

2007 discharge: European Food Safety Authority EFSA

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PURPOSE: to present the final accounts of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for the financial year 2007.

CONTENT: this document sets out a detailed account of the implementation of the European Food Safety Authority's budget for the financial year 2007. It notes that the final budget amounted to EUR 52.2 million (compared to EUR 40 million in 2006), representing a 100% Community contribution.

As regards the staffing policy, the Authority, whose head office is based in Parma (Italy), officially set out 300 posts in its establishment plan. 273 are currently occupied with 37 other staff (auxiliary staff, contract staff and seconded national experts) totalling 310 posts assigned to administrative and operational duties.

In 2007, the Authority's main activities can be summarised as follows:

Scientific opinions: EFSA, as Europe's risk assessment body, provides the scientific advice on which risk managers in the European Union can base their decisions to protect consumers in the EU. In this regard, following the 205 requests for scientific opinions made to EFSA in 2007, 203 opinions and 80 reports were adopted and published. An example of the impact of the EFSA's scientific work is the opinion issued in July 2007, concluding that the colouring Red 2G raised safety concerns. This led to the immediate suspension of its use in food;

Communication: the overall objective of EFSA's communication efforts is to provide its target audiences, and ultimately European consumers, with clear, consistent, coherent and timely messages about food-related issues. The communication main tools used and the results obtained in 2007 were: (i) the new website with 1.5 million visits, over 17 500 subscribers to the EFSA's electronic newsletter and 1 500 viewing sessions per event regarding the webstreaming of management Boards meetings; (ii) the EFSA's press office with 7 press conferences organised, 24 press releases and statements, 39 web news stories and 37 news alerts were published; (iii) the celebration of EFSA's Five-year Anniversary and the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome provided EFSA with the opportunity to use new communication platforms resulting in scientific forums, food safety summit and joint events with Member States;

Cooperation: the Advisory Forum connects EFSA with the national food safety authorities in all Member States. The Advisory Forum met quarterly in 2007. As a part of the cooperation strategy, a network of national 'Focal Points' serves as a relay contact between EFSA and national authorities. At the end of 2007, 18 Member States had already signed a national Focal Point agreement with EFSA;

Management of food crises: to make sure that EFSA is prepared to react and support the European Community, in particular the EC, during emergencies or other urgent situations, a crisis exercise programme was started in October 2007 and the first Crisis Exercise was performed in January 2008 (with the Advisory Forum) in order to finalise the crisis manual.

The complete version of the final accounts may be found at the following address:

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/AboutEfsa/HowWeWork/Funding/efsa_locale-1178620753816_Accounts.htm