2005 discharge: European Maritime Safety Agency

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The committee adopted the report by Edit HERCZOG (PES, HU) granting discharge to the European Maritime Safety Agency for 2005. In its accompanying resolution, it made a number of general points concerning the majority of the EU agencies:

- the ever-growing number of Community Agencies and the activities of some of them do not seem to form part of an overall policy framework, and "the remits of some Agencies do not always reflect the real needs of the Union or the expectations of its citizens";

- the Commission should therefore define an overall policy framework and should present a cost-benefit study before the setting up of any new Agency, and the Court of Auditors should give its opinion on this study before Parliament takes its decision;

- every 5 years, the Commission should present a study on the added value of every existing Agency; where the evaluation is negative in the case of a particular Agency the latter’s mandate should be reformulated or the Agency should be closed;

- the Commission should improve administrative and technical support to the Agencies, given the growing complexity of the Community’s administrative rules and technical problems;

- the Agencies should improve their cooperation and benchmarking with actors in the field;

- the Commission should harmonise the format of the annual reporting by the Agencies to develop performance indicators which would allow a comparison of their efficiency.

In its specific remarks on the EMSA, the committee noted that the budget implementation for 2005 was affected by delays in staff recruitment and that this had had repercussions on the utilisation of appropriations for operating activities. It insisted that similar delays should be avoided in future in order for the Agency to be fully operational. It also noted the failure to introduce activity-based management, even though the Agency's financial regulation provides for it, so as to allow better monitoring of performance. Lastly, the report insisted that the system of control should be tightened up and drew attention to shortcomings in a number of procedures.