

RESOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**of 29 April 2015****with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the SESAR Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2013**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

- having regard to its decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the SESAR Joint Undertaking for the financial year 2013,
 - having regard to Rule 94 of and Annex V to its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control and the opinion of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A8-0110/2015),
- A. whereas the SESAR Joint Undertaking ('the Joint Undertaking') was set up in February 2007 to run the Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR) programme that aims to modernise air traffic management in Europe,
- B. whereas the SESAR project is divided into a 'definition phase' (2004-2007) led by Eurocontrol, a first 'development phase' (2008-2016), funded by the 2008-2013 programming period managed by the Joint Undertaking and a 'deployment phase' (2014-2020) running in parallel to the 'development phase'; whereas the deployment phase is expected to be led by industry and stakeholders for the large-scale production and implementation of the new air traffic management infrastructure,
- C. whereas the Joint Undertaking started to work autonomously in 2007,
- D. whereas the Joint Undertaking was designed as a public-private partnership with the Union and Eurocontrol as founding members,
- E. whereas the budget for the 2008-2016 development phase of the SESAR project is EUR 2 100 000 000 and is to be provided in equal parts by the Union, Eurocontrol and the participating public and private partners,
1. Highlights the Joint Undertaking's vital role in coordinating and implementing research into the SESAR project, which is a pillar project of the Single European Sky; notes also that 2014 marks the beginning of the deployment phase of the SESAR project;

Budget and Financial Management

2. Notes that the Court of Auditors ('the Court') stated that the 2013 annual accounts of the Joint Undertaking present fairly, in all material respects, its financial position as of 31 December 2013 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with the provisions of its Financial Rules;
3. Notes that the Joint Undertaking's final budget for the financial year 2013 included commitment appropriations of EUR 64 300 000 and payment appropriations of EUR 105 400 000; notes furthermore that the utilisation rates for commitment and payment appropriations were 99,6 % and 94,7 % respectively;
4. Takes note that as of 31 December 2013, the Joint Undertaking's development phase consisted of project work done by 16 members including Eurocontrol, on programme activities involving more than 100 private and public entities and subcontractors resulting in 333 out of 358 programme projects to be implemented or completed under the third Multilateral Framework Agreement (MFA);
5. Points out that 100 % of the Union and Eurocontrol contributions payable to the other 15 members under the third MFA of EUR 595 000 000 has been committed; notes furthermore that 55 % of that amount, equalling EUR 316 000 000, has been paid out until 31 December 2013 while the remaining 45 % (EUR 279 000 000) is expected to be paid by 31 December 2016;

6. Acknowledges that in 2013 the Joint Undertaking concluded its fourth MFA which came into force on 1 January 2014 and is expected to remain in force for the remaining 3 years of the Joint Undertaking's operating life; notes that the fourth MFA provides for the reduction of the number of projects to 250 through mergers of current projects, as well as the allocation of EUR 38 000 000 to the funding of new operational activities; acknowledges that this allocation will be provided by the Joint Undertaking and will result from synergies of the mentioned mergers;
7. Calls on the Joint Undertaking to submit a report to the discharge authority concerning the contributions of all members other than the Commission, including the application of the evaluation rules for in-kind contributions, together with an assessment by the Commission;

Legal framework

8. Takes note that on 13 December 2013 the Joint Undertaking's Administrative Board, in agreement with the Commission, adopted its Financial Rules for the 2014-2020 programming period on a provisional basis; recalls that the Financial Rules have been adopted pursuant to the Commission's framework financial regulation ⁽¹⁾ with effect from 1 January 2014;
9. Notes that the Joint Undertaking's Financial Rules are subject to the forthcoming opinions and decisions of the Commission, with a focus on the continuation of derogations of funding that were in place in the previous programming period;
10. Notes the Joint Statement by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission ⁽²⁾ and the subsequent political agreement reached on the separate discharge for Joint Undertakings;

Internal control systems

11. Notes that in accordance with the coordinated strategic audit plan for the Joint Undertaking for 2012-2014, a limited review of the closing procedure applicable to grant management projects as well as a risk assessment of information technology were carried out by the Commission's Internal Audit Service's (IAS); notes moreover that a compliance audit of procurement and contract management as well as a review of the ABAC Workflow authorisations were carried out by the Internal Audit Capability (IAC) in 2013;
12. Points out that the Joint Undertaking has put specific measures in place in order to prevent conflicts of interest with respect to its three key stakeholders: Administrative Board members, employees and experts;
13. Takes note that between October 2012 and March 2014, the Commission's Second Interim Evaluation was carried out in order to assess the Joint Undertaking in terms of the implementation of its establishing regulation, working methods, results obtained and general financial situation; emphasises that the report produced two main recommendations, one addressing the need to improve the approach towards the specific information and communication needs of Member States, and the second which addresses the need to continue efforts to improve the Joint Undertaking's annual goal completion rate; is concerned that its annual goal completion rate was 82 % by the end of 2012 (60 % in 2010) and believes performance must be improved;
14. Notes from the Court's report that the improvements in the *ex ante* controls area have been implemented;

Monitoring and reporting of research results

15. Takes note that on 31 May 2013, the Joint Undertaking published its Annual Report on the monitoring of the implementation of the Intellectual Property provisions in all financial years prior to 2013; notes furthermore that on 30 October 2013, the Administrative Board of the Joint Undertaking adopted the compiled list of the Foreground ownership assessment and the related ownership status for all financial years prior to 2013;

⁽¹⁾ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1271/2013 of 30 September 2013 on the framework financial regulation for the bodies referred to in Article 208 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 328, 7.12.2013, p. 42).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 163, 29.5.2014, p. 21.

16. Believes, where appropriate, that links between the Joint Undertaking and the Clean Sky Joint Undertaking should be strengthened; invites the Commission to work with both joint undertakings in order to improve the communication and reinforce synergies and complementarities, ensuring at the same time that there is no risk of overlapping between the activities of the two joint undertakings in question;
 17. Acknowledges from the Court's report that the Joint Undertaking proceeded to disseminate research foreground by making available detailed information on deliverables and their processes to the relevant stakeholders on its extranet, as well as by publishing general details of 2013 deliverables in its 2013 annual activity report;
 18. Calls on the Joint Undertaking to submit a report to the discharge authority on the social-economic benefits of the already completed projects; calls for that report to be submitted to the discharge authority together with an assessment by the Commission;
 19. Recalls that Parliament has previously requested the Court to draw up a special report on the capacity of the joint undertakings, together with their private partners, to ensure added value and efficient execution of Union research, technological development and demonstration programmes.
-