2011 discharge: European Environment Agency (EEA)

2012/2187(DEC) - 17/04/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 284 votes to 356, with 33 abstentions (and contrary to the committee' s position) not to postpone the decision to grant the Executive Director of the European Environment Agency discharge in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2011. The vote on the decision to grant discharge covers the closure of the accounts (in accordance with Annex VI, Article 5(1) of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure).

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the annual accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2011 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted a resolution containing 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 performance, financial management and control of EU agencies:

- **Financing, budget and financial management**: Parliament recalls that the Commission's subsidy to the Agency for 2011 amounted to EUR 35.5 million and that the total revenue was EUR 44.5 million.
- **Procurement**: Parliament also notes that the Agency clarified the situation as regards its contractual relationships with a Danish video production company. The Agency awarded a video-production contract with a budget ceiling up to EUR 1 000 000 following an open tendering procedure. It emphasises that the awarding criteria differed greatly from those used for the previous tender on video-production. Plenary also noted discrepancies as regarding the awarding of a framework contract to a London based company which subcontracted some services to the Danish company.
- **Conflicts of interest**: Parliament notes that from the Court of Auditors' report that the Agency made a payment to an international environmental organisation amounting to EUR 6 061 which was related to the participation of Agency staff in expeditions organised by that organisation in 2011. No procurement procedure had taken place and no contract had been drawn up for those expeditions. The Agency bore the travel costs, amounting to more than EUR 11 000. Parliament notes the Court of Auditors' findings that the Agency's Executive Director was a member of the international environmental organisation's board of trustees until April 2011 and that this could **constitute a conflict of interest**. Members acknowledge that the Executive Director resigned from the board of trustees of the other organisation on being informed, in April 2011, of a potential perception of a conflict of interests by the Court of Auditors. Plenary acknowledges that the Management Board and the Agency's administration have strengthened the Agency's conflicts of interest policy in order to avoid any problems in the future.

Parliament highlighted other weaknesses which were found in the recruitment procedures and the overall performances of the Agency.