2017 discharge: Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER)

2018/2205(DEC) - 28/02/2019 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Petri SARVAMAA (EPP, FI) on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) for the financial year 2017.

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 2017.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the annual accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2017 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

The final budget of the Agency for the financial year 2017 was EUR 13 272 160, representing a decrease of 16.38 % compared to 2016, which is mainly due to the decrease of revenues related to the Regulation on wholesale Energy Market Integrity and Transparency (REMIT) operations.

Budget and financial management

Budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2017 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 98.72 %, reaching the Agency's planned target and representing an increase of 0.61 % compared to 2016. Payment appropriations execution rate was at 75.81 %, representing an increase of 15.87 % compared to the previous year.

The cancellations of carry-overs from 2016 to 2017 amounted to EUR 122 606.52, representing 2.03 % of the total amount carried forward, showing a notable decrease of 7.77 % in comparison to 2016.

Members also made a series of observations regarding performance, staff policy, procurement and conflicts of interest.

In particular, they noted that:

- the Agency succeeded on the implementation of the regulation on wholesale energy market integrity and transparency and that 2017 was the first full year of data collection following the core implementation of this regulation in 2016;

- on 31 December 2017, the establishment plan was 92.65 % filled, with 63 temporary agents appointed out of 68 authorised under the Union budget;

- human resources and budget constraints at the Agency in 2017 posed risks of delays, as well as a necessity of reprioritisation of objectives and of reducing the scope of some reports and opinions;

- the resignation of a member from the Administrative Board in October 2017, for whom a potential conflict of interest was identified;

- the Agency did not carry out a comprehensive analysis in 2017 of the likely impact of Brexit on its organisation, operations and accounts. It did however carry out such an analysis in 2018.