2015 discharge: European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

2016/2182(DEC) - 13/09/2016 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE: presentation of the EU Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) for the financial year 2015, together with the Agency's reply.

CONTENT: in accordance with the tasks conferred on the Court of Auditors by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Court presents to the European Parliament and to the Council, in the context of the discharge procedure, a Statement of Assurance as to the reliability of the annual accounts of each institution, body or agency of the EU, and the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them, on the basis of an independent external audit.

This audit focused on the annual accounts of the European Chemicals Agency. To recall, its main tasks are to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment as well as the free movement of substances on the internal market while enhancing competitiveness and innovation. It also seeks to promote the development of alternative methods for the assessment of hazards relating to substances.

Statement of Assurance: pursuant to the provisions of Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Court has audited:

- the annual accounts of the Agency, which comprise the financial statements and the reports on the implementation of the budget for the financial year ended 31 December 2015;
- the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts.

Opinion on the reliability of the accounts: in the Court's opinion, the Agency's annual accounts present fairly, in all material respects, its financial position as at 31 December 2015 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with the provisions of its Financial Regulation and the accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer.

Opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts: the Court considers that the transactions underlying the annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2015 are legal and regular in all material respects. However, the Court did make a comment about a communication problem concerning the cost of after-school care of staff children in the European School in Helsinki.

The report made a series of observations on the budgetary and financial management of the Agency, accompanied by the latter's response. The main observations may be summarised as follows:

The Court's observations:

- **budgetary management**: the Court noted that carry-overs of committed appropriations were high for biocides operating expenditure at EUR 1.5 million. They mainly concern a large scale IT project (EUR 1.4 million). This project could only be started in the second half of 2015 when sufficient fee income for its funding had been collected.

The Agency's reply:

- **budgetary management**: the ECHA appreciated the conclusion of the European Court of Auditors and will continue to be attentive to avoid any non-justified carry-over operations.

Lastly, the Court of Auditors' report also contained a **summary of the Agency's key figures in 2015**:

- **Budget**: EUR 115.1 million (payment appropriations).
- **Staff**: 572 including officials, temporary and contract staff and seconded national experts.