2020 discharge: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

2021/2128(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for the financial year 2019 and to approve the closure of the accounts for that year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors had stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the Authority's annual accounts for the financial year 2020 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 544 votes to 63 with 34 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.

Authority's financial statements

The Authority's final budget for the financial year 2020 was EUR 103 023 255,80, representing an increase of 27.60 % compared to 2019, mainly because of an increase in operating expenditure linked to the Authority.

Budgetary and financial management

Thebudget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 100 %, representing a slight increase of 0.01 % compared to 2019. Payment appropriations execution rate was at 88.41 %, representing a decrease of 3.04 % compared to 2019.

Other observations

Parliament also made a number of observations concerning performance, staff policy, procurement, conflicts of interest and Covid-19.

In particular, it noted that:

- in 2020, the Authority finalised 697 questions through scientific outputs, technical reports and supporting publications;

- Parliament adopted two objections to extensions of approval periods of active ingredients used in pesticides which meet the cut-off criteria and should therefore not be authorised for use in the Union;

- on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan was 97.46 % implemented, with five officials and 340 temporary agents appointed out of 354 posts authorised under the Union budget (compared to 320 authorised posts in 2019);

- the Authority continued its activities and was able to deliver its work programme despite the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the Authority's budget underwent changes with a decrease of commitments and payments appropriations by EUR 5 million due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on missions, training, energy supplies, maintenance and the cancellation of physical meetings;

- the Authority was involved in the Network of Procurement Officers (NAPO), contributing significantly to the implementation of its 2020 work programme, launching and signing seven inter-agency procurement calls in 2020, resulting in an estimated saving of EUR 2.1 million to the EU budget;

- the Authority identified and managed 31 conflicts of interest at the level of annual declarations of interests pertaining to external experts.