



2018/2193(DEC)

22.1.2019

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 Union Agency for Railways for the financial year 2017
(2018/2193(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Innocenzo Leontini

PA_NonLeg

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 Union Agency for Railways ('the Agency') for the 2017 financial year are legal and regular in all material aspects;
2. Highlights the Agency's role in ensuring the safety and interoperability of the European rail system and 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; supports the Commission's vision of a European railway system that leads the world on safety performance;
3. 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 also that the 4th Railway Package comprises a technical pillar that enhances the role of Agency by introducing new tasks to ensure a uniform implementation of the EU framework; 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;
4. 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;
5. 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;
6. Notes that the Agency's annual budget for 2017 was EUR 30,7 million in commitment and EUR 26,8 million in payment appropriations and that the average implementation rates were 100,0 % in commitment (including carry-overs) and 87,3 % in payment appropriations; regrets that the target of 90,0 % for payment was not achieved; notes that the reason for not reaching the payment target was related to some commitments made at the very end in the year in order to reach the 95 % target set for commitments;
7. Regrets the fact that only the indicative ceiling of 10 % used by the Court of Auditors to assess the budget execution at the level of carry-overs for Title 1 (staff) has been reached, while the ceiling for Title 2 and Title 3 (respectively of 20 % (administrative expenditure) and 30 % (operational expenditure)) have not been reached;
8. Encourages the Agency to ensure the independence of the accounting officer by making him or her directly responsible to the Agency's Director (administratively) and to the Board (functionally), as underlined by the Court of Auditors; calls on the Agency to

take into consideration and undertake all necessary actions concerning the recommendations of the Internal Audit Service for 2017 on Human Resources and competency management; welcomes the adoption of the Agency's code of good administrative behaviour in January 2018, containing in particular all measures preventing conflicts of interest;

9. Deplores that numerous contacts with French authorities have not resulted in the signature of the Agency's headquarter agreement according to Article 71 of the Agency Regulation; regrets further that the Management Board has been unable in 2017 to unanimously adopt implementing rules for the language arrangements for the Agency, leading to extra costs and delays, e.g. during recruitment; deplores that the agency continues to operate in two locations; calls for the agency to relocate all activities to its headquarters and operate only from that site;
10. Notes that the results of the annual benchmarking exercise regarding the staff are similar to those of 2016 with 18% of the staff assigned to administrative tasks, 69,5 % assigned to operational task, i.e. a slight decrease (0,5%) compared to 2016 (from 65 % to 70 %), while the staff assigned to control and financial tasks remained around 12 %; notes that the BREXIT referendum in June 2016 has caused considerable disturbance amongst the Agency staff, as some key personnel in the Agency are from the UK; notes also that intensive exchange with the UK rail sector has confirmed their interest in staying in the "European system";
11. Welcomes the Agency's pro-active approach to transform its structure for its new tasks as defined by the Fourth railway Package, in particular through the setting up of a Steering Groups; encourages the Agency management to continue its focus on the preparation of the new tasks under the Fourth Railway Package technical pillar to be fully ready by 15 June 2019, recommending to put high priority on human resource management; notes the progress, among others, regarding preparatory decisions for the adoption of a framework for auditing Notified Bodies, as well as for the framework for the One-Stop-Shop and the policy on monitoring the performance and decision making of National Safety Authorities;
12. Notes that, in 2017, the Agency continued the implementation of the action plan defined in the Agency Antifraud Strategy; welcomes the fact that the Agency has included the fraud risk assessment in the regular Agency risk assessment and that the description of risks have been streamlined and clarified; notes also that during the reporting year, one case of suspicion of fraud was transmitted to OLAF;
13. Deplores that there are weaknesses in public procurement, mostly relating to services, and this weakness puts value for money at risk;
14. Welcomes the certification, under ISO 9001, of the Agency's Integrated Management System (IMS), which is an independent acknowledgement of the continuous improvement of the Agency's performance; notes that in the light of the preliminary results of the assessment of the compliance and effectiveness of the internal control against the ERA management standards, it can be considered that the Agency's control system as a whole works as intended and adequately mitigates the main risks to the achievement of the Agency's objectives;
15. 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 2017.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	22.1.2019
Result of final vote	+: 35 -: 4 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Lucy Anderson, Georges Bach, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Deirdre Clune, Michael Cramer, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Andor Deli, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Jacqueline Foster, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Innocenzo Leontini, Bogusław Liberadzki, Peter Lundgren, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Georg Mayer, Gesine Meissner, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault d'Allonnes Bonnefoy, Dominique Riquet, Massimiliano Salini, Claudia Țapardel, Keith Taylor, Pavel Telička, Marita Ulvskog, Wim van de Camp, Marie-Pierre Vieu, Janusz Zemke, Roberts Ziļe, Kosma Złotowski
Substitutes present for the final vote	Jakop Dalunde, Markus Ferber, Maria Grapini, Karoline Graswander-Hainz, Peter Kouroumbashev, João Pimenta Lopes
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Christelle Lechevalier, Francisco José Millán Mon, Julie Ward

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

35	+
ALDE	Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Gesine Meissner, Dominique Riquet, Pavel Telička
ECR	Innocenzo Leontini, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski
GUE/NGL	Marie-Pierre Vieu
PPE	Georges Bach, Wim van de Camp, Deirdre Clune, Andor Deli, Markus Ferber, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Francisco José Millán Mon, Massimiliano Salini
S&D	Lucy Anderson, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Maria Grapini, Karoline Graswander-Hainz, Peter Kouroumbashev, Bogusław Liberadzki, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault d'Allonnes Bonnefoy, Claudia Țapardel, Marita Ulvskog, Julie Ward, Janusz Zemke
VERTS/ALE	Michael Cramer, Jakop Dalunde, Keith Taylor

4	-
ECR	Jacqueline Foster, Peter Lundgren
EFDD	Daniela Aiuto
ENF	Christelle Lechevalier

2	0
ENF	Georg Mayer
GUE/NGL	João Pimenta Lopes

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention