2009 discharge: European Environment Agency EEA

2010/2170(DEC) - 21/03/2011

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Georgios STAVRAKAKIS (S&D, EL) calling on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the European Environment Agency discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2009.

Noting that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2009 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 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 DEC/2010/2271):

- **performance:** Members call on the Agency to set out, in a table to be annexed to the Court of Auditors' next report, 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 the Agency's performance from one year to the next more effectively. Members encourage the Agency to 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. They also consider that such measures may lead to a more transparent working method and greater public interest in the Agency' s work;
- **budgetary procedures**: Members acknowledge that the Court of Auditors reported insufficiently rigorous procedures for drawing up the budget leading to a considerable number of budgetary transfers affecting most of the budget lines (equivalent to 8 % of the Agency's budget). They are concerned about the Agency's practice of making transfers to increase a budget line in order to pay the rent for the Agency's premises for the first quarter of 2010 and charge it to the 2009 budget. They stress that this practice by the Agency is at odds with the principle of annuality. They call on the Agency to improve, by the end of the year, the accuracy of the information provided by the operational departments on the estimation of accrued operational expenditure;

- **human resources:**Members call on the Agency to redress its deficiencies in the recruitment procedures. They note, in particular, that vacancy notices did not specify a number of crucial aspects and call on the Agency to enhance the transparency of its procedures in this regard;
- **internal audit**: Members note that the Agency has still not followed up on certain recommendations from the Internal Audit Service (IAS) in spite of the fact that they were considered "very important".