

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2008/2186(DEC)

12.2.2009

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 European Union general
budget for the financial year 2007
(SEC(2008)2359 - C6-0415/2008 - 2008/2186(DEC))

Section III - Commission

Rapporteur: Péter Olajos

PA_NonLeg

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 in its motion for a resolution:

1. Considers the overall implementation rates of the budgetary headings for environment, public health and food safety satisfactory;
2. Underlines the overall rate of 94,6 % of the budget execution in the field of environment, public health and food safety, which represents a satisfactory result considering that 2007 was the first year of the new financial framework 2007-2013 and was characterised by the adoption and the entry into force of new programmes in the environment policy area;
3. Stresses, in particular, that the implementation of the LIFE + Programme achieved an implementation rate of over 98,87 % in commitment appropriations; points out that in this context 82 % of commitment appropriations have been dedicated to projects in Member States in full compliance with the LIFE+ Regulation; notes the reduced payment appropriations for projects in 2007 due to the late adoption of the LIFE+ Regulation; is however satisfied with the implementation as regards general policy support, communication, awareness raising and non-governmental organisation (NGO) funding;
4. Welcomes the implementation rate of the Community Tobacco Fund which amounts to 100 %; is therefore convinced that this instrument, which grants financial support to projects improving public awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco consumption, in particular by means of information and education, is put in place effectively;
5. Calls on the Commission to develop further assistance to applicants in the context of multiannual programmes, especially by providing specific training for applicants and user-friendly guidelines;
6. Welcomes the efforts to better focus calls for tenders and to provide more assistance to applicants, especially in public health programmes, in order to avoid the submission of project applications which are clearly not eligible for funding or of poor quality, but notes that further work is needed in order to obtain a satisfactory situation;
7. Points out that part of the Health Action Programme is implemented by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC); reminds the Commission in this context to use programme funds of an operational nature very cost-effectively as they are also used for administrative tasks;
8. Points out that compliance with administrative and financial provisions of the Financial Regulation should not lead to unnecessary delays in awarding grants or selecting projects to be financed and calls on the Commission to continue its efforts to improve administrative procedures which have an impact on the implementation of commitment and payment appropriations;
9. On the basis of the data available, is of the opinion that the Commission can be granted

discharge in respect of expenditure in the areas of environmental policy, public health and food safety in 2007.

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

This opinion examines the execution of the budget in the areas of environment, public health and food safety policy for the financial year 2007.

Environment

2007 was the first year of the new financial framework (2007-2013) and was characterised by the adoption and the coming into force of new programmes in the Environment Policy Area such as: LIFE +, adopted on 9 June 2007 and the Civil Protection Financial Instrument, adopted on 5 March 2007. The overall level of the budget execution was felt to be satisfactory at 94,6 %.

The implementation of the LIFE + Programme can be considered very satisfactory in terms of commitment appropriations, despite the late adoption of the legal base (23 May 2007), and achieved an implementation rate of 98,87 % of the LIFE + operational budget.

The new legal base for Civil Protection adopted on 5 March 2007, expands the scope of that instrument that now covers the protection, primarily of people, but also of the environment and property, including cultural heritage, in the event of natural and man-made disasters, acts of terrorism and technological, radiological or environmental accidents.

The level of funding under the previous legal base was of 7,01 M€ in 2006. The new financial instrument adopted in 2007 had an available amount of appropriations of EUR 20,8 M€ (budget lines 07 04 01 and 19 06 05).

For Disaster response an amount of EUR 7,225 M€ had been set aside in the financing decision for new actions but the final rate of implementation is in fact very low, less than 1%, both for the late adoption of the legal base and for the fact that the actual use of the funds is directly related with the occurrence of disasters, condition very difficult to predict. However the implementation of the Civil protection instrument can be considered overall satisfactory.

The new programmes represent a radical change in the delivery instruments of expenditure in the Environment area, mainly for the mainstreaming of a number of previous instruments and initiatives into the new LIFE + programme, the upscaling of Civil Protection (+ Marine Pollution) through the “Civil Protection Financial Instrument”, (that covers also the support to civil protection interventions in Third Countries) as well for the transfer of most external activities to the instruments managed by the RELEX family group, leaving under the direct management of DG ENV only a small ad hoc envelope for the payment of subscriptions to Multilateral Environment Agreements.

The overall implementation rate of 80,04 % of payment appropriations in the area of environment was achieved, which is slightly lower than the level achieved in 2006. But this percentage raise to 84,57 % if one considers the level of payments of non-dissociated appropriations.

Public Health and Food safety

The level of implementation of payment credits under the Public Health programme reached in 2007 the 89 %, leaving an under execution of 6.7 M€, partly related to an overestimation of

the amounts of payments when the 2007 budget was drafted, at the beginning of 2006 and partly to factors directly related to the beneficiaries.

The implementation rates for payments for the Public health budget lines are lower than the implementation rates for commitments but this is to a large extent due to the fact that beneficiaries have not always been able to use the entire budget that had been granted to them. In 2007, until 15 October, the reductions made of the amounts in grants, upon request of the beneficiaries, amounted to 1.3 M€.

The implementation rates for the commitment appropriations for the tobacco funds are very satisfactory (almost 100%). The credits under this line are "non dissociated credits", which in terms of presentation could give the misleading perception of an under execution. But that line presents No Under execution.

As for Food safety, Animal health and welfare and Plant health, the level of execution of Animal disease eradication budget line is fairly high and it represents the 97.4 % of the amount.

The level of execution of commitment credits for food safety measures is characterised by a sporadic low implementation rate, due in the case of the Emergency funds, to the fact that this is a specified line with a high level of unpredictability. A limited number of diseases' outbreaks in the EU determines, in that case, an auspicious small portion of the credits used. In other cases, as in the Feed and food control ones, the low implementation rate is due to an over estimation of payments or, as in the Food and feed safety cases, to an over estimation of training sessions, needs and costs.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	10.2.2009
Result of final vote	+: 44 -: 0 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Adamos Adamou, Georgs Andrejevs, Pilar Ayuso, Irena Belohorská, Maria Berger, Johannes Blokland, John Bowis, Martin Callanan, Magor Imre Csibi, Chris Davies, Avril Doyle, Mojca Drčar Murko, Elisabetta Gardini, Matthias Groote, Françoise Grossetête, Satu Hassi, Gyula Hegyi, Marie Anne Isler Béguin, Christa Kläß, Eija-Riitta Korhola, Holger Kraemer, Urszula Krupa, Peter Liese, Linda McAvan, Péter Olajos, Miroslav Ouzký, Vladko Todorov Panayotov, Vittorio Prodi, Frédérique Ries, Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, Guido Sacconi, Amalia Sartori, Carl Schlyter, Horst Schnellhardt, Richard Seeber, María Sornosa Martínez, Antonios Trakatellis, Thomas Ulmer, Åsa Westlund
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Iles Braghetto, Jutta Haug, Hartmut Nassauer, Bart Staes, Andres Tarand
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Emanuel Jardim Fernandes