2015 discharge: Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking - BBI Joint Undertaking

2016/2197(DEC) - 29/03/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Miroslav POCHE (S&D, CZ) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the bio-based industries (BBI) Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2015.

The committee called on the European Parliament to **grant the joint undertaking's Executive Director discharge** in respect of the implementation of the joint undertaking's budget for the financial year 2015.

Noting that the Court of Auditors issued a statement of assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions for the financial year 2015, Members called on Parliament to **approve the closure of the joint undertaking's accounts**.

They made, however, a number of recommendations that need to be taken into account when the discharge is granted. They may be summarised as follows:

General: Members noted that the Joint Undertaking as it reached operational capacity and financial autonomy on 26 October 2015 without any issues of a systemic nature during the first months. They welcomed the fact that the first projects funded by the Joint Undertaking leveraged a total contribution of EUR 71 million from private partners.

Financial management: the Joint Undertaking's annual accounts provide for the final 2015 budget available for implementation included commitment appropriations of EUR 209 422 797 and payment appropriations of EUR 21 075 192, the utilisation rates for commitment and payment appropriations of which were 87 % and 89 % respectively.

The total operational commitments in 2015 (namely, EUR 180 390 497) were made at a global level and related to two 2015 calls for proposals, for which the award procedures were ongoing on 31 December 2015.

No in-kind contributions were reported by members other than the Union to the Joint Undertaking by 31 December 2015. The report pointed out that private sector members face difficulties in presenting their accounts by the deadline of 31 January. Members feared that this risks becoming a recurring issue for most joint undertakings and goes against the general trend towards simplification.

Members welcomed the fact that the Commission presented clear guidelines for the budgetary reporting and financial management of BBI on 20 December 2016 following the Court's recommendation.

Other observations: the report also contained a series of observations on procurement and recruitment procedures, the legal framework and the prevention and management of conflicts of interests. The Joint Undertaking is invited to incorporate into its annual activity report a section on its anti-fraud strategy.