



2018/2166(DEC)

23.01.2018

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 2017, Section III – Commission and executive agencies
(2018/2166(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Adina-Ioana Vălean

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on 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 2017;
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 institutions 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;
3. Notes that this year, the Court of Auditors ('the Court'), in its Annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2017 ('the Court's report'), decided not to provide an assessment, or estimated level of error, for the area of 'rural development, market measures, the environment, climate action and fisheries', but provided insight on the type of errors that may occur in this area (mainly ineligible beneficiaries, activities, projects or expenditure); notes that only 6 out of the 230 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 no error rate was calculated for heading 3, which includes spending on health, and food and feed safety;

Environment and Climate Action

4. Notes that in 2017 the LIFE Programme celebrated its 25th anniversary; highlights that the programme provided EUR 222 million to co-finance 139 new projects;
5. Stresses that further efforts need to be made to lower payments delays under the LIFE Programme, as 5,8 % of payments exceeded legal deadlines in 2017 (3,9 % in 2016, 12 % in 2015);
6. Points out that the mid-term evaluation of the LIFE Programme, covering the years 2014-2015, was released in 2017; notes that, as most projects had yet to start and few projects had ended, that evaluation focused mainly on the processes put in place to reach the LIFE Programme's objectives, and concluded that the LIFE Programme provides Union added value, while pointing to possible improvements; stresses that grant management procedures, particularly application and reporting procedures, should not only be simplified but also significantly accelerated;
7. Notes 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;

8. Highlights that those of DG ENV's and DG CLIMA's internal control systems that were audited are only partially effective, as some very important recommendations still need to be addressed in line with the agreed action plans;
9. Notes that DG CLIMA was reorganised as of 1 October 2017 to abolish the Shared Resources Directorate (SRD) ENV/CLIMA, including its budget and finance unit, and that the DG now fully integrates the financial activities, administrative support, internal communication and information technology activities of the SRD;
10. Stresses that DG CLIMA and DG BUDG monitor the 20 % climate mainstreaming target in the Multiannual Financial Framework, and that DG CLIMA supports other DGs in integrating climate in their activities; regrets that in 2017, only 19,3 % of the Union budget was spent on climate-related activities, and that it is estimated that the average for the period 2014-2020 will only be 18,8 %;
11. Is concerned with the fact that the reservation on reputational grounds concerning the remaining significant security weakness identified in the Union registry of the Emissions trading system (EU ETS) is repeated in DG CLIMA's Annual Activity Report for 2017;

Public Health

12. Welcomes the fact that both the commitments and the payments appropriations of the third Health Programme (the 'Health Programme') were fully implemented; notes that a large majority of the actions of the Health Programme is being implemented through the Consumer, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA);
13. Stresses that in 2017, DG SANTE completed the mid-term evaluation of the Health Programme covering the years 2014-2016, which concluded that the Health Programme produced tangible results and was highly relevant to Member States' needs, and which recommended strengthening efforts to achieve Union added value, increase synergies, and ensure the upscale of results through cooperation with other Union financial instruments;
14. Welcomes the launch of 24 European reference networks serving patients with rare and complex diseases, involving 900 highly specialised health care units from over 300 hospitals in 26 countries, i.e. 25 Member States and Norway;

Food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health

15. Welcomes the fact that both the commitments and the payments appropriations available for the food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health programmes were fully implemented;
16. Regrets that DG SANTE's average residual error rate reached 2,5 % for the overall activity in the area of food and feed safety in 2017, exceeding the materiality threshold of 2 %; notes that this is due to overstatements in costs claims of Member States, in the context of structural changes made to management and controls of the claims in one Member State; asks DG SANTE to take all the necessary measures to ensure that this does not happen again in the future by increasing for instance the use of simplification

measures offered by the Financial Regulation;

17. Highlights that in 2017 DG SANTE released the mid-term evaluation of the Common Financial Framework for the food chain 2014-2020, which concluded that the current framework functions well and contributed to achieving EU added value; notes that the Commission, as recommended by the Court, is working to develop a cost-effectiveness analysis methodology for the food chain area, in order to make future economic evaluations of the Union-funded interventions more robust;
18. 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 2017.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	22.1.2019
Result of final vote	+: 50 -: 7 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Catherine Bearder, Ivo Belet, Simona Bonafè, Biljana Borzan, Paul Brannen, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Nessa Childers, Birgit Collin-Langen, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Angélique Delahaye, Mark Demesmaecker, Stefan Eck, Bas Eickhout, José Inácio Faria, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Arne Gericke, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Sylvie Goddyn, Françoise Grossetête, Jytte Guteland, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jean-François Jalkh, Benedek Jávor, Kateřina Konečná, Urszula Krupa, Valentinas Mazuronis, Susanne Melior, Miroslav Mikolášik, Rory Palmer, Gilles Pargneaux, Bolesław G. Piecha, Pavel Poc, John Procter, Frédérique Ries, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Ivica Tolić, Nils Torvalds, Adina-Ioana Vălean, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes present for the final vote	Nikos Androulakis, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Christophe Hansen, Martin Häusling, Anja Hazekamp, Jan Huitema, Tilly Metz, Bart Staes, Tiemo Wölken
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Olle Ludvigsson

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

50	+
ALDE	Catherine Bearder, Jan Huitema, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Valentinas Mazuronis, Frédérique Ries, Nils Torvalds
ENF	Jean-François Jalkh
GUE/NGL	Stefan Eck, Anja Hazekamp, Kateřina Konečná
PPE	Pilar Ayuso, Ivo Belet, Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Birgit Collin Langen, Angélique Delahaye, José Inácio Faria, Karl Heinz Florenz, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Jens Gieseke, Julie Girling, Françoise Grossetête, Christophe Hansen, Miroslav Mikolášik, Annie Schreijer Pierik, Ivica Tolić, Adina Ioana Vălean
S&D	Nikos Androulakis, Simona Bonafè, Biljana Borzan, Paul Brannen, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Nessa Childers, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Jytte Guteland, Olle Ludvigsson, Susanne Melior, Rory Palmer, Gilles Pargneaux, Pavel Poc, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Tiemo Wölken, Damiano Zoffoli
VERTS/ALE	Margrete Auken, Bas Eickhout, Martin Häusling, Benedek Jávor, Tilly Metz, Bart Staes

7	-
ECR	Mark Demesmaeker, Arne Gericke, Urszula Krupa, Bolesław G. Piecha, John Procter, Jadwiga Wiśniewska
EFDD	Sylvie Goddyn

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention