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

2018/2205(DEC) - 26/03/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to grant discharge to the Director of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) for the financial year 2017 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 2017 are reliable and that the underlying transactions are legal and regular, Parliament adopted by 509 votes to 122 with 2 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 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 overall delivered on its Work Programme despite significant challenges related to the available resources;

- it 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;

- measures should be taken to ensure better gender balance within its senior management;

- 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.