2008 discharge: European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders FRONTEX

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The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Véronique MATHIEU (EPP, FR) calling on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX) discharge in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2008.

Noting that the Court of Auditors states that it has obtained reasonable assurance that the annual accounts for the financial year 2008 are reliable, and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, MEPs approve the closure of the Agency's accounts. However, they make a number of recommendations that need to be taken into account when the discharge is granted, in addition to the general recommendations that appear in the draft resolution on financial management and control of EU agencies (see 2010/2007 (INI):

- **recurring problems since the financial year 2006**: MEPs are concerned about the high level of carry-overs and cancellations of appropriation since 2006. In 2008, EUR 30 300 000 in appropriations for the year had to be carried over and EUR 13 000 000 in appropriations available had to be cancelled. According to Members, this is indicative of the inability of the Agency to manage so large an increase in its budget. In this regard, they wonder whether it would not be more responsible for the budgetary authorities, in future, to take greater care in deciding on increases in the Agency's budget in the light of the time needed to carry out the new activities. Members are also concerned that legal commitments were entered into before the corresponding budgetary commitments. Overall, Members call for a more rigorous application of financial rules and cashflow management, cash holdings in 2008 having amounted to EUR 28 604 623.67 (which is excessive);
- **human resources**: MEPs regret that recruitment procedures depart from the rules and that their transparency and the non-discrimination of applicants are not ensured;
- **performance**: although satisfied with the Agency's multiannual work plan, Members call on the Agency to establish a link promptly between the plan and its financial forecasts. They also call on the Agency to set out a comparison of operations carried out during the year for which discharge is to be granted and in the previous financial year so as to enable the discharge authority to assess more effectively its performance from one year to the next;
- **transparency**: noting that the Agency does not publish information about its governing boards on its website, Members recommend that a list of board members be placed on the Agency's website;
- **cooperation with the Member States**: Members encourage the Agency to step up its dialogue with Member States, as well as to improve its financial management with regard to the reimbursement of costs contracted by Member States (in the context of actions taken as part of joint operations);
- **internal audit**: Members call for the rigorous application by the Agency of the recommendations prepared by the Internal Audit Service.