2003 discharge: European Maritime Safety Agency

2004/2057(DEC) - 12/04/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Inés AYALA SENDER (PES, ES) and Carl SCHLYTER (Greens/EFA, SE) by 563 votes for, 49 against and 26 abstentions giving discharge to the Director of the European Maritime Safety Authority for the 2003 financial year.

Parliament notes the observations of the ECA in relation to problems encountered as regards compliance with the Financial Regulation (for example, on the lack of segregation of duties between financial actors or on delays in systems' validation for supplying accounting information). It also notes the ECA's findings with regard to deficiencies in the application of the rules concerning the determination of remuneration and entitlements of recruited staff. It takes the view that such deficiencies largely related to the fact that the Agency was in its start-up phase and it invites the Agency to take further remedial action, where appropriate, so as to fully comply with the Court's observations. Parliament regrets the absence of an equality plan and expects the Agency to develop a plan shortly in order to become an equal opportunities employer.

In its accompanying comments, the committee made a number of general points addressed to the Commission, the Agencies and the Court of Auditors (ECA):

General points addressed to the Commission and the Agencies: Parliament notes the Commission's position with regard to delegating responsibility for the execution of tasks to bodies, including agencies, other than the Commission's core administration and it takes the view that this does not answer Parliament's call for in-depth consideration at inter-institutional level of the structure of existing agencies. It therefore invites the Commission to provide clarification on this point and on the future overall inter-institutional agreement related to the new arrangements to be set up within or in parallel with the Financial Perspective and invites the Commission to organise and perform in the medium term, e.g. on a standard three-year cycle, a cross-cutting analysis of the evaluations carried out on individual Agencies in order to:

- reach conclusions with regard to the coherence of Agency activity with EU policies in general and as regards the synergies existing or to be developed between the agencies and Commission departments and the avoidance of overlapping between them;

- make an assessment of the broader European added value of the Agencies' outputs in their respective area of activity and of the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency model in implementing or contributing to EU policies;

- determine and enhance the impact of the Agencies" actions in terms of the proximity, accessibility and visibility of the EU to its citizens.

In addition, Parliament calls on the Commission, in parallel with this exercise, to present by the end of 2005 at the latest, proposals for changes to be made in the existing Agencies" Constituent Acts with a view, inter alia, to optimising its relationship with the Agencies.

General points addressed to the Agencies: Parliament expects to receive from now on, from each of the Agencies, the report summarising information on the audits carried out by the Internal Auditor. It invites the Agencies to make further efforts to apply correctly the staff regulations and rules applicable to other civil servants with regard to their staff (recruitment procedures and relevant decisions taken, personal

files, calculation of remuneration and other entitlements, promotions policy, percentage of vacant posts, quotas for respecting gender equality, etc.). Moreover, the Parliament expects the Agencies, in response to the relevant observations of the ECA, to comply fully with the budgetary principles as set out in the Financial Regulation, in particular those of unity and budgetary accuracy.

Parliament invites the Agencies to develop a comprehensive strategy of communication addressing the need to make available, in the appropriate form, the results of their work to the general public beyond the presentation of such results to the Institutions, Member States" competent services, specialists, partners or specific beneficiaries.

General points addressed to the ECA and the Agencies: Parliament welcomes the ECA's initiative to add a table to its specific reports on the Agencies presenting summary information on the competences, governance, resources available and products/output of the particular agency.