Discharge 2024: Joint Undertakings

2025/2157(DEC) - 29/04/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament decided to **grant discharge** on the implementation of the budget of all joint undertakings for the financial year 2024.

In its resolution adopted by 525 votes to 104, with 116 abstentions, Parliament welcomed the role played by joint ventures in supporting research and innovation activities in the fields of transport, energy, health, circular bio-industries, key electronic components, artificial intelligence and supercomputing, cybersecurity, and network systems. It urged joint ventures to **facilitate the conversion of scientific knowledge into market-ready innovations** and to establish mechanisms ensuring that their activities contribute to strengthening Europe's strategic autonomy, competitiveness, security (including cybersecurity), environmental sustainability, and climate objectives on a global scale.

It called on joint ventures to promote regular cybersecurity training to enhance resilience against cyber threats.

The Commission and the budgetary authority are invited to ensure that joint undertakings are provided **with sufficient, stable and long-term funding** under the future multiannual financial framework (MFF), commensurate with their increasing responsibilities and their role as key drivers of innovation in strategic sectors such as energy, digital technologies, semiconductors, clean energy, health and defence-related research.

Given that joint ventures are based on public-private partnerships, Members reiterated that **contributions from private members** must meet the established objectives for these partnerships to remain mutually beneficial. They stressed that, due to insufficient contributions from private members, some joint ventures are facing financial difficulties that prevent them from achieving their targets. They also urged joint ventures and the Commission not to rely too heavily on in-kind contributions for additional activities to meet the objectives and to ensure that such contributions are used appropriately, transparently, and proportionately.

Parliament urged **increased transparency** and Commission control of the methods of communicating information on in-kind contributions to additional activities and the methods of validating these contributions, as well as the prioritisation of contributions related to actions financed by joint undertakings and awarded through a competitive procedure.

Several joint ventures have been significantly affected by major events likely to impact their performance, such as the war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine, the cancellation by the United States of America of a very large part of the programmes managed by the United States Agency for International Development, including programmes in the field of global health, and the entry into force on 1 August 2024 of the Union regulation on artificial intelligence establishing a common legal framework for highrisk artificial intelligence systems.

Budgetary and financial management

In 2024, the total budget available for payments to the twelve joint undertakings audited by the Court amounted to **EUR 3.2 billion**. Parliament stressed that all joint undertakings must **strengthen their internal financial controls and transparency frameworks** to ensure that funds are allocated efficiently and in line with the Union's strategic objectives. It endorsed the Court's concerns regarding the persistent **low use** of funds by some joint undertakings in the execution of their operational and administrative

budgets and emphasised that the accumulation of unused appropriations creates cash surpluses that cannot be redeployed to other Union activities and programmes.

Parliament called on all joint ventures to:

- strengthen their actions to promote gender equality at all levels in order to integrate gender balance into all procurement activities; integrate geographical balance into all procurement and grant award procedures;

- implement a consistent, transparent and fair staff policy in all joint ventures, guaranteeing inclusive working conditions, career planning, work-life balance and mental health support;

- encourage balanced representation in leadership and decision-making positions, and to address pay gaps and promote equal opportunities in career development;

- establish structured cooperation with European universities in order to improve awareness among young graduates and strengthen future recruitment;

- adopt a common framework for measuring performance and impacts ensuring reporting on outcomes beyond compliance with financial rules and ensuring the systematic publication of declarations of interest for members of governing bodies.

Matters of concern regarding the European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the high-performance computing joint undertaking

Regarding **ITER**, a major international project involving 35 partners, the European Union plays a central role. However, the project is experiencing significant delays (first plasma delivery postponed from 2025 to 2035, project completion now projected for 2059) and a substantial increase in costs (rising to EUR 25.8 billion). These developments are increasing technical, legal, and financial risks, while also threatening the project's viability and scientific leadership in the face of international competition. Uncertainties also persist regarding governance and the legal framework beyond 2042.

Parliament stressed the need for improved management: robust financial planning, cost control, performance monitoring, transparency, and a reinforced risk management system. It also recommended internal reforms (human resources, reduction of external service providers).

Significant concerns also include: (i) continued Russian participation, requiring strict enforcement of EU sanctions, including procurement restrictions of components for European ITER supplies; (ii) shortcomings in human resource management, including widespread interpersonal conflicts, harassment, and excessive reliance on external contractors.

Regarding **the joint undertaking for high-performance computing**, Parliament highlighted persistent recruitment difficulties, weak budget execution and insufficient contribution from the private sector.