2017 discharge: European Union Agency for Railways

2018/2193(DEC) - 18/09/2018

PURPOSE: presentation of the EU Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Railway Agency for the year 2017, together with the Agency's reply.

CONTENT: the Court of Auditors carried out the audit on the annual accounts of the European Railway Agency (ERA).

In brief, the Agency's task is to enhance the level of interoperability of railway systems and to develop a common approach to safety in order to contribute to creating a more competitive European railway sector with a high level of safety.

Statement of assurance and reliability of the accounts

The Court considered that:

- the Agency's annual accounts present fairly, in all material respects, its financial position as at 31 December 2017 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with the provisions of its Financial Regulation and the accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer;

- the transactions underlying the annual accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017 are legal and regular in all material respects.

The report also makes a series of observations on the budgetary and financial management of the Agency, accompanied by the latter's response. The main observations may be summarised as follows:

The Court's observations

Financial management

Concerning a framework contract for the acquisition of IT hard and software and the provision of maintenance and support (IT services), the Court noted that while most of these IT services and related prices were defined in the framework contract resulting from the competitive procurement procedure, it also allowed the purchase of IT services not specifically mentioned. In the case of one audited payment amounting to some EUR 47 000 the Agency purchased, through the contractor, IT services without any competitive procedure or prior market research. In 2017, total payments to the contractor amounted to EUR 1.1 million.

The Agency's reply

Financial management

As recognised by the Court the contract was used according to the relevant contractual provisions. Any further considerations as regards sound financial management shall be notified to the contract manager, namely DG DIGIT.

Lastly, the Court of Auditors' report contains a summary of the Agency's key figures in 2017:

Budget

EUR 31 million.

Staff

164 including officials, temporary and contract staff and seconded national experts.