2015 discharge: Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 Joint Undertaking - FCH 2 Joint Undertaking

2016/2199(DEC) - 27/04/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to grant the Executive Director of the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen 2 (FCH2) Joint Undertaking discharge in respect of the implementation of Authority's budget for the financial year 2015.

Based on the statement of assurance provided by the Court of Auditors concerning the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, it decided to **approve the closure of the accounts** of the Joint Undertaking for the same financial year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the Joint Undertaking's annual accounts for the financial year 2015 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 501 votes to 101 with 11 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations which form an integral part of the decision on discharge.

Financial management: the final budget of FCH2 for the financial year 2015 included commitment appropriations of EUR 132 583 855 and payment appropriations of EUR 95 089 121. Members noted the following:

- the commitment appropriations increased by 17 % compared to 2014 mainly due to the higher amount for 2015 call of proposals and payment appropriations showed a decrease of 2 % compared to 2014;
- the budget execution by year end for all fund sources reached **87.3 % as regards commitment appropriations**, representing a slight decrease compared to previous year (a number of project proposals were rejected as they did not meet the required quality, resulting in unused commitment appropriations of EUR 13 700 000). The **payment execution rate was at 83 %,** representing the best execution rate of payments for FCH2 to date;
- FCH2 has set up *ex-ante* procedures based on financial and operational data reviews, and performs ex post audits of grant beneficiaries;
- the sector manifested a clear intention to invest, develop and commercialise its innovative technologies, both on the side of industry and research. A total of 59 research and industry organisations reported their investments for a cumulative total amount of EUR 188 570 000.

Members welcomed the fact that the Commission presented **clear guidelines for the budgetary reporting** and financial management of FCH2 on 20 December 2016 following the Court's recommendation.

Other observations: the resolution also contained a series of observations regarding calls for proposals, the legal framework of the joint undertaking, the prevention and management of conflicts of interests and internal audits and controls.

Members acknowledged the fact that FCH2 successfully made the transition to Horizon 2020. The FCH2 is called upon to report to the discharge authority regarding improvements which have been taking in order to make the selection procedure more transparent.