2015 discharge: Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)

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PURPOSE: presentation by the Commission of the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2015, as part of the 2015 discharge procedure.

Analysis of the accounts of the **Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)**.

CONTENT: the organisational governance of the EU consists of institutions, agencies and other EU bodies whose expenditure is included in the general budget of the Union.

The EU's operational expenditure of these institutions takes different forms, depending on how the money is paid out and managed.

From 2014 onwards, the Commission classifies its expenditure as follows:

- **Direct management**: the budget is implemented directly by the Commission services.
- **Indirect management**: the Commission confers tasks of implementation of the budget to bodies of EU law or national law, **such as the EU agencies**.
- **Shared management**: under this method of budget implementation tasks are delegated to Member States. About 80 % of the expenditure falls under this management mode covering such areas as agricultural spending and structural actions.

This Commission document concerns the EU's consolidated accounts for the year 2015 and details how spending by the EU institutions and bodies was carried out. The consolidated annual accounts of the EU provide financial information on the activities of the institutions, agencies and other bodies of the EU from an accrual accounting and budgetary perspective.

It is the responsibility of the Commission's Accounting Officer to prepare the EU's consolidated annual accounts and ensure that they present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position, the result of the operations and the cash flows of the EU institutions and bodies, including the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), with a view to granting discharge.

Discharge procedure: the final step of a budget lifecycle is the discharge of the budget for a given financial year. It represents the political aspect of the external control of budget implementation and is the decision by which the European Parliament, acting on a Council recommendation, "releases" the Commission (and other EU bodies) from its responsibility for management of a given budget by marking the end of that budget's existence. The European Parliament is the discharge authority within the EU.

The discharge procedure may produce three outcomes: (i) the granting; (ii) postponement or; (iii) the refusal of the discharge.

The final discharge report including specific recommendations to the Commission for action is adopted in plenary by the European Parliament and are subject to an annual follow up report in which the Commission outlines the concrete actions it has taken to implement the recommendations made.

Each agency is subject to its own discharge procedure, including the ACER.

The Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER): the Agency, which is located in Ljubljana (SI), was set up by Regulation (EU) No 713/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council with a view to helping the Member States' regulatory authorities in the areas of electricity and natural gas. Its aim is to give an opinion on any of the issues relating to the purpose for which it has been established.

As regards the Agency's accounts, these are presented in detail in the document on the consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for 2015:

Commitment appropriations:

- **committed**: EUR 11 million;
- **paid**: EUR 14 million;
- **carried-over**: 0.

Payment appropriations:

- **committed**: EUR 11 million;
- **paid**: EUR 22 million;
- **carried-over**: EUR 2 million.