2007 discharge: European Aviation Safety Agency EASA

2008/2266(DEC) - 16/03/2009

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report drawn up by Christofer FJELLNER (EPP-ED, SE) on discharge to be granted to the European Aviation Safety Agency, calling on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the Agency discharge in respect of the implementation of its budget for the financial year 2007.

Noting that the Agency’s annual accounts for the financial year 2007 are reliable, and the underlying transactions are legal and regular, MEPs approve the closure of the Agency’s accounts.

However, they make a number of recommendations as part of the decision on discharge. In addition to the general recommendations appearing in the draft resolution on financial management and control of EU agencies (see 2008/2207(INI)), MEPs make the following observations:

- the European Court of Auditors (ECA) identified anomalies in the Agency’s 2007 establishment plan;
- the Agency states that the reduction of staff was due to the fact that during the first two years of implementation of its fees and charges regulation, revenue was insufficient to cover forecasted costs;
- the imbalance between costs and revenue highlighted in the previous discharge resolution triggered a need to reduce the planned number of staff by 25%, from 467 to a maximum of 342.

In this context, MEPs expect the Agency to explain how far a balance between costs and revenue in relation to certification activities could be achieved through implementation of the new fees and charges regulation, which entered into force on 1 June 2007.

Moreover, MEPs fully support the ECA's recommendation that the Agency carefully check the consistency of its expenditure forecasts.

MEPs note that the ECA and the Agency disagree over the calculation of an amount of EUR 14.9 million in assigned revenue received by the Agency in 2007 to cover future certification costs. Moreover, MEPs note the ECA's criticism of several audited procurement procedures (lack of transparency, in particular). MEPs therefore call on the Agency to stick to the promise given in its replies to comply strictly with the procurement rules and to pay particular attention to the provision of clear information to potential bidders. Lastly, they call on the Commission to ensure that the Agency maintains strict financial discipline in the future and always works within the agreed budgets.