



2016/2151(DEC)

27.1.2017

OPINION

of the Committee on Fisheries

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015: European Commission (2016/2151(DEC))

Rapporteur: Alain Cadec

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Fisheries calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the Court of Auditors on the annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2015; notes, also, the Annual Report of the Court of Auditors concerning the financial year 2015; notes DG MARE's 2015 annual activity report;
2. Notes the opinions of the Court of Auditors on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts; notes that the positive trend of recent years in financial management has been maintained, with the accumulated error rate falling to 0.74% in 2015; notes the adverse opinion of the Court of Auditors on payment appropriations, in respect of which the overall error rate was 3.8%, although that figure was lower than in 2014 and there was no specific error rate concerning fisheries; calls for fisheries to be dealt with separately and not merged with agriculture, in order to guarantee greater transparency in the area of fisheries;
3. Is satisfied to see that the follow-up to the reservations DG MARE expressed in its 2014 annual report in respect of the management and control system for the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) programmes (2007-2013) has significantly reduced, to only five, the number of operational programmes and Member States concerned;
4. Is reassured that the internal control system implemented by DG MARE provides sufficient assurance to adequately manage the risk relating to the legality and regularity of the transactions;

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

5. Welcomes the fact that of the 12 specifically fisheries-related transactions audited by the Court, none shows a quantifiable error;
6. Regards it as regrettable, however, that the vast majority of Member States forwarded details of their operational programmes relating to the EMFF very late, which causes long delays in the mobilisation of funds;
7. Notes in consequence that no expenditure was declared to the Commission before 30 June 2015 and therefore no expenditure was monitored by that date; points out that Member States are responsible for implementing appropriations under shared management;
8. Takes the view that the Commission should establish a homogeneous and flexible system so that Member States deliver reliable data and improve the instruments and channels they use to forward information to the Commission;
9. Calls on the Commission to provide all necessary assistance to the Member States to facilitate the transition from direct management to shared management of the EMFF and to ensure that EMFF resources are used properly and fully; welcomes, therefore, the fact that this issue is taken fully into account in the DG MARE audit programme for 2017;

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

10. Welcomes the successful completion in 2015 of the transfer of EMFF-related responsibilities to the Agency; draws attention to the need to ensure that the Agency provides high-quality support to all its beneficiaries in connection with the 19 EMFF actions;

Follow-up to Special Report No 11/2015 of the Court of Auditors entitled ‘Are the Fisheries Partnership Agreements well managed by the Commission?’

11. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has accepted and taken account of all the Court’s recommendations;
12. Emphasises and shares, however, the concerns that the Commission’s auditors have expressed with regard to the need to ensure that these agreements bring value for money and are economically and environmentally sustainable;
13. Emphasises that the information provided by independent *ex post* evaluations was not always sufficiently complete, consistent or comparable, which reduced its usefulness in the decision-making process and negotiations;
14. Shares the Commission’s view on the importance of the proposal for a regulation on the sustainable management of external fishing fleets and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1006/2008 (COM(2015) 636) for enhancing the supervision and transparency of the activities of the EU fishing fleet outside Union waters;
15. Calls for additional fiscal effort in the field of international fisheries agreements, given the number of major fishing grounds which are still not the subject of protocols;

Discharge

16. Proposes, on the basis of the data available, to grant discharge to the Commission in respect of its expenditure in the areas of maritime affairs and fisheries for the financial year 2015.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	26.1.2017
Result of final vote	+: 23 -: 1 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Marco Affronte, Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Renata Briano, Alain Cadec, David Coburn, Richard Corbett, Diane Dodds, Linnéa Engström, Mike Hookem, Ian Hudghton, Carlos Iturgaiz, Werner Kuhn, António Marinho e Pinto, Gabriel Mato, Liadh Ní Riada, Ulrike Rodust, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Remo Sernagiotto, Ricardo Serrão Santos, Isabelle Thomas, Ruža Tomašić, Jarosław Wałęsa
Substitutes present for the final vote	Ian Duncan, Verónica Lope Fontagné
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	João Pimenta Lopes