

2016 discharge: Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)

2017/2174(DEC) - 22/03/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Bart STAES (Greens/EFA, BE) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) for the financial year 2016.

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the Director of the Agency discharge in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2016.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the annual accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2016 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Members called on Parliament to approve the closure of the Agency'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](#):

- **Agency's financial statements:** Members noted that the final budget of the Agency for the financial year 2016 was EUR 15 872 582, representing an increase of 40.89 % compared to 2015. The increase was due to new additional tasks expanding its mandate, including the completion of the internal energy market.
- **Budget and financial management:** Members noted that budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2016 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 98.11 %, reaching the Agency's planned target and representing an increase of 3.02 % compared to 2015.
- **Commitments and carry-overs:** the carry-overs for operational expenditure were very high at EUR 4.9 million (86 %) of its committed appropriations, compared to EUR 1.4 million (59 %) in 2015. Members noted from the Agency's reply that the high level of carry-overs is due to the timing of the annual contractual cycle which was established in 2013, when a substantial additional budget for the REMIT project was received by the Agency at the end of the year. The commitment appropriation for the financial year 2016 under the budget Chapter of REMIT expenditure was implemented at the maximum 100 % level. The report noted that the high share of cancelled carry-overs (9.8 %) could be considered a sign of inaccurate budget planning.

Members also made a series of observations regarding staff policy and internal controls. In particular, they welcomed the decision adopted in 2017 of the administrative board on preventing psychological and sexual harassment.

Lastly, Members recalled that, according to the Seat Agreement between the Agency and the Slovenian government, a European School is to be established in Slovenia. They regretted however that, more than four years after the agreement, no European School has been set up.