2017 discharge: European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)

2018/2189(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 European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) for the financial year 2017.

The committee called on the European Parliament to grant the Executive 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 191 611 843, representing a decrease of 0.92 % compared to 2016.

Budget and financial management

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2017 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99 %, representing the same rate as in 2016. Payments appropriations execution rate was 93.75 %, showing an increase of 2.55 % compared to 2016.

Members noted with concern from the Court's report in its comments from previous years, as an ongoing remark that, although Industry financed activities resulted in a deficit of EUR 7 600 000 in 2016, budgetary results fluctuate over the years and the Agency has accumulated EUR 52 000 000 surplus from this category of activity. The Agency's founding Regulation establishes that Industry fees levied should be adequate to cover the Agency's cost for the related certification activities and thus does not foresee an accumulated surplus. Such surplus should be avoided in the future.

The cancellations of carryovers from 2016 to 2017 amounted to EUR 239 829, representing 2.6% of the total amount carried over, showing a decrease of 1.07 % in comparison to 2016.

Members also made a series of observations regarding performance, staff policy, procurement and internal controls.

In particular, they noted that:

- in 2017, the Agency was audited by the International Civil Aviation Organization. While the official results pend publication, initial input suggests that the Agency is amongst the top aviation authorities in the world;

- it signed agreements with France, Germany and Italy regarding cooperation between civil and military aviation safety;

- it may propose to the Commission the technical expertise to regulate drones of all sizes, including the small ones;

- necessary resources are needed for the new and reinforced competences concerning, among others, risks to civil aviation arising from conflict zones, environmental related topics and the certification and registration of unmanned aircraft;

- on 31 December 2017, the establishment plan was 100 % executed, with 673 temporary agents appointed out of 678 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget.