2013 discharge: Clean Sky Joint Undertaking

2014/2131(DEC) - 21/10/2014 - Court of Auditors: opinion, report

PURPOSE: presentation of the EU Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the Clean Sky Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2013, together with the Joint Undertaking's reply.

CONTENT: in accordance with the tasks conferred on the Court of Auditors by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Court presents to the European Parliament and to the Council, in the context of the discharge procedure, a Statement of Assurance as to the reliability of the annual accounts of each institution, body or agency of the EU, and the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them, on the basis of an independent external audit.

This audit concerned, amongst others, the annual accounts of the Clean Sky Joint Undertaking.

Statement of assurance: pursuant to the provisions of Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the Court has audited:

- the annual accounts of the Clean Sky Joint Undertaking, which comprise the financial statements and the reports on the implementation of the budget for the financial year ended 31 December 2013;
- the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts.

Opinion on the reliability of the accounts: in the Court's opinion, the Joint Undertaking's annual accounts present fairly, in all material respects, its financial position as at 31 December 2013, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the provisions of its financial rules and the rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer.

Opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts: in the Court's opinion, the transactions underlying the annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013 are, in all material respects, legal and regular.

The audit approach taken by the Court comprises analytical audit procedures, testing of transactions at the level of the Joint Undertaking and an assessment of key controls of the supervisory and control systems. This is supplemented by evidence provided by the work of other auditors and an analysis of management representations and of annual activity reports.

The 2013 audit placed special emphasis on ex post audits.

At the end of this audit, the Court concluded the following:

- **financial and budgetary management**: the average time for the launch of the 2013 call for proposal and the signing of grant agreements was 9 months for Clean Sky (versus 12 months for 2012);
- **key controls of the supervisory and control systems**: the Court's report noted weaknesses were noted in respect of the ex-ante control of cost claims submitted by Clean Sky partners.
- **conflicts of interest**: on 13 December 2013, the Joint Undertaking adopted the Code of Conduct for the prevention and mitigation of conflicts of interest applicable to private members of the Governing Board.

Cross-cutting remarks for all the Joint undertakings: the prevention of conflicts of interest is addressed by most Joint Undertakings by the adoption of specific rules and by the development of tools to

document all related information. An Interim Evaluation was performed over 2013 assessing all Joint Undertakings in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and research quality. The reports, while positive, also highlighted areas for further improvement. In general, all Joint Undertakings have produced reliable accounts but there is room for improvement.

Joint Undertaking's replies: the Joint Undertaking replied point by point to all of the technical elements highlighted by the Court of Auditors. It noted that in order to ensure the sound functioning of the control system, the JU has updated the financial back-up system by introducing new actors to perform the roles of financial verifier and authorising officer by delegation and is now closely monitoring the continuity of operations during absences.

As regards the **activities of the Joint Undertaking in 2013**, the report refers to the Annual Activity Report 2012 which can be found at http://www.cleansky.eu

It should be noted that the budget for the Joint Undertaking for 213 amounted to EUR 306 043 097.