2011 discharge: European Railway Agency (ERA)

2012/2198(DEC) - 17/04/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a decision on discharge to be granted to the Director of the European Railway Agency (ERA) in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2011. The vote on the decision to grant discharge covers the closure of the accounts (in accordance with Annex VI, Article 5(1) of the European Parliament’s Rules of Procedure).

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the annual accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2011 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted 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 draft resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies:

- **Financing, budget and financial management**: Parliament recalls that the budget for the Agency for the year 2011 was EUR 25 988 665, compared to EUR 24 147 240 in 2010, which accounts for an increase of 7.62% compared to the previous year.
- **Implementation rate of appropriations**: It notes that 95% of appropriations were committed and 81% have been used for payments. It acknowledges that the level of payments against budget appropriations improved for all titles, but remained low for Title III with 47% and demands that the Agency take further actions to address this deficiency and report back to the budgetary authority forthwith. Members acknowledge that the appropriations carried forward to 2012 amounted to EUR 3 617 887 and they call on the Agency to take further action to address this deficiency as the situation is at odds with the budgetary principle of annuality.
- **Seat**: Parliament takes note that the Agency recognises that the use of two locations leads to inefficiencies and additional costs. It notes, moreover, that all efforts are made by the Agency to minimise the negative impact of the decision on the Agency's seat. It acknowledges that the preparatory phase of the project to increase the capacity of headquarters in Valenciennes was completed.
- **Conflicts of interest**: Parliament calls on the Agency to scrutinise and prohibit possible conflicts of interest when hiring experts and staff from the sector it supervises.

Lastly, Parliament made a series of observations concerning the internal audit system, staff and the recruitment procedures of this Agency.