

2022 discharge: Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking (CAJU)

2023/2173(DEC) - 11/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** to the Executive Director of the Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2022 and approve the closure of the Joint Undertaking's accounts.

Noting that the Court of Auditors found that the annual accounts of the Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2022 present fairly the financial situation of the Joint Undertaking on 31 December 2022 and the results of its operations, Parliament adopted, by 510 votes to 52 with 23 abstentions, a resolution containing a series of observations which form an integral part of the discharge decision.

Budgetary and financial management

Parliament commended the launch of the Clean Aviation programme in 2022 and the role of the Joint Undertaking in developing innovative technologies to reduce aircraft emissions and noise.

The Joint Undertaking's final available budget for 2022 (including re-entered unused appropriations of previous years, assigned revenues, and reallocations to the next year) comprised commitment appropriations of **EUR 411.2 million** (compared to EUR 182.6 million in 2021) and payment appropriations of **EUR 415.3 million** (compared to EUR 189.9 million in 2021).

Regarding the Horizon 2020 programme, at the end of 2022, the Joint Undertaking had fully committed **EUR 1 716 million** of the maximum Union operational contribution for signed grant agreements under the programme and that of this committed amount, around EUR 70.1 million (or 4.1 %) remains to be paid in the coming years for projects yet to be completed.

The private members had legally committed to provide in-kind contributions to the Joint Undertaking's operational activities of **EUR 968.3 million**, and in-kind contributions to additional activities of EUR 1 223.1 million or 101.6 % of the minimum target of EUR 2 154.9 million. These committed amounts were fully reported at the end of 2022.

Parliament noted that for a considerable number of ongoing Horizon 2020 projects, the technical activities were delayed or reduced due to COVID-19 and the war of aggression against Ukraine, and that, therefore, these projects had to be amended or prolonged and final payments postponed to 2023.

Other comments

The resolution also contains a series of observations on management and control, procurement and staff.

In particular, it noted the following:

- the first open call for proposals by the Joint Undertaking, resulting in 19 grant agreements by year-end, totalling EUR 654 million around three core thrusts: Hybrid Electric Regional aircraft, Hydrogen-powered aircraft and Ultra-Efficient Short and Medium Range aircraft; the call for proposals comprised 14 topics covering 13 Innovation Actions and one Coordination Support Action; in total 244 participants were selected across 24 different countries;

- the 20 projects to steer aviation towards a sustainable future; the call for proposals has brought together a wide array of public and private partners, research centres and academia to find impactful solutions that can deliver sustainable aircraft and, climate-neutral aviation future, supported by a budget of EUR 654 million in Union grant funding;
- the establishment plan for 2022 contained a total of 44 statutory staff (temporary agents, contract agents and seconded national experts) with 40 posts filled at the end of the 2022;
- for Horizon 2020 expenditure (clearings and final payments), the Joint Undertaking reported a representative error rate of 1.6 % and a residual error rate of 0.4 %;
- at the end of 2022, the Joint Undertaking had developed and implemented a complete risk-based approach to ex-ante controls;
- the beneficiary and/or project structure of the Joint Undertaking is changing significantly under the Horizon Europe programme: the risk factors identified in previous programmes may no longer be relevant and new risk factors may emerge;
- it is necessary to expand and foster integration of climate-neutral aviation research and innovation value chains, including academia, research organisations, industry and SMEs, exploiting synergies with national and European programmes, while facilitating the uptake of industry-related skills across the value chain.