2009 discharge: European Environment Agency EEA

2010/2170(DEC) - 16/09/2010 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE: presentation by the Court of Auditors of its report on the annual accounts of the European Environment Agency, together with the Agency's replies.

CONTENT: in accordance with the tasks and objectives conferred on it by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Court of Auditors, in the context of the discharge procedure, addresses to the European Parliament and the Council a Statement of Assurance on the reliability of the annual accounts, as well as of the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them of each EU institution, body or agency, on the basis of an external, independent audit.

This audit also covered the annual accounts of the European Environment Agency (EEA).

In the Court's opinion, **the Agency's annual accounts presented "fairly, in all material respects", its financial position as of 31 December 2009** and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with the provisions of its Financial Regulation.

The Court also stated that the **transactions underlying the annual accounts** of the Agency for the financial year ended 31 December 2009 were, "in all material respects, **legal and regular**".

The report again confirmed that the Agency's 2009 final budget amounted to EUR 39.9 million, of which 87% stems from a Union subsidy. The number of staff employed by the Agency at the end of the year was 133.

The report also included comments on the Agency's budgetary and financial management, together with the Agency's replies. The main comments are as follows:

The Court's comments:

- procedures for drawing up the budget were not sufficiently rigorous and led to a considerable number of budgetary transfers affecting most of the budget lines. This situation shows that the link between the budget and the work programme needs to be improved;
- weaknesses in the estimation of accrued operational expenditure (over-estimation of certain amounts);
- weaknesses in the recruitment procedures.

The Agency's replies:

- 2009 was the first year in a new five-year strategic plan with a new nomenclature for the operational budget to better mirror the EEA work programme;
- measures will be taken to improve the internal control with a view to improving the accuracy of the accrued expenses evaluation;

- the methodology followed by the Selections Boards is being revised in order to ensure more transparency in the selection procedures.

Lastly, the Court of Auditor's report contained a summary of the **Agency's activities in 2009** in the following areas:

- participation and organisation of conferences on key environmental themes for Europe;
- launch of Eye-on Earth portal;
- various research work (e.g. Annual European Union greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2007 and inventory report 2009, report on air pollution by ozone across Europe during summer 2008);
- launch of Noise Observation and Information System for Europe (NOISE).
- various studies (quality of bathing water, quality of life in Europe's cities and towns, biodiversity in Europe, waste management, etc);
- collaboration with DG Environment, ESTAT and the JRC.