

2014 discharge: European Environment Agency (EEA)

2015/2168(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 Environment Agency for the financial year 2014.

The parliamentary committee calls on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the Agency discharge in respect of the implementation of the agency'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 Agency'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](#):

- **Agency's financial statements:** Members note that the EEA's final budget for the financial year 2014 was EUR 52 573 071, representing an increase of 6.70 % compared to 2013; whereas 76.81 % of the Agency's budget derives from the Union budget. This increase is mostly related to operating expenditure for strategic actions.
- **Comments on the legality and regularity of transactions:** Members note that in 2014 the Agency launched a call to procure IT and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) consultancy services for the implementation of the Reference Data Access (RDA) component and for the purpose of supporting the Agency in other Copernicus-related activities.

Members also made a series of observations regarding budgetary and financial management, commitment and carryovers, contract award, recruitment, control and internal audit procedures.

They note that the Agency's anti-fraud strategy was adopted by its Management Board in November 2014, with the aim of ensuring proper handling of **conflict of interest issues** and of developing anti-fraud activities especially through prevention, detection, awareness-raising and closer cooperation with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). They take note that in line with OLAF's "Methodology and guidance for anti-fraud strategies for EU decentralised Agencies", the Agency conducted a fraud risk assessment of its activities based on the estimated likelihood and possible impact of fraud.

They also note that the Agency contracted IT backup services, including email services, with a cloud services provider using an interinstitutional contract provided by the Commission. They take note that the conditions of the contract do not adequately define the location of the Agency's data, which means that there is a **risk that the privileges and immunities of the European Communities, to which the Agency is subject, are not guaranteed**, and that the service provider does not fully respect the privacy guarantees granted by Article 7 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. They acknowledge from the Agency that further to receiving clarifications and guarantees from the service provider, it considers the identified residual risks as acceptable and adequately addressed by the agreed contractual clauses. Lastly, they note that the Agency will nevertheless undertake periodic reviews of the contract implementation with a view to re-assessing the risks and adopting appropriate measures and remedial actions if deemed necessary.