2020 discharge: Office of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)

2021/2117(DEC) - 04/05/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Director of the Agency for Support for BEREC (BEREC Office) in respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the 2020 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 2020 were reliable and that the underlying transactions were legal and regular, Parliament adopted, by 561 votes to 71 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 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 7 233 653, representing an increase of 27.96 % compared to 2019, which mainly represents an increase in staff and operational expenditure.

Budgetary and financial management

The budget monitoring efforts during the financial year 2020 resulted in a budget implementation rate of 99.07 %, representing a decrease of 0.86 % compared to 2019. The payment appropriations execution rate was 61.14 %, representing a decrease of 20.85 % compared to 2019.

Other observations

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

In particular, it noted that:

- the BEREC Office found some synergies with other agencies in common areas and currently cooperates in the development of a new corporate website with the European Union Intellectual Property Office and in the use of IT infrastructure and online platforms with the European Food Safety Authority;

- on 31 December 2020, the establishment plan was 87.50 % implemented, with 14 temporary agents appointed out of 16 temporary agents authorised under the Union budget (compared with 16 authorised posts in 2019). Measures should be taken to achieve gender balance as soon as possible;

- again, the Office struggles to attract and retain professionals;

- the BEREC Office signed a framework contract with one company for the provision of secretarial support services, which did not comply with Union social and employment rules, exposing the BEREC Office to legal and reputational risks. It also finished a procurement procedure and signed a contract before evaluating all of the offers it had received;

- due to the Covid-19 pandemic the BEREC Office cancelled most of the planned physical events and organised them successfully by means of videoconferencing instead which resulted in a reduction in its costs and in a better environmental performance.