from the Questionnaire and the EEAS 2024 report that in 2024 the EEAS reinforced its strategic commitment to Union data and digital sovereignty by ensuring strict GDPR-compliant social media practices, strengthening security and access controls, and reducing dependence on single external providers; highlights that the diversification of platforms-including the expansion to Bluesky and Threads-together with the use of Union-hosted management tools, systematic staff training, and regular risk and disinformation assessments, helps in increasing the resilience and safeguarding Union’s communication sovereignty;

101. Notes that the EEAS reached, through its EUvsDisinfo campaign, over 38 million users and documented more than 18 000 cases, demonstrating the scale and systemic nature of pro-Kremlin disinformation in 2024.