2009 discharge: European Railway Agency ERA

2010/2180(DEC) - 10/05/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 517 votes to 78, with 41 abstentions a decision to grant discharge to the Executive Director of the European Railway Agency for implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2009.

Noting that the Agency’s annual accounts for the financial year 2009 are reliable, and the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament approves the closure of the Agency’s accounts. However, it makes a number of recommendations that need to be taken into account when the discharge is granted (in addition to the general recommendations that appear in the resolution on financial management and control of EU agencies - see DEC/2010/2271):

- **performance:** Parliament considers, once again, that the fact that the Agency carries out its activities at two locations (Valenciennes and Lille) exposes it to additional costs. It notes that this observation has been made since 2006 and that no measures have been taken by the Council to amend the Decision of 13 December 2003 requiring the Agency to have a dual headquarters;
- **carryover of appropriations:** Parliament regrets that the Agency has yet again failed to address the problem of appropriations being carried forward from one year to the next. The carryover of 41% of Title II credits (property, data processing and other administrative costs) and 61% of Title III (operational expenditure) represent a serious breach of the budgetary principle of annuality and demonstrate delays in the implementation of the Agency’s activities. Parliament calls on the Agency to deal with this issue, as well as for an improvement in the situation as regards cancellations and delays in procurement procedures (given that this situation has also persisted since 2006);
- **shortcomings in the management of the fixed assets:** Parliament regrets the shortcomings in the management of the fixed assets' inventory identified by the Court of Auditors but notes the Agency's assurance that this will be remedied. It considers that uncertainty about the location of fixed assets is another illustration of the problems and additional costs arising from using two sites;
- **human resources:** Parliament notes that the Agency's Annual Activity Report (AAR) provides only limited information on the planning, allocation and use of human resources and considers that this deficiency could affect the stakeholders' view on the Agency's use of its staff. It also notes that the Agency does not have a consolidated manual on different rules, instructions and guidelines governing staff recruitment. This deficiency could lead to differences in the processing and managing of individual recruitments, thus compromising the principle of equal treatment of candidates.