2020 discharge: Euratom Supply Agency (ESA)

2021/2137(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director General of the Euratom Supply Agency (ESA) for the financial year 2020 and to approve the closure of the accounts for that year.

Noting that the Court of Auditors stated that it had obtained reasonable assurance that the Agency's annual accounts for the financial year 2020 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 529 votes to 27 with 10 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of recommendations which form an integral part of the discharge decision and which complement the general recommendations contained in the resolution on the performance, financial management and control of EU agencies.

Agency's financial statements

The Agency's final budget for the year 2020 was EUR 230 000, representing an increase of 3.14 % compared to 2019.

Budgetary and financial management

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a commitment appropriations implementation rate of 99.54 %, representing a decrease of 0.32 % compared to 2019. The payment appropriation execution rate was 22.33 %, representing a decrease of 18.72 % compared to 2019. The decrease is due to carrying forward outstanding commitments that amounted to EUR 177 578,67, or 78 % of committed amounts in relation to signed IT service contracts that had not been completed at year-end. The cancellation rate of budget appropriations carried over from 2019 to 2020 was 7 %, demonstrating unjustified commitments in the previous year. The Agency is invited to carry over budgetary appropriations only where justified.

Other observations

Parliament also made a series of observations concerning staff performance and policy and internal controls and Covid-19.

In particular, it noted that:

- the Agency should pursue the digitalisation of its services;

- on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan was 94.12 % implemented, with 16 Commission officials appointed out of 17 posts authorised under the Union budget (17 authorised posts in 2019). A gender ratio was noted for all staff with 56 % women and 44 % men and an equal opportunities policy in place;

- the Agency made efforts to reduce the effect of the pandemic on its staff and stakeholders by taking all necessary steps to continue its core duties and introduced changes in its spending pattern via a budget amendment to reduce expenses on actions negatively affected by the pandemic;

- the worldwide lockdown measures have accelerated the deployment of secure digital solutions resulting in an overall increase of the digital knowledge and maturity of stakeholders;

- in 2020, the Agency adopted its internal control framework, designed to provide reasonable assurance in achieving the objectives set in its financial regulation.

With regard to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the Union, that intense negotiations were held in 2020 with regard to the future partnership of the UK and the Union in the Agency, including in the civil nuclear area. On 24 December 2020, the EU and the UK signed the Euratom Agreement, which provides wide-ranging cooperation on safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, underpinned by commitments by both sides to comply with international non-proliferation obligations, upholding a high level of nuclear safety standards.