2016 discharge: Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking - BBI Joint Undertaking

2017/2183(DEC) - 18/04/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director of the Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking on the implementation of the budget of the Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2016 and to approve the closure of the accounts of the Joint Undertaking for the same exercise. Noting that the Court of Auditors considered that the annual accounts of the Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2016 accurately reflect the financial position of the Joint Undertaking as at 31 December 2016, as well as the results of its operations, Parliament adopted 562 votes in favor, 108 against and 29 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of observations which form an integral part of the discharge decision:

General: Members noted that the maximum Union contribution to the activities of the Joint Undertaking is EUR 975 000 000, to be paid from Horizon 2020. The industry members of the Joint Undertaking are to contribute resources of at least EUR 2 730 000 000 over the period of the Joint Undertaking, consisting of at least EUR 975 000 000 of in-kind and cash contributions to the Joint Undertaking's operational activities and at least EUR 1 755 000 000 of in-kind contributions to the Joint Undertaking's additional activities.

They noted that 29 out of 65 retained proposals from Call 2016 were at the grant agreement preparation stage by the end of 2016. By early 2017, the Joint Undertaking programme will have a portfolio of 65 ongoing projects with a total of 729 participants from 30 countries with a total grant value of EUR 414 000 000.

Budget and financial management: the Joint Undertaking's annual accounts provide that the final 2016 budget is to be available for implementation and include commitment appropriations of EUR 194 295 870 and payment appropriations of EUR 67 196 187, the **utilisation rates for commitment and payment appropriations of which were 97.1 % and 95.8 %, respectively.**

Members expressed some concern that several industry members participating in Joint Undertaking's projects **could not report their in-kind contributions by the given deadline**, either because their own 2016 accounts were not yet closed, or because the projects had started close to the end of 2016.

They regretted that, by the end of 2016, the total contribution from the industry members amounted to EUR 313 200 000, compared to the Union's cash contribution of EUR 65 000 000 which stems from the fact that the industry members had already declared a significant amount of in-kind contributions to additional activities compared to the Union's input. The Joint Undertaking is invited to inform the discharge authority of developments in in-kind contributions and payments made.

Other observations: the resolution also contained a series of observations on procurement and recruitment procedures, the legal framework and the prevention and management of conflicts of interests.

By the end of 2016, **the Joint Undertaking's staff was almost complete**, with 20 posts filled out of a total of 22 posts allocated to the Joint Undertaking by the staff establishment plan. Members welcomed the fact that the target set in the 2016 annual work programme was fully achieved, with the recruitment of 13 temporary agents and 8 contract agents coming from 10 Members States.

Members noted with appreciation that in 2016 the human resources function continued to **strengthen the legal framework** paying particular attention to the application of the implementing rules of the

Commission to the Joint Undertaking. They welcomed the fact that, in that respect, the governing board has adopted nine new implementing rules in 2016. They also recognised the need for the Joint Undertaking to **communicate** with Union citizens concerning the significant research and collaboration that it is undertaking. The Commission was asked to ensure the direct involvement of the Joint Undertaking in the process of the Horizon 2020 mid-term review in the sphere of the further simplification and harmonisation of joint undertakings.