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DRAFT OPINION

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

on 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 2016
(2017/2159(DEC))

Rapporteur: Adina-Ioana Vălean

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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 budget of the European Food Safety Authority ('the Authority') amounted to EUR 79,4 million, which represents a slight reduction compared to 2015 (-0,2_ %); notes that the level of execution of budgetary commitments in the Authority amounts to 100 % (in comparison to 99,8 % in 2015) and execution of payment appropriations reached 89,7 % (in comparison to 90,1 % in 2015);
2. Welcomes the contribution of the Authority to the safety of the Union food and feed chain, by 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;
3. Welcomes the improvement of the statutory staff occupancy rate compared to 2015 (+0,6 %), reaching 95,3 %, which allowed a partial compensation of the human resources challenge;
4. Notes that in 2016, 74 % of staff was dedicated to operational activities, and that this figure, although slightly below the target for that year (75 %), represented an improvement compared to 2015;
5. Highlights that the Authority produced 481 scientific outputs, technical reports and other publications, and closed 382 scientific questions; notes that the proportion of outputs and questions adopted within deadline was below the target for 2016, and that the timeliness of scientific advice still needs to be improved;
6. Notes that the Authority adopted in 2016 the strategy called 'EFSA Strategy 2020: trusted science for safe food', based on five strategic objectives: prioritise public and stakeholder engagement in the process of scientific assessment, widen the Authority's evidence base and optimise access to its data, build the Union's scientific assessment capacity and knowledge community, prepare for future risk assessment challenges and create an environment and culture that reflects the Authority's values;
7. Notes that the adoption of the Authority's revised independence policy, initially scheduled for 2016, was rescheduled to mid-2017;
8. Believes that the Authority should continue paying special attention to public opinion, and commit itself to openness and transparency; welcomes, in this respect, that in 2016, the Authority's scientific data warehouse provided access to more of the evidence that underpins its scientific assessments, as several data collections were published, on pesticides, contaminants, chemical hazards, food composition, molecular typing and botanicals; the Authority's journal migrated to an international scientific publisher, in order to increase publishing quality and outreach; the Authority's authorship guidelines for scientific outputs were reviewed to increase transparency and openness; the

Authority launched 'Knowledge Junction', an open repository for the exchange of evidence and supporting materials used in food and feed safety risk assessments; encourages the Authority to further progress on this path;

9. Stresses that in 2016 the Authority reviewed its stakeholder consultative platform, which was disbanded to make place for a new stakeholder engagement approach, and by the end of 2016 over 80 organisations had expressed an interest in joining this new framework;
10. Notes that the Authority shared with Members of the European Parliament raw data it had used in its evaluation of the pesticide glyphosate;
11. Recommends, on the basis of the facts available, that discharge be granted to the Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority with respect to the implementation of the Authority's budget for the financial year 2016.