2013 discharge: Clean Sky Joint Undertaking

2014/2131(DEC) - 29/04/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 557 votes to 105, with 27 abstentions, to grant discharge to the Executive Director of the **Clean Sky 2 Joint Undertaking** for the financial year 2013. The vote on the discharge decision approved the closure of the accounts (in accordance with Annex VI, Article 5(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament).

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the annual accounts of the Clean Sky 2 JU for the financial year 2013 are reliable, and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 565 votes to 74, with 31 abstentions, a resolution containing a number of recommendations that form an integral part of the discharge decision and as well as the general recommendations that appear in the resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies:

- **Budgetary and financial management**: Parliament noted that the commitment appropriations utilisation rate was 90.6% while the rate for payment appropriations was 87.7%. It was concerned that the lower rate for payment appropriations still reflected **delays in budget implementation**, although the rate improved in comparison to the previous year (75%). It also noted that the members of the Joint Undertaking other than the Commission must contribute resources of at least EUR 600 million, including their contributions to cover running costs. Members pointed out that at the time of the Court's audit, the contribution committed by the Union amounted to EUR 713 million while the resources from the members amounted to EUR 409 million. 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, together with an assessment by the Commission.
- **Internal controls**: Parliament noted that several weaknesses were identified when the Grant Management Tool was tested by the accounting officer. It agreed that **follow-up on resolving these weaknesses** was needed, in particular regarding the management of grants and internal governance regarding verification and validation of commitments.

Other observations: Members noted the Joint Statement by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the **separate discharge for Joint Undertakings**. They called on the Court to present a complete and appropriate financial assessment of the rights and obligations of the Joint Undertaking for the period up to the date of Clean Sky 2 starting activity. Parliament asked the Joint Undertaking to submit a report to the discharge authority on the social-economic benefits of the completed projects already. It 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.

Parliament made a series of observations regarding conflicts of interests and urged the Joint Undertaking to provide a track record of all the conflict of interest cases resolved by the end of September 2015. In particular, it invited the Joint Undertaking to adopt comprehensive policies for the management of conflict of interest situations such as divestment of the interest by the public official, recusal of the public official from involvement in an affected decision-making process, restriction of access by the affected public official to particular information, rearrangement of the public official's duties or **resignation of the public official from their office**.

Lastly, it believed that **links between the Joint Undertaking and the SESAR Joint Undertaking should be strengthened** in order to improve communication and reinforce synergies and complementarities.