2016 discharge: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

2017/2159(DEC) - 23/03/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Indrek TARAND (Greens/EFA, EE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Food Safety Authority (ESFA) for the financial year 2016.

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the Authority discharge in respect of the implementation of the Authority'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 Authority 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 Authority'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:

- **Authority's financial statements**: the final budget of the European Food Safety Authority for the financial year 2016 was EUR 79 492 944, representing a decrease of 1.10 %. The entire budget derived from the Union budget.
- **Budget and financial management**: Members noted with satisfaction that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2016 resulted in a budget **implementation rate of 100 %,** representing an increase of 0.19 % compared to 2015.
- **Commitments and carry-overs**: carry-overs from 2016 to 2017 were at EUR 8.2 million and predominantly related to infrastructure and operations.

Members also made a series of observations regarding staff policy, as well as internal audits and controls.

They noted that a close cooperation with the Commission's DG SANTE is well on track towards its preparation related to the United Kingdom's decision to leave the Union. The Authority is well aware of the financial risks due to the United Kingdom's decision to leave the Union, such as a restricted budget availability, contractual issues for ongoing and new contracts and related payments, and unemployment allowances, and the operational risks such as access to United Kingdom citizens as members of staff or as experts, access to United Kingdom entities for services and information/data, change in the volumes of work and access rights to documents.

Members noted that the Authority adopted in 2016 the strategy called 'EFSA Strategy 2020: trusted science for safe food', based on five strategic objectives: prioritise public and stakeholder engagement in the process of scientific assessment, widen the Authority's evidence base and optimise access to its data, build the Union's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community, prepare for future risk assessment challenges and create an environment and culture that reflects the Authority's values.