2021 discharge: European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

2022/2104(DEC) - 10/05/2023 - 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 2021 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 2021 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 578 votes to 56 with 4 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 2021 was EUR 129 179 801.95, representing an increase of 25.39 % compared to 2020.

Budgetary and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2021 resulted in a budget implementation of current year commitment appropriation rate of 99.99 %, representing a slight increase of 0.01 % compared to 2020. Payment appropriations execution rate was at 88.85 %, representing an increase of 0.44 % compared to 2020.

Other observations

Parliament also made a number of observations concerning performance, staff policy, conflicts of interest and digitalisation.

In particular, it noted that:

- the work plan of the Authority for 2021 was executed under the Strategy 2020, which the management board decided to extend for an additional year due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic;

- in 2021, the Authority finalised 704 questions through scientific opinions, technical reports and supporting publications, 81 fewer than the planned 785;

- on 31 December 2021, the establishment plan was 98.16 % implemented, with 5 officials and 368 temporary agents appointed out of 380 posts authorised under the Union budget (compared to 354 authorised posts in 2020);

- the Authority continues not to publish the CVs of its management board members online;

- the Authority is urged to ensure a high level of compliance with conflict of interest and transparency rules throughout all of its activities;

- more systematic rules on transparency, incompatibilities, conflict of interests, illegal lobbying and revolving doors should be put in place. The Authority should also strengthen its internal control mechanisms, including the setting up of an internal anticorruption mechanism;

- the Authority launched its first pan-EU digital communication campaign in 2021, aimed to explain the science behind food safety in the Union in an accessible way and to help make informed decisions about food choices;

- the Authority is urge to close gaps in the risk assessment undertaken by the Authority's Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms;

- the Authority initiated work on a major series of animal welfare mandates concerning, in particular, animal transport, which will form the foundation of new legislation being drafted in this area.