2010 discharge: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

2011/2226(DEC) - 06/09/2011 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE: presentation of the EU Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), together with the Authority's replies.

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

This audit concerned, amongst others, the annual accounts of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

In the Court's opinion, **the Authority's Annual Accounts fairly present, in all material respects, its financial position as of 31 December 2010** 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 considers that the **transactions underlying the annual accounts** of the Authority for the financial year ended 31 December 2010 are, in all material respects, **legal and regular**.

The report confirms that the Agency's 2010 budget amounted to EUR 74.7 million and that the number of staff employed by the Agency at the end of the year was 433.

The report also makes a series of observations on the budgetary and financial management of the Agency, accompanied by the latter's response. The main observations may be summarised as follows:

The Court's observations:

- Declarations of Interest of the Members of the Management Board is carried out by the Chairperson with the assistance of Vice Chairpersons. The Court states that this review process is insufficiently rigorous and insufficiently detailed. There is scope to improve the completeness and transparency of this procedure;
- weaknesses were noted in some recruitment procedures.

The Authority's response:

- in order to reinforce the self assessment of its Members Declarations of Interest the Management Board adopted in June 2011 a code of conduct as well as a draft policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making processes for public consultation. This new draft policy foresees that for any matters linked to the independence of members of the Board, the Authority might consult the EU institutions that contributed to the appointment process (Council, Parliament, Commission);
- as regards recruitment, the Authority adapted its guidelines to adhere to the ECA best practices recommendations.

Lastly, the Court of Auditors' report contains a **summary of the Authority's activities** in 2010. This is focused on the following:

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- scientific outputs and supporting publications: scientific opinions and advice, Evaluation of products, substances and claims subject to authorisation, Data Collection, scientific cooperation and networking;
- various publications: scientific outputs supported by communication activities: 34%, 78 public consultations, 3 million web visits, 16 press releases, 59 web news stories and 116 interviews.