2011 discharge: ENIAC Joint Undertaking

2012/2221(DEC) - 17/04/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a decision on discharge to be granted to the Executive Director of the Joint Undertaking for the implementation of the ENIAC Joint Undertaking 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 Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2011 are reliable but that it had delivered **a qualified opinion on the legality and the regularity of the transactions underlying the Undertaking's accounts,** Parliament approved the closure of the accounts. It, however, adopted 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.

- **Financing, budget and financial management:** Parliament recalls that the maximum contribution for the period of 10 years from the Union to the Joint Undertaking is EUR 450 million to be paid from the budget of the Seventh Research Framework Programme. It also notes that the 2011 Joint Undertaking's final budget included commitment and payment appropriations amounting to EUR 66 million and EUR 35 million respectively.
- **Implementation rate of appropriations and carryovers:** Parliament notes that the utilisation rates were 97% for commitment appropriations and 48% for payment appropriations respectively. It calls for a detailed progress report on those shortcomings which makes specific proposals for a gradual improvement in utilisation rates.
- **Qualified opinion of the Court of Auditors:** Parliament is 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 Joint Undertaking was not in a position to assess whether the *ex post* audit strategy provides sufficient assurance with respect to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. It reiterates that ENIAC should reinforce without delay the quality of its *ex-ante* controls in particular for the grant management, requests that the discharge authority is informed of the results of the following *ex post* audit processes conducted by the Joint Undertaking.
- **Greece:** Parliament condemns the fact that Greece is using Union structural funds to cover its national contributions to the Greek beneficiaries of the ENIAC projects instead of providing national funding. It requests that the Commission inform the discharge authority on the legality of this situation as soon as possible.
- **Host State Agreement:** Parliament welcomes the fact that the Host State Agreement between the Joint Undertaking and the Belgian authorities concerning office accommodation, privileges and immunities and other support to be provided was signed on 3 February 2012.

Parliament also makes a series of observations as regards the Joint Undertaking's procurement policy, control systems and internal audits, weaknesses of the activity report, as well as other management matters.

Lastly, Parliament invites the Court of Auditors to provide, within a reasonable deadline, a special report to Parliament on common issues which occur 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.** It further notes that the same report should include **an assessment of the effectiveness of the joint undertakings' establishment and structure**. In addition, it calls for a cost-benefit analysis of a **merger with Artemis** to be undertaken.