

2007 discharge: European Environment Agency EEA

2008/2259(DEC) - 16/03/2009

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report drawn up by Christofer FJELLNER (EPP-ED, SE) on discharge to be granted to the Community European Environment Agency, calling on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the Agency discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2007.

Noting that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2007 are reliable, and the underlying transactions are legal and regular, MEPs approve the closure of the Agency's accounts.

However, they make a number of recommendations as part of the decision on discharge. In addition to the general recommendations appearing in the draft resolution on financial management and control of EU agencies (see [2008/2207\(INI\)](#)), MEPs make the following observations:

- the Agency should continue its efforts to further develop its communication methods in order to attract more media coverage for its findings and thus feed public debate on important environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity and the management of natural resources;
- the Agency should provide support for policy-making by further developing its work in the field of environmental impact assessment.

In relation to **recruitment procedures**, MEPs regret the fact that the European Court of Auditors (ECA) identified problems of transparency and discrimination. Noting the Agency's responses on this issue, MEPs the Agency's promise to modify its approach to recruitment.

On the issue of **procurement procedures**, MEPs regret the direct award of certain services. MEPs consider the Agency's reply to be unsatisfactory and call on it to ensure full compliance with procurement rules.

In relation to the **management of grant agreements** with European Topic Centres (which, according to the ECA, were not sufficiently monitored), MEPs are satisfied with the Agency's reply but note that the grant agreements between the Agency and the European Topic Centres provide for a flat rate of 20% of direct expenditure for their indirect expenditure (overheads), whereas the implementing rules of the Financial Regulation limit this rate to 7%. MEPs therefore welcome the Agency's commitment to sort out this situation in 2009/2010.

Lastly, in relation to **follow-up to previous discharge exercises**, MEPs recall their request that the Agency, before 1 January 2010 and every five years thereafter, commission an independent external evaluation of its achievements on the basis of its founding regulation and the work programme decided upon by the Management Board. Moreover, they call on the Agency to inform the discharge authority of the results of the external evaluation. At the same time, MEPs regret that, according to the data provided in the Agency's annual report, the situation with regard to balance in, and diversity of, staff did not improve significantly in 2007, as one third of staff are still of a single nationality. They therefore call on the Agency to step up its efforts to improve the balance in, and diversity of, staff.