

# 2010 discharge: European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy

2011/2237(DEC) - 10/05/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a decision to grant discharge to the Director of the European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy in respect of the implementation of the Joint Undertaking's budget for the financial year 2010. This decision also approves the closure of the Agency's accounts.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the annual accounts of the Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2010 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted a resolution containing a series of recommendations that need to be taken into account when the discharge is granted, in addition to the general recommendations that appear in the [draft resolution](#) on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

These recommendations may be summarised as follows:

- **Budget and Financial Management:** Parliament takes note from comments by the Joint Undertaking that it has implemented 99.9% of its 2010 budget in terms of commitment appropriations. It acknowledges with concern that carryovers from 2009 amounted to EUR 106.8 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 52.2 million in payment appropriations and that these appropriations are mainly accruing from the ITER host state and assigned to the ITER construction. Moreover, Members underline with concern the high cash balance, which amounted to EUR 78.8 million at the end of the year representing 26.8% of the available payment appropriations in 2010;
- **Procurement and Grants:** Parliament is concerned that for the grants, the average number of proposals received was only one per call. It urges the Joint Undertaking to develop an Action Plan with concrete measures and deadlines to maximise competition and to follow the value-for-money principle in the call preparation, publication, evaluation and contract management phases. Weaknesses are also observed as regards the payment of grants as well as transparency.
- **Internal control systems:** Parliament notes with concern that the Joint Undertaking's internal control systems have not yet been fully established and implemented as required by its Financial Regulation. It calls on the Joint Undertaking to validate the business processes that provide financial information to the accounting systems (ABAC and SAP);
- **Late payment of membership contributions and Host State agreement:** Parliament considers it essential that the deadline for paying membership contributions is respected by all Members of the Joint Undertaking. It recognises that, although a host agreement on the site and support, privileges and immunities was signed between Spain and the Joint Undertaking, the permanent premises were yet not made available to the Joint Undertaking; notes however that the Joint Undertaking occupies temporary premises sponsored by Spain;

**Horizontal observations on the Joint Undertakings:** Members underline that seven Joint Undertakings have so far been established by the European Commission under Article 187 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and that the total Union contribution deemed necessary for the Joint Undertakings for their period of existence amounts to **EUR 11.5 billion** (for the financial year 2010 alone, the overall Union contribution amounted to EUR 505 million). They note that six Joint Undertakings (IMI, ARTEMIS, ENIAC, CLEAN SKY, FCH and ITER-F4E) are in the research area under the Commission's DGs RTD and INFOS and one is charged with developing the new air traffic management system (SESAR) in the transport domain whose activities are supervised by DG MOVE.

In this context, Parliament calls on the Commission to provide the discharge authority annually with consolidated information on the total annual funding per Joint Undertaking made from the general budget of the Union in order to ensure transparency and clarity on the use of the Union's funds and restore trust among the European taxpayers. It recalls that Joint Undertakings are public-private partnerships and that as a consequence public and private interests are intertwined. Members consider that the **likelihood of conflicts of interest should not be dismissed but addressed properly**. They call therefore on the Joint Undertakings to inform the discharge authority on the verification mechanisms which exist in their respective structures to enable a proper management and prevention of conflicts of interest.

Parliament notes, with the notable exception of the Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy, that Joint Undertakings are relatively small structures and geographically-concentrated and that **they should pool their resources where possible**.

Lastly, the Court of Auditors is invited to provide, within a reasonable deadline, a special report to Parliament, on the added value of the establishment of the Joint Undertakings.