2013 discharge: Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCH Joint Undertaking)

2014/2134(DEC) - 31/03/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Ryszard CZARNECKI (ECR, PL) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the **Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking** for the financial year 2013.

It called on the European Parliament to grant the Executive Director of the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 (FCH 2) 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 FCH 2 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 FCH 2'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 noted that the Joint Undertaking's final budget for the financial year 2013 included commitment appropriations of EUR 74.5 million and payment appropriations of EUR 69.7 million. They observed moreover, that the utilisation rates for commitment and payment appropriations were 98.9 % and 56.7 % respectively. the level of payment appropriations is lower than the previous year was due to the postponement of funding of three projects.

- **Conflicts of interests:** other than the weaknesses noted by the Court, Members remarked that FCH2 had put in place specific measures in order to prevent conflicts of interest in respect of its three key stakeholders - Governing Board members, experts and employees - such as a **clear definition of conflict of interest** with a database of all related information and process for managing them. They noted that the written procedure regarding the specific measures was submitted to the Governing Board in November 2014.

Other observations: the committee also made a series of observations on the legal framework of the Joint Undertaking, and the current call for proposals. It took note that the Joint Undertaking, along with ARTEMIS, Clean Sky, Eniac and IMI Joint Undertakings, was the subject of an IT risk assessment of the common IT infrastructure performed by the Commission's Internal Audit Service.

Members observed that FCH 2 had introduced a new IT tool which helped with the **analysis and synthesis of the results of finished projects** and reporting the first public foreground deliverables arising from complex projects. They called on the Joint Undertaking to submit a report to the discharge authority on the social-economic benefits of the projects already completed.

They acknowledged the Joint Undertaking's efforts to examine the possibility of using the Commission's IT system for monitoring purposes related to the protection, dissemination and transfer of research results as well as to develop its reporting on results. Lastly, Members recalled that the discharge authority had previously requested 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.