



**2016/2177(DEC)**

28.2.2017

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Transport and Tourism

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European  
Railway Agency for the financial year 2015  
(2016/2177(DEC))

Rapporteur: Claudia Schmidt

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Transport and Tourism calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the finding of the Court of Auditors that the accounts of the European Railway Agency ('the Agency') for the 2015 financial year are legal and regular in all material aspects;
2. Notes that the Agency's annual budget for 2015 was EUR 26.3 million in commitment and payment appropriations and that the average implementation rates were 99.1% in commitment (including carry-overs) and 89,78% in payment appropriations (90,59% of the appropriations committed in 2015); further notes that 10, 07% carried over to 2016 mainly concern operational expenditures and that 96,3% of the appropriations carried over from 2014 have been executed;
3. Notes an improvement compared to 2014 with regard to the carry-overs (18,98% for Title II compared to 24,53% in 2014 and 29,42% compared to 37,93% in 2014 for Title III); welcomes the fact that the indicative ceilings used by the Court of Auditors to assess the budget execution at the level of carry-overs (10% for Title 1, 20% for Title 2 and 30% for Title 3) have been reached;
4. Regrets the fact that only 92,6% of the invoices were paid within the set deadline of 30 days due to the delay in processing invoices by the Agency's staff, shortage of cash and disagreement with suppliers on the content of the invoices;
5. Regrets that corrective actions regarding the Court's comments of 2013 regarding the double location of the Agency in Lille and Valenciennes have not yet been implemented; regrets also that the recommendation on the reinforcement of the recruitment procedures have also not yet been implemented;
6. Regrets that full compliance with the Internal Control Standards has not yet been reached and that several activities with priority for 2015 are yet to be finalised, such as for example a procedure for job description, a competence management system, an incident management procedure;
7. Notes the results of the second benchmarking exercise on the Agency's posts, with 21,14% of the jobs dedicated to administrative support and coordination, 64,61% to operational tasks and 14,25% to control and financial tasks; regrets the decrease of proportion of staff directly affected to operational tasks;
8. Highlights the Agency's strategic role in improving competitiveness of rail with other modes of transport, by reducing administrative and technical barriers, encouraging market entry and ensuring non-discrimination, spending public money more efficiently on public rail transport services and through better governance of the infrastructure;
9. Highlights the Agency's role in ensuring the safety and interoperability of European rail system; welcomes the Agency's role in the follow-up of the development, testing and

implementation of European Railway Traffic Management System (ERTMS), as well as in evaluating the specific ERTMS projects; notes furthermore that a review of the Agency's role (e.g. one-stop-shop for vehicle authorisation and safety certification) and powers forms part of the Fourth Railway Package; stresses that, as the Agency receives greater responsibilities, it will need to be given the necessary financial, material and human resources to perform its new and additional tasks effectively and efficiently; notes, with concern, the contradiction between the recently approved legislation extending the scope of the Agency's mission and the budgetary cuts related to the Agency to be implemented within the scope of the multi-annual financial framework 2014-2020;

10. Supports the initiative taken by the Agency in 2015 to put in place a new process to get stronger engagement from Member States and stakeholders in the development of the 2016 work programme; welcomes the launch of the ERTMS Stakeholder platform and recalls that ERTMS is crucial for achieving a Single European Railway Area; stresses, therefore, that an optimised coordination of ERTMS development and deployment that ensures a single, transparent, stable, affordable, and interoperable ERTMS system throughout Europe is a key priority;
11. Welcomes the proactive approach of the Agency, which has set up a task force in preparation for the likely adoption, in 2016, of the Fourth Railway Package and the new status of the Agency and its expanding role;
12. Welcomes the focused programme on the cleaning-up of national rules in order to reduce the impact or eliminate the existing barriers between Member States;
13. Supports the progress of the Agency towards an increased cooperation with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) in order to develop a common safety culture;
14. Recalls the European Parliament's position in budgetary procedure for recovering of total amounts relocated from the Connecting Europe Facility to the European Fund for Strategic Investments;
15. Regrets that declarations of interests are still missing for several Members of the Board and urges the Agency to make them public without delay;
16. Welcomes the fact that the Agency has started the implementation of the action plan defined in the Agency Antifraud Strategy; deplores the fact, however, that , with the exception of management, the attendance rate of staffon training activities on fraud prevention was low;
17. Notes that the Agency has adopted an Integrated Management System based on requirements specified in the Internal Control Standards and ISO 9001 series standards;
18. Notes that the 2015 risk assessment exercise highlighted risks related to the extension of the Agency's mandate in view of the entry into force of the technical pillar of the Fourth Railway Package as well as risks regarding potential security issues impacting interoperability and innovation challenges affecting railway competitiveness;
19. Proposes that Parliament grants discharge to the Executive Director of the Agency in

respect of the implementation of the Agency's budget for the financial year 2015.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	28.2.2017
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 38 -: 7 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Daniela Aiuto, Lucy Anderson, Marie-Christine Arnautu, Georges Bach, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Andor Deli, Karima Delli, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Jacqueline Foster, Bruno Gollnisch, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Merja Kyllönen, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Bogusław Liberadzki, Peter Lundgren, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Georg Mayer, Gesine Meissner, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Jens Nilsson, Markus Pieper, Salvatore Domenico Pogliese, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault D'Allonnes Bonnefoy, Dominique Riquet, Massimiliano Salini, Claudia Schmidt, Jill Seymour, Claudia Țapardel, Keith Taylor, Pavel Telička, István Ujhelyi, Wim van de Camp, Janusz Zemke, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Jakop Dalunde, Mark Demesmaeker, Markus Ferber, Karoline Graswander-Hainz, Kateřina Konečná, Franck Proust