2016 discharge: European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

2017/2166(DEC) - 18/04/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2016, and to approve the closure of the accounts for the financial year in question.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2016 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are **legal and regular**, Parliament adopted by 553 votes to 129 with 11 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations, which form an integral part of the decision on discharge and which add to the general recommendations set out in the 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 9 967 000, representing an increase of 8.14 % compared to 2015. The increase was mainly due to additional ad hoc grants related to the European Coastguard Pilot Projects. The entire budget of the Agency derives from the budget of the Union.
- **Budget and financial management**: budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2016 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99.6 %. Members noted that the additional funds that were received from the Commission during the year for pilot projects in relation to the European Coastguard functions have significantly influenced the budget, notably two ad hoc grants, EUR 750 000 in total, were received in the budget as assigned revenue to be spent in the budget years 2016 and 2017 (i.e. multi-annual).
- **Performance**: Members noted the adoption of the Agency's amended founding Regulation in 2016, which **extended the mission of the Agency** to cooperate with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) to support national authorities carrying out coastguard functions. They observed that those three Agencies have been working together with their three "partner" Commission Directorates-General ((Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE), Migration and Home Affairs (HOME) and Mobility and Transport (MOVE)) in the preparation and implementation of the **pilot project "Creation of a European coastguard function",** established by Parliament in preparation for the implementation of the "border package".

Members also made a series of observations regarding commitments, carry-overs, transfers, procurement, recruitment and staff policy, the prevention and management of conflicts of interests, internal audits and controls. They called on the Agency to **eliminate the gender imbalance** (the overall share of men and women in its workforce was 62% and 38% respectively) and stressed the need to establish an independent body with sufficient budgetary resources to help **whistleblowers** to disclose information on possible irregularities affecting the Union's financial interests, while protecting their confidentiality.

Parliament recalled the importance of expanding the Agency's mandate with a view to developing joint operational activities with other Union agencies in the maritime sector, in order to prevent disasters at sea and to coordinate the work of European coastguards. It also stressed the need to **increase the allocation of resources** in order to boost the Agency's operational capacity to cope with the uncertainties linked to Brexit and the resulting additional checks.

Members highlighted the Agency's contribution to the harmonisation and standardisation of CFP measures relating to monitoring, control and surveillance with the aim of ensuring equal treatment and improving compliance with the CFP rules, including the landing obligation.

They proposed **including a Member of the European Parliament on the Administrative Board of the Agency** in order to strengthen its institutional transparency, particularly during the approval of the budget by the Board. That Member should be chosen from within Parliament's Committee on Fisheries.