2004 discharge: European Food Safety Authority

2005/2119(DEC) - 06/02/2006 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

Having examined the Authority’s revenue and expenditure account and the observations made by the Court of Auditors, the Council recommends the European Parliament to give a discharge to the Executive Director of the Authority in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2004.

In doing so, the Council confirms that EUR 3.2 million (76 %) of the EUR 4.2 million in appropriations carried over from the financial year 2003 to the financial year 2004, have been used. In addition, EUR 5.7 million in appropriations have been carried forward from the financial year 2004 to the financial year 2005 and EUR 8.5 million have been cancelled.

In parallel, the Council makes accompanying comments on the discharge which should be followed up. In particular, it:

- notes that the Court has been able to issue a statement of reasonable assurance on the reliability of the Authority's annual accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2004. However, it regrets that in respect of the reasonable assurance as to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taken as a whole, the Court has excluded some situations relating to the recruitment of staff and the award of contracts;

- notes that the Authority, as one of the recently established agencies, has had to manage a period of transition, and that 2004 is the second year of the applicability of the new Financial Regulation and its implementation rules. It calls on the Authority to pursue actively the implementation of the appropriate measures to meet the Court's reservations concerning staff recruitment and public procurement;

- shares the Court's concerns on the procedures used for the selection of candidates, which were incorrect or not duly justified. In this context, it urges the Authority to take the appropriate measures to remedy all the weaknesses detected by the Court, and to improve the transparency of its decisions in order to guarantee observance of the rules in force;

- regrets that the Authority has not fully respected certain aspects of the general Financial Regulation and its implementation rules especially on the issue of public procurement, such as the number of tenders required for the conclusion of contracts, or the conclusion of a contract by direct negotiation. Consequently, it urges on the Authority to pursue the reinforcement of the rules governing the award of contracts;

- calls on the Authority to follow the Court's remarks regarding the treatment of carry-overs when calculating the economic outturn, and the methods used to compile the physical inventory.