



Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2019/2055(DEC)

22.01.2020

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 general budget of the
European Union for the financial year 2018, Section III – Commission and
executive agencies
(2019/2055(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Pascal Canfin

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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. Is satisfied with the overall implementation by the Commission of the budgetary headings for environment, climate action, public health and food safety in 2018;
2. Is satisfied with the work carried out by the five decentralised agencies which are under its remit and which carry out technical, scientific or managerial tasks that help the Union's institutions to elaborate and implement policies in the area of environment, climate, public health and food safety, as well as with the way those agencies' budgets are implemented; stresses that, given the scale of upcoming challenges, appropriate funding must be guaranteed for the agencies and Commission DGs working in the areas of environment, climate, public health and food safety, and that further cuts or a failure to increase the budgets will have knock-on effects for the quality of life of European citizens;
3. Notes that the Court of Auditors ('the Court'), in its Annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2018, continued to find a material level of error in the spending areas of rural development, European Agriculture Guarantee Fund (EAGF) market measures, fisheries, environment and climate action, recalled that expenditure in these areas is subject to complex eligibility conditions and drew attention to the type of errors that may occur, such as ineligible beneficiaries, activities or declared costs; notes that 6 out of the 251 transactions in the sample used to estimate the level of errors for 'Natural resources' (2,4 %) relate to the environment, climate action and fisheries; notes that the Court did not estimate the overall level of error concerning heading 3, which includes spending on health, and food and feed safety;

Environment and Climate Action

4. Highlights that in 2018, DG ENV had 456 members of staff and its budget reached EUR 469,02 million;
5. Points out that the implementation rates of commitment and payment appropriations reached 99,8 % and 97,7 %, respectively, in 2018;
6. Stresses that the share of payments exceeding legal deadlines reached 8,20 % of payments executed by DG ENV in 2018 (5,85 % in 2017, 3,92% in 2016); regrets in particular that payment delays under the LIFE Programme reached higher levels in 2018 (10, 3% compared to 5, 8% in 2017 and 3,9 % in 2016);
7. Notes that, in 2018, DG ENV presented in its Annual Activity Report (AAR) an average residual error rate of 0,09 %, not exceeding the materiality threshold of 2 %;
8. Notes that DG ENV stressed in its AAR that the terms of the externalisation decision for cooperation with the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

(EASME) regarding staff imply that the staffing situation is very tight in DG ENV as regards the activities related to the LIFE Programme, which may require further review of the working methods and arrangements within the DG;

9. Highlights that in 2018, DG CLIMA managed EUR 131,9 million under the title “Climate action” of the Union budget, and had 200 members of staff; points out that the implementation rates of commitment and payment appropriations reached 99,77 % and 92,04 %, respectively, under that title;
10. Welcomes the fact that in 2018 only 0,93 % of all DG CLIMA’s payments were paid late as compared to the legal deadlines (3,9 % in 2017);
11. Stresses that DG CLIMA and DG BUDG monitor the 20 % climate mainstreaming target in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and that DG CLIMA supports other DGs in integrating climate considerations in their activities; welcomes the fact that in 2018, 20,1 % of the Union budget was spent on climate-related activities, but regrets that at the beginning of 2019 it was still estimated that the Union budget trend would deliver only 19,7 % for the current MFF period;
12. Calls on the Commission to develop a monitoring system for the proper and timely implementation of the climate mainstreaming target for MFF 2021-2027 and recalls that due to the late start of the current MFF the climate mainstreaming target could not be achieved in the first few years; stresses that the Union must ensure that those targets are met, in order to help implement the Paris agreement;
13. Asks the Commission to provide the European Parliament every year with a report detailing the contribution of each budget item to the climate mainstreaming target, in order to facilitate its monitoring;
14. Is strongly concerned by the fact that the reservation on reputational, legal, financial and institutional grounds related to significant security risks identified in the maintenance and the operation of the Union Registry system of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), as reported in AARs since 2010 and as confirmed by the 2018 risk assessment exercise, is repeated in DG CLIMA’s AAR for 2018; deplores the abnormal duration of this reservation; calls on the Commission to quickly resolve the situation;

Public Health, food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health

15. Notes that in 2018 DG SANTE implemented a budget of EUR 484,9 million in its policy areas;
16. Highlights the fact that in the field of public health, public procurement is the most important financial management instrument and that, in 2018, commitment and payment credits were fully consumed; stresses that in the field of food and feed safety, the budget is implemented to a large extent through direct grants to Member States, and that the implementation rates of commitments and payments reached 99,0 % and 98,6 %, respectively;
17. Notes that in 2018 DG SANTE presented in its AAR an average residual error rate of 1,9 %, not exceeding the materiality threshold of 2 %;

18. Notes with concern that the share of payments related to grant management made on time by DG SANTE decreased from 97 % to 83 % between 2016 and 2018;
19. Stresses that in 2018, 778 members of staff worked in DG SANTE (780 in 2017);
20. Points to the challenges identified by DG SANTE in its AAR in the implementation of the Union's Third Health Programme 2014-2020 (the 'Health Programme'); notes that those challenges relate to the current funding mechanism of the Health Programme, which only allows for project-oriented funding and can have a negative impact on the longer-term sustainability of the actions undertaken, and to the complexity of some mechanisms in the Health Programme, such as joint actions implemented with Member States, which implies that timelines from the initial planning of the activity to its actual launch can be lengthy; notes the conclusions of the European Court of Auditors in Special report No 21/2019 on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), according to which the activities of the Commission and agencies have led to some progress, for example in veterinary and food-related issues; regrets, however, that according to the same report there is little evidence to date that the health burden of AMR has been reduced in the Union;
21. Stresses the challenges identified by DG SANTE in its AAR in the implementation of the Common Financial Framework (CFF) 2014-2020 in the food chain area, such as the lack of access to a crisis reserve facility and the absence of an established method of valuation for animals, plants and products which need to be destroyed in the course of disease containment measures;
22. Is of the opinion, on the basis of the data available and the implementation report, that discharge can be granted to the Commission in respect of expenditure in the areas of environmental and climate policy, public health and food safety for the financial year 2018.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

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| Date adopted | 21.1.2020 |
| Result of final vote | +: 58 -: 6 0: 9 |
| Members present for the final vote | Margrete Auken, Simona Baldassarre, Marek Paweł Balt, Aurelia Beigneux, Monika Beová, Malin Björk, Delara Burkhardt, Pascal Canfin, Sara Cerdas, Mohammed Chahim, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Esther de Lange, Marco Dreosto, Bas Eickhout, Eleonora Evi, Agnès Evren, Fredrick Federley, Pietro Fiocchi, Andreas Glück, Catherine Griset, Jytte Guteland, Teuvo Hakkarainen, Anja Hazekamp, Martin Hojsík, Pär Holmgren, Jan Huitema, Yannick Jadot, Petros Kokkalis, Athanasios Konstantinou, Ewa Kopacz, Joanna Kopcińska, Peter Liese, Sylvia Limmer, César Luena, Anthea McIntyre, Tilly Metz, Silvia Modig, Alessandra Moretti, Dan- tefan Motreanu, Ljudmila Novak, Rory Palmer, Jutta Paulus, Rovana Plumb, Stanislav Polák, Jessica Polfjärd, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Rob Rooker, Silvia Sardone, Christine Schneider, Günther Sidl, Ivan Vilibor Sin i , Nicolae tef nuță, Nils Torvalds, Edina Tóth, Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, Caroline Voaden, Alexandr Vondra, Mick Wallace, Michal Wiezik, Anna Zalewska |
| Substitutes present for the final vote | Maria Arena, Hildegard Bentele, Catherine Chabaud, Martin Häusling, Lídia Pereira, Alexandra Louise Rosenfield Phillips, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Christel Schaldemose, Tiemo Wölken |
| Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote | Krzysztof Hetman, Aušra Maldeikienė, Christel Schaldemose |

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

| 58 | + |
|-----------|---|
| GUE/NGL | Malin Björk, Anja Hazekamp, Petros Kokkalis, Silvia Modig, Mick Wallace |
| NI | Eleonora Evi |
| PPE | Hildegard Bentele, Agnès Evren, Krzysztof Hetman, Ewa Kopacz, Esther de Lange, Peter Liese, Aušra Maldeikienė, Dan- tefan Motreanu, Ljudmila Novak, Lídia Pereira, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Stanislav Polák, Jessica Polfjård, Christine Schneider, Edina Tóth, Michal Wiezik, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez |
| RENEW | Pascal Canfin, Catherine Chabaud, Fredrick Federley, Andreas Glück, Martin Hojsík, Jan Huitema, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Nicolae tef nuță, Nils Torvalds, Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, Caroline Voaden |
| S&D | Maria Arena, Marek Paweł Balt, Monika Beová, Delara Burkhardt, Sara Cerdas, Mohammed Chahim, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Jytte Guteland, César Luena, Alessandra Moretti, Rory Palmer, Rovana Plumb, Christel Schaldemose, Günther Sidl, Tiemo Wölken |
| VERTS/ALE | Margrete Auken, Bas Eickhout, Martin Häusling, Pär Holmgren, Yannick Jadot, Tilly Metz, Jutta Paulus, Alexandra Louise Rosenfield Phillips |

| 6 | - |
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| ECR | Rob Rooker |
| ID | Simona Baldassarre, Aurelia Beigneux, Marco Dreosto, Catherine Griset, Silvia Sardone |

| 9 | 0 |
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| ECR | Pietro Ficocchi, Joanna Kopcińska, Anthea McIntyre, Alexandr Vondra, Anna Zalewska |
| ID | Teuvo Hakkarainen, Sylvia Limmer |
| NI | Athanasios Konstantinou, Ivan Vilibor Sinđić |

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention