

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

2017/2174(DEC) - 18/04/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director of the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2016, and to approve the closure of the accounts for the financial year in question.

Noting that the Court of Auditors has stated that it has obtained reasonable assurances that the agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2016 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are **legal and regular**, Parliament adopted by 558 votes to 131 with 5 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations, which form an integral part of the decision on discharge and which add to the general recommendations set out in the [resolution on performance, financial management and control of EU agencies](#):

- **Agency's financial statements:** 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:** 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 resolution 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**, and the decision to create a register of meetings of the Agency's Director with external actors. They noted that women accounted for 38% of staff and men for 62%.

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