2004 discharge: European Food Safety Authority

2005/2119(DEC) - 27/04/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Umberto **GUIDONI** (GUE/NGL, IT) and granted discharge to the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority for the implementation of the Authority's budget for the financial year 2004. In its accompanying comments, Parliament was disappointed to note that the Court of Auditors had again discovered anomalies in the application of the rules concerning staff recruitment. It urged the Authority to apply with more transparency the rules regarding selection procedures.

Parliament was also concerned by the irregularities noted by the Court of Auditors in contract award procedures. It urged the Authority to improve by any means necessary the transparency of its decisions on the award of contracts in order to avoid any suspicion of bias, as stressed by the Court of Auditors.

2004 was the second operating year for the Authority. Due to the delayed decision by the Council on its permanent seat, the Authority continued operating on a transitional basis. It was not able to complete its establishment plan largely due to the announced move to Parma in 2005. Parliament considered it understandable, therefore, that with fewer staff the Authority was not possible fully to implement all actions in the operating budget.

Parliament also made a series of general remarks on the agencies. As well as spending money properly, agencies should also strive to spend money as efficiently and effectively as possible. The Court of Auditors was asked to consider the possibility of extending its specific annual reports on the agencies to include an examination of performance and achievement of objectives. The following aspects should be taken into account: duplication of work among the agencies must be avoided as much as possible and measures designed to improve transparency and communication with the public must be clarified, along with Community affirmative action measures at all levels of recruitment, training and the assignment of responsibilities.

Parliament noted that Community agencies did not always have a good image or good press and that many of them did not deserve such a negative image. EU citizens should be made aware of this, and Parliament called on the Commission to act accordingly, using whatever means it considers necessary.

Furthermore, the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 had affected the structures and operating arrangements of the Community agencies in many ways, and several of the agencies draw attention to these effects in their activity reports, focusing in particular on the increase in the number of administrators. The Commission needed to assess the problems encountered and recommend the regulatory changes required.

The Commission had made a commitment to harmonising the way in which activity reports concerning its directorates-general were presented. Parliament called for a similar approach to be taken in respect of the activity reports of the Communities" agencies, which differed significantly in terms of content. The Commission should point out to the agencies the information and activity indicators that they must provide.

Finally, Parliament asked the Commission to improve synergies between agencies by making cooperation more effective, avoiding duplication of work and addressing shortcomings, in particular as regards common areas such as training, the implementation of Community policies across the board, the use of the latest management systems and solving problems relating to sound management of the budget.