2015 discharge: European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

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The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Inés AYALA SENDER (S&D, ES) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) for the financial year 2015.

The committee called 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 2015.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the annual accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2015 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Members called 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 noted the final budget of the Agency for the financial year 2015 was EUR 9 217 000 representing no change compared to the previous year. The entire budget of the Agency derives from the Union budget.
- **Budget and financial management**: Members welcomed the implementation of the e-Prior modules for electronic tendering, ordering and invoicing in cooperation with the Commission's Directorate-General for Informatics (DG DIGIT). They noted that the implemented modules were to be progressively used in 2016, leading to an increase in electronic workflows, and subsequently greater efficiency, reliability of the data and audit trail. Members also noted that the effective budget cuts imposed on the Agency impaired its ability to fulfil its objective of organising operational coordination of control and inspection activities of the Member States in order to ensure the effective and uniform application of the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy. They stressed the importance of the Agency's role in implementing the reformed Common Fisheries Policy and in achieving the objectives thereof, particularly in the light of the landing obligation and demands in terms of the monitoring, control and surveillance of fisheries activities. However, the reduction of the Agency's resources and capacity may have as a consequence the weakening of fisheries controls and a concomitant increase in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Moreover, the **new migration policy** of the Union and, in particular, the creation of the European Border and Coast Guard, as part of an overall improvement in coast guard functions, entail new tasks of inspection and better cooperation for the Agency, which will require **increased funding and technical and human resources**.

Members also made a series of observations regarding commitments, carry-overs, transfers, procurement, recruitment procedures, the prevention and management of conflicts of interests, internal audits and performance.

Lastly, Members acknowledged that the Agency commenced a process of cooperation with the European Maritime Safety Agency and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in the preparation and the **implementation of the pilot project entitled "Creation of a European Coastguard function"**. They noted that the lessons learned from the pilot project will be used in the implementation of the new "border package" aimed at establishing the task for the three maritime agencies to cooperate to support the national authorities carrying out coast guard functions. Members considered it important to strengthen the

Agency’s mandate so as to put in place joint operational activities with other Union agencies in the maritime sector in order to **prevent disasters at sea**.