DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Food Safety Authority for the financial year 2018 (2019/2078(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Pascal Canfin
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that the final budget of the European Food Safety Authority (“the Authority”) for the financial year 2018 was EUR 79 183 814, representing a slight decrease of 0.05 % compared to 2017; notes that the entire budget of the Authority derives from the Union budget;

2. Notes with satisfaction that the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2018 resulted in an implementation rate of 100.00 % for commitment appropriations, representing an increase of 0.02 percentage point compared to 2017; notes that in 2018 the payment appropriations execution rate reached 91.31 %, representing a decrease of 1.00 percentage point compared to 2017;

3. Notes that 311 out of the 319 authorised posts were filled in as of 31 December 2018; highlights in addition that 447 of the 459 available posts (including officials, temporary agents, contract agents and seconded national experts) were occupied on 31 December 2018 (97.4 %, compared to 96.5 % in 2017);

4. Welcomes the contribution of the Authority to the safety of the Union food and feed chain, and its considerable efforts in providing Union risk managers with comprehensive, independent and up-to-date scientific advice on questions linked to the food chain, communicating clearly to the public on its outputs and the information on which they are based, and cooperating with interested parties and institutional partners to promote coherence and trust in the Union food safety system;

5. Highlights that in 2018, the Authority finalised 788 questions through scientific opinions, technical reports and supporting publications;

6. Believes that the Authority should continue paying special attention to public opinion, and commit itself to openness and transparency;

7. Welcomes that, following adoption of its new policy on independence in 2017, the Authority has in 2018 for the first time included a new annex to its consolidated annual report, dedicated to implementation of the Authority’s policy on independence; notes with satisfaction that the two-year cooling off periods requested by the European Parliament was enforced for the first time during the 2018 scientific panel selection process;

8. Notes that following the results of the third external evaluation of the Authority, the Management Board adopted a series of recommendations, focusing on enhancing the Authority’s capacity for fit-for-purpose scientific advice, bolstering communication activities to strengthen the Authority’s reputation and securing the long-term efficiency and sustainability of the Authority’s operations;

9. Notes with satisfaction that the Authority cooperates with other agencies working on complementary tasks, i.e. the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
(ECDC), the European Chemicals Agency and the European Medicines Agency, e.g. in the areas of data collection and analysis and databases (e.g. zoonoses, antimicrobial resistance, molecular typing), in scientific assessments (e.g. rapid outbreak assessments with the ECDC), or risk assessment;

10. Welcomes that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Authority’s annual accounts for 2018 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular;

11. Recommends, based on the facts available, that discharge be granted to the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority in respect of the implementation of the Authority’s budget for the financial year 2018.