2019 discharge: Office of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)

2020/2178(DEC) - 28/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided by 611 votes to 77, with 10 abstentions, to **grant discharge** to the Director of the BEREC Support Agency (Office of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications) in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the 2019 financial year and to approve the closure of the Joint Undertaking's accounts for the same financial year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the Office's annual accounts for the financial year 2019 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 605 votes to 79 with 7 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations which form an integral part of the discharge decision and which complement the general recommendations set out in the resolution on the performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

Agency's financial statements

The Agency's final budget for the financial year 2019 was EUR 5 653 185, which represents an increase of 30.53% compared to 2018, mainly corresponding to an increase in staff

Budgetary and financial management

Parliament welcomed the budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2019, which resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99.93%, which represents an increase of 0.07% compared to the financial year 2018. The execution rate for payment appropriations was 82.68%, a decrease of 0.69% compared to 2018.

Other observations

Members also made a series of observations concerning performance, staff policy, public procurement, conflicts of interest and internal controls.

In particular, they noted that:

- the BEREC Office uses several types of metrics as key performance indicators to assess the added value of its activities but does not share resources with other EU agencies, due to its own limited resources. It needs to expand cooperation and exchange of best practices with other EU agencies to improve efficiency (human resources, building management, IT services and security);

- by the end of 2019, the establishment plan was 87.50 % implemented, with 14 temporary agents appointed out of 16 temporary agents authorised under the EU budget. The gender balance had decreased by 8% compared to 2018 at staff level and deteriorated at middle management level;

- BEREC's Office continued to experience high staff turnover, which poses a serious risk to the implementation of its work programme; the Agency struggles to attract professionals, in particular due to the low host country correction coefficient;

- The Agency was not able to launch five procurement procedures planned for 2019 due to a lack of staff to manage them or changes in planning and requirements, resulting in only 44% of the contracts foreseen in the procurement plan being signed, which is significantly below the target rate of 90%;

- the BEREC Office still does not publish the CVs and declarations of interest of all board members on its website and not all board members follow the new rules;

- there are concerns about the internal control weaknesses identified by the Court in relation to procurement procedures.