2016 discharge: European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)

2017/2157(DEC) - 23/03/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Bart STAES (Greens/EFA, BE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) for the financial year 2016.

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 2016.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the annual accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2016 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**: the final budget of the Agency for the financial year 2016 was EUR 70 215 156, representing an increase of 6.05 % compared to 2015.
- **Budget and financial management**: Members noted that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2016 resulted in a **budget implementation rate of 98.07 %,** representing a decrease of 1.16 % compared to 2015. The report took note of the implementation for Budget 2016 of the final phase of a two-part budget restructuring in 2014 and 2015 affecting budgetary years 2015 and 2016. The new structure is intended to better support the business needs of the Agency by isolating project financed activities and the financing earmarked for those specific actions. The Agency is invited to inform the discharge authority on the practical impact and efficiencies gained with the new budget structure.
- **Commitments and carry-overs**: out of the total amount carried forward from 2015 to 2016 (EUR 36 450 711), 54 % were consumed, 43 % remained as "open amount" (amount due, not yet paid) and 2 % of the total has been cancelled.
- Carry-overs are often justified and do not necessarily indicate weaknesses in budget planning and implementation.

Members also made a series of observations regarding transfers, the prevention and management of conflicts of interests, procurement and staff policy, internal audits and controls.

On performance, Members noted that during 2016, cooperation with participating Member States and Union bodies continued, including provision of services to Frontex (border control), EFCA (fisheries monitoring), OLAF (customs and illegal cross border activities), MAOC-N (law enforcement - narcotics) and EUNAVFOR (anti-piracy and anti-people smuggling).

They noted that the proposal for a revision of the Agency's Founding Regulation for the development of European cooperation on coastguard functions had a **significant impact** on the Agency's multi-annual programming exercises, conducted in 2016.

They also noted that the European Parliament funded pilot project aiming to explore and further develop, in 2016 and 2017, inter-agency synergies between EMSA, Frontex and EFCA to enhance cooperation on coastguard functions.

They welcomed the conclusion of the legislative process and adoption of the revision at the end of 2016.

Lastly, Members highlighted that the Agency has completed the procurement of services of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) for maritime surveillance. The Agency is urged to cooperate with other Union Agencies in addressing the **refugee crisis**, including in the performance of critically important activities outside its original mandate, such as by contributing knowhow, operational support and staff to help to tackle the refugee crisis.