2019 discharge: European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)

2020/2169(DEC) - 28/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 611 votes to 81, with 6 abstentions, to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) for the financial year 2019 and to approve the closure of the accounts for that year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurance that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2019 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 599 votes to 85 with 7 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations which form an integral part of the discharge decision and which complement the general recommendations set out in the resolution on the performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

Financial statements of the Agency

The Agency's final budget for the financial year 2019 was EUR 17 247 000, a decrease of 0.93% compared to 2018.

Budgetary and financial management

Parliament welcomed the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2019 which resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99.88%, which represents a slight increase of 0.15% compared to the financial year 2018. The implementation rate for payment appropriations was 85.69%, a decrease of 1.93% compared to 2018.

Other observations

Members also made a series of observations concerning performance, staff policy, public procurement, conflicts of interest and internal controls.

In particular, they noted that:

- the Agency implemented 99% of its activities on time and delivered its entire annual strategic communication plan. In 2019, it coordinated 32 381 inspections of fishing vessels, which led to the detection of 1487 suspected infringements, these figures representing an increase of 20.2% and 107.8% respectively compared to 2018;

- without additional resources, the Agency coordinated monitoring, control and surveillance measures for some 45 additional fish species in European waters, including all species subject to the landing obligation, and extended these activities to recreational fisheries (Western Baltic cod);

- the Agency, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) adopted tripartite working arrangements defining cooperation between them and with national authorities performing coastguard functions in the provision of services, information, equipment and training, as well as in the coordination of multipurpose operations;

- in 2019, the Agency expanded its operational cooperation with Europol and Eurojust in the framework of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats, which covers illegal fishing activities;

- on 31 December 2019, 96.72% of the establishment plan was filled, with 59 temporary agents engaged out of the 61 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget; however, the complete lack of gender balance at senior management and Management Board level is a concern;

- the main procurement activities in 2019 focused on the launch of two open calls for tenders, one for IT and software development services and the other for communication equipment and services;

- the Agency is making efforts to ensure transparency and the prevention and management of conflicts of interest and whistleblowing. It is committed to increasing the transparency of its activities by reporting on the meetings that staff members and the Executive Director of the Agency have had with interest representatives and making them available on the Agency's website.

Lastly, the Agency initiated a process to obtain EMAS (EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) certification and adopted a series of measures to reduce its overall environmental impact.