2011 discharge: Clean Sky Joint Undertaking

2012/2217(DEC) - 21/03/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Gerben-Jan GERBRANDY (ADLE, NL) on discharge to be granted to the Executive Director of the Clean Sky Joint Undertaking in respect of the implementation of the Undertaking's budget for the financial year 2011.

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 2011 are reliable but has **delivered a qualified opinion on the legality and the regularity of the transactions underlying the Undertaking's accounts**, Members approve the closure of its accounts. However, they make 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 draft resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies:

- **Financing, budget and financial management**: Members recall that the maximum contribution for the period of 10 years from the Union to the Joint Undertaking is EUR 800 million to be paid from the budget of the Seventh Research Framework Programme. They take note that the Joint Undertaking's final amending budget for the financial year 2011 included commitment appropriations of EUR 175 million and payment appropriations of EUR 159.8 million.
- **Implementation rate of appropriations and carryovers**: they further acknowledge that the utilisation rates for commitment and payment appropriations were 94% and 64% respectively. They call for a detailed progress report on those shortcomings which makes specific proposals for a gradual improvement in utilisation rates. Members express concern that the low rate for the payment appropriation reflects delays in the implementation of the Joint Undertaking's activities.
- **Qualified opinion of the Court of Auditors**: Members are concerned that annual accounts of the Joint Undertaking received a qualified opinion from the Court of Auditors on the legality and the regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts on the grounds that the error rate resulting from the ex post audits was 6.16%. They reiterate that the Joint Undertaking should reinforce without delay the quality of its ex-ante controls related to the grant management. They request that the discharge authority is informed of the results of the following ex-post audit processes conducted by the Joint Undertaking and that a detailed progress report be produced which makes specific proposals for a gradual reduction in error rates.

Members made a series of observations as regards the Joint Undertaking's internal audit as well as other management matters.

Lastly, Members invite the Court to provide, within a reasonable deadline, a special report to Parliament on common issues due to the nature of the joint undertakings in order to ensure **their added value and efficient execution of Union research, technological development and demonstration programmes**. They note, furthermore, that the report should include an assessment of the **effectiveness of the joint undertakings' establishment and structure**.