2010 discharge: European Railway Agency (ERA)

2011/2229(DEC) - 10/05/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 525 votes to 81 with 22 abstentions, a decision concerning the discharge to be granted to the Executive Director of the European Railway Agency in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for 2010. The decision to grant the discharge also closes the accounts for the Agency for that year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the annual accounts for the financial year 2010 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 546 votes to 67, with 9 abstentions, a resolution containing 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 performance, financial management and control of EU agencies:

- **Budget and Financial Management**: Parliament notes the low rate of utilisation for payment appropriations, particularly for operational expenditure and appreciates the fact that the Agency provides information on the use of the appropriations carried forward from 2009 to 2010. It takes the view that it is extremely important to optimise the use of budgetary resources at a time of financial crisis and urges the Commission and the Agency to analyse and establish the real budgetary requirements in order for the Agency to be able to carry out all the tasks assigned to it.
- **Transfers**: Parliament regrets that the errors in budgetary forecasts resulted in the cancellation or delay of certain investments. It urges the Agency to inform immediately the discharge authority of the measures implemented in order to allow for better expenditure forecasts.
- **Carryover of appropriations**: once more, Parliament notes the significant carryover of credits. It acknowledges from the Court of Auditors that the appropriations carried forward to 2011 amounted to EUR 5 500 000, of which EUR 4 300 000 (78 %) are related to goods and services that were to be provided in 2011. It is of the opinion that the Agency did not adequately address the problem of appropriations being carried forward from one year to the next. It calls on the Agency to inform the discharge authority about actions taken to improve this situation. It reminds the Agency that this request was already made during the previous discharge procedure;
- **Performance**: Parliament urges the Agency to create a Multi-Annual Plan translating long-term objectives into multi-annual tasks and associated Key Performance Indicators. This would better provide stakeholders with information on the objectives/activities, strategic priorities and resource allocation.
- **Two locations**: Parliament considers that using two locations (Lille and Valenciennes) for carrying out its activities exposes the Agency to additional costs. It notes, also, that this observation has been made since 2006 and that no action has been taken by the Council to change the situation.
- **Internal audit**: lastly, Parliament calls on the Agency to implement the Internal Audit Service (IAS) recommendations related to the audit on Human Resources (HR) management undertaken by the IAS in 2009.