2015 discharge: European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

2016/2181(DEC) - 27/04/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Directive of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2015.

The vote on the discharge decision covers the closure of the accounts (in accordance with Annex IV, 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 2015, Parliament adopted by 510 votes to 111, with 6 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 resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

These recommendations may be summarised as follows:

- **Agency's financial statements**: Parliament 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**: Parliament 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). It 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**.

Parliament 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.

It 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"**. It 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. It 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**.

Lastly, Parliament pointed out that 2016 was a key year for the implementation of the new Common Fisheries Policy concerning the **landing obligation rules**, and that the operational coordination of the activities of fisheries control inspections with the Member States entails appropriate human and financial resources. It expressed concern about the practical difficulties involved in implementation of the landing obligation for demersal fisheries, and considered that monitoring should take those difficulties into account.