2014 discharge: European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

2015/2184(DEC) - 28/04/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to grant discharge to the Executive Director of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2014. The vote on the discharge decision covers the closure of the accounts (in accordance with Annex V, Article 5(1)(a) to its Rules of Procedure).

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, Parliament adopted by 508 votes to 121, with 7 abstentions, a resolution containing 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**: Parliament noted that the final budget of the European Chemicals Agency for the financial year 2014 was EUR 114 112 193 representing an increase of 6.37 % compared to 2013.
- **Budget and financial management**: Parliament noted that budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2014 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 97.08 % and that the payment appropriations execution rate was 87.46 %.
- **Fees and management of biocide products**: Parliament recalled that, as of 2012, the Agency was given the task of managing and carrying out technical, scientific and administrative aspects of Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Biocidal Products Regulation - BPR), as well as similar tasks related to the export and import of hazardous chemicals. It also recalled that, with respect to the BPR Regulation, the expenditure for procedures associated with the new implementation of the BPR Regulation was to be covered by application fees for the registration of biocidal products. It acknowledged that the fees collected in 2014 covered **only 17 % of this expenditure** and the remaining part was financed by contributions to the Agency's budget from the Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries. It took note of the Agency's comment about the Commission's incorrect assumption of the Agency's largely self-financing nature regarding the BPR related costs. It noted the difficulties of the Agency, in the absence of a financial reserve, to obtain additional subsidies in those years where the financial revenue from biocide fees will be lower than estimated and took note of the Agency's concern that if this situation continues and is not compensated by a higher subsidy, it will be extremely difficult for it to continue to deliver on all its non-fee related obligations.

It also stressed that the Agency received a Union contribution for the PIC Regulation totalling **EUR 1.3 million in 2014**, a contribution that allowed it to finalise the preparatory activities and ensure the successful entry into application of the PIC Regulation on 1 March 2014.

Parliament made a series of observations regarding commitments and carryovers, payments, contract award, recruitment and internal audit and control procedures.

As far as the issue of **preventing conflicts of interest** is concerned, Parliament noted the Agency has four scientific committees set up by its founding regulation which issue formal opinions and recommendations. Those committees consist of experts, almost all of whom are public officials, nominated or appointed by the Member States, while the stakeholders are only allowed to participate as observers. It acknowledged that the prevention of conflicts of interest for those committee members is strictly managed by the Agency'

s procedure on the prevention and management of potential conflicts of interest, including annual declarations of interests and oral declarations at the start of each meeting.

Lastly, Parliament noted from the Agency that it continues to work on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations.