2013 discharge: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

2014/2108(DEC) - 30/03/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Ryszard CZARNECKI (ECR, PL) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for the financial year 2013.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament grant the Executive Director of the Authority discharge in respect of the implementation of the Authority's budget for the financial year 2013.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the annual accounts of the Authority for the financial year 2013 are reliable, and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Members called on the Parliament to approve the closure of the Authority's accounts. They made, however, a number of recommendations that needed 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.

- **Authority's financial statements**: Members noted that the final budget of the Authority for the financial year 2013 was EUR 78 051, representing a decrease of 0.31 % compared to 2012.
- **Commitments and carry-overs**: Members noted that budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2013 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 98.08% and that the payment appropriations execution rate was 90.80%. They acknowledged that the committed appropriations carried forward to 2014 amounted to EUR 6 431 431, showing a decrease compared to the previous year, this being mostly related to the centralisation of expert payments leading to higher efficiency in payment processing, as well as the IT operational budget not having been increased by transfers from other areas at the end of 2013.

Members also made a series of observations on transfers, procurement and recruitment procedures, internal controls and internal audits and the prevention and management of conflicts of interest.

The committee went on to note with concern the recent European Ombudsman's ruling concluding that the Authority should revise its conflict of interest rules, and the related instructions and forms it uses for declarations of interests to ensure that those experts who work in academia declare all relevant information to it. It called on the Authority to have **scientists on its panels and working groups disclose the financial arrangements** between the departments of the universities they work for and commercial companies when they are in the Authority's remit. Members noted the **clarification of the scope of conflicts of interests** with new definitions regarding, inter alia, the obligation to declare even the smallest economic interest or the practice of allowing experts' interests to be anonymised only on an exceptional basis solely to ensure compliance with rules on data protection.