2014 discharge: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

2015/2176(DEC) - 07/04/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Derek VAUGHAN (S&D, UK) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Food Safety Authority for the financial year 2014.

The parliamentary committee calls on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the Authority discharge in respect of the implementation of the Authority's budget for the financial year 2014.

Noting that the Court of Auditors issued a statement of assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions for the financial year 2014, Members call on 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 note its final budget for the financial year 2014 was EUR 79 701 222, representing an increase of 2.11 % compared to 2013.

- **Budget and financial management:** Members note that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2014 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99.69 %, representing an increase of 0.86 % compared with 2013.

Members also made a series of observations regarding contract award, recruitment and internal audit and control procedures.

On the issue of conflicts of interest, Members note that the Authority launched a project to modify the way it screens and processes the annual declarations of interest in order to ensure **better coherence and overall compliance** with its rules on declarations of interest. They note with concern that in order to attain both working with the top academics in the industry and having the most effective conflicts of interest policy possible, the Authority uses a system **to assess the experts' interests which takes into account the role of the experts** and the mandate of the scientific working group or panel of which the expert would be a member against a number of different criteria. They observe that, during 2014, the Authority received a number of contributions on independence-related issues from stakeholders and non-governmental organisations and that these contributed to the **review of implementing rules for the independence policy**. Members favour a holistic approach to the question of conflicts of interest in the Authority.

Members point out that, in 2013, of the 29 statutory staff members that left the employment at the Authority, three went to the chemical/pharmaceutical sector with a range of restrictions put in place for these individuals. They acknowledge that the Authority considers that a clear legal and governance framework on **revolving doors** is already in place.

Lastly, they note with satisfaction that the Authority no longer accepts anonymised interests and has withdrawn this option for experts when completing their declaration of interests.