2013 discharge: SESAR Joint Undertaking to develop the new generation European air traffic management system

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The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Anders Primdahl VISTISEN (ECR, DK) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the **SESAR Joint Undertaking** for the financial year 2013.

It called on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of SESAR Joint Undertaking discharge in respect of the implementation of the Joint Undertaking's budget for the financial year 2013.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the annual accounts of SESAR for the financial year 2013 are reliable, and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Members called on the Parliament to approve the closure of SESAR's accounts. They made, however, a number of recommendations that needed 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.

- **Budgetary and financial management:** Members observed that that the Joint Undertaking's final budget for the financial year 2013 included commitment appropriations of EUR 64 300 000 and payment appropriations of EUR 105 400 000, with utilisation rates for commitment and payment appropriations at 99.6 % and 94.7 % respectively. They stressed that 100 % of the Union and Eurocontrol contributions payable to the other 15 members under the third Multilateral Framework Agreement (MFA) of EUR 595 million had been committed. They also remarked that 55 % of that amount, equalling EUR 316 million, had been paid out until 31 December 2013 **while the remaining 45 % (EUR 279 million) was expected to be paid by 31 December 2016**. Members noted that the number of projects would be reduced to 250 through mergers of current projects, with the allocation of EUR 38 million to the funding of new operational activities. They called on the Joint Undertaking to submit a report to the discharge authority concerning the contributions of all members other than the Commission, including the application of the evaluation rules for in-kind contributions, together with an assessment by the Commission.

- **Conflicts of interests:** the committee emphasised that the Joint Undertaking had put specific measures in place in order to prevent conflicts of interest with respect to its three key stakeholders: Administrative Board members, employees and experts.

Other observations: the committee made a series of observations on the legal framework of the Joint Undertaking, and SESAR's internal controls.

It believed that **links between the Joint Undertaking and the Clean Sky Joint Undertaking should be strengthened**. It invited the Commission to work with both joint undertakings in order to improve communication and reinforce synergies and complementarities, ensuring at the same time that there is no risk of overlapping.

Members acknowledged that SESAR disseminated research foreground by making available detailed information on deliverables and their processes to the relevant stakeholders on its extranet, as well as by publishing general details of 2013 deliverables in its 2013 annual activity report.

They called on the Joint Undertaking to submit a report to the discharge authority on the social-economic benefits of the projects already completed and for that report to be submitted to the discharge authority.

Lastly, Members recalled that Parliament had asked the Court to draw up a special report on the capacity of the joint undertakings, together with their private partners, to ensure **added value and efficient execution** of Union research, technological development and demonstration programmes.