2022 discharge : European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

2023/2151(DEC) - 11/04/2024 - 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 2022 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 2022 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 554 votes to 50 with 6 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 2022 was **EUR 149 841 816.93**, representing an increase of 15.99 % compared to 2021.

Budgetary and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2022 resulted in a budget implementation of current year commitment appropriation rate of 99.95 % representing a slight decrease of 0.04 % compared to 2021. The payment appropriations execution rate was at 89.77 % representing an increase of 0.92 % compared to 2021.

The lack of resources and posts for plant protection products regulatory authorities is noted which results in delays in approving low risk active substances and updating assessment methodologies according to scientific developments, which would lower the environmental impact of plant protection products in the long term. In this regard, Parliament called on the Commission to take appropriate steps to ensure that the Authority has sufficient resources and posts to support Member States to meet their deadline and to double the amount of assessments of active substances for plant protection products per year and to triple the speed of development of methodologies to keep risk assessments abreast of the latest scientific developments and in line with societal expectations.

Other observations

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

In particular, it noted that:

- the Authority implemented an integrated performance framework connecting resources and activities to outputs and expected results, complemented by a set of key performance indicators to monitor and drive performance. The performance against the targets set out in the Performance Framework reached an overall rate of 96 %;

- 2022 marked the first year of the implementation of the Authority’s 2027 Strategy addressing new evolving Union policies (in the longer term);

- on 31 December 2022, the establishment plan was 95.55 % implemented, with five officials and 382 temporary agents appointed out of 405 posts authorised under the Union budget (compared to 380 authorised posts in 2021);

- three cases of burnout were reported in 2022 by the medical service. The Authority is called on to continue promoting a healthy work-life balance among staff;

- the Authority identified and managed seven conflicts of interest at the level of annual declarations of interest pertaining to external experts. The Authority prevented them from participating in the scientific activity;

- the Authority increased its public visibility and online presence and invested in making its website multilingual, with artificial intelligence via the Commission’s eTranslation widget.