

2010 discharge: European Environment Agency (EEA)

2011/2217(DEC) - 09/10/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the second reading report of Monica Luisa MACOVEI (PPE, RO) on the discharge for the European Environmental Agency (EEA) which calls on the European Parliament **to refuse the Executive Director of the EEA the discharge for the implementation of the Agency budget for the 2010 financial year.**

In May 2012, Parliament previously postponed its decision on granting the discharge for the implementation of the Agency budget, essentially because of a **problem with conflicts of interest** of some Agency personnel (please refer to the summary dated 10/05/2012).

Whilst approving the closure of the Agency accounts for the 2010 financial year, Members made a series of observations supporting the Committee's position to refuse the discharge:

- **budget and financial management:** Members recall that the Agency covered its building with a Green Façade at a cost of EUR 294 641 and that no public tender was issued. They therefore call for clarification regarding the Agency's relationships and contracts concluded with private companies (OLAF is invited to undertake an administrative investigation on this issue). In general, Members call for measures to be taken in cases of the Agency's non-compliance with existing rules. The European Parliament or the European legislator are also called upon to address these problems by changing the existing rules to eliminate possible loopholes;
- **human resources:** Members recall issues already raised in the previous resolution of 10 May 2012 on the **conflicts of interest of some agency staff** (in particular, the position of the Executive Director of the Agency who was a trustee and a member of the International Advisory Board of *Earthwatch* – an international organisation for the protection of the environment, and that the unclear relationships between the Agency and the NGO gave rise to questions). Although Members welcome the fact that the Agency had prepared a strategy and an action plan to resolve conflicts, they note that there are still regrettable loopholes on matters of transparency (e.g. none of the curriculum vitae of the Management Board members is currently available on the Agency's website). They call on the Agency to **promote greater transparency in terms of preventing and combating conflict of interests** and demanded to be kept informed on ongoing administrative investigations related to the Agency.

Overall, Members welcome the agreement on the Joint Statement and Common Approach adopted in June 2012 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on decentralised agencies in which certain elements of importance to the discharge have been addressed and taken up.