Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors

A Rolling Check-List of recent findings

STUDY

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service
Authors: Biliana Tzarnoretska and Gabriella Zana with Ilja Surikovs
Policy Cycle Unit
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Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors: A Rolling Check-List of recent findings
Introduction

This rolling check-list is intended to present a comprehensive overview of the European Court of Auditors’ (ECA) special reports, concentrating on those relevant for the 2015 EU discharge procedure. This document aims to relate the topics covered in the special reports to the relevant debates and positions within the European Parliament (EP), including, notably, the working documents of the Committee on Budgetary Control and the work of specialised parliamentary committees, and also Members’ written and oral questions. Accordingly, it provides a tool for parliamentary committees and Members to better analyse the different stages in the policy cycle. It is produced by the Policy Cycle Unit of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the EP’s in-house research service and think-tank, as part of its on-going support for parliamentary committees and individual Members in scrutinising the executive in its implementation of EU law, policies and programmes.

The special reports of the European Court of Auditors present the results of ECA performance audits, which cover a wide range of topics and issues related to the management of EU funds, programmes and policies. ECA performance audits assess the quality of EU spending or revenue in the specific policy area, and whether the principles of sound financial management have been applied. EU programmes and operations, and the management systems and procedures of bodies and institutions managing EU funds, are examined in order to evaluate whether resources have been used efficiently and effectively and in an economically sound manner.

The ECA’s special reports form an integral part of the discharge procedure, and the European Parliament adopts a separate resolution on them which is published during the year of the specific discharge procedure concerned. At the same time, they are a useful tool for policy-makers, highlighting issues of implementation and enforcement of EU policies and programmes, but also good practices and lessons learned. They contribute to better law-making by providing valuable information to the co-legislators as to where the design of future EU legislation or programmes needs further improvements.

The check-list seeks to assist Members both in their work on scrutinising how the EU general budget is spent and in their role as co-legislator. The document will be updated on a regular basis to include the most recent special reports. The first edition of this rolling check-list covered ECA special reports of relevance for the 2015 EU discharge procedure.

Depending on their interests and objectives, readers might also find it useful to use this rolling check-list in conjunction with the other rolling check-lists, listed below, that are produced by the Policy Cycle Unit of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). These research and analysis tools complement each other and allow the reader to gather an overview of relevant information available in a given policy area or on a specific piece of legislation at different stages of the policy cycle. Together, these rolling check-lists offer a rich and varied repository of information and analysis, creating a ‘scrutiny toolbox’ for the European Parliament:
‘Review Clauses in EU Legislation: A Rolling Check-List’, which provides parliamentary committees with a structured overview, by subject area and individual legislative act, of review clauses and the timelines for up-coming reviews and other reporting provisions in EU law.

‘Evaluation in the European Commission: Rolling Check-List and State of Play’, which provides a comprehensive overview of on-going and planned ex-post evaluations of EU legislation and spending programmes conducted by the Commission, as well as of the mechanisms underpinning them;

‘European Commission Follow-up to European Parliament Requests: A Rolling Check-List’, which looks at recent resolutions adopted by the European Parliament on the basis of own-initiative reports and legislative own-initiative reports and the response of the European Commission to these resolutions;

‘International Agreements - Review and Monitoring Clauses: A Rolling Check-List’, which outlines review and monitoring clauses, sunset clauses and management and implementation clauses included in international agreements that have been concluded between the EU and third countries.

The European Parliament is strongly committed to the concept of better law-making, and particularly to the effective use of ex-ante impact assessment and ex-post evaluation throughout the whole legislative cycle. It is in this spirit that the Parliament has a particular interest in following the transposition, implementation and enforcement of EU law, and more generally, in monitoring the impact, operation, effectiveness and delivery of policies and programmes in practice.

Stephan HUBER
Head of Policy Cycle Unit,
Directorate-General for Impact Assessment and European Added Value,
European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).

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**Financial assistance provided to Member States in difficulties**

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<td>1.1. Were the growing fiscal risks detected on time?</td>
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<td>1.2. Were processes sufficiently well designed to make a comprehensive input into programme decisions?</td>
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<td>1.3. Did the Commission borrow at the best possible rates and in accordance with best debt issuance practices?</td>
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<td>1.4. Did the financial assistance programmes meet their main objectives?</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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<td>1. The Commission was unprepared for the magnitude of the crisis that broke out: it underestimated the extent of the fiscal imbalances in the run-up to the crisis, and as a result, the Commission was not ready for the programme management;</td>
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<td>2. Processes were generally weak: the Commission’s processes did not always incorporate sufficient checks and balances, programme documents had improved with time but still displayed shortcomings, cooperation with the other partners was informal only;</td>
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<td>3. Borrowing met financing needs even though circumstances initially made it difficult to always abide by best practice. Bond issues were also well subscribed;</td>
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<td>4. Programmes did meet their objectives.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
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<td>1. The Commission should establish an institution-wide framework allowing the rapid mobilisation of the Commission’s staff and expertise if a financial assistance programme emerges. The Commission should also develop procedures in the context of the ‘two-pack’ regulations.</td>
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<td>2. The forecasting process should be subject to more systematic quality control.</td>
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<td>3. To ensure the factors underlying programme decisions are internally transparent, the Commission should enhance record-keeping and pay attention to it during quality reviews.</td>
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<td>4. The Commission should ensure that proper procedures are in place for the quality review of programme management and of the content of programme documents.</td>
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<td>5. For budget monitoring purposes, the Commission should include, in memoranda of understanding, variables that it can collect with short time lags.</td>
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<td>6. The Commission should distinguish conditions by importance and target the truly important reforms.</td>
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7. For any future programmes, the Commission should attempt to formalise interinstitutional cooperation with other programme partners.
8. The debt management process should be more transparent.
9. The Commission should further analyse the key aspects of the countries’ adjustment.

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<td>1-3. Takes note ... and welcomes the first Special Report of the Court on economic governance in the EU...; regrets that the Court has not included in this report all the Member States that received financial assistance since the beginning of the financial crisis, including the programme for Greece in order to facilitate a comparison;</td>
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<td>4-5. Welcomes ... that the Court will produce a separate Special Report on Greece; calls on the Court to compare the results of both Special Reports and ... to address the suggestions of the European Parliament to the Report on Greece, including medium and long term results; ... calls on the Court ... to take fully into consideration the external expertise reports requested by the Court as a background basis for the audit;</td>
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<td>6. Draws attention to the fact that the Court limited the audit to the very short term and concrete scenario of financial assistance as decided by the EU Council without taking into consideration other potential solutions to the fiscal imbalances that were already part of public and academic debate, such as the mutualisation of sovereign debt or debt relief;</td>
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<td>7. Regrets that the report limits its focus to the management of the assistance but does not analyse, nor question, the programme's content and the conditions negotiated for financial assistance;</td>
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<td>8. Takes note that the specific measures taken by the EU political level and the main features of the programmes have only been described in the Special Report; encourages the Court to analyse if the measures adopted were appropriate to the objectives of the programmes and the way they have interacted with the wider policy framework and long term objectives, including the Europe 2020 strategy;</td>
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<td>9. Takes note that the objectives of the financial assistance programmes were for the assisted countries to return to financial markets, achieve sustainable public finances, and return to growth and reduce unemployment; regrets that the Court’s findings has not fully analysed the results of the programme against these objectives;</td>
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<td>10. Notes that the Court primarily focused its conclusions on the Commission as the manager of the financial assistance, but considers that for a better understanding, further attention should have been brought to the International Monetary Fund and the ECB which initially supported the Commission in the preparation and monitoring of the programmes;</td>
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<td>11. Shares the view of the Commission that the role of the EU Council and other partners has been underestimated in the establishment and management of the programme; asks the Court and Commission to analyse the relevance of the measures adopted by the Council, and the role of the ECB, and whether these were appropriate to meet the objectives of the programme and contributed to the EU’s objectives, including phasing out of the economic crisis, more jobs and growth;</td>
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<td>12. Regrets that the partners did not always share all available information with the Commission which led to inconsistency of the negotiating team; urges the Commission to set up formal agreements with the partners in order to have full access to all information available in due time and thus avoid such problems in the future;</td>
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<td>13. Highlights that some of the reforms indicated in the programmes (i.e. reform of labour markets) can only lead to results in competitiveness in the very long term, while assistance programme seek mainly more immediate, short-term results;</td>
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<td>14. Regrets that the programmes have been mainly based on the side of expenditure (reforms on labour markets, pension and unemployment schemes, reduction of local entities etc.) as well as cuts to public programmes (education, social security and health programmes) which have had an impact not</td>
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only on vulnerable citizens, but also on depressing growth opportunities;

15. Urges the Council to carefully review the toolbox and set of measures available for financial assistance in future programmes in order to reduce the impact on the population, the non-desired effect on internal demand and the socialisation of the costs of the crisis;

16-17. Highlights that financial assistance provided to the Member States in difficulties took the form of loans borrowed on the capital markets using the EU budget as a guarantee; considers that the role of the European Parliament as budgetary authority in these programmes has been undermined ...; urges the Commission to increase the level of Parliament's involvement in the framework of financial assistance when the EU budget it is at stake;

18. Considers important to study the role of the European Central Bank in indirectly helping Member States to meet their objectives and on the wider support to the financial architecture of the EU during the time of the financial programmes;

19. Considers that at the onset of the crisis it was difficult to have predicted some abrupt imbalances with devastating effects in some Member States; highlights the difficulty of predicting the magnitude and nature of the 2007-2008 global financial crises which was unprecedented;

20. Shares the Court's view that the attention paid to the pre-crisis surveillance legal framework was not adequate in identifying the risk in the underlying fiscal positions in times of severe economic crisis;

21. Welcomes the approval by the legislators of the 'six' and 'two' pack introduced as a result of the financial crisis which addressed the surveillance weakness that the crisis revealed; considers however that the reform of the EU Economic governance framework in the past years has not lead to a complete phase-out of the crisis and calls on the Commission to further analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the new framework compared to other similar economies (i.e. US, Japan and other OECD countries) and to propose new reforms, if necessary;

22. Calls on the Commission to follow the Court's recommendation to further improve the quality of its macroeconomic and fiscal forecasts;

23. Takes note of the Court's conclusion that the Commission achieved in difficult time constraints and limited experience ex novo duties to manage the financial assistance programmes; highlights the Court's conclusion that this was an achievement taking into consideration the environmental constraints;

24. Welcomes the decision to allow the management of financial assistance to be the responsibility of the Commission instead of other financial partners, allowing tailored assistance that takes into consideration particularities and ownership of the Member States;

25. Is of the opinion that while Member States should be treated equally, flexibility to tailor and adjust programmes and reforms to particular national circumstances was deemed necessary; consider that for future programmes of the Commission and reports of the Court, it should be necessary to identify and differentiate the implementation of strictly EU measures from the national conjectural agendas;

26-28. Takes note of the Court's comment as regards the Commission's difficulties in keeping track of the information and that its processes were not geared towards retrospective evaluation of the decisions taken; underlines that in the early phase of the programmes, the Commission was operating under severe time and political pressure in the face of uncertain risks ...; considers that, whilst not having prior experience on financial assistance, the Commission 'learnt by doing' and managed to properly put in place relatively quickly those programmes and improved its management for the later ones;

29. Shares the Court's recommendations that the Commission should further analyse the key aspects of the countries' adjustments, but also should compare economic forecasts including housing market, public and private national debts; urges all Member States to provide systematically and regularly the appropriate data to the Commission;

30. Considers that the timeframe since the launch of the first EU programme until the end of the Court's analysis should give the opportunity to include improved recommendations both on the improvements and the results of the programme to future programmes, as result of the inter-institutional and contradictory dialogue between the ECA and the European Commission;

31. Considers that, on grounds of transparency, better information and communication to citizens, the replies of the Commission and the opinion of the Court should be presented in a double column to allow comparison of views as is done for the annual report of the Court;

32. Taking into account the sensitivity of these new reports on EU financial governance, recommends that the press releases and other communication documents should reflect thoroughly the findings and recommendations of the Court.
**Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees**


**Leading Committee:** ECON (EMPL, IMCO, REGI, CULT for opinion)

**Summary**

**Articles 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 15**

The Parliament welcomed the Commission’s focus in its 2016 country-specific recommendations (CSRs) on the three main priorities to further strengthen economic growth: supporting investment for innovation, growth and job creation, pursuing socially balanced structural reforms and encouraging responsible public finances. It stressed, however, that the Commission should do more to bolster fiscal sustainability in line with the Stability and Growth Pact. The Parliament recognised the importance of coherence between cohesion policy instruments and the wider economic governance framework, with a view to supporting the recovery efforts needed to achieve compliance with the European Semester rules, underlined, however, that the legitimacy of cohesion policy derives from the Treaties, and that this policy is the expression of European solidarity, having as its main objectives strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU. It stressed that measures linking the effectiveness of ESI Funds with sound economic governance should be applied judiciously and in a balanced way, but only as a last resort, and that their effects should be reported. The Parliament welcomed the Commission’s continuing approach of limiting the number of recommendations and its effort to streamline the semester by covering mainly key priority areas of macroeconomic and social relevance when setting the policy objectives for the next 18 months and stressed the need to reduce economic disparities and achieve upward convergence between Member States. It supported the efforts made to ensure greater national ownership in the formulation and implementation of CSRs and considers that these should be clearly articulated around well-defined and structured priorities at European level, involving national parliaments, regional and local authorities where appropriate. The Parliament supported the proposal of a code of conduct for the involvement of the local and regional authorities in the European Semester as suggested by the Committee of the Regions. It called on the Commission to continue to encourage responsible and sustainable budgetary policies that underpin growth and recovery in all Member States by putting more emphasis on investment and efficient public expenditure, and supporting sustainable and socially balanced structural reforms and invited the Commission to give priority to measures that reduce the obstacles to greater investment flows and trade.

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**Leading Committee:** ECON (EMPL, IMCO, AFCO for opinion)

**Summary**

**Articles 3, 38, 46, 48, 49, 52, 54**

The Parliament took note of the fact that in some Member States, progress had been made in addressing debt level or in exiting the Excessive Deficit Procedure. It was, however, concerned by the debt increase in countries which already had a high level of debt. It asked the Commission to explain how it intended to address this contradiction and to ensure that debt ratios would be reduced to sustainable levels in line with the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). It believed that a deepened and more resilient EMU urgently needed less complexity, better ownership and more transparency, rather than just adding new layers of rules to the already existing ones. It acknowledged, based on the current situation, that the economic governance framework must be simplified, better enforced and where necessary, corrected and completed to allow for the EU and the euro area to meet the challenges of convergence, sustainable growth, full employment, citizens’ welfare, competitiveness, sound and sustainable public finances, future oriented with high social-economic return long-lasting investment and reliance. Recalled
its request to develop options for a new legal framework for future macroeconomic adjustment programmes, replacing the Troika, in order to increase the transparency and ownership of these programmes and ensure that all EU decisions are, where possible, taken under the Community method. The Parliament stressed that the 6 and 2 pack were based on a strengthened role for an independent Commissioner who should ensure the fair and non-discriminatory application of the rules, believed that further steps in the institutional set-up of economic governance, such as the strengthening of the role of the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs or the creation of a European Treasury Office must respect the separation of powers between the different institutions and be linked to adequate means for democratic accountability and legitimacy, involving the European Parliament.

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Leading Committee: ECON (BUDG, EMPL, ENVI and IMCO for opinion)
Summary

Articles 10, 16

The Parliament underlined the fact that the excessive indebtedness in several Member States in the euro area was not only an obstacle to growth but also put a huge burden on future generations. It was still concerned at the lack of progress in reducing excessive private debt levels. The Parliament pointed out that a necessary condition for the success of financial assistance programmes was a combination of solidarity and conditionality, strong ownership and commitment to reform. It recalled the Commission to fully align the legal obligations arising from the 'two-pack' (Regulation (EU) N° 472/2013) with the current adjustment programmes. It urged the Commission and the Member States, to incorporate financial assistance and the ad hoc system of the Troika into an improved legal structure compliant with the EU economic governance framework and community law, thereby guaranteeing democratic accountability. It called on the future Commission to put forward, inter alia, a proposal on the single external representation of the euro area based on Article 138 TFEU as well as to present the report committed in the 'two pack' and the roadmap 'Towards a Genuine EMU' on the possibilities offered by the Union’s existing fiscal framework to balance public investments needs with the fiscal discipline objectives;

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EP Resolution of 13/03/2014 on the enquiry on the role and operations of the Troika (ECB, Commission and IMF) with regard to the euro area programme countries, based on 2013/2277(INI) (P7_TA-PROV(2014)0239; A7-0149/2014)
Leading Committee: ECON (CONT and AFCO for opinion)
Summary

Articles 38,48, 67, 83, 84, 90, 91

The Parliament welcomed the fact that financial assistance achieved in the short run the objective of avoiding a disorderly default on sovereign debt that would have had extremely severe economic and social consequences which would have arguably been worse than the current ones. However, that there was still no guarantee this would be avoided in the long run. The Parliament noted that because of the evolving nature of the EU’s response to the crisis, the unclear role of the ECB in the Troika and the nature of the Troika decision-making process, the Troika’s mandate had been perceived as being unclear and lacking in transparency and democratic oversight. It called for the development of an improved communication strategy for ongoing and future financial assistance
programmes. It urged that this concern be given the utmost priority, as inaction on this front would ultimately damage the image of the Union. Regarding the Commission, the Parliament called on the Commission to start interinstitutional negotiations with Parliament in order to define a common procedure for informing the competent committee of Parliament on the conclusions drawn from the monitoring of the macroeconomic adjustment programme, as well as the progress made in the preparation of the draft macroeconomic adjustment programme provided for in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 472/2013. It reminded the Commission to conduct and publish ex-post evaluations of its recommendations and its participation in the Troika. It called on the Council and the Commission, in conformity with Article 265 TFEU, to act in order to streamline and align the ad hoc financial assistance programmes with the procedures and acts referred to in Regulation (EU) No 472/2013. The Parliament emphasised in particular that it had laid down provisions in this position which increase further the transparency and accountability of the decision-making process leading to the adoption of macroeconomic adjustment programmes, providing for a clearer and well-delimited mandate and overall role for the Commission. The Parliament emphasized that the preparation of future assistance programmes shall be placed under the responsibility of the Commission, which should seek advice, where appropriate, from third parties such as the ECB, the IMF or other bodies. It instructed the Commission, in its capacity of 'guardian of the Treaties', to present by the end of 2015, a detailed study of the economic and social consequences of the adjustment programmes in five countries (Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Ireland and Portugal) in order to provide a precise understanding of both the short-term and long-term impact of the programmes, thus enabling the resulting information to be used for future assistance measures. It called on the Commission and Council to ensure the involvement of all relevant Directorate -Generals (DGs) of the Commission and national ministries in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) discussions and decisions. It highlighted in particular the role DG Employment had to play alongside DG ECFIN and DG MARKT in ensuring that the social dimension was a key consideration in the negotiations.

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EP Resolution of 13/03/2014 on Employment and social aspects of the role and operations of the Troika (ECB, Commission and IMF) with regard to euro area programme countries, based on 2014/2007(INI) (P7_TA-PROV(2014)0240; A7-0135/2014)
Leading Committee: EMPL
Summary

Articles 4, 36, 37

The Parliament emphasized its regret of the conditionality imposed in return for the financial assistance, which threatened the EU's social objectives. This was because the EU was ill-prepared and ill-equipped to deal with the problems that arose, mainly because the sovereign debt crisis demanded an immediate response in order to avoid bankruptcy. However, the financial measures were particularly burdensome, likely because the economic and social situation was not noticed in time, because little time was allowed to implement them, and because proper impact assessments were not made considering their distributional impact on different groups of society. The parliament called on the Commission to carry out a detailed study of the social and economic consequences of the economic and financial crisis, and the adjustment programmes carried out in response to it in the four countries, in order to provide a precise understanding of both the short-term and long-term effects on employment and social protection systems. The Parliament further called on the Commission to use its consultative bodies when drafting this study, as well as the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee and suggested that the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) be asked to draft a specific report. It invited the Commission to ask the ILO and the Council of Europe to draft reports on possible corrective measures and incentives needed to improve the social situation in these countries, their funding and the sustainability of public finances, and to ensure full compliance with the European Social Charter, with the Protocol thereto and with the ILO's Core Conventions and its Convention 94, since the obligations deriving from these instruments have been affected by the economic and financial crisis and by the budgetary adjustment measures and the structural reforms requested by the Troika.
Leading Committee: CONT

Article 9

The Parliament acknowledged that in the future, the Court should devote more resources to the examination of whether economy, effectiveness and efficiency have been achieved in the use of the public funds entrusted to the Commission. It noted the results of the findings obtained in Special Reports should imply corresponding adjustments in EU programmes.

Leading Committee: AFCO (ECON, EMPL and REGI for opinion)

Summary

Articles 8, 27, 28, 37, 53, 54, 55

The Parliament stressed that the existing differentiated integration procedures under the Treaties allow taking a first step in the establishment of a genuine EMU which is fully consistent with the requirements of stronger democratic accountability, increased financial resources and better decision-making capacity. It called on all institutions to proceed swiftly by maximising the possibilities afforded by the existing Treaties. It stressed that proper legitimacy and accountability must be ensured at national and EU levels by national parliaments and the European Parliament respectively. It recalled the principle set out in the conclusions of the December 2012 European Council meeting that ‘throughout the process, the general objective remains to ensure democratic legitimacy and accountability at the level at which decisions are taken and implemented’. It regretted, therefore, the lack of parliamentary scrutiny of the Troika, the EFSF and the ESM. It noted that to mitigate the crisis and respond to structural shortcomings in the architecture of the economic and monetary union, national governments and European institutions had implemented a wide range of measures to safeguard financial stability and improve economic governance. It noted that these decisions, such as certain provisions of the six-pack and the creation of the ESM, only concerned the euro area members. It welcomed the fact that, on 2 July 2013, the Commission, following the two-pack agreements, set up an expert group under the chairmanship of Ms Gertrude Tumpel-Gugerell, tasked with thoroughly assessing the main features of a potential redemption fund and eurobills, including any legal provisions, financial architecture and complementary budgetary frameworks, and intended to position itself on these matters after the expert group’s report has been submitted. It considered that the operations of the EFSF/ESM and any future similar structure should be subject to regular democratic control and oversight by the European Parliament. It took the view that the ESM should be fully incorporated within the framework of the Union. It pointed out that the troika must be held properly accountable. It was of the opinion that the Commission should report regularly on behalf of the Troika to the European Parliament, by means of regular reporting. It recalled that EU participation in the ‘troika’ system should be subject to democratic scrutiny by, and accountability to, the Parliament.

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EP Resolution of 12/06/2013 on strengthening European democracy in the future EMU based on 2013/2672(RSP) (P7_TA(2013)0269; B7-0271/2013)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA

Summary

Articles 7, 11, 12

The Parliament reminded the Commission that it had the sole right of legislative initiative. It was, therefore, perplexed as to why the Commission had not yet presented legislative texts based on the proposals contained in its ‘Blueprint for a deep and genuine EMU and the Commission declaration annexed to the ‘Two-Pack’ regulations. It believed that if the Commission did not take such an initiative as a matter of urgency, it would be neglecting its political and Treaty-based responsibilities. It reiterated its repeated demands that the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) be integrated into the Community acquis so that it can be managed in accordance with the Community method, and that it be made accountable to Parliament. It asked the Commission to put forward a proposal to that end. It recalled that EU participation in the ‘troika’ system should be subject to democratic scrutiny by, and accountability to, the Parliament.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 on the proposal for a Council regulation establishing a facility for providing financial assistance for Member States whose currency is not the Euro (COM(2012)0336), based on 2012/0164(APP) (P7_TA(2013)0174; A7-0129/2013)
Leading Committee: ECON

Summary

Articles 1, 2, 3, 7

The Parliament welcomed the proposal for a Council regulation establishing a facility for providing financial assistance for Member States whose currency is not the Euro (BoP proposal). It acknowledged the task was not simple given the features of the euro area, but believed the BoP financial assistance could play an important role in helping Member States absorb funds more effectively. The Parliament mentioned the following amendments that were needed in order to achieve an acceptable outcome, and requested the in the interest of transparency, that the Council and the Commission await the adoption of this interim report before adopting the regulation on the basis of the BoP proposal: 1.) specifications regarding the evaluation on the government debt sustainability analysis, including disclosure requirements (Article 6 of the Gauzès file) 2.) additional specifications regarding the mandate of technical assistance provided to Member States under programme (Article 7(8) of the Gauzès file) 3.) the need for realistic, updated and disclosed forecasts (Articles 6 and 7(5) of the Gauzès file) 4.) comprehensive audit of a Member State’s public finances within the macroeconomic adjustment programme (Article 7(9) of the Gauzès file) 5.) assessment of whether deviations from the programme are within or beyond Member State control, as well as assessment of the consequences resulting from the macroeconomic adjustment programme and the explicit protection of health care and education sectors (Articles 7(5) and 7(7) of the Gauzès file) 6.) economic dialogue with the Commission, the ECB and the IMF (Article 3(9) of the Gauzès file) 7.) regular communication of the review mission assessment in post-programme surveillance to the competent committee of the European Parliament and to the parliament of the Member State concerned, including the possibility to conduct an economic dialogue (Articles 14(3) and 14(5) of the Gauzès file) 8.) monitoring requirements on the quality of public finances including provisions regarding the impact of foreseen budgetary measures on the targets set by the Union’s Strategy for growth and jobs (EU2020 targets) and the adaptations that an assistance programme entails on the National Reform Programmes as well as a description and quantification of budgetary measures, including foreseen tax policy reforms and potential spill-over effects of foreseen measures for other Member States (Article 6 of the Ferreira File).

Leading Committee: ECON (BUDG and EMPL for opinion)

**Summary**


Articles 2 and 3 of the Final Act

The Commission shall publish, for information purposes, a list of the instruments providing precautionary financial assistance, as referred to in paragraph 3 and shall keep it updated to take into account possible changes in the financial support policy of the ESM, the EFSF or of another relevant international financial institution. The assessment of the sustainability of the government debt shall be based on the most likely macroeconomic scenario or a more prudent scenario and budgetary forecasts using the most up-to-date information and taking proper account of the outcome of the reporting referred to in point (a) of Article 3(3) as well as any supervisory task exercised in accordance with point (b) of Article 3(3). The Commission shall also assess the impact of macroeconomic and financial shocks and adverse developments on the sustainability of government debt. The Commission shall make public the macroeconomic scenario, including the growth scenario, the relevant parameters underpinning the assessment of the sustainability of the government debt of the Member State concerned, and the estimated impact of the aggregate budgetary measures on economic growth.

**Reporting**

Article 19 of the Final Act

By 1 January 2014, and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and to the Council a report on the application of this Regulation, accompanied, where appropriate, by a proposal to amend this Regulation. The Commission shall make that report public.

The reports referred to in the first subparagraph shall evaluate, inter alia:
(a) the effectiveness of this Regulation;
(b) progress in ensuring closer coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of economic performance of the Member States in accordance with the TFEU;
(c) the contribution of this Regulation to the achievement of the Union’s strategy for growth and jobs.

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**EP Resolution of 16/01/2013** on the feasibility of introducing Stability Bonds, based on 2012/2028(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0018; A7-0402/2012)

Leading Committee: ECON (IMCO and JURI for opinion)

**Summary**

Articles 17, 18, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 38, 44, 46
The Parliament asked for further clarification on the Commission’s proposal to make the common debt issuance conditional, e.g. concerning the Stability and Growth Pact. This is because the Parliament believed that the prospect of common bonds may be a strong signal to financial markets, help preserve the integrity of the EMU, underpin a return to economic stability and reduce uncertainty, provided that progress is made with EU financial and budgetary integration and supervision. It reiterated its position that sequencing was a key issue, involving a binding roadmap similar to the Maastricht criteria for introducing the single currency. It recommended that the Commission define exit and entry criteria based on strong fiscal consolidation and budgetary discipline, while also taking into account the current crisis and the fiscal adjustments being pursued in a number of euro area countries. It asked the Commission to elaborate further on the criteria of allocation of the loans to the Member States, as the Green Book only states that this would be done ‘according to their needs’; insists that the capacity to service the debt should be one of the central allocation criteria. It pointed out that the Commission’s Green Book stated that the upper limit of 60 % of GDP in the blue bond proposals may be too high to insure the stability of the system, and asked for further clarification concerning that limit. It believed that it was essential to establish a roadmap for finding, in the short term, an exit from the current crisis, and for moving, in the long term, towards a fiscal union by completing, strengthening and deepening the economic and monetary union. It called on the Commission as soon as possible to present a report to Parliament and the Council examining the options for, and – if appropriate – making proposals for a roadmap towards, common issuance of public debt instruments, taking into account financial, budgetary and legal aspects. It noted that, in this context and in parallel to the intermediary Van Rompuy report of 12 October 2012 , the Commission should pay particular attention to the feasibility of introducing a redemption fund which combines temporary common issuance of debt instruments, and strict rules on fiscal adjustment among those countries whose indebtedness exceeds 60 % of GDP, with the participating countries undertaking to make their repayments, in order to allow all participating countries to reduce excessive debt over a benchmark period of 25 years, which was a longer period than provided for in the renewed Stability and Growth Pact but which likewise, in practice, required sufficient economic growth and very strict financial discipline. It called on the Commission to engage in clarifying the legal restraints to the common issuance of bonds, especially Article 125 of the TFEU and its implication for three possible issuing modes: joint liability, several liabilities, and joint and several liabilities. It urged the Commission to analyse the possible use of article 352/1 of the TFEU, or any other legal basis, for the implementation of a partial common debt issuance solution without a necessary Treaty change, including a surveillance and reporting framework, on the basis of Articles 121 and 136 of the TFEU, aiming at monitoring, on a quarterly basis, progress made by euro area Member States and by the euro area as a whole towards a reinforced and genuine Economic and Monetary Union, as well as aiming at coordinating the issuance of sovereign debt instruments not covered by any mutualisation framework. It asked the Commission to elaborate further its option to establish a system of differentiation of the interest rates between Member States with divergent ratings, especially in order to clarify how and by whom these ratings are established once market mechanisms are neutralised by the introduction of common bonds. It stressed that the Commission should study the feasibility of each and all of the options presented in the Annex to this resolution (both phase 1 and phase 2), as these options were not necessarily alternative but could be, under certain circumstances, cumulative. It urged the Commission to assess comprehensively the impact of different guarantee structures for stability bonds on national debt-to-GDP ratios.

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EP Resolution of 20/11/2012 with recommendations to the Commission on the report of the Presidents of the European Council, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the Eurogroup 'Towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union', based on 2012/2151(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0430; A7-0339/2012) Leading Committee: ECON (BUDG, EMPL and AFCO for opinion)

Summary

Articles 12, 14, 16

The Parliament was of the opinion that under the existing Treaties Article 136 TFEU allows the Council, on a recommendation from the Commission and with the
vote of only the Member States whose currency is the euro, to adopt binding economic policy guidelines for the euro area countries in the framework of the European Semester. It stressed that an incentive mechanism would reinforce the binding nature of the economic policy coordination. It called for an Interinstitutional Agreement to involve Parliament in the drafting and approval of the Annual Growth Survey and the Economic Policy and Employment Guidelines. It requested the Commission to submit to Parliament as soon as possible after consultation of all interested parties, with Parliament being a co-legislator, proposals for acts on following the detailed recommendations set out in the Annex hereto. It called on the Commission, in addition to the measures which can and must be taken swiftly under the existing Treaties, to list the institutional developments which may prove necessary in order to establish a stronger EMU architecture, based on the need for an integrated financial framework, an integrated budgetary framework and an integrated economic-policy framework built on enhancing the role of Parliament.

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EP Resolution of 26/10/2012 on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation of 2012 priorities, based on 2012/2150(INI)
(P7_TA(2012)0408; A7-0312/2012)
Leading Committee: ECON (BUDG, EMPL, IMCO, AFCO and FEMM for opinion)
Summary

Articles 4, 14, 15, 19, 30, 57, 58, 62, 63

The Parliament urged the Commission to avoid taking a one-size-fits-all approach to the recommendations given to Member States and to ensure that such recommendations were made according to the specific needs of the Member State concerned. It called on the Commission to be more explicit, thorough and coherent in its recommendations, to continue to monitor recommendations made in the past, including detailed explanation and evaluation in those cases where the Commission thinks a country has only partially followed the recommendations and to take full account of the different economic and social realities of each Member State. It considers that the Commission should make recommendations to Member States on how to minimise the negative spill-over effects of their internal policies and facilitate compliance of other Member States. It believed that in order to pursue such a plan the Commission should propose that European funds be used as efficiently as possible and should look for ways to adapt them to the needs that the EU currently has, something which requires adequate funding. It called upon the Commission to include the EU2020 Strategy in the European Semester and to ensure that it was better reflected in the country-specific recommendations. It called on the Commission to report on the progress made regarding the call issued by Parliament in its resolution of 1 December 2011 on the European Semester for Economic Policy Coordination for ‘the Commission to ask civil society and social partners to contribute an annual shadow report on the progress of the Member States regarding the headline targets and the implementation of measures proposed in the NRPs’. It called on the Commission to report on the use of a common, uniform set of benchmarks across the EU for assessing the NRPs. It called on the Commission to encourage the Member States to use social indicators and data that measure progress and development which goes beyond the measure of GDP, as this was crucial in order to measure progress on reaching the Europe 2020 targets. It urged the Commission, in its next Annual Growth Survey (AGS), to fully address and underline the role of the EU budget in the European Semester process by providing factual and concrete data on its triggering, catalytic, synergetic and complementary effects on overall public expenditure at local, regional and national levels. It called therefore, on the Member States neither to consider their national GNI contribution to the EU budget as an adjustment variable in their consolidation efforts, nor to seek to reduce artificially the volume of the EU budget’s growth-enhancing expenditure contrary to the political commitments they have made at the highest level. It was, however, aware of the economic tension between the need to consolidate public finances in the short run, on the one hand, and any potential increase for some Member States in their GNI-based contribution brought about by an increase in the level of payments in the EU budget. It restated, therefore, its strong calls for reform of the financing of the EU budget – to be agreed in the framework of the 2014-2020 MFF negotiations – by reducing the share of Member States’ GNI-based contributions to the EU budget to 40 % by 2020, thereby contributing to their consolidation efforts. It asked the Commission, moreover, to explore the possibility of excluding the GNI-based contribution to the EU
budget from the calculation of the structural deficit as defined in the two-pack.

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Leading Committee: ECON (BUDG, EMPL, ENV, ITRE, IMCO, REGI, CULT, AFCO and FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**

Articles 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 71

The Parliament called on the Commission to ensure that the national policies and targets announced in the National Reform Programmes together add up to a level that was sufficiently ambitious to reach the EU 2020 headline targets. It called on the Commission to make sure that all Member States contribute to the headline targets according to their potential and give an exact road map together with the corresponding timetable for necessary actions. It called on the Commission to reflect better the comprehensive multidimensional (smart, sustainable and inclusive) approach of the EU2020 strategy in the benchmarks used to assess the progress made by Member States and to issue country-specific recommendations accordingly. It called on the Commission to enlarge the set of indicators it uses to monitor national developments, taking account of the work performed, notably, in the framework of the follow-up to the Communication 'GDP and beyond' and the roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe. It called on the Commission to adopt the Annual Sustainable Growth Guidelines by 10 January each year with a specific chapter for the euro area. It called on the Commission, when drawing up the Annual Sustainable Growth Guidelines, to draw upon a wide range of scientific expertise to the greatest extent possible and to take relevant recommendations of the European Parliament, Member States and local and regional governments into account. It further called on the Commission clearly to assess, in the Annual Sustainable Growth Guidelines, the main economic and fiscal problems of the EU and individual Member States, to propose priority measures to overcome those problems, and to identify the initiatives taken by the Union and the Member States to support enhanced competitiveness and long-term investment, to remove obstacles to sustainable growth, to achieve the targets laid down in the Treaties and the current EU 2020 strategy, to implement the seven flagship initiatives and to reduce macroeconomic imbalances. It called on the Commission to identify explicitly in the Annual Sustainable Growth Guidelines potential cross-border spill-over effects of major economic policy measures implemented at the EU level as well as in Member States. It called on the Commissioners responsible for the European Semester to come and debate the Annual Sustainable Growth Guidelines with the relevant EP committees as soon as they have been adopted by the Commission. It called on the Commission to make use of all available information and expertise, including that of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, in its assessment of progress towards the Europe 2020 objectives and related initiatives.

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**EP Resolution of 06/07/2011** on the financial, economic and social crisis: recommendations concerning the measures and initiatives to be taken, based on 2010/2242(INI) (P7_TA(2011)0331; A7-0228/2011)

Leading Committee: CRIS

**Summary**

Articles 13, 97

The Parliament called on the Commission to carry out an investigation into a future system of Eurobonds, with a view to determining the conditions under which such a system would be beneficial to all participating Member States and to the eurozone as a whole. It pointed out that Eurobonds would offer a viable
alternative to the US dollar bond market, and that they could foster integration of the European sovereign debt market, lower borrowing costs, increase liquidity, budgetary discipline and compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), promote coordinated structural reforms, and make capital markets more stable, which would foster the idea of the euro as a global 'safe haven'. It recalled that the common issuance of Eurobonds requires a further move towards a common economic and fiscal policy. It requested the Commission to put forward additional proposals for the regulation of financial market structures whose size, systemic integration, complexity or interconnectedness may jeopardise financial stability and the capacity of regulators to resist their demands, incorporating measures enabling supervisors to have an overview of their activities, including the shadow banking system and their level of leverage. It called on the Commission to consider regulatory options such as capping or disincentivising size as well as business models.

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EP Resolution of 16/12/2010 on establishing a permanent crisis mechanism to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area, based on 2010/2987(RSP) (P7_TA(2010)0491; B7-0733/2010)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Sharon Bowles on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

Summary

Articles 5, 8, 14, 17, 18, 19

The Parliament called on the Commission to present a Communication bringing together the broad guidelines of the economic policies (Article 121(2) TFEU) as well as the guidelines on employment policies (Article 148(2) TFEU) for consideration in the debate on the 'European Semester' to reduce meaningless and endless discussions. It urged the Commission to ensure greater involvement of the European Parliament at every stage of this debate to enhance democratic accountability and raise its public profile. It called on the Commission to present a Communication, after consultation with the ECB, containing a comprehensive description of the ESM, clarifying the position of investors, savers and market participants and stating explicitly that the ESM will be fully consistent with IMF policy and IMF practices as regards private-sector involvement in order to dissipate market concerns. It urged the Commission to speed up a legislative proposal defining a common consolidated corporate tax base (CCCTB). It also called on the Commission to present a Communication containing a comprehensive description of clauses and conditions attached to the EFSM, as well as other EU financial assistance instruments and packages granted as a response to the crisis. It asked Commission to inform the European Parliament of the estimated effect on the EU's credit rating (a) of the creation of the financial stabilisation mechanism, and (b) of the utilisation of the full line of credit. It asked the Commission to prioritise the spending in the EU budget in each year of the existence of the EFSM to establish the order in which the budget would have to be cancelled in the event of having to return up to EUR 60 billion.

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EP Resolution of 20/10/2010 with recommendations to the Commission on improving the economic governance and stability framework of the Union, in particular in the euro area, based on 2010/2099(INI) (P7_TA(2010)0377; A7-0282/2010)
Leading Committee: ECON (EMPL, IMCO and AFCO for opinion)

Summary

Articles 1, 3

The Parliament requested the Commission to submit to Parliament as soon as possible after the consultation of all interested parties, and on the basis of the appropriate provisions of the TFEU, legislative proposals in order to improve the economic governance framework of the Union, in particular within the euro
area, and following the detailed recommendations set out in the Annex, to the extent that those recommendations are not yet addressed by the Commission’s legislative proposals of 29 September 2010 on economic governance. It called on the Commission, in addition to the measures which can and must be taken swiftly under the existing Treaties, to begin to consider the institutional developments which may prove necessary in order to implement coherent, effective economic governance.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Sharon Bowles on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

Summary

Articles 98, 9, 18, 20

The Parliament asked the Commission to provide an assessment of the impact of the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism, in particular on the EU budget and other EU financial instruments and loans by the EIB. It asked the Commission to provide an assessment of the impact of the European Financial Stability Facility, in particular on the functioning of the euro bond markets and their spreads. It also asked the Commission to assess, in addition, the practicability and accountability of the decision-making procedure for this special purpose vehicle (SPV), with a view to a longer-term solution. It invited the Commission to undertake an independent feasibility study by the end of 2010 on the question of innovative financing instruments, such as the joint issuance of Eurobonds as a means of reducing spreads and increasing liquidity in euro-dominated debt markets. It asked the Commission to analyse a range of options for a long-term system to prevent and resolve potential sovereign debt problems in an efficient and sustainable way, while reaping the full benefit of the single currency. It considered that this analysis should take account of the fact that the credit risk of government bonds may differ between Member States and may need to be better reflected in credit institutions’ capital ratios.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA

Summary

Articles 13, 26

The Parliament asked the Commission to come up with a macroeconomic impact assessment of the package of measures to preserve financial stability in the European Union and to publish a communication on the feasibility, risks and advantages of issuing Eurobonds. It called on the Commission to clarify the relationship between Union budget lines and the relevant Europe 2020 strategy objectives. It insisted that before the end of the first half of 2010 the Commission should come forward with a proposal to revise the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2007-2013 in order to find extra budgetary resources to achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Oral / Written Questions

E-005870-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Sylvie Goulard (ALDE), Michael Theurer (ALDE), Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE), Sophia in ’t Veld (ALDE), Nils Torvalds (ALDE), Cora van Nieuwenhuizen (ALDE), Lieve Wierinck (ALDE), Petr Ježek (ALDE), Enrique Calvet Chambon (ALDE) on Compliance with macroeconomic adjustment
programmes in Greece
E-002347-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Marco Zanni (EFDD) on Greek bailout — fiscal multiplier
E-001058-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) on Court of Auditors report on assistance provided to countries in difficulties
E-000777-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Elisa Ferreira (S&D) on Court of Auditors report on financial assistance provided to countries in difficulties
E-015631-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Ivana Maletić (PPE) on Joint reporting by Eurostat and the ECB
E-009989-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) on Troika's second 'post-programme' assessment of Portugal
E-006336-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Lola Sánchez Caldentey (GUE/NGL) on Troika obligations and the respect for fundamental rights
E-002605-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Barbara Kappel (NI) on Progress in relation to the inquiry report on the role and operations of the Troika
E-002056-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz (ALDE) on Lack of transparency and dissolution of the troika
E-000225-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Bernd Köhl (ECR) on Need to inform members in the event of value adjustments being necessary at EFSF
E-000224-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Bernd Köhl (ECR) on Responsibility of the statutory auditor PWC
E-000223-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Bernd Köhl (ECR) on Exoneration from responsibility under criminal and civil law for actions at EFSF
E-000222-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Bernd Köhl (ECR) on The EFSF's duty to file for insolvency
E-000221-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Bernd Köhl (ECR) on Failure of the Luxembourg Public Prosecutor's office to act with regard to EFSF
E-000216-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Bernd Köhl (ECR) on Discrepancy between EFSF and accounting practices of banks and insurance companies
E-000215-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Bernd Köhl (ECR) on Applicability of IFRS to the EFSF rescue package
E-010773-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Dimitrios Papadimoulis (GUE/NGL) on Application of Regulation (EU) No 472/2013
E-008275-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Hugues Bayet (S&D), Marc Tarabella (S&D) on An accountable Troika with more democratic legitimacy
P-006194-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Seán Kelly (PPE) on Interest rate charged on the IMF portion of the EU/IMF Irish Programme
E-005978-14 WQ COM Rule 130 João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) on Recapitalisation of the private banks — EU/IMF programme (Portugal)
E-005657-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Ana Gomes (S&D) on Differences between Portuguese and Spanish bailout interest rates
E-003827-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D) on Use made of bail-out funds in the programme countries
E-003821-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D) on Prolongation of fiscal adjustment timeframes
E-003666-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D) on Insufficient democratic accountability of the Troika
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<td>to the Commission on Medium-term financial assistance for Member States' balances of payments and social conditionality [debate]</td>
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Special report 19/2015 of 16 February 2016
More attention to results needed to improve the delivery of technical assistance to Greece
Economic and Monetary Affairs

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<td>Summary</td>
<td>Short summary of questions asked, observations, findings and recommendations</td>
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Questions asked:
1. To what extent was the EU technical assistance (TA) provided to Greece under the coordination of the Task Force for Greece (TFGR) managed effectively?
2. To what extent has the EU technical assistance (TA) provided to Greece under the coordination of the Task Force for Greece (TFGR) contributed positively to the process of reforms in Greece?

Observations:
1. The Task Force for Greece (TFGR) had a functional operational structure but lacked a single strategic orientation and dedicated budget: it was established late compared to the launch of the programme and without considering alternatives, and without a single strategic document and a dedicated budget; TFGR had a flexible internal organisation, but staff needs were not defined based on a proper analysis.
2. The TFGR fulfilled its mandate overall, but there were shortcomings: TFGR faced the major challenge of putting together a comprehensive programme of technical assistance (TA) to support implementation of the adjustment programmes and the overall sustainability of Greek reforms; the coordination system performed satisfactorily; no consistency of the role TFGR in the different projects; the selection of TA providers was not always based on a thorough analysis of alternatives, however support to accelerate the take-up of EU funds was properly structured; the terms of reference of some contracts was not clearly defined however the TA was appropriate to programme requirements; the TFGR effectively monitored the progress of TA and, to varying degrees, the deliverables of external service providers.
3. The technical assistance (TA) achieved mixed results: the TFGR did not systematically monitor the results and impacts of TA; there are satisfactory outputs but some late delivery; the contribution to the reform process was assessed as varied (policy fields addressed are public administration, business environment, Structural Funds, taxation (revenue administration), capacity building).

Recommendations:
1. The establishment of any entity for delivering TA should be based on a strategy with well-defined objectives. The strategy should define the nature and division of responsibilities between parties. It should be formally endorsed by the beneficiary Member State to guarantee ownership and efficient implementation.
2. The Commission should create a pool of external experts who could be deployed on an ad hoc basis on TA projects in Member States.
3. When designing TA programmes the Commission should analyse the complexity that arises from involving multiple partners and the increased need for coordination resulting thereof. In specific policy fields it should aim at streamlining the number of partners in order to ensure a coherent methodology for the provision of TA.
4. TA actions should be prioritised following an assessment of their potential to bring about the strategic objectives. TA should be focused and operate through...
the most appropriate and effective implementation mode, in accordance with the existing legislative and regulatory framework, and taking into account the political context.

5. The Commission should select service providers based on a comparative analysis of the available options. Contracts should clearly define the scope of deliverables and set measurable performance indicators.

6. The Commission should seek feedback from the beneficiary Member State(s) on the provision of TA. The implementation of TA should be systematically monitored in the light of objectives set. With regard to the activities of the TFGR, the Commission should carry out a comprehensive ex-post evaluation. These actions are crucial for assessing effectiveness and/or adjusting the delivery of TA.

7. Aiming at the achievement of sustainable results, TA should focus on strengthening the capacity of national administrations. It should be delivered with a view to business continuity and the sustainability of reforms, which means anchoring them in local government practices.

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<td>[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]</td>
<td>[The European Parliament,]</td>
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<td>1. Notes that at the time this working document is being drafted, the Commission has already presented its proposal for the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP); welcomes that the Commission has evidently taken the recommendations from the European Court of Auditors into consideration and hopes the SRSP will emerge as a strong tool for technical assistance (TA) based on the lessons learned from the Task Force for Greece (TFGR);</td>
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<td>2. Is concerned that the ad-hoc, rapid set-up of the Task Force caused some of its operational problems; calls for a thorough assessment of the situation on the ground and formulation of a concise step-by-step action plan as mandatory preliminary exercise of any TA project; requests that in its subsequent TA programmes the European Commission applies a more planned approach, including a timeline with start and end date for mandates;</td>
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<td>3. Underlines that a dedicated budget is an essential pre-requisite to a successful TA programme, both for planning and streamlining expenses, thus avoiding different levels of control and rules to be observed, related to separate budget lines;</td>
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<td>4. Notes that the Task Force managed an impressive number of projects involving multiple partner organizations; believes that the impact of TA could have been improved by streamlining programmes, limiting the number of partner organizations and scope of projects to minimize administrative coordination efforts and increase efficiency;</td>
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<td>5. Regrets that the beneficiary Member State as well as the Task Force did not provide the Commission with regular activity reports; points out that the Commission should insist on receiving quarterly activity reports without excessive delay and a comprehensive final report in the form of an ex-post evaluation within a reasonable timeframe after the conclusion of the work of the TFGR; requests the Commission to monitor the implementation of TA systematically in order to adjust for a results-oriented TA;</td>
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<td>6. Calls on the Commission, European Parliament and European Council to use the discussion on the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) for the period 2017 to 2020 as an opportunity to revise the good practice of domain leaders; encourages the Commission to find a system together with the Member States to hire experts directly from the Member States, thus avoiding another layer of complexity and administrative burden by circumventing national agencies;</td>
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<td>7. Demands the Member States to show stronger commitment: a performance based approach would allow the European Parliament as well as national Parliaments to play a more supportive role through their respective budget oversight committees.</td>
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### Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

**CONT Report of 3/12/2015 on the fact-finding mission of the Budgetary Control Committee to Greece on 24/25 September 2015**

**Recommendations of the CONT Committee:**

1. One of the major challenges while implementing EU-funded projects in Greece is the centralisation of the country. Many projects lack regional and/or local oversight. Additionally the frequent changes of governments and thus recurring electoral periods, causes the procrastination of decisions, resulting in unnecessary delays therefore adding another hurdle to the list of problems the projects have to deal with;
2. Some of the projects lacked realistic planning - which included rational possible delays due to unforeseen circumstances which are based on similar projects conducted in a similar environment;
3. One of the most important issues which caused delay in nearly all of the visited projects was the archaeological excavations; while conducting any project which includes ground works in a country as rich in history as Greece, one should include a realistic estimate for delays caused by excavations of archaeological findings; additionally the process of deciding of what to do with the findings once unearthed should be smoother and shorter as it significantly hampers the implementation of the projects;
4. Another major obstacle is the problem of the expropriation of land; although this remains a prerogative of the Member State, the Committee suggests the Greek authorities consider examining some of the solutions already in place in other Member States in order to eliminate this hurdle which is blocking the timely finalisation of most major projects in Greece;
5. The Committee would like to remind the Greek authorities that for the 2007-2013 programming period, the eligibility period for expenditure ends on 31 December 2015. After that date, uncompleted projects will have to be funded by the national budget; this includes all of the visited projects, as none of them will be completed and operational by that date;
6. The Committee would like to remind that if the projects are not fully completed and operational within the operational programme’s set deadline, financial recovery to the EU budget will be applied. We urge the Commission to provide us with an overview of the state of play of each project financed with EU money;
7. Although the Committee received assurances by the Greek authorities about their financial capacity in finishing these projects by the end of the 2007-13 programming period, it would ask the Greek authorities to provide information on the amounts of national funds reserved in the national budget for the projects to be completed;
8. The Committee plans to revisit Greece in the upcoming 3-4 years in order to see whether progress has been made in the implementation of projects and whether the appropriate use of EU funds can be noted.

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**Leading committee REGI (BUDG, ECON, EMPL, PECH, CULT for opinion)**

**Amendment 5**

Recital 6 a (new)

**[(6a) The European Court of Auditors’ Special Report (19/2015) entitled ‘More attention to results needed to improve the delivery of technical assistance to Greece’ includes useful recommendations with respect to the provision of technical assistance by the Commission to Member States which should be]**
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<td>(9) Member States should be able to request support from the Commission under the Programme in relation to the design and implementation of reforms in the context of economic governance processes, in particular of relevant Country Specific Recommendations in the context of the European Semester, to actions related to the implementation of Union law, as well as in relation to the implementation of economic adjustment programmes. They should also be able to request support in relation to reforms undertaken at their own initiative, in order to achieve economic, social and territorial cohesion, sustainable investment, enhance growth, job creation and competitiveness. The Commission should provide guidance as to the main elements of the request for support.</td>
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<td>(10) Further to a dialogue with the requesting Member State, including in the context of the European Semester, the Commission should analyse the request, taking into account the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity, transparency, equal treatment and sound financial management and determine the support to be provided based on urgency, breadth and depth and severity of the problems as identified, the justification for the reform sought, support needs in respect of the policy areas envisaged, analysis of socioeconomic indicators, and the general administrative capacity of the Member State. The Member State concerned should be responsible for the application of the partnership principle. Based on this analysis and taking into account the existing actions and activities financed by Union funds or Union programmes, the Commission should reach an agreement with the Member State concerned on the priority areas, the objectives, an indicative timeline, the scope of the support measures to be provided and the estimated global financial contribution for such support, to be set out in a cooperation and support plan. The European Parliament should be fully informed of the analysis undertaken by the Commission. The Commission should provide the cooperation and support plan to the European Parliament as soon as possible.</td>
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<td>(10a) The Commission should be able, with the consent of the Member State wishing to receive support, to organise the provision of support in cooperation with international organisations, as defined in this Regulation.</td>
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<td>(10b) The Member State wishing to receive support should be able, for a specific area or areas of support, to enter into a partnership with one or more Member States as Reform Partners to help formulate strategy, reform roadmaps, design high-quality assistance or oversee the implementation of strategy and projects. While the responsibility for the reforms lies with the Member State wishing to receive support, Reform Partners or other Member States providing support should be able to contribute to the successful implementation of the Programme. The European Parliament should be fully informed about the participation of a Reform Partner and its role in the cooperation and support plan.</td>
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Amendment 13  
Recital 13 a (new)  

(13a) This Regulation lays down a financial envelope for the entire duration of the Programme which is to constitute the prime reference amount, within the meaning of Point 17 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 2 December 2013 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, for the European Parliament and the Council during the annual budgetary procedure. The financing of the Programme through the transfer of allocations from technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission should only be considered a one-off solution that should not constitute a precedent as regards the funding of future initiatives in this field. A possible legislative proposal for the prolongation of the Programme under the new Multiannual Financial Framework should include a separate new allocation that is earmarked specifically for the Programme.

Amendment 20  
Recital 20  

(20) To facilitate the evaluation of the Programme, a proper, transparent framework for monitoring the implementation of actions and the results achieved by the Programme should be put in place from the very beginning. An annual monitoring report on the implementation of the Programme, including an analysis of the application of the criteria for assessing the request for support, an interim mid-term evaluation looking at the achievement of the objectives of the Programme, its efficiency and its added value at the European level and an assessment of the Programme under the next financial programming period, including its possible renewal and alternative sources of funding, should be carried out. An ex-post evaluation should, in addition, deal with the long-term impact and the sustainability effects of the Programme. Those evaluations should be based on the indicators defined in advance, measuring the effects of the Programme.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2015/2154(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0147; A8-0140/2016)  
Leading committee CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

[The European Parliament,]

260. Recalls that the implementation of 51 priority projects in Greece needed to be accelerated; furthermore, 14 projects - concerning, among other issues, the cadastral and the national registry - have been identified as “bottleneck” projects and run the risk of de-commitment; expects the Commission to update Parliament on the situation in the 2014 Commission discharge follow-up report;

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2014/2075(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0118; A8-0101/2015)  
Leading committee CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)
158. Is worried about the implementation of the priority projects in Greece under the Task Force management; notes that 48 priority projects have to be accelerated; notes that the main problems are, according to the Commission: (a) delays at the maturation stage, (b) delays in licensing, (c) the dissolution of contracts due to the lack of liquidity of contractors and (d) lengthy court appeals during awarding procedures; calls therefore on the Commission to provide an update on the priority projects for the 2013 follow-up report;

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EP Resolution of 3/04/2014 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2013/2195(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0287; A7-0242/2014)

Leading committee CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

229. Appreciates the work of the Task Force for Greece; notes that of the 181 priority projects identified by the Group the following projects amounting to EUR 415,7 million are at risk:
- new port of Igoumenitsa, phase C with an approved volume of EUR 81,25 million;
- suburban train section Piraeus-3 Gefyres with a co-financed budget of EUR 70 million;
- construction of pier in Symi port with an approved volume of EUR 4,1 million;
- national registry with an approved volume of EUR 41,9 million;
- cadastre with a co-financed budget of EUR 130 million;
- e-ticket with an approved volume of EUR 34,76 million;
- rehabilitation of Karla lake with an approved volume of EUR 41 million;
- improvement of the access road to the landfill of the 2nd geographical unit of the Prefecture of Aitolo Akarnania with an approved volume of EUR 11,4 million;
- improvement - widening of Provincial Road Velo - Stimagka - Koutsi – Nemea with an approved volume of EUR 7,1 million;
- replacement of the central water mains of Zakynthos with an approved volume of EUR 9,6 million;
- requests the Commission to inform Parliament in detail about the problems encountered with those projects;

230. Requests that the Commission evaluate the possibility to establish a Task Force for those Member States that struggle with the implementation of Union funds;

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EP resolution of 13/03/2014 on the enquiry on the role and operations of the Troika (ECB, Commission and IMF) with regard to the euro area programme countries based on 2013/2277(INI) (P7_TA(2014)0239; A7-0149/2014)

Leading committee ECON (CONT, AFCO for opinion)

Summary
90. Instructs the Commission, in its capacity of ‘guardian of the Treaties’, to present by the end of 2015, a detailed study of the economic and social consequences of the adjustment programmes in the four countries (Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Cyprus), in order to provide a precise understanding of both the short-term and long-term impact of the programmes, thus enabling the resulting information to be used for future assistance measures; asks the Commission to use all relevant consultative bodies, including the Economic and Financial Committee, the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee, when drafting this study, and to fully cooperate with Parliament; believes the report of the Commission should also reflect the assessment of the European Agency of Fundamental Rights;
### Special Report 21/2015 of 16 December 2015

**Review of the risks related to a results-oriented approach for EU development and cooperation action**

**EU Development Aid | Foreign Affairs**

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<td>Short summary of questions asked, observations, findings and recommendations</td>
<td><strong>Questions asked:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Did the Commission adequately address the key risks entailed by a results approach for EU development and cooperation measures?&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Observations:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. The European Court of Auditors (ECA) identified several key risk areas related to a results-oriented approach for EU development and cooperation action:&lt;br&gt;   a) The use of inconsistent results-related terminology or failure to establish a clear logical chain between action, outputs, outcome and impact can be a source of confusion and undermine the assessment of what has been achieved;&lt;br&gt;   b) Increased complexity due to the integration of cross-cutting issues in EU programmes represents a supplementary risk for the achievement and reporting of results;&lt;br&gt;   c) The lack of harmonisation between development partners’ aid delivery instruments, results frameworks and accountability structures can generate inefficiencies and accountability gaps;&lt;br&gt;   d) Weaknesses in evaluation and results reporting can prevent the feedback of relevant knowledge and lessons-learnt into reporting and decision-making processes;&lt;br&gt;   e) A lack of consolidated reports on or an overview of results achieved by EU aid can impair decision making and accountability;&lt;br&gt;   f) A lack of sufficient, relevant, reliable and up-to-date data can significantly weaken the quality and reliability of reported results;&lt;br&gt;   g) Focusing on budgetary outturn as an objective can be detrimental to sound financial management and the achievement of results;&lt;br&gt;   h) Changes in the context of actions can undermine the achievement or sustainability of results, and make it difficult to assess the results achieved.&lt;br&gt;   i) The Court observed that these risk areas had been correctly identified by the Commission in a wide range of documents and that there is an interest in the actions that are being undertaken by the Commission to launch an EU international cooperation and development results framework. Nevertheless, further actions remain to be taken in order to harness the full potential of the Commission’s initiatives to improve EU development and cooperation results.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Recommendations:</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Commission should:&lt;br&gt;1. Improve its guidelines to ensure the consistent use of terminology regarding results (outputs, outcomes, impacts) and, where relevant, to formulate SMART objectives and clear indicators for its interventions at all levels;</td>
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2. Through its internal guidelines, practical tools, project formulation and monitoring processes, ensure that a clear link is established between actions and expected results, including cross-cutting issues;
3. Improve its information system in order to be able to effectively consolidate and report on the results of its interventions. This should be complemented by measures enabling the Commission's evaluation activities to identify useful lessons for subsequent legislation, programming or action design in the areas concerned;
4. In all its interventions, assess data availability and quality, and strive to have sufficient, relevant, reliable and up-to-date data on results achieved. This should be reflected in its systems and guidelines;
5. Before committing its financial resources, and when considering the expected results, assess the risks inherent to its choice of a particular implementation modality.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

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<td>1-2. Welcomes the special report and acknowledges the fact that the Commission has integrated the issue of risks in the management of its external operations;</td>
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<td>3. Especially welcomes the Court’s recommendation to the Commission to improve the use of terminology regarding long-term results (outputs, outcomes and impacts) and stresses the importance of formulating true S.M.A.R.T. objectives before any decision on financing different projects is taken;</td>
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<td>4. Highlights the need to put extra focus on formulating “Attainable and Realistic” goals to avoid the cases where the initial objectives were met by partner countries but without significant results in term of development;</td>
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<td>5. Considers it necessary to refrain from focusing on budgetary outturn as the sole management objective which can be detrimental to the principle of sound financial management and the achievement of results;</td>
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<td>6-7. Recalls that the regular monitoring and mapping of high risk factors (external, financial and operational) and their quantification, is a prerequisite not only for a good financial management and quality expenditure but also to ensure the credibility, sustainability and reputation of the Union interventions; takes the view that setting-up activities and countries risk profiles also facilitate the design of rapid risk mitigation strategy in case of deterioration of the situation in a partner country; highlights the need to regularly adapt the control environment and risk management functions to take into account the emergence of new forms of assistance instruments and facilities like the blended finance, trust funds and financial partnerships with other international institutions; believes that developing partner countries' capacity building, governance frameworks and ownership is also an important way to mitigate systemic risks;</td>
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<td>8. Reiterates the view that a new balance between absorption, compliance and performance is needed and to be reflected in the management of operations;</td>
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<td>10. Considers also necessary to strengthen the political and policy dialogue, aid conditionality and the logical chain framework in order to ensure both the coherence between decision and preconditions of payments or disbursements in financing agreements by clearly linking payments to the achievement of actions and results as well as the relevance of selected objectives and indicators;</td>
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<td>11. Encourages, particularly in the case of co-funded and multi-donor initiatives, international institutions to assess and plan the future benefits of a project and the way each partner contributes towards the final outcomes and broader impacts so as to avoid the questions about the results ownership i.e. which part of the results was attributable to the EU funding or to other donors’ interventions; and to combine their governance frameworks with the EU one, notably by improving their risk management methods; considers that the fungibility of funds should be closely monitored for its high level of</td>
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Calls on to ensure that the connection between evaluations and policy formulation is effective by taking into account all lessons learned in the decision-making process and recalls that undermining performance monitoring and results evaluation is detrimental to public accountability and to comprehensive information of policymakers.

**Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees**

EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2015/2154(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0147; A8-0140/2016)

Leading committee CONT (AFET, DEVE, ECON, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**


The Parliament expressed its regret that the overall performance of Union delegations in implementation of external assistance programs as measured by the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) utilised in the External Assistance Management Reports (EAMR) of 2014 has worsened compared to 2013, noted however that these reports present an assessment of ongoing projects and that the performance is influenced by factors outside the control of the Union delegations, including quality of governance in beneficiary countries, security situation, political crises, commitment of implementing partners, etc. It insisted that the Commission use the EAMR to address the identified shortcomings, so that ongoing projects meet the objectives initially set and called on the Commission to report to the Parliament on corrective action to redress the situation in delegations with serious implementation problems. The Parliament expressed its concern at the Union’s management of external assistance in third countries, including budget support and EDF projects as regards to late payments and failure to reach the intended objectives. It believes that the heads of Union delegations should be provided with clear guidance in the general guidelines on the definition of the reservation and its components, as well as that it is important to identify and consolidate trends by delegation on the basis of management information and KPI, in order to assess the programming cycle for the benefit of the overall or sectoral performance of Union development aid. The Parliament noted that due to the character of expenditures and the territories of their allocation, data management in this field visibly differs from any other area of the Union budget and that even improved risk management and strengthened control systems contribute substantially to a performance focus. The Parliament asked the Commission to:

(a) provide the Parliament every year with a global assessment of the EAMR; and
(b) indicate in the annual activity reports of DG DEVCO and DG NEAR the measures it has taken to redress the situation in the delegations with implementation problems, to shorten the delays in budget support and to simplify the programmes.

The Parliament noted the potential value of DG DEVCO’s Results Framework launched in 2015, but also the associated risks identified by the Court in its Special Report 21/2015. It considered it necessary to prevent also the more political risk that the pursuit of the limited number of quantifiable results included by DG DEVCO in the framework will be over-emphasised, at the cost of the pursuit of other results in relation to the objectives of the Union’s development cooperation policy, as well as of qualitative results and emphasised the importance of treating the framework as a complement to other monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The Parliament welcomed the Court’s Special Report 18/2014 on EuropeAid’s Evaluation and Results Oriented Monitoring Systems and invited DG DEVCO to urgently address the various weaknesses in its evaluation and monitoring systems pointed to in the Court’s special report specially those related to serious deficiencies of DG DEVCO’s evaluation system. It highlighted that a badly functioning evaluation system increases the risks of selecting projects lacking quality or which do not reach their objectives. The Parliament expressed its concern of the diverging views between the Commission and the Court when it comes to reliable information on the effectiveness of budget support operations.

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2014/2075(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0118; A8-0101/2015)

Leading committee CONT (AFET, DEVE, ECON, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Articles 204, 213, 214, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233

The Parliament welcomed the increased focus of the discharge process on improving performance in order to achieve the best possible results with Union taxpayers’ money and encouraged the Commission to redouble its efforts to improve the feedback loop of the evaluations cycle, so that lessons learnt from past practice and evaluation recommendations contribute to an even greater extent to better decision-making, programming and implementation of Union aid in the future. It shared the criticisms of the Court of Auditors of the ‘notional approach’ in the case of multi-donor projects and asked the Commission to examine the option of presenting, in its own accounts an analysis of these projects as a whole, instead of limiting itself to the consideration of whether the pooled amount includes sufficient eligible expenditure to cover the Union contribution. In addition the Parliament asked the Court of Auditors to calculate a separate error rate in external relations for the expenditures not included in the budget support or in the contributions to multi donor projects carried out by international organisations. The Parliament highlighted that a majority of Union delegations did not reach the benchmarks set up by the Commission for the key performance indicators (KPIs) included in the External Assistance Monitoring Reports (EAMR) concerning financial planning and resource allocation, financial administration and auditing. It expressed its regret that the results, outputs or impacts of the actions lead by the Union delegations services were not measured adequately in the framework of the existing KPIs, and that the indicators give very limited clarity about the quantity and especially the performance of the delegations as well as the degree of “stakeholders’ satisfaction” about the services provided by Union Delegations in these countries.

The Parliament asked the Commission to:
– present to the Parliament the measures taken in order to improve the performance of Union delegations as regards financial planning and resource allocation, financial administration and auditing in particular as regards the worst performing delegations;
– better document every year the conclusions it has drawn from the EAMR and from the KPIs and provide these conclusions together with the EAMRs to Parliament;
– include a balance sheet with the accounting data of the delegation into the EAMR;
– improve the quality and the exhaustiveness of the data provided in the EAMR and the relevance of the reports as well, in particular as regards the delegations overseen by DG ENLARGE; and
– make external assistance contingent on efforts being made to combat corruption.

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EP Resolution of 03/04/2014 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth European Development Funds for the financial year 2012, based on 2013/2206(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0290; A7-0176/2014)

Leading committee CONT (DEVE for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the summary:
Statement of assurance: Parliament welcomed the Court of Auditors’ opinion that the final annual accounts present fairly, the financial position of the EDFs, and the results of their operations and cash flows for the year 2012. It noted however, that in the domains of budget support and the Union’s contributions to multidonor projects implemented by international organisations, the nature of the instruments and payments conditions limited the extent to which transactions were prone to errors.

Effectiveness of systems: Parliament noted with regret, as in the past, that EuropeAid’s ex ante checks, carried out before the project payments were done, still remain vulnerable. Worried by the fact that errors had been found, it called on EuropeAid and Union delegations to focus more on the follow-up of external audits and expenditure verification reports, especially when the recovery of ineligible amounts is at stake.

Audit of the EDFs: Parliament regretted that no significant improvement could be observed in the functioning of the Internal Audit Capability which has a role to play in the improvement of the internal control system or in the cost-effectiveness analysis of the control architecture/mechanisms.

Budget support: Parliament supported public disclosure of relevant budget information relating to budget support programmes in order to enhance domestic and mutual accountability, including to citizens. It called the Commission to ensure that the disbursement of funds through budget support was withheld, reduced or cancelled when clear and initial objectives and commitments of partner countries were not achieved and when the Union’s political and financial interests were at stake.

Specific aid to Haiti: Parliament took note of the fact that the Commission, notwithstanding Parliament’s resolutions in the context of the 2010 and 2011 discharge procedures, had not yet made public exhaustive performance indicators on which the budget support to Haiti was based, nor the detailed assessments of the Government of Haiti’s performance on which the decision to give budget support was based. It asked that the Commission to explain what performance targets had been set for the Haitian government in return for budget support and the modalities for the assessment of these targets, particularly in light of recent concerns about the deterioration of the rule of law in Haiti and persistent low scores on international corruption indices. It urged the Commission to ensure that the impact evaluation was completed as required by Parliament. Parliament regretted the lack of progress on accounts for Union funds received and accounting for Union spending.

Cooperation with international organisations and non-governmental organisations: Parliament reiterated the need for the reinforcement of the cooperation and contacts with international organisations on the errors found for transactions implemented by them and discussion on actions to be taken jointly in the future to prevent them. It encouraged all actions, furthermore, leading not only to a better mutual understanding of Union and World Bank methodologies but also reinforcing the overall quality and reliability of the control management with regard to the use of Trust funds. To that end, the European Commission’s 7 Pillars Assessment constituted a real benchmark for providing adequate level of assurance.

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Leading committee AFET (DEVE, INTA, BUDG for opinion)
Summary

Recitals: 5, 12, 19  
Articles: 1, 2, 4, 12, 13, 17

The Union's external action under the Instruments (the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) and the Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries) should contribute to clear results (covering outputs, outcomes and impacts) in countries benefiting from the Union's external financial assistance. Whenever possible and appropriate, the results of the Union's external action and the efficiency of a particular Instrument should be monitored and assessed on the basis of pre-defined, clear, transparent and, where appropriate, country-specific and measurable indicators, adapted to the specificities and objectives of the Instrument concerned. The types of financing shall be chosen on the basis of their ability to achieve the specific objectives of the actions and to deliver results. Financing decisions should include in an annex a description of each action, specifying its objectives, main activities, expected results, methods of implementation, budget and indicative timetable, any associated support measures and performance monitoring arrangements, and should be approved in accordance with the procedures provided for in Regulation (EU) No 182/2011. Budget support is to be used effectively to support poverty reduction and the use of country systems, make aid more predictable and strengthen partner countries' ownership of development policies and reforms. The disbursement of forecast budget tranches should be conditional on the progress achieved towards the objectives agreed with partner countries. In countries benefiting from that type of the Union's financial assistance, the Union supports the development of parliamentary control, audit capacities, transparency and public access to information.

### Monitoring and evaluation

**Article 12 of the Final Act**

1. The Commission shall regularly monitor its actions and review progress made towards delivering expected results, covering outputs and outcomes. The Commission shall also evaluate the impact and effectiveness of its sectoral policies and actions and the effectiveness of programming, where appropriate by means of independent external evaluations. Proposals by the European Parliament or the Council for independent external evaluations shall be taken into due account. Evaluations shall be based on OECD-DAC good practice principles, seeking to ascertain whether the specific objectives, where applicable taking into account gender equality, have been met and to formulate recommendations with a view to improving future operations. Those evaluations shall be carried out on the basis of pre-defined, clear, transparent and, where appropriate, country-specific and measurable indicators.
2. The Commission shall send its evaluation reports to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the Member States through the relevant committee referred to in Article 16. Specific evaluations may be discussed in that committee at the request of Member States. The results shall feed back into programme design and resource allocation.
3. The Commission shall, to an appropriate extent, associate all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation phase of the Union’s assistance provided under this Regulation, and may, where appropriate, seek to undertake joint evaluations with the Member States and development partners.
4. The report mentioned in Article 13 shall reflect the main lessons learnt and the follow-up to the recommendations of the evaluations carried out in previous years.

**Article 13 of the Final Act**

1. The Commission shall examine the progress made in implementing the measures of the Union's external financial assistance and, from 2015 onwards, shall submit to the European Parliament and to the Council an annual report on the achievement of the objectives of each Regulation by means of indicators, measuring the results delivered and the efficiency of the relevant Instrument. That report shall also be submitted to the European Economic and Social
Committee and to the Committee of the Regions.

2. The annual report shall contain information relating to the previous year on the measures financed, the results of monitoring and evaluation exercises, the involvement of the relevant partners, and the implementation of budgetary commitments and of payment appropriations broken down by country, region and cooperation sector. It shall assess the results of the Union’s financial assistance using, as far as possible, specific and measurable indicators of its role in meeting the objectives of the Instruments. In the case of development cooperation, the report shall also assess, where possible and relevant, the adherence to aid-effectiveness principles, including for innovative financial instruments.

3. The annual report prepared in 2021 shall contain consolidated information from annual reports concerning the period from 2014 to 2020 on all funding governed by this Regulation, including external assigned revenues and contributions to trust funds, and offering a breakdown of spending by beneficiary country, use of financial instruments, commitments and payments.

Article 17 of the Final Act

1. No later than 31 December 2017, a mid-term review report shall be submitted by the Commission on the implementation of each of the Instruments and of this Regulation. It shall cover the period from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2017 and shall focus on the achievement of the objectives of each Instrument by means of indicators measuring the results delivered and the efficiency of the Instruments.

…

The report shall … inform decisions on the renewal, modification or suspension of the types of actions implemented under the Instruments.

…

A final evaluation report on the period from 2014 to 2020 shall be established by the Commission within the interim review of the next financial period.

2. The mid-term review report … shall be submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council, and shall be accompanied, if appropriate, by legislative proposals introducing the necessary modifications to the Instruments and to this Regulation.

3. The values of the indicators on 1 January 2014 shall be used as a basis for assessing the extent to which the objectives have been achieved.

4. Partner countries shall be required by the Commission to provide all the data and information necessary, in line with the international commitments on aid effectiveness, to permit the monitoring and evaluation of the measures concerned.

5. The longer-term outcomes and impacts and the sustainability of effects of the Instruments shall be evaluated in accordance with the monitoring, evaluation and reporting rules and procedures applicable at that time.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2013/2195(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0287; A7-0242/2014)

Leading committee CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Articles 261, 263, 264, 268

The Parliament expressed its regret that shortcomings persist in EuropeAid’s ex ante checks and in the supervisory and control system and that they fail to detect and correct material errors. It welcomed the performance audits produced by the Court of Auditors concerning the European Union’s aid to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt and Palestine and suggested that the Commission and the Court of Auditors work closely together to further develop both measurable indicators and the methodology of performance audits. The Parliament reiterated its support to the Commission’s efforts to shift from an input-based to a
performance- and impact-oriented approach and urged the adoption of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed benchmarks for all relevant programmes. It welcomed the Commission’s "Transparent Aid" initiative providing comprehensive and timely information about humanitarian and development aid and potentially helping to reduce double funding.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth European Development Funds for the financial year 2011, based on 2012/2166(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0125; A7-0062/2013)
Leading committee CONT (DEVE for opinion)
Summary

Extract of the Summary:

**Budget support:** Parliament ... observes that 23% of budget support payments were affected by non-quantifiable errors which resulted from the lack of a structured demonstration of compliance with the eligibility criteria. The Commission is called upon to ensure a rigorous control of recipient countries both before and after the decision to grant budget support in order to ensure that European taxpayers' money is not misappropriated for funding terrorism or corruption. Whilst acknowledging the potential advantages of budget support, Parliament draw attention to the risks that this aid modality entails in that it is more vulnerable to fraud and corruption than other forms of aid, due to its fungibility. ... Parliament therefore urges the Commission to take into account existing reporting on corruption and fraud levels before taking a decision on granting budget support. It also insists that an independent national audit body must be a condition for granting budget support. It repeats its call on the Commission to provide regular reports on the accomplishment of the goals set for Union budget support and on specific problems encountered in particular recipient countries. The Commission is also called upon to ensure that budget support is reduced or cancelled when clear goals are not achieved.

**Cooperation with international organisations:** Parliament is deeply concerned by the Court of Auditors' finding that the majority of errors for payments were found in grants and contribution agreements with international organisations (58% of audited transactions were affected by error). Safeguards are required to ensure the control and the follow-up of Union funds under joint management. It makes a series of further recommendations on aid under the management of the World Bank Group (WBG) in order to ensure its effectiveness.

**Haiti:** Parliament ... urges the Commission to make public the performance indicators for budget support to the Republic of Haiti and deplores the lack of sustainability of some of the projects implemented. This is why the plenary calls on the Commission to provide an assessment of the sustainability of the Union-funded projects in Haiti based in a five-year perspective and to report to the discharge authorities on an annual basis.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of its Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2012/2167(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0122; A7-0116/2013)
Leading committee CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)
Summary

Articles 242, 243, 248
The Parliament expressed its concern that EuropeAid’s and DG ECHO’s supervisory and control systems were again found to be only partially effective and noted the introduction of a new version of the six-monthly External Assistance Management Report aiming to strengthen the accountability links between delegations and EuropeAid headquarters. It reiterated its concerns about the high frequency of encoding errors in the external aid management information system (CRIS), which may compromise the reliability of the data used for the preparation of the annual accounts and called on the Commission to continue investing in the improvement of data quality and the development of CRIS functionalities. The Parliament urged the Commission and the EEAS to focus more on results and impact measurement in the design of the new spending programmes under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2014-2020, inter alia by using pre-defined, country-specific, clear, transparent and measurable indicators adapted to the specificities and objectives of each instrument.

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EP Resolution of 20/04/2012 on the impact of devolution of the Commission’s management of external assistance from its headquarters to its delegations on aid delivery, based on 2011/2192(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0144; A7-0056/2012)

Leading committee DEVE (AFET, CONT for opinion)

Summary

Articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 17, 18, 21

The Parliament welcomed the conclusions of the ECA’s report (Special Report No1/2011 Has the devolution of the Commission’s management of external assistance from its headquarters to its delegations led to improved aid delivery?) and called on the Commission to continue its efforts to increase the effectiveness of aid delivery. It noted that further efforts are necessary on the part of the Commission in order improve the manner in which it evaluates the quality and the results of its interventions and encouraged the Commission to complement the criteria and strengthen the procedures for assessing the quality of the projects financed, in order to increase the quality of aid and further to decrease the number of non-performing projects. The Parliament repeated its call on the Commission to appoint Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) focal points in each delegation to monitor the impact of EU policy at partner-country level. It called on the Commission to take all the necessary measures to overcome the weaknesses of the supervisory and control systems, notably at delegation level and asked the Commission to inform Parliament’s competent committees by the end of 2012 at the latest as to the measures it has taken. The Parliament also called on the Commission to analyse and identify possibilities for leveraging the aid programmes in the partner countries with the involvement of the EIB and of European national and international institutions that finance development.

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Leading committee AFET (DEVE, BUDG, EMPL, ITRE, REGI, CULT, LIBE, AFCO for opinion)

Summary

Articles 3, 96, 105, 106

The Parliament stressed that differentiation based on each country’s political, economic and social realities, performance and achievements should be predicated on clearly defined criteria and assessable and regularly monitored benchmarks for each individual partner country and called on the Commission and the EEAS to consider the benchmarks laid down in the Joint Communication as objectives to be achieved and that, for assessing the progress made, these objectives require more specific, measurable, achievable, time bound benchmarks. The Parliament emphasised that a result-oriented policy needs a clearer methodology of
benchmarking and underlined the importance of setting up appropriate follow-up mechanisms to assess the progress of ENP countries, which should be reflected in the structure of the ENP Action Plans and in the corresponding annual progress reports. It considered that the distribution of funds should be driven by performance and centred on commitments and progress as regards reforms in partner countries. The Parliament emphasised that the allocation of resources should be based on a limited number of clearly defined priorities and measurable objectives, in agreement with partner countries, taking into account their needs and based on clear conditionality and on the progress already achieved and underlined that budget support should be used only where there are guarantees for sound budgetary management and that the full range of available tools should be used to better reflect the priorities. In addition the Parliament stressed on the need for a consistent approach in the assistance provided to neighbouring countries by each individual EU Member State and the EU within the ENP framework and welcomed every mechanism that would help to coordinate and streamline the action of the different EU donors in the ENP countries, without adding unnecessary bureaucratic layers.

**Oral / Written Questions**

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Water quality in the Danube river basin: progress in implementing the water framework directive but still some way to go

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**Questions asked:**

1. Did the Member States' implementation of the water framework directive lead to an improvement in water quality?
   1.1. Were the measures in the 2009 river basin management plans well targeted and of a type and extent necessary to ensure the achievement of good water quality in 2015?
   1.2. Are the measures and instruments implemented by the Member States appropriate to reduce pollution by waste waters?
   1.3. Are the measures and instruments implemented by the Member States appropriate to reduce diffuse pollution from agriculture?

**Observations:**

1. The implementation of the measures has led to little improvement in water quality; the Court considers that the progress on individual elements assessed for water quality may be masked due to the assessment methodology; there is a lack of targeted measures for water bodies with unsatisfactory quality status.
   1.1. The Court found little improvement in the ecological and chemical status of water bodies; the shortcomings in monitoring systems resulted in a lack of data both on the type and sources of pollution causing a water body to fail; the measures identified in the river basin management plans were not sufficient to adequately address pollution sources; significant number of water bodies were exempted from the 2015 and 2021 deadlines; the Commission closely followed up the 2009 river basin management plans but improvements depend on Member States' willingness to act;
   1.2. Pollution from agglomerations: the Court observed progress in the treatment of waste water but found that available instruments could be used to a better effect; pollution from industrial installations: the Court observed difficulties in setting emission limits and weaknesses in enforcement by the responsible authorities.
   1.3. Pollution from agriculture: Member States did not use all possibilities offered by the nitrates directive; their pesticide action plans suffered from shortcomings; the Court found that the cross-compliance mechanism had some impact but it was not being fully exploited; the potential of rural development measures to address water quality issues was not fully exploited; the 'Polluter pays' principle only applied to a limited extent to diffuse pollution from agriculture;

**Recommendations:**

1.1. The Commission should:
a) provide guidelines for a more differentiated reporting on progress with regard to water quality currently masked due to the application of the ‘one-out all-out’ rule; b) foster comparability of data; c) continue its follow-up of Member States' progress in reaching good water quality.

1.2. Member States should:
   d) ensure good-quality water monitoring to have accurate information on the situation and origin of pollution by water body to allow better targeting and cost-effectiveness of the measures;
   e) provide in their river basin management plans - i. clear justifications for the use of exemptions from the deadlines of the water framework directive, ii. information on how the implementation of measures will be funded and iii. information on the expected impact;
   f) ensure coordination between those bodies defining measures in the river basin management plans and those approving projects for funding.

2.1. The Commission should:
   a) assess how to best set binding criteria for effective Member State inspections on waste water treatment plants not falling under the industrial emissions directive.

2.2. Member States should:
   b) indicate for which water bodies, due to their unsatisfactory quality, measures are required for specific dischargers. For urban waste water treatment plants this will include setting emission limits in the permits that are stricter than those set by law for organic and nutrient pollution parameters and setting limits for priority and other chemical substances or micropollutants;
   c) assess and ensure the effectiveness of the enforcement mechanisms, in particular the coverage to be achieved and the deterrent effect of the penalties applied;
   d) assess the potential of using the water pollution charge as an economic instrument and as a way to apply the 'polluter pays' principle at least for the main substances which negatively affect water quality.

3.1. The Commission should:
   a) continue its efforts in ensuring that Member States make the best use of the requirements under the nitrate action programmes and that they implement the pesticide action plans within a reasonable timeframe;
   b) systematically assess not only the existence, but also the adequacy of the GAEC (good agricultural and environmental condition) standards and minimum requirements adopted by the Member States;
   c) consider the introduction of an obligation to set limitations on the quantity of phosphorus to be applied on land;
   d) reduce the possibility of Member States' double reporting on the eutrophication status by aligning the reporting under the nitrates directive and the water framework directive and promote the use of the 2009 guidance on eutrophication assessment so that the same assessment parameters are used under both directives;
   e) provide guidance on the possible methods for cost recovery in the field of diffuse pollution.

3.2. Member States should:
   f) set requirements in the nitrate action plans, in the pesticide action plans, under GAEC and for agrienvironmental payments that are ambitious enough to achieve a reduction of fertiliser and pesticides input and adequate protection from erosion;
   g) assess the potential of using economic instruments (such as environmental taxes) as an incentive to reduce pollution and as a way to apply the 'polluter pays' principle.
### 3.3. The Commission and the Member States should identify ways for simplifying the set-up and implementation of the checks and for ensuring their effectiveness.

**CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur**


Rapporteur: Tamás Deutsch (EPP)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Believes that the guidelines for a more differentiated reporting on progress with regard to water quality should be provided by the Commission;
2. Agrees with the Court that the Commission should foster comparability of data, for example, by reducing the discrepancies in the number of physicochemical substances that are assessed for the ecological status; highlights the need for the Commission to continue its follow-up of Member States’ progress in reaching good water quality;
3. Invites the Member States to ensure good-quality water monitoring in order to have accurate information on the situation and origin of pollution by water body, to allow better targeting and increase cost-effectiveness of the remedial measures;
4. Encourages the Member States to ensure coordination between those bodies defining measures in the river basin management plans and those approving projects for funding;
5. Encourages the Member States to assess and ensure the effectiveness of the enforcement mechanisms, in particular the coverage to be achieved and the deterrent effect of the penalties applied;
6. Invites the Member States to assess the potential of using the water pollution charge as an economic instrument and as a way to apply the ‘polluter pays’ principle at least for the main substances which negatively affect water quality;
7. Calls on the Commission to consider systematically assessing not only the existence, but also the adequacy of the good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) standards and minimum requirements adopted by the Member States;
8. Notes that the Commission should provide guidance on the possible methods for cost recovery in the field of diffuse pollution;
9. Invites the Commission and the Member States to identify ways for simplifying the set-up and implementation of the checks and for ensuring their effectiveness, on the basis of an inventory of the enforcement of both EU and national mechanisms.

**Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees**


Leading committee ENVI (DEVE, PETI for opinion)

Summary:

Articles 36, 37, 41, 43, 50, 65, 66, 70, 73, 76

The Parliament highlighted the importance of a full and effective implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the Groundwater Directive, the Drinking Water Directive and the Urban Wastewater Directive. It called on the Member States to: (i) impose an obligation on water suppliers to indicate the physicochemical characteristics of the water on water bills; (ii) draft urban plans according to the availability of water resources; (iii) increase controls and monitoring of pollutants, and plan immediate actions aimed at the removal and sanitisation of toxic substances; (iv) take action to reduce the considerable leakages from pipes in Europe and to renew the inadequate water supply networks.
The Parliament recalled that its Committee on Petitions has received a significant number of petitions from EU citizens in many Member States expressing their concerns about water supply and quality and wastewater management. It called on the Member States to complete their River Basin Management Plans as a matter of urgency and as a key element in the enforcement of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), and to implement them properly with full respect for the overriding ecological criteria. It recalled, furthermore, that each Member State should have a central webpage to provide information on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, so as to facilitate an overview of water quality and management. The Parliament stressed the importance of national regulatory authorities in ensuring fair and open competition between service providers and called on the Commission to support initiatives for regulatory cooperation in the EU in order to accelerate benchmarking, mutual learning and exchange of best regulatory practices.

The Parliament expressed its regret that the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive is still not fully implemented in the Member States and called for Union financial resources to be deployed as a priority in areas where EU environmental legislation is not respected, including wastewater treatment. It noted that compliance rates have proven to be higher where costs were recovered and the 'polluter pays' principle has been implemented and called for the Commission to review the adequacy of current instruments to deliver a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. The Parliament urged the Commission, in any revision of the WFD, to ensure that quantitative assessments of water affordability problems become a mandatory requirement of reporting exercises by Member States as regards the implementation of the WFD.

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Leading committee ENV/E confusing in next line

Summary


Extract from the Summary:

Environmental quality standards (EQS): the amended text provides that the revised EQS for existing priority substances should be taken into account for the first time in river basin management plans covering the period 2015 to 2021. The newly identified priority substances and their EQS should be taken into account in the establishment of supplementary monitoring programmes and in preliminary programmes of measures to be submitted by the end of 2018. With the aim of achieving good surface water chemical status, the revised EQS for existing priority substances should be met by the end of 2021 and the EQS for newly identified priority substances by the end of 2027.

Technical guidelines on monitoring strategies and analytical methods for substances, including sampling and monitoring of biota, shall be developed, to the extent possible, by 22 December 2014, as part of the existing implementation process of Directive 2000/60/EC.

Specific provisions for pharmaceutical substances: the new legislation recognises the risk of contamination of water and soil by pharmaceutical residues. Pursuant to Directive 2000/60/EC, the Commission shall, within two years, draw up a strategy against pollution of water by pharmaceutical substances. ... The Commission will propose measures to be taken at Union and/or Member States level, as appropriate, to address the possible environmental impacts of pharmaceutical substances on the environment.
**Watch lists**: the first watch list established by the Commission shall contain a maximum of 10 substances or groups of substances and shall indicate the monitoring matrices and the possible methods of analysis not entailing excessive costs for each substance. Once adopted, the first watch list shall be updated every two years. The duration of a continuous watch list monitoring period for any individual substance shall not exceed four years.

**Maps presenting the chemical status of water with respect to certain substances**: in the river basin management plans, Member States may provide additional maps that present the chemical status information for one or more of the following substances separately from the information for the rest of the substances identified in Part A of Annex I to this Directive: (i) substances behaving like ubiquitous PBTs; (ii) newly identified substances; and (iii) substances for which revised, stricter EQS are established.

**Coordination**: the text provides for the exploration of potential synergies with a view to identifying possible areas where data gathered through implementation of Directive 2000/60/EC can be used to support REACH and other relevant substance evaluation procedures.

**Reporting and review**

Article 1 of the Final Act

Directive 2000/60/EC is amended as follows:
(1) Article 16(4) is replaced by the following:

'4. The Commission shall review the adopted list of priority substances at the latest four years after the date of entry into force of this Directive and at least every six years thereafter, and come forward with proposals as appropriate.';

Article 2 of the Final Act

Directive 2008/105/EC is amended as follows:

Articles 8 and 9 are replaced by the following:

Article 8

Review of Annex X to Directive 2000/60/EC

The Commission shall report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the outcome of the regular review of Annex X to Directive 2000/60/EC provided for in Article 16(4) of that Directive. It shall accompany the report, where appropriate, with legislative proposals to amend Annex X including, in particular, proposals to identify new priority substances or priority hazardous substances or to identify certain priority substances as priority hazardous substances and to set corresponding EQS for surface water, sediment or biota, as appropriate.

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**EP Resolution of 3/07/2012** on the implementation of EU water legislation, ahead of a necessary overall approach to European water challenges, based on 2011/2297(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0273; A7-0192/2012)
Leading committee ENVI (ITRE, PETI for opinion)

**Summary**

Articles 1, 3, 7, 13, 14, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 37, 48

The Parliament acknowledged that the Water Framework Directive (WFD) constitutes a solid and ambitious legislative base for long-term integrated water management in the EU and pointed out that the rate of implementation has been slow and uneven across Member States and regions and that the implementation of the WFD needs to be improved significantly in order to achieve 'good status' throughout European waters by 2015. It further noted that, despite the progress made in the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, there are still gaps concerning the compliance rates on collecting systems and/or treatment. The Parliament urged the Commission to take determined action to bring Member States' infringements of EU law in the field of water to an end, to develop comprehensive guidelines and effective instruments to foster capacity-building in particular for regional authorities and river basin agencies, and to assist the Member States in achieving better compliance at future stages of implementation of EU water policy. The Parliament pointed out that, in many instances, petitions have uncovered problems related to the transposition and proper implementation of the EU water legislation and invites the European Commission to be more determined in its inquiries.

The Parliament underlined that an environmentally- and economically-sound water sanitation and wastewater management policy should tackle pollution at source before passing all pollutants through a costly end-of-pipe treatment, particularly with regard to water flowing through contaminated soil. It encourages the use of wastewater and the by-products of end-of-pipe treatment as a new resource for example as a source of energy. The Parliament called for EU water legislation to be updated - as appropriate - to properly take into account technological advances for the reuse and recycling of water in order to allow a cost- and energy-efficient reuse of treated wastewater for irrigation and industry as well as the reuse of greywater in households, as well as for measures for proper monitoring of the chemical and biological quality of reclaimed water.

The Parliament drew attention to a number of negative factors denounced by petitions received – including waste landfills, failure by competent authorities to control water quality, irregular or unlawful agricultural and industrial practices, urban and energy-related development, agriculture and industry – which impact on the environment and human health and are responsible for poor water quality. It urged the Commission to step up the battle against the increasing release of pollutants such as anti-biotic and drug residues – as well as hormone residues from anti-conception pills – in water, as these residues have a negative effect on human health and the environment.

The Parliament recognised that the EU policy framework has allowed the collection of less fragmented data on water as well as better monitoring, noted however the lack of reliable data on water quantity. It further noted the potential for better data management based on an improvement in statistical information and on the use of data collection stations, the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) and the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) monitoring of the state of water resources and the pressures on them from economic activity. The Parliament called on the Commission, in cooperation with the European Environment Agency, to develop a new set of reliable indicators for water accounts.

The Parliament called on the Commission and Member States to ensure the application of the 'polluter pays' and 'user pays' principles by means of transparent and effective pricing schemes implemented in all water-using sectors that aim at the recovery of the costs of water services, including environmental and resource costs, as set down in the Water Framework Directive. It further called on the Commission to develop a strategy for internalising the external costs incurred through water consumption, water pollution and wastewater treatment.

The Parliament reiterated that the WFD prescribes coordination between Member States for sharing a common river basin where water use may have
transboundary effects, and urged such Member States as may be concerned to engage in regular transboundary communication and cooperation to support the implementation of the WFD with regard to priority substances, priority hazardous substances and nutrients pollution.

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Resolution on a topical subject tabled by The Greens/EFA, S&D, EPP

[The European Parliament,]

23. Points out that from an ecological point of view Central and South-Eastern Europe is one of the richest but at the same time one of the most vulnerable areas of Europe, therefore requiring a high level of protection; welcomes the aim of the European Strategy for the Danube Region to create a liveable, sustainable and at the same time developed, prosperous Danube region by managing environmental risks such as floods and industrial pollution, preserving the quality and quantity of water reserves and ensuring their sustainable use, and preserving biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils; stresses that protecting the environment in the Danube basin is an important aspect which should stimulate responsible agricultural and rural development of the region; calls for improvements to the ecological status of the Danube, and for measures to reduce pollution and to prevent further releases of oil and other toxic and harmful substances; stresses that a good ecological status of the Danube is a prerequisite for all human activity along the river and recommends that the environmental targets should be considered in particular.

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Resolution on a topical subject tabled by S&D, ALDE, GUE/NGL, The Greens/EFA, EPP

[The European Parliament,]

8. Notes that responsibility for the pollution of the Danube region lies with both the Member States and the other riparian countries through which the Danube flows; stresses that protecting the environment in the Danube basin is an important aspect which will have a bearing on the agricultural and rural development of the region and urges riparian states to give top priority to the establishment of shared hydrological and water quality testing facilities;

11. Calls on the Commission to draw on the operational experience gained with the Baltic Sea Strategy; calls, accordingly, for an action plan to complement the document; is of the opinion that the Action Plan should include the following elements: environmentally friendly use of the Danube by inland navigation, intermodality with other transport modes along the Danube through the improvement of all infrastructures (with priority for the better use of existing infrastructure) and by creating a multi-modal transport system all along the river, environmentally-friendly use of water power along the Danube, preservation and improvement of Danube water quality in accordance with the Water Framework Directive, stringent vessel safety requirements, development of environmentally friendly tourism and improvements in the fields of education, research and social cohesion.
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### Questions asked:
1. Is the EU tackling intra-Community VAT fraud effectively?
   1.1. Is the Commission effectively using the tools at its disposal to tackle intra-Community VAT fraud and are these tools sufficient?
      a) Did the Commission make a reliable estimate of the volume of fraud in this area and set relevant performance indicators?
      b) Did the Commission put in place effective administrative cooperation arrangements between Member States so that VAT information could be shared between tax authorities?
      c) Did the Commission contribute to setting up a sound regulatory framework by putting forward pertinent legislative proposals likely to lead to a reduction in VAT fraud in Member States?

1.2. Are Member States cooperating effectively to tackle intra-Community VAT fraud?

### Observations:
1. The Court found that:
   a) there is lack of comparable data and indicators on intra-Community VAT fraud;
   b) the administrative cooperation framework allows sharing of VAT information between Member States' tax authorities but there are problems with the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of data; information received from non-EU countries is not being exchanged between Member States;
   c) VAT legislation has been adapted to tackle VAT fraud, however some of the legislative instruments are not consistently applied or difficult to enforce;

1.2. The Court found that there is lack of cooperation and overlapping competences of administrative, judicial and law enforcement authorities to fight against VAT fraud.

### Recommendations:
1. The Commission should:
   a) initiate a coordinated effort by Member States to establish a common system of collecting statistics on intra-Community VAT fraud;
   b) propose legislative amendments enabling effective cross-checks between customs and VAT data;
   c) provide initiative and encourage Member States to address weaknesses in Eurofisc;
   d) encourage Member States to better coordinate their policies on reverse charges;
   e) focus, in the context of its evaluation of the administrative cooperation arrangements, on improving the timeliness of Member States’ replies to
1. The Commission should initiate establishment of a common system of estimating the size of intra-Community VAT fraud, which would allow Member States to evaluate their performance against adequate indicators. The performance should be in terms of reducing the intra-Community VAT fraud, increasing detection of fraud and increasing tax recovery following the detection of fraud;

2. In order to improve the performance of Eurofisc as an efficient early warning system, the Commission should recommend to Member States to:
   a) introduce a common risk analysis to ensure that the information exchanged through Eurofisc is well targeted to fraud;
   b) improve the speed and frequency of these information exchanges;
   c) use a reliable and user-friendly IT environment;
   d) set up relevant indicators and targets to measure the performance of the different Working Fields;
   e) participate in all Eurofisc Working Fields;

3. In the context of its evaluation of the administrative cooperation arrangements among the Member States for exchanging information between their tax authorities to fight against intra-Community VAT fraud, the Commission should carry out monitoring visits selected on a risk basis. These monitoring visits should focus on improving the timeliness of Member States’ replies to information requests, the reliability of VAT Information Exchange System (VIES), the speed of Multilateral Controls, and the follow-up of the findings of its previous reports on administrative cooperation;

4. Member States need information from non-EU countries to enforce VAT collection of e-commerce Business to Consumer (B2C) services and intangibles supplied via internet. To strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries and enforce VAT collection, the Commission should support the Member States to negotiate Mutual Assistance Arrangements with the countries where most of the digital service providers are established and sign these arrangements;

5. While the Intra-Community VAT fraud is often linked with the organised criminal structures, the Commission and Member States should remove legal obstacles preventing the exchange of information between administrative, judicial and law enforcement authorities at national and EU level. In particular, OLAF and Europol should have access to VIES and Eurofisc data and Member States should benefit from intelligence information supplied by them;
6. In order to ensure the viability and sustainability of the Operational Action Plans (OAPs) set up by Member States and ratified by the Council under the umbrella of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Crime Threats (EMPACT) initiative, the Commission should provide sufficient financial resources.

**Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees**


**Leading committee: ECON (CONT, LIBE for opinion)**

**Summary**

Articles 1, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 26, 37, 28, 40, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81

The Parliament welcomed the Commission’s intention to propose a definitive VAT system by 2017 that is simple, fair, robust, efficient and less susceptible to fraud. It emphasised that it is the responsibility of the tax authorities in the individual Member States to ensure that VAT is paid in a proper and simple way. The Parliament noted that it is essential for the Member States to adopt a coordinated tax policy and to improve the speed and frequency of their exchange information concerning intra-Community trade in order to combat tax evasion and tax avoidance more effectively and finally close the existing ‘VAT gap’. The Parliament took the view that cooperation and information exchanges between the Member State tax authorities have been inadequate in the past and the activities of Eurofisc have to date failed to achieve any satisfactory results and stated that it was expecting the upcoming Commission proposal to enhance the functioning of Eurofisc. The Parliament further noted that the VAT Information Exchange System (VIES) has proven to be a helpful tool in fighting fraud by enabling tax authorities to reconcile data on traders across countries, but that shortcomings persist in its implementation, in particular as regards the timeliness of the information provided, the swiftness of the replies to queries and the speed of reaction to the errors signalled and recommended that Member States give due consideration to addressing these shortcomings. The Parliament took the view that the Commission should closely monitor the performance of national tax authorities and improve coordination between them and called on the Commission to carry out more monitoring visits to Member States, selected on a risk basis, when assessing administrative cooperation agreements.

The Parliament believes that the lack of comparable data and of adequate relevant indicators to measure Member States’ performance affects the effectiveness of the EU system in tackling intra-EU VAT fraud, and called on tax authorities to establish, in coordination with the Commission, a common system to estimate the size of intra-EU fraud and then set targets to reduce it, as this would make it possible to evaluate Member States’ performance in tackling this issue. It urged the Commission to initiate the establishment of a common system that will allow a more refined estimation of the size of intra-EU VAT fraud by compiling intra-EU VAT fraud statistics. The Parliament called on Member States to also facilitate the exchange of information with judicial and law enforcement authorities such as Europol and OLAF, as recommended by the Court of Auditors. The Parliament further noted that Customs Procedure 42, which provides for VAT exemption on goods imported into one Member State when they will subsequently be shipped to another Member State, has shown to be vulnerable to fraudulent abuse. It reiterated that effective cross checks of the data held by tax authorities with data held by customs authorities are crucial to detect and eliminate this type of fraud and called on Member States and on the Commission to act in order to facilitate the flow of information between tax and customs authorities regarding imports under Customs Procedure 42, as recommended by the European Court of Auditors.

The Parliament called on the Commission to evaluate the effects of the reverse charge procedure in terms of benefits, compliance costs, fraud, effectiveness and implementation problems and long-term advantages and disadvantages through pilot projects, as requested by some Member States and explicitly confirmed by the Commission in the meantime, even if this has not been included in its action plan so far.

The Parliament expressed its regret that VAT fraud, and in particular the so-called ‘carousel’ or ‘missing trader’ fraud, distorts competition and deprives national budgets of significant resources, as well as being detrimental to the Union budget. It is concerned that the Commission has no reliable data on VAT ‘carousel
fraud' and called on it to launch a coordinated effort by the Member States to establish a joint system of collecting statistics on VAT 'carousel fraud', stressing that such a system could build upon practices already used in some Member States.

It encouraged the Commission and the Member States to be more active at international level, to strengthen cooperation with non-EU countries and to enforce efficient VAT collection, to exchange information received from non-EU countries among themselves in order to facilitate the enforcement of VAT collection, particularly in e-commerce.

The Parliament urged the Commission to propose an amendment to the VAT Directive with a view to achieving further harmonisation of Member States' VAT reporting requirements for intra-EU supplies of goods and services. It further urged the Council to include VAT in the scope of the Directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law (the 'PIF Directive') with a view to finding agreement on the matter as soon as possible.

The Parliament stressed that it deemed it crucial to ensure the establishment of a single, strong and independent European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) that is able to investigate, prosecute and bring to court the perpetrators of criminal offences affecting the Union's financial interests, including with regard to VAT fraud, highlighted, however, the need to ensure that division of competence between the EPPO and Member States' investigating authorities does not lead to offences with a meaningful impact on the Union budget falling outside the competence of the EPPO.

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Leading committee CONT (INTA, REGI, LIBE, AFCO for opinion)

Summary

Articles 11, 13, 52

The European Parliament expressed its concern about the VAT gap and the estimated losses on VAT collection, which amounted to EUR 168 billion in 2013. It pointed out that the Commission does not have access to the information exchanged between Member States with a view to preventing and combating so-called 'carousel' fraud and called on all the Member States to participate in all of Eurofisc's fields of activity so as to facilitate the exchange of information with the aim of helping to combat fraud. The Parliament reiterated that the Commission has the competence to control and supervise measures taken by the Member States and calls on the Commission to make full use of its executive powers in order to both control and help the Member States in their fight against VAT fraud and tax avoidance.

The Parliament noted the increasing number of coordination centres supported by Eurojust and Europol and welcomed the results of cross-border operations Vertigo 2 and 3 and the efficient cooperation between law enforcement and judicial authorities in Member States, leading to the neutralisation of criminal networks responsible for defrauding approximately EUR 320 million in tax revenues, including VAT.

The Parliament reiterated its view that there is an urgent need to adopt the PIF directive (Directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law), which should include VAT in its scope and set out a clear definition of PIF offences, minimum rules for maximum applicable imprisonment penalties, and minimum rules on the statute of limitations, as soon as possible.
Leading committee ECON
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

15. Notes that the EU VAT system provides for a significant part of EU public revenues – 21% in 2009(32) – highlights that the current VAT collection model has remained unchanged since its introduction, leading to high levels of both unnecessary compliance costs and tax avoidance; stresses that as the model is outdated, its continued use leads to substantial and unnecessary losses;

16. Is extremely concerned that EUR 177 billion(33) in VAT revenues was lost due to non-compliance or non-collection in 2012;

18. Calls on the Commission to put forward concrete proposals to tackle the VAT gap in order to fight tax fraud and tax evasion, taking into account the recent proposals as adopted by the Council;

20. Calls on the Commission to come forward with a proposal to simplify legislation on VAT return obligations in order to reduce administrative burdens for EU businesses and to facilitate cross-border trade.

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Leading committee CONT (REGI, LIBE for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

16. Underlines the fact that in many Member States the VAT gap is continuously high owing to VAT fraud and avoidance; emphasises that the Commission has the authority to control and supervise the measures taken by the Member States; calls, therefore, on the Commission to fully use its powers in order to help the Member States in their fight against VAT fraud and tax avoidance.

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Leading committee CONT

Articles 5, 24, 25, 26, 27, 53
The Parliament welcomed the main initiatives taken by the Commission, at Parliament's request, to shape a new EU legislative landscape for anti-fraud policy, and in particular the proposal for a directive on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law, the proposal for a Council regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, and the proposal for a regulation on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), as well as the amendment to Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and stronger legal rights for persons concerned by OLAF investigations. It called on the Council to take the necessary time and not to finalise negotiations in a rush, in order to develop a robust European legal framework and strengthen the existing institutional tools for protecting the Union's financial interests. The Parliament welcomed also the action plan to step up the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion, as well as VAT reform in the EU, both efforts having been initiated in 2011.

The Parliament took note of the VAT gap in 2011 reported by the Commission and pointed out that effective action to close the VAT gap requires a concerted, multidisciplinary approach. It stressed the importance of implementing new strategies and making more efficient use of existing EU structures in order to combat VAT fraud more vigorously.

The Parliament welcomes the fact that the VAT reform process launched in December 2011 has already delivered important tools for ensuring better protection against VAT fraud. It expressed its conviction that there should be a focus on the need to simplify the VAT system for companies throughout Europe. The Parliament called on Member States to reform their national tax systems, making them simpler, fairer and more effective so as to facilitate compliance, prevent, deter and sanction tax fraud and evasion, and boost the efficiency of tax collection and welcomed the Commission’s renewed call to Member States to extend their national tax bases and to restrict tax exemptions and deductions, thus enabling them not only to simplify their tax systems but also to avoid increasing their standard VAT rates.

The Parliament welcomed the proposal for a regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office, stressed the need to establish a consistent, complementary system for protecting the Union’s financial interests and urged the Commission to provide a clear EU-level definition of the roles of the future European Public Prosecutor’s Office, Eurojust and OLAF, delimiting their respective remits.

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Leading committee LIBE (JURI for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary:

Parliament confirmed the content of its previous interim report, adopted in its resolution of 12 March 2014 while reaffirming its determination to achieve the priorities necessary to the establishment of the European Prosecutor, as well as to set the principles and the conditions that determine its approval. It called on the Council to ensure transparency and democratic legitimacy by keeping the Parliament fully informed and consulting it regularly. Members called on the Council to ensure transparency and democratic legitimacy by keeping Parliament fully informed and regularly consulting it.

Members endorsed the establishment of a single, strong, independent EPPO that is able to investigate, prosecute and bring to court the perpetrators of criminal
offences affecting the Union’s financial interests. They recalled that that the relevant criminal offences are to be set out in the proposed Directive on the fight against fraud to the Union’s financial interests by means of criminal law. The Council was invited to renew its efforts to find agreement on the latter for the establishment of the EPPO.

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EP Resolution of 12/12/2013 on the call for a measurable and binding commitment against tax evasion and tax avoidance in the EU, based on 2013/2963(RSP) (P7_TA(2013)0593; B7-0552/2013)
Resolution on a topical subject tabled by Elisa Ferreira, Anni Podimata, Mojca Kleva Kekuš on behalf of the S&D Group, Jean-Paul Gauzès on behalf of the EPP Group, Sylvie Goulard on behalf of the ALDE Group

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

2. Welcomes recent Commission proposals to expand automatic information exchange, fight VAT fraud and amend the Parent-Subsidiary Directive, which are designed to reduce tax avoidance in Europe by closing existing legal loopholes that some companies have been using to escape paying their fair share of fiscal contributions;

3. Recalls its urgent call for the Member States to commit to an ambitious but realistic target of at least halving the tax gap by 2020;

9. Stresses that there is an urgent need for better coordination, and that a common drive to reduce the tax gap would give substance to the Council’s pledges of commitment to fighting tax evasion and avoidance.

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EP Resolution of 23/10/2013 on organised crime, corruption and money laundering: recommendations on action and initiatives to be taken, based on 2013/2107(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0444; A7-0307/2013)
Leading committee CRIM (Special committee on organised crime, corruption and money laundering)

Articles 30, 44, 50, 119, 131

The Parliament called on the Member States to foster administrative, police and judicial cooperation enabling criminal assets to be traced anywhere in EU territory with a view to their seizure or confiscation, including through full activation of the network of asset recovery offices and rapid access to national data records such as, for example, those of the tax authorities, the public registry of motor vehicles, the land registry and the bank registry. It emphasised the major results achieved so far thanks to the introduction of joint investigation teams, and recognised the fundamental importance of these in terms of disseminating a culture of cooperation in the combating of cross-border crime.

The Parliament stressed the importance of stepping up cooperation by developing effective systematic communication and promoting information-sharing between judicial and law enforcement agencies among Member States, Europol, Eurojust, OLAF and ENISA, and with the corresponding authorities in non-EU countries, especially the EU’s neighbouring countries, on the basis of proper data protection and procedural rights standards, with a view to improving systems
for gathering evidence and to enabling data and information relevant to the investigation of offences, including those against the EU’s financial interests, to be processed and exchanged effectively with increased accuracy and speed of exchange, in full compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and with EU fundamental rights.

The Parliament welcomed the establishment in Europol of the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) and called for it to be strengthened, in particular with a view to combating cross-border organised crime offences and to improving cooperation between stakeholders in the public, private and research sectors and stepping up cooperation with non-EU countries.

Selected recommendations of the Parliament:

iii) eliminate tax havens throughout the European Union and put an end to tax evasion and tax avoidance by adopting the ‘origin of wealth’ principle recommended by the OECD;
ix) introduce Europe-wide corporate taxation that is as uniform, equal and homogeneous as possible;
x) strengthen the agreements on judicial and police cooperation between the Member States and between the EU and third countries;
 xv) establish and launch the European Public Prosecutor’s Office, equipping it with the necessary human and financial resources; at the same time support European Agencies, such as Europol and Eurojust, as well as JITs and AROs;
xx) define and introduce, also on the basis of a uniform reporting system, appropriate penalties for standard types of cybercrime;

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Leading committee CONT (AFET, AGRI for opinion)
Summary

Articles 20, 21, 32, 33, 34, 35, 91, 94

The Parliament emphasised that fighting tax evasion should be given the highest priority by both the Commission and the Member States. It called on the Member States to make their tax systems simpler and more transparent because tax fraud is too often facilitated by complex and opaque tax systems. It further calls on the Commission to strengthen its coordination with the Member States in order to collect reliable data on the customs and VAT gap in the respective countries and to report on a regular basis to Parliament in that regard.

The Parliament expressed its concern by the Court of Auditor’s finding in its Special Report No 13/2011 that the application of customs procedure 42 alone accounted in 2009 for extrapolated losses of approximately EUR 2 200 million. It expressed its apprehension that VAT fraud is widespread and stressed that the VAT collection model is outdated, given the many changes to the technological and economic environment that have taken place. The Parliament noted that initiatives in the field of direct taxation require a unanimous decision of the Council and deplored the fact that two important initiatives aimed at combating VAT fraud, i.e. the proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax as regards a quick reaction mechanism against VAT fraud (COM(2012)0428) and the proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards an optional and temporary application of the reverse charge mechanism in relation to supplies of certain goods and services susceptible to fraud (COM(2009)0511), are currently blocked in Council.
The Parliament welcomed the Commission's proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the fight against fraud to the Union’s financial interests by means of criminal law (PIF Directive), in particular, the fact that the definition of the Union’s financial interests in the proposal for the PIF Directive encompasses VAT, in accordance with the judgment of the European Court of Justice, which confirmed that there is a direct link between, on the one hand, the collection of Value Added Tax revenue in compliance with the applicable Union law, and on the other, the availability to the Union budget of the corresponding Value Added Tax resources, since any lacuna in collection of the first potentially causes a reduction in the second.

The Parliament affirmed that it looked forward to the submission by the Commission of the legislative proposal on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, which will be responsible for investigating, prosecuting and bringing to justice those who damage assets managed by or on behalf of the EU.

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EP Resolution of 21/05/2013 on Fight against Tax Fraud, Tax Evasion and Tax Havens, based on 2013/2060(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0205; A7-0162/2013)
Leading committee ECON (DEVE, CONT for opinion)

Summary

Articles 32, 40, 41, 42, 43, 53

The Parliament stressed the importance of implementing new strategies and making more efficient use of existing EU structures for improved combating of VAT fraud, especially carousel fraud and urged the Council promptly to adopt and implement the Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax as regards a quick reaction mechanism against VAT fraud.

The Parliament noted that as VAT is an 'own resource', tax evasion in that area does have a direct influence on both the economies of the Member States and the EU budget and pointed out that the model for collecting it is outdated. It further stressed that the correct operation of the customs system has direct consequences in terms of the calculation of VAT and expressed its concern that customs checks in the EU are not functioning properly, resulting in significant VAT losses.

The Parliament called on the Commission to speed up the creation of an EU tax identification number (TIN), applicable to all legal and natural persons engaged in cross-border transactions and expressed its opinion that the TIN should be connected to an international and open VAT Information Exchange System (VIES) database, assisting in identifying the unpaid taxes and other avoided liabilities.

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Leading committee ECON

Summary


Recital 6 of the Final Act
| Considering the massive instances of fraud that have occurred, a rapid and exceptional response to further instances of sudden fraud is best guaranteed by a Quick Reaction Mechanism ("QRM") special measure consisting of the option to apply for a short period a reverse charge, following appropriate notification by the Member State concerned. In order to ensure the exercising of the option is proportionate to the problem, the Commission, once it is in possession of the relevant information, should have a short period in which to appraise the notification and confirm whether it objects to the QRM special measure. Member States should have the opportunity for their views to be taken into account by the Commission, and should therefore be fully informed of the notification and any additional information provided throughout the process. Additionally, the Council should then decide on any further application of the reverse charge by an implementing Decision pursuant to Article 395 of Directive 2006/112/EC.  

| Recital 10 of the Final Act  

| Since a QRM can only be a temporary solution pending longer term legislative solutions with a view to making the VAT system more resilient to instances of VAT fraud, the QRM should only apply for a limited period of time.  

| Reporting and review  

| Article 2 of the Final Act  

| Before 1 January 2018, the Commission shall present to the European Parliament and to the Council an overall assessment report on the impact of the QRM provided for in point (1) of Article 1.  

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| CONT report of 18/12/2012 concerning Special Report No 13/2011 of the Court of Auditors entitled 'Does the control of customs procedure 42 prevent and detect VAT evasion?’, based on 2012/2010(DEC) (PE 485.900v03-00; A7-0426/2012)  

| Summary  

| Articles 4, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21  

| The CONT committee noted that, according to a study carried out on behalf of the Commission, the estimated average VAT gap in the Union is 12 % and stressed that besides tax avoidance and losses due to insolvencies, the VAT gap is also attributable to fraud, non-transparent rules, incoherent control systems and non- or partial implementation of Union law in Member States. It expressed its concern about the Court of Auditors’ findings that the application of customs procedure 42 alone accounted for extrapolated losses of approximately EUR 2 200 million.  

| The committee called on the Commission to urge Member States to simplify their law on VAT, introduce a standard form for the notification of the implementation of VAT to tax authorities and establish uniform and proper management of cases of exemption from VAT by the customs authorities of the Member States and to ensure the improved availability of those legislative texts translated into English, French and German as a minimum requirement. It strongly suggested to all Member States to take part in Working Field 3 of Eurofisc on fraudulent transactions using customs procedure 4200.

The committee stressed the importance of more intensive and rapid cooperation between Member States, better monitoring of exchanges of information and more direct contacts between local tax and customs offices, including by means of the online VAT Information Exchange System (VIES), so as to ensure that Member States provide efficient assistance to each other. It recommended to Member States that they give customs authorities online access to the VAT identification numbers contained in VIES without further delay and requested that the Commission keep Parliament’s competent committees and the Court of Auditors informed on a monthly basis on the developments in all Member States on preventing fraud under customs procedure 42.

The committee called on the Commission to create a system that would combine assistance in the customs area and administrative cooperation in the area of VAT to ensure effective information flows, so that the relevant authorities in one field are routinely informed about action in the other field.

The committee endorsed the Court of Auditors’ recommendations, in particular:

- the recommendation to amend the Customs Code Implementing Provisions, implementing compulsory communication of the relevant VAT ID numbers,
- the recommendation to amend the VAT Directive in order to hold importers jointly and severally liable for the VAT loss,
- the recommendation to the Commission to provide guidance to Member States on assistance and administrative cooperation,
- the recommendation to provide for automatic verification of VAT ID numbers and creation of EU risk profile under customs procedure 42,
- the recommendation for amending the VAT Directive allowing for reconciliation between customs and tax data,
- the recommendation to provide for exchange of information necessary for correct charging of VAT,
- the recommendation to set up a direct automatic data exchange concerning risk-prone transactions under customs procedure 42;

and called on the Commission to report on a six-monthly basis on how and when it will implement those recommendations.

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Leading committee CONT
Summary

Articles 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33

The Parliament noted that, according to a study carried out on behalf of the European Commission, the estimated average EU VAT gap has been found to be at the level of 12 % and stressed that, besides tax avoidance and losses due to insolvencies, the VAT gap is attributable also to fraud. It points to the fact that the VAT collection model is outdated, given the many changes to the technological and economic environment that have taken place.

The Parliament underlined that the correct operation of customs has a direct impact on the calculation of value-added tax and recalled that in its Special Report No 13/2011, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) found that the application of customs procedure 42 alone accounted in 2009 for extrapolated losses of approximately EUR 2 200 million. It recalled that the ECA found serious deficiencies in the control of simplified customs procedures, which account for 70 % of all
customs procedures and points out that they have led to unjustified losses to the Union budget and breaches in the EU’s trade policy.

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Leading committee ECON (CONT, IMCO, TRAN for opinion)
Summary

Articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39

The Parliament welcomes the Commission's Green paper on overhauling and reforming the current VAT system, and agreed that a comprehensive VAT system should reduce operational costs for users and administrative charges for authorities while combating fraud. It emphasised that rendering the VAT system fraud-proof must be a key priority, given the massive losses incurred by Member States and insisted that particular attention should be paid to 'carousel' fraud.

The Parliament called upon Member States to continue to build relationships based on trust, transparency and cooperation between national tax administrations, and to build 'tax partnerships' with businesses as the 'unpaid tax collectors’ for tax authorities. It furthermore urged the Commission to develop a coordinated strategy to improve the fight against fiscal fraud.

The Parliament agreed with the Commission that the efficiency of VAT collection needs to be improved in order to reduce the VAT gap and limit the possibility of fraud, stressed that combating tax fraud in the European Union is a priority, and called for closer cooperation between the Member States, Europol, Eurojust and OLAF in this area. It underlined the need to improve cross-border prosecution of intra-Community VAT fraud in the Member States, to increase accountability and risk awareness in this area and to have a comprehensive and uniform definition in EU legislation of a VAT-fraudulent scheme or VAT carousel, as well as harmonised administrative penalties. The Parliament noted that accurate estimates of the extent of VAT-carousel fraud are unavailable and urged the development of an accurate valuation tool for VAT fraud, which would also enable relevant comparisons to be made in this area between the EU Member States.

The Parliament called on the Commission to propose a simplification and consolidation of Community anti-fraud legislation, and to address the weaknesses in cooperation between the Commission and the Member States in the framework of this process. It further called on the Commission to ensure that the EUROFISC functions has a practical added value to Member States' cross-border VAT fraud investigations, to report regularly to Parliament on its functioning and to make these reports public.

The Parliament stresses that opportunities for VAT fraud can be significantly reduced by increased use of new technologies and innovative solutions and urged the Commission to further strengthen the Value Added Information Exchange System (VIES) by shortening the timescale for collecting and capturing data and by granting broader direct access to data.

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Leading committee ECON (JURI for opinion)
Summary
Final act: Council Regulation (EU) No 904/2010

Extract from the Summary:

**Eurofisc**: the amendments aim to clarify the fact that Eurofisc will operate on the basis of an EU-wide approach and to specify the Commission’s role in its operations. It shall be made up of officials appointed by the competent authorities of the Member States. According to Members, Eurofisc should have an open and transparent structure and it should therefore be made clear that not only the administrative committee set up by the Commission is to have the right to examine its reports but also the Member States and the European Parliament.

The European Parliament recalls that in its [resolution of 4 December 2008](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/mediacentre/en/press/statement/20080415ST0195) it called for the introduction of Eurofisc and recalled the paramount necessity for sharing existing national best practices in the fight against cross-border VAT fraud with a view to introducing both appropriate incentives for due diligence by Member States in relation to VAT, and rewards for honest taxpayers.

**Inventive mechanism**: in order to investigate VAT fraud with more efficiency in the Union, Members propose an incentive mechanism which shall be designed for the recovery of cross-border tax claims by distributing a fair proportion of the collected unpaid VAT between the Member State recovering the tax claims and the requesting Member State.

**Administrative cooperation**: the Member States, the European Parliament and the Commission shall examine and evaluate how the arrangements for administrative cooperation provided for in this Regulation are working. In particular, the Member States shall conduct audits of the operation of those arrangements. The Commission shall pool the Member States’ experience with the aim of improving the operation of those arrangements and shall regularly report to the Member States and the European Parliament on the results. It is important that the Commission should be responsible for providing assistance and expert opinions to help the Member States to attain the objectives.

**Exchange of information**: it is desirable for Member States to exchange and receive data reports of the highest possible quality, and these should meet with standards for transparency. With a view to improving the exchange of information between the various national authorities, it is proposed to monitor cases where a Member State has refused to transmit information or has failed to authorise an administrative inquiry.

**Reporting and review**

Article 59 of the Final Act

1. By 1 November 2013 and thereafter every five years, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of this Regulation.

2. Member States shall communicate to the Commission the text of any provisions of national law which they adopt in the field covered by this Regulation.

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Leading committee ECON (JURI for opinion)

Summary


Recital 3 of the Final Act

The rules concerning the chargeability of VAT on intra-Community supplies of goods and on intra-Community acquisitions of goods should be clarified in order to ensure the uniformity of the information submitted in recapitulative statements and the timeliness of the exchange of information by means of those statements. It is furthermore appropriate that the continuous supply of goods from one Member State to another over a period of more than one calendar month should be regarded as being completed at the end of each calendar month.

Recital 4 of the Final Act

To help small and medium-sized enterprises that encounter difficulties in paying VAT to the competent authority before they have received payment from their customers, Member States should have the option of allowing VAT to be accounted using a cash accounting scheme which allows the supplier to pay VAT to the competent authority when he receives payment for a supply and which establishes his right of deduction when he pays for a supply. This should allow Member States to introduce an optional cash accounting scheme that does not have a negative effect on cash flow relating to their VAT receipts.

Reporting and review

Article 1 of the Final Act
Amendments to Directive 2006/112/EC

24. Articles 235, 236 and 237 are replaced by the following:

Article 237

By 31 December 2016 at the latest, the Commission shall present to the European Parliament and the Council an overall assessment report, based on an independent economic study, on the impact of the invoicing rules applicable from 1 January 2013 and notably on the extent to which they have effectively led to a decrease in administrative burdens for businesses, accompanied where necessary by an appropriate proposal to amend the relevant rules.

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Leading committee ECON

Summary
9. Recalls that VAT-related tax fraud is a matter of particular concern for the functioning of the internal market insofar as it has a direct cross-border impact, involves substantial amounts of lost revenue and directly affects the EU budget; urges the Council to adopt the new directive on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation and to fight fraud in the area of VAT;

11. Calls for increased cooperation, such as the automatic exchange of information between countries, with a view to facilitating the recovery of capital moved abroad via illegal activity to the detriment of the internal market;

20. In regard to mutual assistance for the recovery of tax claims, duties and other measures, invites the Commission to estimate the number of cross-border tax claims by the Member States to be recovered within the territory of the European Union and to introduce quantifiable indicators for measuring progress in cross-border recovery over time;

21. Considers that the EU should actively promote the improvement of the OECD standards, with the aim of making the automatic, multilateral exchange of information the global standard; urges the EU, furthermore, to adopt measures that prevent abuse of the “residence principle” through artificial domicile and ownership schemes allowing holding companies with no activity or shell companies to shield beneficial owners from paying taxes in their country of domicile; urges the EU also to adopt a common approach to the application of anti-abuse measures, which should be effective, fair and aligned with the concept of wholly artificial arrangements as established by the Court of Justice;

29. Asks the Commission to report to Parliament annually on the implementation of the EU tax governance policy, starting in October 2010.

Oral / Written Questions

E-000393-17 WQ COM Rule 130 Claudia Ţapardel (S&D) on EU harmonisation of VAT rates
E-000179-17 WQ COM Rule 130 Lefteris Christoforou (PPE) on EU plan for potential VAT change
E-009289-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Christel Schaldemose (S&D) on VAT in e-commerce
P-008679-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Julia Pitera (PPE) on Number of VAT fraud cases
E-007466-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR) on The cost of compliance with VAT collection requirements
E-004161-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Jarosław Wałęsa (PPE) on Rules governing tax on goods and services
E-003150-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Luděk Niedermayer (PPE) on VAT reform
E-002585-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Marco Valli (EFDD), Laura Ferrara (EFDD), Marco Zanni (EFDD) on Europol and OLAF access to VIES and Eurofisc data
E-002245-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Zigmantas Bačytytis (S&D) on VAT fraud in the EU
E-000426-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Barbara Kappel (ENF) on VAT fraud
E-000145-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Jeppe Kofod (S&D) on VAT fraud in the food industry
E-014169-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Brian Hayes (PPE) on VAT fraud
E-013300-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Louis Michel (ALDE) on Tax fraud
E-009731-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Sophie Montel (NI), Dominique Bilde (NI), Florian Philippot (NI) on 'Merry-go-round' VAT fraud
E-009236-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Esther de Lange (PPE) on Persistent problems with the Commission's VAT number validation site
E-008688-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Monica Macovei (PPE) on Proposal for a Council directive for the mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation
E-008064-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD), Dario Tamburrano (EFDD), Piernicola Pedicini (EFDD) on Carousel fraud
E-006626-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE) on Repercussions of poor choices in relation to VAT increases in Spain
| E-005753-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Dimitrios Papadimoulis (GUE/NGL) on Audits for tax evasion by German companies |
| E-003557-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Richard Sulík (ECR) on VAT-related administrative cooperation - repeat question |
| P-002510-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Richard Sulík (ECR) on Europol's access to VAT Information Exchange System (VIES) |
| E-001971-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Gianluca Buonanno (NI) on Reverse charge and split payment mechanisms |
| E-010658-14 | WQ COM Rule 130 Richard Sulík (ECR) on Administrative cooperation in the field of VAT |
| E-008815-14 | WQ COM Rule 130 José Blanco López (S&D) on VAT collection |
| E-003464-14 | WQ COM Rule 117 Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) on Combating VAT fraud |
| E-011283-13 | WQ COM Rule 117 Marc Tarabella (S&D) on VAT fraud via the Internet |
| E-010918-13 | WQ COM Rule 117 Marc Tarabella (S&D) on EUR 193 million in VAT losses |
| E-000609-13 | WQ COM Rule 117 Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE) on VAT fraud on staple foods |
| E-000066-13 | WQ COM Rule 117 Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D) on VAT fraud |
| E-003935/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 David Casa (PPE) on VAT and Excise Duties Forum |
| E-000994/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 David Casa (PPE) on EU VAT authority |
| E-012349/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Hans-Peter Martin (NI) on Review of value added tax rules |
| E-009348/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Giommaria Ugias (ALDE) on Compatibility of the tax shield with Community VAT legislation |
| E-006325/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Paul Rübig (PPE) on Proposed measures against VAT fraud in the energy sector |
| E-004323/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Rovana Plumb (S&D) on EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) - Value Added Tax |
| E-000730/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Andreas Mölzer (NI) on Opportunities for fraud in emissions trading |
| E-010589/2010 | WQ COM Rule 117 Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D) on Future Green Paper on revision of the VAT system |
| E-010171/2010 | WQ COM Rule 117 Morten Messerschmidt (EFD) on Prevention of CO2 quota fraud |
| E-01083/2010 | WQ COM Rule 117 Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) on Combating VAT carousels and emissions trading |
| E-1433/2010 | WQ COM Simon Busuttil (PPE) on Hijacking of VAT numbers |
| E-5485/2009 | WQ COM Graham Watson (ALDE) on New electronic VAT system |
| E-4874/2009 | WQ COM Morten Messerschmidt (EFD) on Administrative problems with the implementation of the reverse charge mechanism |
## Special report 25/2015 of 29 February 2016

**EU support for rural infrastructure: potential to achieve significantly greater value for money**

Rural Development | Regional Development | European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) | European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) | Cohesion Fund (CF)

### Policy Area

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### Summary

**Questions asked:**

1. Have the Member States and the Commission achieved value for money with the support for rural infrastructure investments?

1.1. Was the justification of the need for EU funds for rural infrastructure sufficient and the coordination with other funds effective?

1.2. Did selection procedures direct funding towards the most cost-effective projects?

1.3. Were the results of the measures been monitored and evaluated in such a way as to allow the Member States and the Commission to identify and respond to any problems which may have arisen, and to provide objective information on the results of the measures financed?

**Observations:**

1. The Court found that the Member States and the Commission, acting through shared management, had achieved only limited value for money, as aid was not systematically directed towards the most cost-effective projects addressing the objectives set in the Rural development programmes (RDP) and there was insufficient information to demonstrate the success or otherwise of the measures:

   1.1. Member States did not always clearly justify the need for using EU rural development funds. Effective coordination with other EU, national, regional or local funds was often affected by weak demarcation lines and insufficient mechanisms to ensure complementarity. The risk of deadweight was not effectively mitigated, though some good practices were identified;

   1.2. Selection procedures did not always direct funding towards the most cost-effective projects, the risk of excessive project costs was not effectively limited and the sustainability-related requirements did not take into account the useful life of investments. Long delays in the administrative processes, especially with regard to the approval of grant applications, also impacted the measures' efficiency and effectiveness. The Commission started to systematically follow up weaknesses and related Member States' action plans late in the programming period;

   1.3. The monitoring and evaluation system did not produce adequate information. While the audited projects delivered the expected physical output, reliable information on what has actually been achieved with the public funds spent was often unavailable, making it difficult to direct future policy and manage the budget by results. The Commission has encouraged Member States to improve monitoring and evaluation, but some weaknesses are likely to persist in the 2014-2020 programming period.

**Recommendations:**

1.1. Analysis of needs and coordination between funding sources:
a) The Member States should have a coordinated approach for supporting rural infrastructure, which quantifies needs and funding gaps and justifies the use of the RDP measures. This approach should consider the EU, national, regional and local public funds and the private funds that could address - or are already addressing - the same needs as the RDP. Member States should ensure that RDP funds do not merely replace other public funds dedicated to the same policy area and select projects for which there is a demonstrable need for public support and which deliver added value;
b) In fulfilling its role in shared management, the Commission should promote the adoption of best practices in mitigating the risk of deadweight and encourage Member States to avoid simple substitution of other funds by the RDP resources, thereby achieving greater added value for the EU funds employed;
c) Member States should make better use of the existing coordination structures such as coordination bodies and joint management, control and monitoring arrangements to implement effective mechanisms aimed at minimising gaps and overlaps in funding, in line with the guiding principles of the common strategic framework;
d) The Commission should build upon the first steps taken to ensure effective coordination between the different EU funds and carry out a thorough assessment of the complementarity between the different EU funds to be used by Member States in the 2014-2020 programming period. The Commission should be proactive in encouraging Member States to draw on the experience gained with other funds supporting infrastructure to improve the efficiency of the management of the measures. It should take the opportunity provided by the enhanced annual implementation report to be submitted by Member States in 2019 to assess the effectiveness of the coordination mechanisms and suggest improvements where necessary.

1.2. Management of the measures:
   a) Member States should establish and consistently apply criteria to ensure the selection of the most cost-effective projects - the projects with the potential to make the greatest contribution to the RDP objectives per unit of cost. These selection systems should systematically set a minimum threshold taking into account the quality of the projects;
   b) With regard to effective checks on the reasonableness of costs, the Commission and the Member States should implement the recommendations in the Court’s special report on this subject. In particular for infrastructure projects, the Member States should ensure that project cost estimations are based on up-to-date price information that reflects actual market prices and that public procurement procedures are fair and transparent and promote genuine competition;
   c) Member States should take into account the useful life of the supported investments when establishing the sustainability-related requirements and checks;
   d) Member States should set a reasonable timeframe for processing grant and payment applications and respect it.

1.3. Monitoring, evaluation and feedback:
   a) For the 2014-2020 programming period, the Commission and the Member States should collect timely, relevant and reliable data that provides useful information on the achievements of the projects and measures financed. This information should allow conclusions to be drawn on the efficiency and effectiveness of the funds spent, identify the measures and types of infrastructure projects delivering the greatest contribution to the EU objectives and provide a sound basis for improving the management of the measures;
   b) Member States should ensure that clear, specific objectives are set for the projects to which funds are committed. Objectives should be quantified where possible to facilitate the execution and monitoring of the projects and to provide useful feedback for the managing authorities.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

CONT Working Document of 5/04/2016 on European Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 25/2015 (2015 Discharge): EU support for rural infrastructure: potential to achieve significantly greater value for money (PE576.993v01-00)
Rapporteur: Georgi Pirinski (S&D)
1-2. Recognises the importance of rural infrastructure investments supported by EU funds and notes that European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) funding to infrastructure projects is based on shared management where Member States are responsible for management, monitoring and control as well as for selection and implementation of projects, while the role of the Commission is to supervise the proper functioning of the management and control systems in Member States;

3. Considers ECA’s findings and recommendations, included in the Special Report 25/2015, useful for further improvement of the performance based utilisation of EU funded investments in rural infrastructure and for achievement of better results and value for money, and requests the Commission to implement them;

4. Strongly recommends that the EU investments in rural infrastructure are targeted explicitly to projects that allow improvement of public services and/or contribute to jobs’ creation and economic development in rural areas, and for which there is a demonstrable need for public support and which deliver added value;

5. Recommends that Member States use a coordinated approach which quantifies needs, where applicable, and funding gaps and justifies the use of the RDP measures, and which considers not only EU funds and programmes, but also national, regional and local programmes and public and private funds that could address - or are already addressing - the same needs as the RDP;

6. Calls on the Commission to build upon the first steps taken to ensure effective coordination and complementarity between the different EU funds, undertaken through the checklist used by it to ensure the consistency of the 2014-2020 RDPs, and to provide further guidance to Member States during the implementation of the programmes on how to achieve not only better complementarity, but also on how to avoid the risk of substitution of funds and to mitigate the risk of deadweight; in this regard, asks the Commission to intervene also by promoting good practices;

7. Recommends to the Member States, in order to mitigate the risk of deadweight, before setting aid rates for infrastructure measures to assess the appropriate level of public funding needed to encourage investments, as well as during the project selection process to check, where appropriate before approving applications for support, whether the applicant has sufficient capital or access to capital to finance all or part of the project; encourages better use of management information systems by the Member States;

8. Calls for respecting the principle of additionality on all levels and insists therefore on a proper set-up of monitoring committees and their active participation in the process of coordination; asks the Commission to properly utilize its advisory role in the monitoring committees;

9. Welcomes that the Commission issued guidance in March 2014 encouraging Member States to ensure that eligibility and selection criteria are applied in a transparent and consistent way throughout the programming period, that selection criteria are applied even in cases when the budget available is sufficient to fund all eligible projects and that projects with a total score that is below a certain threshold are excluded from support and calls on the Member States to strictly follow this guidance for EU funded rural infrastructure projects;

10. Request that the Member States establish and consistently apply criteria to ensure the selection of the most cost-effective projects - the projects with the potential to make the greatest contribution to the RDP objectives per unit of cost; asks them to ensure that project cost estimations are based on up-to-date price information that reflects actual market prices and that public procurement procedures are fair and transparent and promote genuine competition; notes the guidelines on how to avoid common errors in EU co-funded project, developed by the Commission at the end of 2014, and encourages all Member States to fulfil the ex-ante conditionality for public procurement requirements by the end of 2016;

11. Calls as well for greater transparency in the selection process and considers that public opinion on local problems in rural areas should be taken into consideration by managing authorities when approving grant applications; recognizes that local action groups may play an important role in this process;

12. Recommends to the Commission to include in the scope of its future audits an examination of performance aspects concerning rural infrastructure projects and expects that the changes made for the 2014-2020 programming period by the Commission, based on the identified past problems, will bring the
| Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees | EP Resolution of 6/07/2016 on synergies for innovation: the European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other European innovation funds and EU programmes, based on 2016/2695(RSP) (P8_TA-PROV(2016)0311; B8-0851/2016, B8-0852/2016, B8-0857/2016, B8-0858/2016 and B8-0860/2016) Resolution on topical subject tabled by Greens/EFA, ECR, EFDD, ALDE, EPP, S&D Summary | Extract from the Summary: The rationale of **strengthening synergies between Horizon 2020 and ESI Funds** lies in building meaningful interactions between investment strategies and interventions as a way to have significant impacts on the economy... Members considered that the smart specialisation methodology should remain a model for cohesion policy post-2020.

While insisting on the need to strengthen result-orientation in cohesion policy, Parliament underlined the urgent need to **increase synergies with other EU policies on competitiveness**...

Members noted that **synergies with other policies and instruments must be further enhanced in order to maximise the impact of investments**. In this context, they noted the Stairway to Excellence (S2E) EU budget pilot project, which continues to support regions of 13 Member States in developing and exploiting the synergies between the ESI Funds. They called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- pay constant attention to the needs of SMEs in the design and implementation of the ESI Funds and Horizon 2020, as well as to synergies between these;
- prepare coordinated calls for proposals in order to ease access to multi-fund financing.

... Lastly, the Commission is called upon to **monitor synergies between the funds systematically** and to issue a communication on this issue.

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Leading committee: AGRI (DEVE, BUDG, CONT, ENV, REGI, JURI for opinion)
Summary


Recitals 7, 9, 10, 38, 40, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 64
Articles 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 49, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79

Each Member State should prepare either a national rural development programme for its entire territory or a set of regional programmes or both a national programme and a set of regional programmes. Each programme should identify a strategy for meeting targets in relation to the Union priorities for rural development and a selection of measures. Programming should comply with Union priorities for rural development, whilst at the same time adapting to national contexts and complementing the other Union policies. Rural development programmes should identify the needs of the area covered and describe a coherent strategy to meet them in the light of the Union priorities for rural development. That strategy should be based on the setting of targets. The links between the needs identified, the targets set and the choice of measures selected to meet them should be established. Targets are to be established in rural development programmes against a common set of target indicators for all Member States and where necessary, against programme specific indicators.

In order to ensure that financial resources for rural development are used in the best possible way and to target measures under rural development programmes in accordance with the Union priorities for rural development and in order to guarantee equal treatment of applicants, Member States should establish selection criteria for the selection of projects. When applying the selection criteria the size of the operation should be taken into account in accordance with the principle of proportionality.

The Commission and Member States should take all steps necessary to ensure the sound management of rural development programmes. In this context the Commission should carry out adequate measures and controls and the Member States should take measures to guarantee the sound functioning of their management systems. A single Managing Authority should be responsible for the management and implementation of each rural development programme. The Managing Authority should be able to delegate part of its duties whilst retaining responsibility for the efficiency and correctness of management. Where a Member State has more than one programme to manage, a coordination body can be set up to ensure consistency.

Each rural development programme should be subject to regular monitoring of the implementation of the programme and of progress towards the established targets of the programme. The responsibility for monitoring the programme should be shared between the Managing Authority and a Monitoring Committee set up for that purpose. The Monitoring Committee should be responsible for the monitoring of the effectiveness of the implementation of the programme. The monitoring of the programme should involve the drawing up of an annual implementation report to be sent to the Commission.

In order to improve its quality and demonstrate its achievements, each rural development programme should be subject to evaluation. In order to provide an efficient and secure exchange of data of common interest as well as to record, maintain and manage key information and report on monitoring and evaluation, an electronic information system should be established.

Since demonstrating and improving the impact and effectiveness of actions under the EAFRD also depends on appropriate evaluation during the preparation and implementation of a programme and its completion, a monitoring and evaluation system should be set up jointly by the Commission and the Member States with the purpose of demonstrating the progress and assessing the impact and efficiency of rural development policy implementation. In order to ensure that information can be aggregated at Union level, a set of common indicators should form part of that monitoring and evaluation system. Key information on the implementation of rural development programmes should be recorded and maintained electronically as a means to facilitate data aggregation. Beneficiaries
should therefore be required to provide the minimum necessary information that is needed for monitoring and evaluation. To take account of the specific needs of evaluation, a European evaluation capacity for rural development should be set up as part of the European network for rural development in order to bring together all actors involved and thereby to facilitate the exchange of expertise in the field.

In order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of this Regulation, implementing powers should be conferred on the Commission, in relation to the content of rural development programmes and national frameworks, the approval of programmes and of modifications thereto, the procedures and timetables for approval of programmes, the procedures and timetables for the approval of modifications to programmes and to national frameworks, including their entry in to force and frequency of submission, the rules on payment methods for participants’ costs for knowledge transfer and information actions, specific conditions for the implementation of rural development measures, the structure and operation of networks set up by this Regulation, the information and publicity requirements, the adoption of the monitoring and evaluation system and the rules for the operation of the information system, and the rules concerning the presentation of the annual implementation reports. Those powers should be exercised in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and the Council.

Ex post evaluation

Article 78 of the Final Act

In 2024, an ex post evaluation report shall be prepared by the Member States for each of their rural development programmes. That report shall be submitted to the Commission by 31 December 2024.

Article 79 of the Final Act

Syntheses of evaluations

Syntheses at Union level of the ex ante and ex post evaluation reports shall be undertaken under the responsibility of the Commission.

The syntheses of the evaluation reports shall be completed at the latest by 31 December of the year following the submission of the relevant evaluations.

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Leading committee: REGI (BUDG, CONT, ECON, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE, TRAN, AGRI, PECH, CULT, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary:

Alignment with Europe 2020 strategy: the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) should facilitate sectoral and territorial coordination of Union intervention under the five European Structural and Investment Funds and with other relevant Union policies and instruments. The CSF must set out:
• how the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Union’s strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;
• the arrangements to address key territorial challenges;
• the arrangements to promote the integrated use of ESI Funds;
• the arrangements for coordination with other relevant Union policies and cooperation activities.

Effectiveness of the Funds: given the fact that Member States and regions increasingly face complex and interrelated challenges, the solutions supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds should be integrated, multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional. In order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the policies, it should be possible for the ESI Funds to be combined into integrated packages which are tailor-made to fit the specific territorial needs. Arrangements for the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds, shall take into account the overall aim of reducing administrative burden for bodies involved in the management and control of the programmes.

Partnership agreement: the partnership principle was strengthened. On the basis of the Common Strategic Framework, each Member State should prepare, in cooperation with its partners, and in dialogue with the Commission, a Partnership Agreement. The ESI should be implemented through programmes covering the programming period of the Partnership Agreement. The provisions on Partnership Agreement were amended so as to give local and regional authorities and partners representing civil society the right of further scrutiny regarding planning and implementation. A code of conduct would establish a framework within which Member States would support the implementation of partnership.

Ex ante conditionalities: the amended regulation defines ex ante conditionalities to ensure that the necessary prerequisites for the effective and efficient use of Union support are in place. To this end, an ex ante conditionality should apply only when it has a direct and genuine link to the effective achievement of the objectives of the ESI Funds. The Commission should assess the information provided by the Member State in the framework of evaluating the Partnership Agreement.

Performance framework: the performance framework should be defined for each programme with a view to monitoring progress towards the objectives and targets set for each priority over the course of the programming period. The Commission should undertake a performance review based on a performance framework and in cooperation with the Member States in 2019.

A performance reserve of 6% of the resources allocated to the ERDF, ESF and CF under the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal as well as to the EAFRD and to Title V of the EMFF, shall be established for each Member State. The effectiveness of expenditure under the European Structural and Investment Funds must be underpinned by sound economic policies. The ESI Funds should be able to be, if necessary, redirected to addressing the economic problems a Member State was facing.

Where a Member State fails to take effective action in the context of the economic governance process, the Commission should make a proposal to the Council to suspend part or all of the commitments or payments for the programmes of that Member State. In such an event, the European Parliament shall be kept informed at all stages of the procedure on suspension of funds, through the structured dialogue with the Commission. Furthermore, the suspension of Funds would be adapted to the social and economic circumstances of the Member state concerned.

Review and evaluation
Article 21 of the Final Act
Performance review

1. The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, shall undertake a review of the performance of the programmes in each Member State in 2019 (the 'performance review'), with reference to the performance framework set out in the respective programmes. The method for establishing the performance framework is set out in Annex II.

2. The performance review shall examine the achievement of the milestones of the programmes at the level of priorities, on the basis of the information and the assessments presented in the annual implementation report submitted by the Member States in the year 2019.

Article 57 of the Final Act
Ex post evaluation

1. The ex post evaluations shall be carried out by the Commission, or by the Member States in close cooperation with the Commission. Ex post evaluations shall examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the ESI Funds and their contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth taking account of the targets established in that Union strategy and in accordance with specific requirements established in the Fund-specific rules.

2. Ex post evaluations shall be completed by 31 December 2024.

3. The ex-post evaluation of the dedicated programmes referred to in point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 39(4) shall be carried out by the Commission and completed by 31 December 2019.

4. For each of the ESI Funds, the Commission shall prepare, by 31 December 2025, a synthesis report outlining the main conclusions of ex-post evaluations.

EP Resolution of 23/06/2011 on the state of play and future synergies for increased effectiveness between the ERDF and other structural funds, based on 2010/2160(INI) (P7_TA(2011)0286; A7-0141/2011)
Leading committee: REGI (BUDG, EMPL for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the summary:

The resolution notes that the Commission, in the Europe 2020 strategy, pledged to mobilise the EU financial instruments ... as part of a consistent funding strategy, pulling together EU and national public and private funding, in the context of the flagship initiative entitled 'Resource efficient Europe', thus reflecting the need for coherence between policies and instruments.

... The mid-term review acknowledges that budgetary flexibility is limited and that obstacles exist to reprioritisation even within programmes, Parliament considers that, in the current post-crisis situation, it is more important than before to understand the processes in the Member States’ economies and the results achieved through the use of EU resources. Members consider that the rationalisation of spending calls for greater effectiveness and efficiency of policies at EU level as well as at national, regional and local levels, whereas closer coordination and complementarity are essential elements in the modernisation of cohesion policy in the future.

In this context, it sets out the following recommendations:
Greater coordination and synergies: the resolution calls for a single strategic framework to be proposed, in time for the next financing period after 2013, to ensure a common approach and to capitalise on synergies between all actions which serve on the ground to further cohesion policy objectives as defined by the Treaties and are funded by the ERDF, the Cohesion Fund, the ESF, the EAFRD and the EFF. Members believe that expenditure in the field of cohesion policy must be rationalised by reducing fragmentation of funding instruments and channels and fostering greater complementarity between the various funding instruments. They stress that coordination should be further enhanced not only between cohesion policy instruments as such … but also between actions financed by these instruments and activities carried out under TENs, the Seventh Framework Programme and the CIP.

Members welcome the proposal set out in the Commission Communication on the Budget Review for the adoption by the Commission of a Common Strategic Framework in order to strengthen the integration of EU policies for the delivery of the Europe 2020 strategy. They call in this context for action to foster synergies between funding methods for the EU 2020 strategy’s flagship initiatives. The resolution highlights the fact, however, that many Member States face difficulties in coordinating the various funds and have apparently expressed anxiety about the lack of synergy, and even in some cases about overlap, between funds. Members highlight, in this respect, the importance of co-financing and the need to simplify the rules to make it possible to strengthen synergies between the structural funds.

Instruments to achieve cohesion: Parliament calls on the Commission to examine the most effective ways of increasing synergies on the ground. Members suggest, in this respect, that consideration be given to the possibility of allowing the Member States to choose to have a single operational programme per region or a multi-regional operational programme in the framework of macro-regional strategies encompassing different funds with a single managing authority. They suggest that the national management authorities in the Member States draw up future operational programmes geared as closely as possible to local and regional objectives.

The Commission is invited to:

- consider multi-fund programmes for Member States and regions that want to use them;
- put forward proposals for reviewing the provisions on cross-financing and reducing the barriers to their application;
- play its role with a view to increasing administrative capacity in the Member States, at regional and local level as well as among stakeholders, in order to overcome barriers to effective synergies between structural funds and other funds and to support effective policy design and implementation;
- to develop a one-stop shop scheme to provide practical guidance, information and advice for those concerned, so as to ensure that the public is kept properly up to date with regard both to cross-financing and to synergies between funds in general;
- enhance both technical assistance and training for national, regional and local administrations in order to increase the capacities and knowledge of rules on implementation-related problems;
- draw up a European guide to multilevel governance and encourage the Member States to implement it in line with specific local and regional objectives.

Improved governance: Members believe that the new strategy for the use of funds will be more effective if it involves regional and local levels of governance, which are capable of applying the strategic objectives to local conditions. Lastly, the Commission is called upon, when establishing the new Common Strategic Framework and bringing forward proposals for regulations, to include provisions enabling local and regional partnerships (cities, towns, functional regions, groups of local authorities) to incorporate the various EU funding streams into a consistent and integrated framework in their respective territories.
Oral / Written Questions

- E-000376-17 WQ COM Rule 130 Matt Carthy (GUE/NGL) on Knowledge Transfer Scheme
- E-009445-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Siôn Simon (S&D) on Rural development in the West Midlands
- E-009207-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Rosa D’Amato (EFDD) on Exclusion of local action group
- E-008215-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Nuno Melo (PPE) on Financial corrections imposed on Portugal I
- E-007238-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) on Investment projects in pig farming
- E-006925-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE) on Rural depopulation and negligent structural fund implementation in Spain
- E-006656-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Mario Borghezio (ENF) on Misuse of European funding in the Czech Republic
- E-006069-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Angel Dzhambazki (ECR) on Misuse of European funds
- E-005322-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Ángela Vallina (GUE/NGL) on Timescales for publishing the results of investigations into the possible fraudulent use of EAFRD funds in Asturias
- E-003914-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Evžen Tošenovský (ECR), Jan Zahradil (ECR) on Enhancing the competitiveness of agriculture in the Rural Development Programme of the Czech Republic
- P-003415-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Iliana Iotova (S&D) on Common agricultural policy (CAP) funding — financial corrections and losses for Bulgaria
- E-003344-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Ángela Vallina (GUE/NGL) on Commission action to assess possible fraudulent use of EAFRD funds in Asturias
- E-002269-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Deirdre Clune (PPE) on European economic development
- P-002209-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Krzysztof Hetman (PPE) on Utilisation of funds for infrastructure in rural areas
- E-008903-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR) on Funding from the Fund for Strategic Investments
- E-005683-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Brian Crowley (ECR) on Poverty and social exclusion in rural areas
- E-002381-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL) on Situation of urban and suburban farmers in the face of rampant urbanisation
- P-001096-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Wojciech Michal Olejniczak (S&D) on Consequences of irregularities identified in checks on the provision of EU financial support - Rural Development Programme
- E-013491-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR) on Distribution of funds under the Rural Development Programme
- E-010882-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Marc Tarabella (S&D) on The EU’s forest strategy
- E-010854-11 WQ COM Rule 117 Oldřich Vlasák (ECR) on Connecting Europe Facility
- E-5479/2010 WQ COM Rule 117 Cristian Silviu Bușoi (ALDE) on Subject: Measure 3.2.2.
**Special report 1/2016 of 7 April 2016**

**Is the Commission’s system for performance measurement in relation to farmers’ incomes well designed and based on sound data?**

Agriculture and Rural Development | Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) | European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) | European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

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**Questions asked:**

1. Is the Commission’s system for measuring the performance of the CAP in relation to farmers’ incomes well designed and based on sound data?
   1.1. Has the Commission clearly established what statistical data are needed for the effective performance assessment of CAP measures in support of farmers’ incomes?
   1.2. Did the Commission and Member States ensure that the data used for the measurement of farmers’ incomes are of appropriate quality?
   1.3. Did the Commission define relevant indicators allowing for the effective performance assessment of CAP measures in support of farmers’ incomes?

**Observations:**

1. The Commission’s system for measuring the performance of the CAP in relation to farmers’ incomes is not sufficiently well designed and the quantity and quality of statistical data used to analyse farmers’ incomes has significant limitations:
   1.1. The Commission has not yet established a comprehensive set of data for assessing the performance of CAP measures in relation to farmers’ incomes: the Commission still lacks relevant information on farmers’ incomes at EU level; the economic accounts for agriculture (EAA) are an important tool for monitoring the economic situation of agriculture but they have inherent limitations for assessing CAP measures; the farm accountancy data network (FADN) is a well-established source of income and business information on commercial agricultural holdings but it has limitations;
   1.2. The Commission and Member States did not always ensure that available data on farmers’ incomes were of an appropriate quality: there were weaknesses in the Commission’s management of the EAAs; in some Member States there were weaknesses in the operation of the FADN;
   1.3. The Court found that the limitations in the available data, vague objectives of certain CAP measures and weaknesses in performance indicators impact the Commission’s ability to demonstrate what has been achieved: direct payments serve a multitude of objectives whose achievement is difficult to measure; CAP performance indicators related to farmers’ incomes cannot be clearly linked to measures and actual achievement of the objectives.

**Recommendations:**

1. Developing frameworks for collecting and comparing relevant information on farmers’ incomes:
   The Commission should develop a more comprehensive statistical framework to provide information on the disposable income of farm households and to better capture the standard of living of farmers. For this purpose the Commission should, in cooperation with the Member States and based on a common...
methodology, consider how best to develop and combine existing EU statistical instruments. The Commission should also improve the framework for the comparison of farmers’ incomes with incomes in other sectors of the economy.

2. Developing the economic accounts for agriculture (EAA):
The Commission should further develop the EAA so that their potential could be better used in order to provide more detailed information on the factors impacting agricultural income and ensure transmission of regional-level data based on formal arrangements with the Member States. The Commission should also examine whether the EAA can be further developed to provide a reasonable estimate of the economic value of the public goods that are produced by farmers and ensure that EAA information is used appropriately in income indicators.

3. Developing synergies between the farm accountancy data network (FADN) and other statistical tools:
The Commission’s analysis of farmers’ incomes should be based on indicators taking account of the current situation of agriculture and on sufficient and consistent data for all beneficiaries of CAP measures. This could be done by developing synergies between existing administrative data or by developing the FADN or other suitable statistical tools.

4. Improving the quality of the EAA:
The Commission should introduce regular quality reporting on the EAA and obtain reasonable assurances that Member States set up a quality assurance framework to ensure that data provided by Member States are comparable and compiled in line with the quality criteria applying to European statistics.

5. Improving the quality of FADN:
The Commission should also address weaknesses identified in the implementation of the FADN by agreeing a clear timetable with the Member States concerned and encouraging better use of the system’s potential. The Commission should further develop the present quality arrangements for the establishment of the FADN statistics by the Member States to ensure that, in all Member States, sectors and size classes of holdings that are of interest for the CAP are adequately represented, reflecting also the choices made by Member States in terms of CAP options.

6. Improving the performance measurement of CAP measures supporting farmers’ incomes:
The Commission should improve the reliability and completeness of performance information of the CAP measures in relation to farmers’ incomes by:

a) defining from the outset appropriate operational objectives and baselines against which the performance of the CAP measures can be compared for the next programming period;

b) in the context of its evaluations, complementing the current framework of performance indicators with other relevant and good-quality data to measure the results achieved;

c) also in the context of its evaluations, assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures designed to support farmers’ incomes.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur
CONT Working Document of 17/05/2016 on European Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 1/2016 (2015 Discharge): “Is the Commission’s system for performance measurement in relation to farmers’ incomes well designed and based on sound data?” (PE576.937v01-00)
Rapporteur: Claudia Schmidt (EPP)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]
[The European Parliament recommends that]
1. The Commission develops a more comprehensive statistical framework to provide information on the disposable income of farm households and to better capture the standard of living of farmers. For this purpose the Commission should, in cooperation with the Member States and based on a common methodology, consider how best to develop and combine existing EU statistical instruments;
2. The Commission improves the framework for the comparison of farmers’ incomes with incomes in other sectors of the economy;
3. The Commission further develops the EAAs so that their potential could be better used in order to: – provide more detailed information on the factors impacting agricultural income; – ensure transmission of regional-level data based on formal arrangements with the Member States.
4. The Commission examines whether the EAAs can be further developed to provide a reasonable estimate of the economic value of the public goods that are produced by farmers and ensures that EAA information is used appropriately in income indicators;
5. The Commission bases its analysis of farmers’ incomes on indicators taking account of the current situation of agriculture and on sufficient and consistent data for all beneficiaries of CAP measures. This could be done by developing synergies between existing administrative data or by developing the FADN or other suitable statistical tools;
6. In view of the importance of the EAAs for monitoring the CAP, the Commission introduces regular quality reporting on the EAAs and obtain reasonable assurances that Member States set up a quality assurance framework to ensure that data provided by Member States are comparable and compiled in line with the quality criteria applying to European statistics;
7. The Commission addresses weaknesses identified in the implementation of the FADN by agreeing a clear timetable with the Member States concerned and encouraging better use of the system’s potential;
8. The Commission further develops the present quality arrangements for the establishment of the FADN statistics by the Member States to ensure that, in all Member States, sectors and size classes of holdings that are of interest for the CAP are adequately represented, reflecting also the choices made by Member States in terms of CAP options;
9. Taking into consideration the weaknesses identified by the Court, the Commission improves the reliability and completeness of performance information of the CAP measures in relation to farmers’ incomes by:
   - defining from the outset appropriate operational objectives and baselines against which the performance of the CAP measures can be compared for the next programming period;
   - in the context of its evaluations, complementing the current framework of performance indicators with other relevant and good-quality data to measure the results achieved;
   - also in the context of its evaluations, assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the measures designed to support farmers’ incomes.

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<td>[The European Parliament,]</td>
<td>5. Points out that small and medium-sized family farms form an integral part of the European agricultural sector and contribute to creating socially and economically vibrant rural areas that contribute to the upkeep of cultural and natural heritage; points out furthermore that these farms experience difficulties at times in tapping the benefits of advanced production techniques and practices that could ensure a fair income and improve farmers living and working conditions and the creation of high-quality jobs; underlines that innovation has the potential to increase labour productivity and income by reducing production costs and making business more efficient; stresses that ownership of, and access to, arable land are pivotal for farmers and family farms; advocates making farming a more desirable occupation for young men and women, inter alia, by improving access to finance, technology and support</td>
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programmes; calls for the development of new business ideas and on the Commission to inform farmers more effectively about their opportunities in this respect; acknowledges the social role of agriculture, its contribution to social cohesion and its effect on fighting rural depopulation, the innovative services it brings to local communities and the role it plays in preserving traditional knowledge; stresses the importance of access to fast and reliable rural broadband internet services, and of innovative concepts tailored for all disadvantaged regions, such as mountainous and peripheral areas in the Union and urges the Commission to make this a priority;

6. Encourages the Commission to come forward with solutions to stimulate the uptake of ICT-based management systems, real-time data monitoring, sensor technology and the use of detection systems for the optimisation of production systems or precision agriculture, which inter alia could mean adapting to changing production and market conditions leading to more efficient and optimal use of natural resources, better monitoring of a number of production stages, increased crop performance, reduction of the environmental footprint, energy consumption and GHGs, better understanding of animal behaviour, and improved animal health and welfare; stresses, likewise, that the more extensive use of ICT is key to making farming more environmentally sustainable and the sector more competitive; encourages, in this respect, the Commission to improve the alignment of the various policies concerned in order to promote more effectively ICT management systems;

34. Highlights the possibility of using financial instruments to help improve farming income in Europe; notes that only five Member States have taken up the additional possibilities under the new Rural Development Programme to make use of market-compatible financial instruments in order to address market gaps; calls on the Commission to facilitate access to credit, since lack of such access is often a barrier to innovation;

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Leading committee: AGRI (DEVE, BUDG, CONT, ENVI, REGI for opinion)
Summary


Selected amendments by the European Parliament, which were incorporated in the final act

(15) The distribution of direct income support among farmers is characterised by the allocation of disproportionate amounts of payments to a rather small number of large beneficiaries. Due to economies of size, larger beneficiaries do not require the same level of unitary support for the objective of income support to be efficiently achieved. Moreover, the potential to adapt makes it easier for larger beneficiaries to operate with lower levels of unitary support. **Member States should therefore reduce the part of the basic payment/single area payment to be granted to farmers which exceeds EUR 150 000 by at least 5%**. To avoid disproportionate effects on large farms with high employment numbers, **Member States may decide to take into account salaried labour intensity when applying the mechanism. In order to make such reduction of the support level effective, no advantage should be granted to farmers who artificially create the conditions to avoid its effects. The proceeds of the reduction of payments to large beneficiaries should remain in the Member States where they were generated**

24a) **As a general rule, any agricultural area of the holding, including areas that were not in good agricultural condition on 30 June 2003 in Member States acceding to the Union on 1 May 2004 that opted to apply the single area payment scheme, that is used for an agricultural activity is eligible to benefit**
from the basic payment scheme. Given that non-agricultural activities may contribute to the income diversification of agricultural holdings and to the vitality of rural areas, an agricultural area of a holding that is used also for non-agricultural activities is to be considered eligible under the condition that it is used predominantly for agricultural activities. For the purpose of assessing this predominant character, common criteria should be set for all Member States. In this context and in order to ensure better targeting of direct payments, Member States may draw up, for reasons of legal certainty and clarity, a list of areas which are predominantly used for non-agricultural activities and hence ineligible. Furthermore, in order to maintain the eligibility of land that was eligible for the purpose of activating set-aside entitlements prior to the abolition of the set-aside obligation, it should be provided that certain afforested areas, including those afforested under national schemes complying with the relevant rules in Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 or Regulation (EU) No [...][RDR], or areas subject to certain environmental commitments are eligible under the basic payment scheme.

25d) In Member States applying the single area payment scheme which were allowed to grant transitional national aids, such aid played an important role in supporting the income of farmers in specific sectors. For that reason, and in order to avoid a sudden and substantial decrease of support from 2015 in those sectors benefiting, until 2014, from transitional national aids, it is appropriate to provide, in those Member States, for the possibility to grant this aid as a complement to the single area payment scheme. In order to ensure the continuity of the support with the national aids granted so far, it is appropriate to limit the conditions to those applicable in 2013 to those aids, or in the case of Bulgaria and Romania complementary national direct payments, as authorised by the Commission following the requests from Member States. It is also appropriate to limit the maximum amounts of aids by sector compared to their levels in 2013 to ensure steady decrease of the aid levels and their compatibility with a convergence mechanism.

(25e) Specific rules should be provided for the first allocation and the calculation of the value of payment entitlements when Member States having applied the single area payment scheme pursuant to this Regulation introduce the basic payment scheme. In order to ensure a smooth transition between those schemes, the power to adopt certain acts should be delegated to the Commission in respect of further rules on the introduction of the basic payment scheme in Member States having applied the single area payment scheme.

(25f) Taking into account that the unitary support to farmers with smaller holdings has to be sufficient in order to achieve the objective of income support effectively, Member States should be allowed to redistribute direct support between farmers by granting them an extra payment for the first hectares on which they activate payment entitlements.

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EP Resolution of 19/01/2012 on the imbalances in the food supply chain, based on 2011/2904(RSP) (P7_TA(2012)0012; B7-0006/2012, B7-0008/2012, B7-0009/2012, B7-0010/2012 and B7-0013/2012)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, ALDE, Greens/EFA, S&D, GUE/NGL
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

4. Calls on the Commission to propose robust EU legislation - where necessary and without distorting the proper functioning of the markets - to guarantee fair and transparent relationships between producers, suppliers and distributors of food products, and to properly implement the rules already in force, not least because the latest agricultural income figures from Eurostat show that, since 2009, there has been an 11.6% drop in farm incomes at EU level, whilst total input costs for EU farmers increased on average by almost 40% between 2000 and 2010;
5. Calls on the Commission and Member States to continue urgently to address the problem of unfair distribution of profits within the food chain, especially with regard to adequate incomes for farmers; recognises that in order to stimulate sustainable production systems farmers need to be compensated for their investments and commitments in these areas; emphasises that power struggles must give way to cooperative relationships;

6. Points out that agricultural policy must enable small and medium-sized farmers, including family farmers, to earn a reasonable income, to produce sufficient food of appropriate quality at affordable prices, to create jobs, to promote rural development and to ensure environmental protection and sustainability;

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EP Resolution of 19/01/2012 on the farm input supply chain: structure and implications, based on 2011/2114(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0011; A7-0421/2011)
Leading committee: AGRI
Summary
[The European Parliament,]

38. Stresses that Single Farm Payment entitlements, where based on historical values or when tradable without land, can be bought up at inflated values by investors and speculators for the purposes of an income stream as opposed to active farming; notes that the distortions created act as a substantial input cost and entrance barrier for new farmers; calls on the Commission, Parliament and the Member States and regions to ensure that CAP reform adequately addresses these problems, and that payment entitlements are available for all farmers for the purposes of active production;

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Leading committee: AGRI (DEVE, ENVI, ITRE, REGI for opinion)
Summary

Articles 13, 15, 16, 17, 25, 27, 82, 91, 94

The Parliament noted that decoupled direct payments can help to support and stabilise farm incomes. It called for a fair distribution of CAP funding for the first and second pillars both among Member States and among farmers within a Member State, in which a pragmatic approach should be the fundamental principle for objective criteria and rejected both major disparities in the distribution of these funds among Member States and a uniform flat-rate direct payment for the whole of the EU. The Parliament supported a single farm payment system which effects a certain redistribution in the interests of fair distribution of direct payment funds in the EU as a whole and proposed that each Member State should receive a minimum percentage of the EU average direct payments and that a ceiling should be set.

In the case of direct farm payments, the Parliament advocated moving away from historical and individual reference values used for distribution among Member States and called for a transition to an area-based regional or national premium for decoupled payments in the next financing period. The Parliament is aware that direct payments are being allocated in a way which has called their legitimacy into question. It took note of the Commission’s proposal to introduce an upper ceiling for direct payments and welcomed this attempt to address the issue of the CAP’s legitimacy and public acceptance. The Parliament further asked the Commission to consider the introduction of similar mechanisms that contribute to these, such as a system of degressivity of direct payments in the light of the
size of agricultural holdings that takes into account the objective criteria of employment and sustainable practices. It considered that direct payments should be reserved only for active farmers and called on the Commission to devise a definition of ‘active farmer’ which the Member States can administer without additional administrative effort or expenditure.

The Parliament supported the introduction of targeted measures, to be decided by the Member States in the second pillar, to attain common rural development objectives of the EU (2020 Strategy). It called for a simplification at all levels of programme planning and management in the second pillar in order to boost efficiency, as well as for simplified, effective and efficient systems for the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of cross-compliance measures. The Parliament considered that checks and monitoring for the first and second pillars should be harmonised and made more coherent, with similar rules and procedures, to reduce the overall burden of checks on farmers. It welcomed the move towards greater coordination at EU level between rural development programmes and cohesion policy in particular, with a view to avoiding duplication, contradictory objectives and overlapping.

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EP Resolution of 17/02/2011 on rising food prices, based on 2011/2538(RSP) (P7_TA(2011)0071; B7-0114, 0115, 0116, 0117, 0118 and 0119/2011)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by S&D, Greens/EFA, ALDE, EPP, GUE/NGL, ECR
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

15. Expresses concern about low farm incomes in the EU; affirms that decreased incomes due to rising production costs and price volatility impact negatively on farmers’ ability to maintain production and that as a result farmers do not benefit from increased food prices; firmly believes that food security will be compromised if these issues are not sufficiently addressed.

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Leading committee: AGRI (ENVI, IMCO for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

2. Calls on the Commission and Member states to urgently address the problem of unfair distribution of profits within the food chain, especially with regard to adequate incomes for farmers; recognises that to stimulate sustainable and ethical production systems farmers need to be compensated for their investments and commitments in these areas; emphasises that power struggles must give way to cooperative relationships;

3. Notes that all the agriculture-related objectives referred to in the Treaties of Rome (increased productivity, adequate food supply, reasonable consumer prices, market stabilisation) have been attained, with the exception of the objective of fair income in agriculture; calls on the Commission therefore to take proper account of this in all budgetary proposals.
Leading committee: AGRI (BUDG for opinion)
Summary

The European Parliament,

56. Believes that the new CAP, through a simplified support system, must be easy to administer, transparent, and reduce red tape and administrative burdens on farmers, particularly for smaller producers, in order to allow farmers to concentrate on their main task of providing high-quality agricultural products; believes that this could be achieved inter alia by moving towards the use of delivery tools that set the goals and empower farmers to choose their own farming systems to meet these objectives, such as outcome agreements, simple contracts and multiannual payments;

63. Insists that the CAP should not be renationalised and therefore believes that direct support should remain fully financed by the EU budget, hence rejecting any further co-financing which could harm fair competition within the EU Single Market;

64. Calls for a fair distribution of CAP funds to farmers across the EU; recalls that to respect the diversity of farming in the EU, objective criteria must be found in order to define a fair system of distribution; points out that direct payments contribute to the provision of public goods, help stabilise farmers’ incomes and ensure against risks, partially offsetting the socially desirable high standards in the EU and the continuing reduction in tariff barriers, as well as rewarding basic public goods provision, which receives no market compensation:
   - Believes that in order to reduce the disparities in the distribution of direct support funds between Member States and to reflect the wide diversity characterising European agriculture, the hectare basis alone will not be sufficient, and therefore calls on the Commission to propose additional objective criteria and to evaluate their potential impact, taking into account the complexity of the agricultural sector and the differences between Member States, in order to achieve a more balanced distribution;
   - Calls for fair and objective criteria to be clearly defined for the allocation of funds for rural development objectives;

65. Believes that direct support should move to an area basis in all Member States within the next financial programming period; this would constitute a sufficient transition period allowing farmers and agricultural structures that are still using the historical payments system the flexibility to adapt to the changes, and to avoid too radical a redistribution of support, without prejudice to promptly achieving a balanced distribution of support amongst Member States; notes that the move away from the historical basis may create particular challenges for Member States or regions with a relatively large amount of ‘naked land’ (unclaimed eligible land); calls for the specific needs of such regions to be given full consideration when designing future support; also believes that Member States and regions must continue to have the flexibility to regionalise their area payments system in such a way as to reflect their specific priorities while respecting fair competition in the internal market;
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### Special report 3/2016 of 12 April 2016

**Combating eutrophication in the Baltic Sea: further and more effective action needed**

**Environment**

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<td>Special report 3/2016 of 12 April 2016. <em>Combating eutrophication in the Baltic Sea: further and more effective action needed</em></td>
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**Summary**

**Questions asked:**
1. Have Member States been successful overall in reducing nutrient inputs into the Baltic Sea?
2. Have EU actions regarding urban waste water been effective in reducing nutrient pollution into the Baltic Sea?
3. Have EU actions regarding agriculture been effective in reducing nutrient pollution into the Baltic Sea?
4. Has the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region (EUSBSR) provided added value as regards existing actions for the reduction of nutrient inputs into the Baltic Sea?

**Observations:**
1. Member States’ implementation of nutrient input reduction into the Baltic Sea: there is limited progress in the reduction of nutrient inputs into the Baltic Sea; the Member States’ nutrient reduction plans lack ambition and appropriate indicators; Member States visited during the audit only partially take into account the Helsinki Commission (Helcom) recommendations in their plans or legal framework; the reliability of monitoring data on nutrient inputs into the Baltic Sea is not assured;
2. Effectiveness of actions to reduce nutrient pollution from urban waste water: most Member States are not yet compliant with the urban waste water treatment directive; EU co-financed waste water treatment plants are effective, but sustainability is not always guaranteed; the Commission’s follow-up of Member States’ implementation of the directive is not timely; EU support to Russia and Belarus is potentially cost efficient, but is very limited in scope compared to what is needed and project implementation takes a long time;
3. Effectiveness of actions to reduce agricultural nutrient pollution of water: the nitrates directive is not effectively implemented, despite relatively successful follow-up on the part of the Commission; the cross-compliance mechanism helps to enforce the nitrates directive and other fertilisation requirements, but is not fully effective; EU co-financed rural development measures in the 2007-2013 period have had little effect on reducing nutrient pollution in water bodies in the visited Member States;
4. The added value of the EUSBSR as regards the reduction of nutrient inputs into the Baltic Sea: EUSBSR has a complex governance network and added value is difficult to assess; flagship projects help to disseminate good practices, but their impact on nutrient reduction has not been demonstrated; there is a need for operational programmes to take better account of the EUSBSR.

**Recommendations:**
1. The Commission should:
   a) require that Member States define programmes of measures which enable them to reach measurable targets for reducing nutrient loads in order to achieve the objectives of the marine strategy framework and the water framework directives;
b) require that Member States reliably and consistently assess and monitor nutrient loads in their river basins and nutrient inputs into the Baltic Sea;

c) The Member States should:
d) collect information on the cost-effectiveness of nutrient load reduction measures in order to have a robust analysis for establishing future programmes of measures;

2. The Commission should:
a) encourage Member States to lay down and enforce legal obligations for households to connect to existing sewage networks;
b) require that Member States implement a sustainable waste water tariff policy in order to enable the correct maintenance and renewal of assets. This policy should take into account the polluter pays principle and the affordability of water services;
c) decrease the time needed to assess compliance with the urban waste water treatment directive;
d) continue to promote projects aimed at reducing the nutrient loads into the Baltic Sea from Russia and Belarus by focusing more closely on key polluters identified by Helcom;

The Member States should:
e) plan and construct their waste water infrastructure as efficiently as possible and consider granting financial support to households which could not otherwise afford to connect to the sewage network;
f) set stricter nutrient standards for effluents than those laid down in the urban waste water treatment directive for areas that drain into waters failing to reach nutrient conditions consistent with water framework directive and marine strategy framework directive good status;

3. The Commission should:
a) require that the Member States designate appropriate nitrate vulnerable zones. In doing so, Member States should take into account information on agricultural nutrients pollution pressures gathered in river basin management plans of the water framework directive;

Member States should:
b) set appropriate limits for the use of phosphorus in agriculture;
c) establish their nitrates action programme rules based on the most recent scientific evidence;
d) establish compulsory actions which go beyond the existing requirements for polluting farms in catchment areas draining into eutrophic waters;
e) apply the most relevant agri-environmental schemes in relation to reducing nutrient pollution of water and target these schemes and afforestation measures at the areas where their impact on nutrient load reduction is highest.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

Rapporteur: Petri Sarvamaa (EPP)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Welcomes the Court’s special report ‘Combating eutrophication in the Baltic Sea: further and more effective action needed’ and endorses its recommendations;
2. Deeply regrets that even though between 2007 and 2013, the EU contributed €14,5 billion to waste water treatment and water protection measures in EU
Member States in the Baltic Sea region, in addition to €44 million to water quality improvement in Russia and Belarus in 2001-2014, limited progress has been achieved to reduce nutrient emissions; asks the Commission to pay special attention to the cost-effectiveness of the above-mentioned measures;

3. Highlights that eutrophication is one of the key threats to reaching a good ecological status of the Baltic Sea and emphasises the importance of combatting the eutrophication of one of the world’s most polluted seas; therefore, underlines that the effectiveness of the EU macro regional strategy for the Baltic Sea Region on the reduction of nutrients is difficult to evaluate and regrets that limited progress has been made on nutrient reduction; and that the EU directive has been only partially applied by some Member States;

4. Stresses that the Member States should create their nitrates programme procedures based on the most recent scientific indication and advice;

5. Asks the Commission to request Member States to collect information on the cost-effectiveness of nutrient load reduction measures in order to have a robust analysis for establishing future programmes of measures;

6. Urges the Commission to improve the reliability of monitoring data on nutrient in the Baltic Sea as the reliability is not assured;

7. Urges the Commission to promote effective designation of nitrate vulnerable areas to Member States in order to put in place sufficient measures in highly vulnerable areas and on the other hand avoid putting unnecessary burden to farmers operating in areas that are not nitrate vulnerable; emphasises that the Member States in the Baltic Sea region should re-evaluate their designation of nitrate vulnerable areas;

8. Notes with concern the lack of effectiveness of actions to reduce nutrient pollution of urban waste water; asks the Commission to ensure effective follow-up of the implementation of Urban Waste Water Directive and ensure that Member States comply fully with the directive;

9. Regrets that the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) recommendations have been only partly achieved and implemented under the EU directive for specific activities;

10. Notes that the leverage effect has been high in financing the projects in Russia and Belarus; is worried however about the delays in projects which might result in significant losses of resources; asks the Commission to continue its efforts in this regard and to focus more closely on key polluters identified by HELCOM; also believes that in regard to the cooperation among EU and non-EU states best practices should be identified and applied widely.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

EP Resolution of 7/06/2016 on enhancing innovation and economic development in future European farm management, based on 2015/2227(INI) (P8_TA(2016)0252; A8-0163/2016)

Leading committee: AGRI (ENVI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

24. Recommends the use of management systems specific to individual farms that measure and evaluate the balance of nutrients at farm level linked to the different chains in the production cycle helping to measure the environmental impact of individual farms and calculate farm-specific nutrient balances; notes that an efficient use of minerals leads to higher crop yields and less need for fertiliser, and contributes to efficient feeding practices, allowing farmers to improve their operations while reducing costs and moving away from generic measures; calls on the Commission to support, by means of co-financing from various European funds, including Horizon 2020 and EFSI, the pilot projects in this field which are already planned, and to present a study on the matter;

25. Encourages the implementation of high-precision low-emission techniques for storage, transportation and land spreading of manure which would lead to a significant improvement of the plant uptake of nutrients from the manure, thus reducing the need for mineral fertilisers and reducing the risk of water contamination;

30. Recognises that farm systems are not productive if they are flooded or drought-afflicted for most of the year; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote innovation in water management and conservation, integrated with farm advice services and extension services, by means of innovative
techniques and technology to reduce wasteful irrigation practices and to mitigate flooding; calls for application of these new techniques with existing and new landscape features such as ponds, and with schemes aimed at increasing water retention in the soil and in habitats associated with agriculture such as wet meadows, protecting groundwater infiltration zones, increasing infiltration capacities of water into the soil and water retention; welcomes landscape-level synergies with river basin management planning; calls for encouraging uptake of ‘regeneration agriculture’ techniques to increase the depth of the topsoil layer, encourage humus creation, inoculate dying or unhealthy soils with compost in order to bring them back to optimal functionality etc.

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Leading committee: REGI (AFET, ENVI, TRAN for opinion)

Summary

Articles 34, 35, 39, 40, 41, 42

The Parliament emphasised the need for an environmental impact assessment of energy infrastructure projects, taking into account, in particular international conventions. It called on the Commission to design an adequate reaction plan for technical accidents and any other possible catastrophes, providing also for ways of dealing with these events from an economic point of view. The Parliament stressed the need to establish a Baltic Sea Environmental Monitoring Centre, an early-warning system for accidents and serious cross-border pollution, and a joint action force to deal with such situations. It also emphasised the need for the EU and its Member States surrounding the Baltic Sea Region urgently to address the serious environmental problems affecting the Region, principal among which are eutrophication, the impact of hazardous substances deposited on the seabed and threats to aquatic biodiversity, with particular regard to endangered fish populations, recalling that the Baltic Sea is one of the most polluted sea areas in the world. The Parliament drew attention to the need to introduce a method common to all Member States for drawing up an inventory of sources of pollution and a plan for their gradual elimination and welcomes the inclusion of environmental sustainability as a central pillar in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the accompanying action plan. It considers that one of the most serious obstacles to realising the objectives of the Baltic Sea Strategy is the lack of consistency with other policy areas within the EU such as the CAP which exacerbates eutrophication, and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) which is not environmentally sustainable and believes that reforms to the CAP and the CFP must be made in such a way that they contribute to achieving the objective of an environmentally sustainable Baltic Sea area.

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Leading committee: TRAN (REGI, PECH for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

31. Expects that a well coordinated and integrated cross-pillar, cross-sectoral, and cross-border approach towards maritime surveillance will improve protection of the interests of Member States and the European Union and protection against marine pollution and illegal actions by making available to authorities operating at sea, monitoring and surveillance information across various relevant sectors of activity, thereby generating more efficiency;
36. Reiterates its call for improved cooperation between Member States' national inspectorates, coastguards and navies and reminds the Commission to carry out – as requested earlier by the European Parliament for 2005 in Directive 2005/35/EC – a feasibility study on further collaboration or integration between the different coastguard services, with greater interoperability between the different surveillance systems and with the prospect of creating a European Coastguard Service; considers that there is great potential for involving EMSA more fully in monitoring coastal areas and for providing Member States with more support in tracing marine pollution;

50. Reiterates the urgent need to relieve pressures upon the marine environment which originate from land, such as pollution from industrial and agricultural effluents and poor coastal zone management, in the context of an integrated ecosystem-based approach.

Oral / Written Questions

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Special report 4/2016 of 14 April 2016

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology must modify its delivery mechanisms and elements of its design to achieve the expected impact

EU Institutions and Other Bodies | Budgetary control

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<td>Report No / Date / Title</td>
<td>Special report 4/2016 of 14 April 2016: The European Institute of Innovation and Technology must modify its delivery mechanisms and elements of its design to achieve the expected impact</td>
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<td>Short summary of questions asked, observations, findings and recommendations</td>
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<td>1. Is the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) an effective tool to foster innovation in the EU?</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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<td>1. The EIT is based on a valid rationale;</td>
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<td>2. Some key elements have not been appropriately designed: the knowledge triangle is not adequately reflected at Commission level; the Court considers that EIT funding based on complementary activities is a poorly defined concept; the claimed leverage effect is undermonstrated and implausible; the knowledge and innovation communities (KIC) are unlikely to reach financial sustainability; the EIT Foundation (EITF) failed to attract additional funds; the annual grant agreement process does not adequately encourage KIC innovation activities; the existing key performance indicators are not suited for effective monitoring; business participation could be improved; the EIT model does not sufficiently set targets to support existing SMEs; there are not enough concrete synergies and complementarities; some EIT elements are well appreciated: focus on the market, long-term perspective, autonomy of the KICs and the co-location centres;</td>
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<td>3. The implementation of the EIT model needs to improve: the EIT is not yet fully autonomous; it has not fulfilled its role as an impact investor; the competitive funding mechanism undervalues performance; there are significant administrative and audit burdens on KIC partners; the EIT is under-resourced and has in the past been poorly managed; the EIT financial support is concentrated; the KICs lack transparency; the KICs have stimulated an innovation network and entrepreneurial culture but with little evidence of tangible results or impact to date;</td>
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<td>4. Future developments: financial sustainability principles have been introduced; the definition of KIC complementary activities has been revised; more meaningful key performance indicators will be developed; the EIT is trying to involve more countries; new framework partnership agreements are currently being discussed.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
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| | 1. The Commission should propose an amended EIT legal basis to the European Parliament and Council, revising the EIT’s funding model. The knowledge and innovation communities (KIC) activities not funded by the EIT should not be included in the calculation basis when determining the EIT’S financial contribution to the KICs, as was the case in the original 2008 legal basis establishing the EIT. Removing the 25% funding condition would alleviate much of the operational and financial reporting burden of the KIC partners. The leverage effect should be measured to demonstrate the EIT’s success in attracting
additional funding for innovation;

2. The EIT grant agreement:
   a) should cover a longer period than the calendar year; and
   b) should be signed before the start of the activities;

3. The EIT should refocus its approach to delivering impact. To that end, it should seek greater autonomy and make use of the flexibility in Horizon 2020's legal basis. In particular, it should adopt specific rules tailored to the needs of the KIC partners. The EIT should resolve its staffing issues to enable it to continuously monitor KICs' performances.

4. The EIT should develop impact-based analysis. The EIT should also streamline its monitoring and reporting processes.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

CONT Working Document of 15/06/2016 on ECA Special Report N° 4/2016 (2015 Discharge): The European Institute of Innovation and Technology must modify its delivery mechanisms and elements of its design to achieve the expected impact (PES80.540v01-00)
Rapporteur: Dennis de Jong (GUE/NGL)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]
[The European Parliament]

1-3. Welcomes the Special Report and the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) findings and recommendations;
4. Recalls the discharge 2012 and 2013 on the Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in which the decision on granting the EIT discharge was postponed, based on the lack of assurance on the legality and regularity of the EIT’s grant transactions, inappropriate evidence not surpassing the ceiling of 25% of the knowledge and innovation communities’ (KIC) global expenditure, the high level of carry-overs not being implemented and the delays in the implementations of the recommendations of the Commission's Internal Audit Service;
5. Considers that the current report of the ECA gives rise to serious concerns about the basis, funding model and the operation of the EIT;
6. Notes the reply of the Commission on the report, whereby the Commission gives its point of view on the facts and findings; states that the Commission agrees with the majority of the recommendations of the ECA;
7. Notes that the report states that in 2015 several improvements by the EIT have been made, that seem to meet the findings and recommendations of the ECA; notes that close monitoring and evaluation is needed to verify the effects of these improvements;
8. Emphasises that a multiannual grant agreement between the EIT and the KICs and the multiannual strategy of the KICs should not be a stand in the way for an annual reporting of the KICs;
9. Emphasises that performance monitoring and results evaluation is essential to public accountability and to comprehensive information of policymakers; highlights that this will not be otherwise for the EIT and KICs;
10. Notes that the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation introduced in 2015 the concept of 'Open Innovation' as the key policy concept to frame innovation policy at EU level; considers that it is not clear which role the EIT plays in this concept; emphasises that this concept does not provide a clear framework for the development of a coherent and coordinated action by the Commission, given the number of policies and instruments in the mix and number of Directorate Generals involved in supporting the innovation;
11. Calls on the Commission to ensure a coordinated and efficient innovation policy, in which the responsible DGs tune up the activities and instruments, and to inform the Parliament on these efforts;
| Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees | 12. Is concerned by the fact that in the KICs the involvement of businesses in the choice of the research could lead to the situation that researchers are financially and otherwise linked to the industry and may not be seen as independent anymore; expresses this concern in the light of the developments in which the influence of businesses in science and fundamental research has grown;  
13. Understands the EIT’s mission to promote cooperation among higher education, research and innovation; takes the view that companies may be in the end the main beneficiary as being the legal owner of the innovate product being brought to the market and have the financial profits; stresses the need in this situation to incorporate in the cooperation-model a structure in which given funds will flow back to the EIT;  
14. Believes that the improvements mentioned and the agreement of the Commission on the recommendations are reason to await the further developments within the EIT;  
15. Calls on the EIT to give in its annual report 2015 the discharge authority an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the ECA’s recommendations;  
16. Calls on the Commission to provide the Parliament a follow-up report on the implementation and monitoring of and actions taken regarding the ECA’s. |
| CONT Draft Report of 9/02/2017 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology for the financial year 2015, based on 2016/2191(DEC) (PE 593.866v02-00)  
Leading committee: CONT  
Rapporteur Inés Ayala Sender (S&D)  
Vote scheduled in committee, 1st reading/single reading: 23/03/2017 |
| 18. Notes from the Court that the original target set by the Commission for the Institute to obtain financial autonomy was 2010; notes, furthermore, that the Institute obtained partial financial autonomy in June 2011, on the condition of continued ex-ante approval of grant related transactions and of procurements above EUR 60 000 by the Commission’s Directorate-General for Education and Culture; acknowledges from the Institute that it requested the Commission to re-launch the process leading to full financial autonomy; acknowledges furthermore that the Commission set out the roadmap and timetable of the process in May 2016 and looks forward to the Commission’s financial autonomy assessment which is expected in the first half of 2017; notes that the Institute hopes that full financial autonomy will be granted before the end of the year and asks that it reports to the discharge authority on developments related to this matter; |
Leading committee: REGI  
[The European Parliament] |
| 26. Calls for the development of flexibility and coordination mechanisms to link the results of the Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) process to the implementation of Horizon 2020 and other programmes; encourages regions to engage in forms of transnational cooperation such as the Vanguard Initiative, the Seal of Excellence, the Knowledge Exchange Platform (KEP), the Smart Specialisation (S3) platforms, the Stairway to Excellence, and the regional innovation schemes for the co-location centres of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT); calls for facilitation of the development of strategic cluster partnerships, with a view to boosting investment, enhancing coordination, creating synergies and promoting exchanges of views in order to avoid duplication and inefficient spending of public resources; |
EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology for the financial year 2014, based on 2015/2193(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0175; A8-0117/2016)
Leading committee: CONT
Summary

[The European Parliament]

5. Notes with concern that, according to the Court’s report, while the KICs are to develop strategies for financial sustainability, to date, and in the fifth year of their existence, they remain fully dependent on financing by the Institute and KIC partners; acknowledges that, following the Institute’s adoption of the principles on KICs’ financial sustainability, all KICs have made the latter one of their priority objectives and activities are reviewed accordingly to create a return of income from activities as well as the establishment of several revenue streams; notes that the Institute’s Governing Board adopted a set of principles in March 2015 stating that the maximum Institute’s contribution to a KIC will be reduced from up to 100% funding after 10 years of a KIC designation to 80%, on average, in year 11 and thereafter progressive reductions: 60% in year 12, 40% in year 13, 20% in year 14 and 10% in year 15; encourages the Institute to consider a tighter schedule for the reductions; notes, furthermore, that the Institute will continue monitoring the progress of KICs towards financial sustainability and take specific corrective actions when necessary;

12. Notes from the Court’s report that the Institute gradually improved its financial verification of the KICs’ cost claims; notes with concern, however, that the operational verification of deliverables falls behind and that the KICs’ annual business plans still include an inadequate definition of deliverables, as well as that no clear link between planned deliverables and eligible cost per partner and cost category exists; is concerned about the cases identified by the Court where full amount of the Institute’s grant was paid out even if some of the objectives set in the business plan had not been achieved; acknowledges that the Institute’s level of detail in the ex-ante technical assessment of the implementation of KIC activities has improved significantly in comparison with previous years and that the Institute put in place a more robust methodology to assess the KICs’ performance based on the reporting;

13. Acknowledges that the Institute’s internal control standards are largely implemented; notes, however, that further improvements are needed in certain areas such as grant management, procurement and IT; takes note of the fact that the Institute prepared a comprehensive register of audit and other recommendations requiring further action; calls on the Institute to inform the discharge authority on the status of implementation of those actions.

EP Resolution of 27/10/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology for the financial year 2013, based on 2014/2125(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0371; A8-0282/2015)
Leading committee: CONT
Summary

Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11

The Parliament recalled that the Court of Auditors found for the second consecutive year no reasonable assurance on the legality and regularity of the grant
transactions. It noted that in the Court’s view the quality of the certificates was compromised as they were issued by independent audit firms contracted by the grant beneficiaries. The Parliament recalled that in order to address the shortcomings related to the quality of the audit certificates, the Institute improved the instructions provided to certifying auditors and communicated the updated instructions to the “Knowledge and Innovation Communities” (KICs), the recipients of the Institute’s grants, in June 2013 and noted from the Institute that the improved instructions resulted in an improvement of the quality of the audit certificates received in respect to 2013 grant transactions for which the final payments were made in 2014.

The Parliament recalled that the Institute introduced complementary ex post verifications for grant transactions as a second layer of assurance on the legality and regularity of grant transactions and noted that the Court has not raised any comments or findings in relation to ex ante or ex post verifications in its preliminary observations for the financial year 2014.

The Parliament acknowledged from the Institute that it improved its procurement procedures since 2013 and the planning and monitoring procedures related to the budget implementation. It further noted that the Institute has, together with the KICs, significantly improved the absorption capacity of the first-wave KICs for the 2010-2014 period, with an average annual growth rate of the Institute’s absorbed grants at 85 %.

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EP Resolution of 3/04/2014 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology for the financial year 2012, based on 2013/2242(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0315; A7-0234/2014)

Leading committee: CONT

Summary

Articles 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 13

The Parliament expressed its regret that the Court of Auditors found the quality of the audit certificates was inadequate in many instances and noted that in order to have a second layer of assurances on the legality and regularity of grant transactions, at the end of 2012, the Institute introduced complementary ex post verifications for grants related to 2011 activities, which were carried out by independent audit firms and are assessed as reliable. It was disappointed that the ex post verification results confirmed that ex ante verifications were not fully effective. The Parliament deplored the fact that given the limited assurances that can be drawn from ex ante verifications for the year 2010, there is no reasonable assurance as to the legality and regularity of these transactions and the Court of Auditors could not obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence on the legality and regularity of the audited grant transactions related to 2010 activities.

The Parliament acknowledged from the Institute that in 2012, the Commission’s Internal Audit Service (IAS) carried out an independent assessment on the design adequacy of the internal control systems related to the preparation of annual grant agreements, which led to one critical and four very important recommendations to the Institute and that based on this assessment the Institute prepared an action plan addressing the critical recommendation, which IAS considers to adequately address the risks and mitigate them if implemented in a timely manner.

The Parliament expressed its regret that budgets for grant agreements signed in 2010 and 2011 were not sufficiently specific, that there was no link between the approved funds and the activities to be implemented and that grant agreements did not set individual thresholds for specific cost categories and did not include rules for the procurement of goods and services by the Knowledge and Innovation Communities and their partners. It further noted that the Institute also carried out technical verifications for all funded projects as part of its ex ante verifications, regretted, however, that the lack of quantifiable targets hampered an effective assessment of project activities and results.
**Summary**


Selected amendments by the European Parliament, which were incorporated in the final act

(8) The EIT should promote an appropriately balanced participation between the different actors from the knowledge triangle involved in the Knowledge and Innovation Communities ("KICs"). Furthermore, it should promote strong participation from the private sector, in particular micro-/small and medium-sized enterprises ("SMEs").

(13) Cooperation on the organisation of monitoring and evaluations of the KICs between the Commission and the EIT is required in order to ensure coherence with the overall Union-level monitoring and evaluation system. In particular, there should be clear principles for monitoring the KICs and the EIT.

(16) The EIT and the KICs should develop outreach activities and disseminate best practices, including through the Regional Innovation Scheme.

(4) Article 5(1) is amended as follows:

(a) point (a) is replaced by the following:

"(a) identify, in accordance with the SIA, its main priorities and activities;";

(b) point (c) is replaced by the following:

"(c) select and designate KICs in the priority fields in accordance with Article 7 and define their rights and obligations by agreement, provide them with appropriate support, apply appropriate quality control measures, continuously monitor and periodically evaluate their activities, ensure an appropriate level of coordination and facilitate communication and thematic cooperation between the KICs;"

(c) point (f) is replaced by the following:

"(f) promote the dissemination of best practices for the integration of the knowledge triangle, including among KICs, in order to develop a common innovation and knowledge transfer culture, and encourage participation in outreach activities, including in the RIS;"

(5) Article 6 is amended as follows:

(b) paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

"2. KICs shall have substantial overall autonomy to define their internal organisation and composition, as well as their precise agenda and working methods. In particular, KICs shall:

(a) establish governance arrangements which reflect the knowledge triangle of higher education, research and innovation;
(b) aim to be open to new members whenever they add value to the partnership;
(c) function in an open and transparent way, in accordance with their internal rules;"
establish business plans with objectives and key performance indicators;

develop strategies for financial sustainability.”.

(6) Article 7 is amended as follows:
(a) paragraph 1 is replaced by the following:

“1. A partnership shall be selected and designated by the EIT to become a KIC following a competitive, open and transparent procedure. Detailed criteria for the selection of the KICs, based on the principles of excellence and innovation relevance, shall be adopted and published by the EIT. External and independent experts shall be involved in the selection process.”;

(7) The following Articles are inserted:

“Article 7a
Principles for the evaluation and monitoring of KICs

The EIT shall, on the basis of key performance indicators set out, inter alia, in Regulation (EU) No .../2013 and in the SIA, and in cooperation with the Commission, organise continuous monitoring and periodic external evaluations of the output, results and impact of each KIC. The results of such monitoring and evaluations shall be reported to the European Parliament and to the Council and shall be made public.”

Reporting and evaluation

Article 7a of the Final Act

Principles for the evaluation and monitoring of KICs

The EIT shall, on the basis of key performance indicators set out, inter alia, in Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 and in the SIA, and in cooperation with the Commission, organise continuous monitoring and periodic external evaluations of the output, results and impact of each KIC. The results of such monitoring and evaluations shall be reported to the European Parliament and to the Council and shall be made public.

Article 15 of the Final Act

Programming and reporting

2. The EIT shall adopt an annual report by 30 June each year. The report shall outline the activities conducted by the EIT and the KICs during the preceding calendar year and assess the results with respect to the objectives, indicators and timetable set, the risks associated with the activities carried out, the use of resources and the general operation of the EIT. The EIT shall transmit the annual report to the European Parliament and the Council and inform them of the activities of the EIT, its contribution to Horizon 2020 and to the Union innovation, research and education policies and objectives at least once a year.
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Special report 5/2016 of 14 March 2016

Has the Commission ensured effective implementation of the Services Directive?

Internal Market and Consumer Protection

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**Summary**

**Questions asked:**
1. Has the Commission ensured effective implementation of the Services Directive?
   1.1. Has the Commission adequately monitored and evaluated the implementation of the Services Directive?
   1.2. Has the Commission sufficiently facilitated and enforced the implementation of the Services Directive?

**Observations:**
1.1.a. Transposition and monitoring of implementation: the Commission assisted and monitored the transposition of the Directives; twenty Member States were late with transposition; mutual evaluations were an innovative practice, managed well by the Commission and subsequently also used for other directives; implementation cannot yet be considered successful; performance checks were made on how EU legislation works in practical business scenarios; the outcomes of the checks led to further legislative proposals by the Commission; the Commission could have used results better to systematically enforce the Services Directive; economic impact assessment was not carried out;
1.1.b. Implementation: the tools and support provided by the Commission for the implementation of the Services Directive have been underused and are thus only partially effective; the Court found delays in setting up points of single contact and varying quality across Member States; the Points of single contact in Member States were difficult to find, businesses were not aware of their existence; the Court found little administrative cooperation among Member States in matters relating to the Services Directive; consumers continue to encounter problems in accessing the single market for services; service providers still exercise discriminatory practices towards consumers;
1.2. Enforcement: the Commission employs a number of enforcement tools; Solvit is rarely used for the Services Directive; EU pilot - a pre-infringement system was appreciated by Member States; the Commission has hardly used infringement procedures; the opened infringement cases take too long; the individual services-related complaints were followed up on regular basis, however, there are long periods of inactivity during the infringement procedures; country-specific recommendations (CSRs) under the European semester have had limited success.

**Recommendations:**
1. The Commission should draft guidance for transposition and issue it as soon as possible after adoption;
2. Results from exercises such as mutual evaluations and performance checks should be followed up to resolve non-compliance; the Commission and the Member States should address the economically most significant issues;
3. The Commission should endeavour to ensure that the issue of data necessary for assessing impacts of new legislation is addressed early in the legislative procedure;
### Member States should respect the point of single contact (PSC) charter by, for example, making information available in multiple languages and enabling completion of all administrative steps necessary for the provision of services across borders;

5. The legislator should introduce a standstill period for the notification of draft requirements and ensure that they are published on a publicly available website to allow better access and timely scrutiny;

6. The Commission should amend the annex of the CPC regulation so that it includes Article 20 of the Services Directive;

7. The Commission should not delay the starting of an EU pilot case where an issue has been identified. Information on the issues resolved via EU pilot should be shared (anonymously, if necessary), contributing to disseminating best practice;

8. The Commission should reduce the length of the infringement procedures as much as possible. It should apply an approach to initiating infringements based on risks and economic importance of the issue concerned. Finally, given that the Commission itself considers that important issues of implementation can only be decided by the Court of Justice, it should refer them where necessary.

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<tr>
<td>Recommendations by the rapporteur,</td>
<td>1. Welcomes the Court’s report, endorses its recommendations and is pleased that the Commission accepts these and will take them into account in future;</td>
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<td>2. Notes that despite the limitation of its scope by the exclusion of provision of some services, the Directive has a very broad field of application which required the Commission to have a set of measures to ensure its correct implementation;</td>
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<td>3. Stresses that the services market has not achieved its full potential and that the impact on growth and jobs of successful implementation of the Services Directive is high; while the potential economic benefit of full implementation of the Directive is still not known, the Commission should develop a study in order to estimate the output gains in the most possibly reliable quantitative terms;</td>
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<td>4. Encourages subsequent inclusion of more sectors in order to achieve a broader removal of sectorial obstacles to market integration with a final goal of removing of barriers in the internal market for services and developing full EU’s potential for growth, competitiveness and job creation;</td>
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<td>5. Considers that MS could have made better use of the measures provided by the Commission to support transposition, implementation and enforcement specially by sharing the problems faced in the different stages of the procedure, discussing possible common solutions and exchanging best practices;</td>
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<td>6. Agrees that the Commission should reduce the length of infringement procedures as much as possible;</td>
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<td>7. Regrets that tools as the Points of Single Contact (PSC), the Internal Market Information System (IMI) and the European Consumer Centres (ECC-net) were not sufficiently known and used by businesses and consumers when having an issue related to the application of the Services Directive;</td>
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<td>8. Notes that the provision of services online continue to be limited due to uncertainties for providers and recipients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Members stressed the <strong>Commission’s essential role</strong> in overseeing the application of EU law. They called on the Commission to continue its active role in developing various tools to improve EU law implementation, in the Member States, and to <strong>provide data</strong>, in addition to that on the implementation of EU directives, on implementation of EU regulations in its next annual report.</td>
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Role of Parliament and stakeholders: while recalling that the role of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of EU law lies with the Commission, Members acknowledged that Parliament also has a crucial role to play in this regard by exercising political oversight of the Commission’s enforcement actions. They suggested that it could contribute further to the timely and accurate transposition of EU legislation by sharing its expertise in the legislative decision-making process through pre-established links with national parliaments. Parliament also stressed the important role of the social partners, civil society organisations and other stakeholders in creating legislation and in monitoring and reporting shortcomings in the transposition and application of EU law by the Member States. It appreciated the importance attributed in the Commission’s annual report to petitions submitted by citizens, businesses and civil society organisations.

Better enforcement: Parliament welcomed the fact that the new Interinstitutional Agreement on better law-making contains provisions that aim to improve the implementation and application of EU law and to encourage more structured cooperation in this respect. It supported the call, expressed in the agreement, for better identification of national measures that are not strictly related to Union legislation (a practice known as ‘gold plating’).

Members called on the European institutions to agree on more suitable timetables for the implementation of regulations and directives, whereby due account is taken of necessary scrutiny and consultation periods.

More transparency: Parliament noted that the increase in the number of new EU Pilot files during the period under examination, and the decrease in the number of open infringement cases, show that the EU Pilot system has proved its usefulness, and has had a positive impact. It reiterated, however, that the enforcement of EU law is neither sufficiently transparent nor subject to any real control by the complainants and the interested parties. Members regretted that, despite repeated requests, Parliament still has inadequate access to information about the EU Pilot procedure and pending cases.

The Commission was asked to present a legislative proposal on a European law of administrative procedure and to make compliance with EU law a real political priority, to be pursued in close collaboration with Parliament.

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Leading committee: IMCO (EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Articles 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 76, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91

The Parliament called on the Commission to deepen its work on enforcements and points out that many measures have already been adopted but are not yet properly enforced, thus undermining the level playing field in the single market. It highlighted the high number of pending infringement proceedings in the area of the single market and called on the Commission, with a view to improved transposition, application and enforcement of single market legislation, to ensure that administrative coordination, cooperation and enforcement are prioritised at all levels. The Parliament believes that with regard to national measures or implementation early intervention may be more effective and better results achieved than through infringement procedures, stressed, however, that if the early intervention procedure does not give results, the Commission must use all available measures, including infringement procedures, to ensure full implementation of legislation on the single market.

The Parliament called on the Commission to further support the Member States in developing a strong culture of compliance and enforcement, including
promoting and broadening the Internal Market Information System (IMI), developing implementation plans for new major legislation, organising compliance dialogues with Member States and training courses for national public servants in charge of enforcement, and fostering more effective coordination between national regulators. It further called on the Member States to transpose internal market rules in a coherent and consistent way and to fully commit to implementing and enforcing EU legislation and applying the mutual recognition principle, and to refrain from discriminatory and protectionist measures.

The Parliament noted that consistent uniform application and proper enforcement of EU rules combined with regular monitoring and evaluation on the basis of qualitative and quantitative indicators, benchmarking and sharing of best practices is urgently needed to achieve more homogeneous implementation of existing single market legislation.

The Parliament emphasised that it is necessary to reinforce the SOLVIT network, particularly by extending the interaction between SOLVIT, CHAP, EU Pilot and Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) to streamline the broader framework of EU complaint procedures, and to raise awareness of the network amongst citizens and SMEs and of its practical role in solving interpretation problems relating to the single market. It considered that data on issues raised through the SOLVIT network should be taken into account when the Commission considers how to identify priorities for enforcement action. It called on the Commission to strengthen its efforts to help Member States solve the most problematic cases and on the Member States to appropriately equip and adequately position their national SOLVIT centres in order for them to fulfil their role.

The Parliament emphasises, in respect of the single market in services, that there is a clear need to improve the cross-border provision of services and urged the Member States to ensure proper and more effective application of the Services Directive, while avoiding the practice of gold-plating. It welcomed the Commission proposal to improve notification under the Services Directive as the current procedure is inefficient and not transparent and expressed its opinion that notification should occur earlier in the legislative process to allow for timely feedback from stakeholders and Member States and to minimise delays in the adoption of new legislation. The Parliament rejected any suggestion that the scope of the Services Directive should be extended and called on the Commission to address the burdens on the fractured banking sector in Europe, which create difficulties for non-residents, especially SMEs, in opening a bank account in another Member State.

The Parliament emphasises the need to ensure consistent proportionality assessment of regulatory requirements and restrictions applicable to services and noted the Commission proposal to introduce a services passport to facilitate, in key economic sectors such as business services, the development and mobility of companies across the single market. It called for the possible services passport to take its place among the series of horizontal tools aimed at supporting internal market legislation, such as the Internal Market Information System (IMI) or the Points of Single Contact, which have been provided for by the Services Directive as a single administrative interface for dealing with all the necessary administrative procedures surrounding cross-border services activities. It underlined, however, that a services passport could be superfluous if the Services Directive were properly implemented and enforced.

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Leading committee: IMCO

Summary

Extract from the Summary:

Tools to improve single market regulation:
- **Impact assessment:** Parliament viewed effective impact assessments as an important tool for informing policymakers about how best to design regulation to achieve these EU objectives. ... Members stressed the need for REFIT proposals to be more targeted, with potential benefits and cost savings being quantified in each proposal.

- **Monitoring and problem-solving:** Parliament encouraged the Commission and Member States to:
  - raise awareness of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and online dispute resolution (ODR) as key tools for improving the single market for goods and services, and publicise one-stop shops in support of dispute resolution, along the lines of SOLVIT, ECC-Net and FIN-Net,
  - improve the services offered by the EU Pilot projects, which are designed to avert the need for the Commission to institute infringement proceedings against Member States;
  - continue to expand the Internal Market Information System (IMI) to other single market tools so that it can become a central information hub;
  - explore the possibility of establishing a single point of contact for consumers and foster understanding of consumer rights in areas such as e-commerce and the recognition of qualifications;
  - consider whether an "early warning system" could be created that signals where problems exist in the implementation or application of EU law.

- **Enforcement and market surveillance:** the resolution recommended:
  - closer cooperation between single market governance tools that receive consumer complaints about traders breaching EU legislation;
  - launching timely and faster infringement proceedings where evidence exists to demonstrate a failure in implementation and where reasonable efforts to solve problems have failed;
  - using market surveillance tools in conjunction with single market tools.

Members considered it regrettable that Parliament’s access to relevant information relating to pre-infringement and infringement proceedings is limited, and called for improved transparency in this area.

- **Ex-post evaluation and review:** Parliament considered, however, that analysis regarding REFIT should be improved as to whether the legislative steps taken so far have contributed effectively to achieving their aim and are consistent with current policy goals. It welcomed the Commission’s commitment to examining the cumulative cost of regulation, which often represents a barrier for participants in the single market, particularly SMEs.

Members are of the view that sunset or enhanced review clauses may be considered on an exceptional basis, in particular for temporary phenomena, with the institutions undertaking to keep legislation up to date and in place only where necessary.

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**Leading committee:** IMCO

**Summary**

Articles 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 18, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51,

The Parliament expressed its concern that the level of implementation of European Semester recommendations for 2011-2014 was lower than expected and called on the Commission to propose a mechanism to encourage countries to implement Country Specific Recommendations (CSR). It noted that the Annual
Growth Survey pays more attention to the Single Market issues than the CSRs and called for inclusion of the Single Market (SM) pillar in the European Semester, with a system for regular monitoring, identification of the country-specific barriers to the Single Market and evaluation of SM integration and competitiveness. It considered that the system should comprise a robust information database, a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators aimed at measuring, inter alia, the economic effects of application of the Single Market rules, benchmarking, peer review and exchange of best practices. The Parliament called on the Report on Single Market Integration and Competitiveness in the EU and its Member States to be further developed and that to become part of the SM Governance pillar and the basis for annual assessment of progress of the Single Market. It considers that the report should feed into the specific SM section in the Annual Growth Survey, in CSRs and in regular structured Single Market compliance dialogue with the Member States.

The Parliament expressed its regret that in several Member States there are significant deficiencies as regards the implementation of the Services Directive, covering activities representing more than 45% of the EU’s GDP and employment, inter alia because of a substantial number of national rules and regulations, which are not always in the public interest. It regretted also that the notification procedure is not always complied with.

The Parliament called on the Commission to ensure that Single Market rules are consistently enforced by the Member States by using all available information, data and instruments at its disposal and imposing the consequences provided for by the Treaties in cases where Member States fail to comply with EU policies and laws. It pointed to the importance of monitoring and data collection and the need for a robust and integrated system.

The Parliament called on the Commission to issue an annual report on the Single Market barriers in various Member States and the EU as a whole and to issue recommendations focused on removing these barriers in the CSRs. It further called on the Commission to use all available measures, including infringement procedures, when necessary, to ensure full implementation of SM legislation. It expressed its concern that the infringement procedure redress takes a long time when a violation of SM rules is being addressed and remedied, and about the high number of outstanding cases.

The Parliament noted the benefits of SOLVIT and requested that SOLVIT be strengthened and better connected to Commission services, and well integrated with existing projects and databases such as CHAP and EU Pilot in order to create information synergies and share best practices. It called on the Commission to follow up consistently on unresolved cases and urged the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the necessary support and expertise are provided for SOLVIT so that the cases received can be efficiently dealt with.

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Leading committee: JURI (ENVI, LIBE, AFCO for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Ensure a better implementation of legislation: stressing that citizens and businesses expect a simple, predictable and reliable regulatory framework, Members urged the Commission, when drafting and assessing legislation, to take greater account of the burden it may impose on SMEs. As for the Commission and the Member States, they should coordinate their efforts at an earlier stage of the legislative process with a view to ensuring that the end result can be implemented more effectively.

...
**New methods for the transposition of EU law:** Parliament noted that the implementation and transposition of EU law remained uneven across Member States. … Parliament stressed that late transposition, incorrect transposition and bad application of EU law could result in differentiation between Member States and distort the level playing field across the EU. Members reiterated the need for the Commission to focus on effective problem-solving, effective management and preventive measures, but suggested that it should also think of new ways, other than formal infringement procedures, of improving the transposition and enforcement of EU law.

**Gold-plating:** Parliament noted the Commission's use of the term 'gold-plating', which referred to obligations that go beyond EU requirements, that is, an excess of norms, guidelines and procedures accumulated at national, regional and local levels interfering with the expected policy goals. The Commission was called upon to clearly define the term. Such a definition must make it clear that Member States have the right to set stricter standards where necessary, while taking into account the fact that better harmonisation in the implementation of EU environmental law is important for the functioning of the internal market.

**Respecting transposition deadlines:** Parliament noted that the decrease in late transposition infringements over the last five years could be explained by the use of EU Pilot and other mechanisms (including SOLVIT 2), and by the introduction in Article 260(3) TFEU of the 'fast-track' procedure for penalties in cases of non-transposition. It stressed that the timely transposition of directives should remain a top priority within the Commission and that transposition deadlines have to be enforced.

Enhancing the legal framework and the legitimacy of EU Pilot: the increase in the number of new EU Pilot files, in particular relating to the environment, taxation, justice and customs, during the period under examination, as well as the decrease in the number of open infringement cases, points to a positive tendency in Member States as regards the implementation of EU law, demonstrating that EU Pilot has proved to be effective in achieving early resolution of potential infringements. The resolution stressed, nevertheless, the need to reinforce the legal status and strengthen the legitimacy of EU Pilot, through more transparency and greater participation by complainants and by the European Parliament.

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EP Resolution of 27/02/2014 on SOLVIT, based on 2013/2154(INI) (P7_TA(2014)0164; A7-0059/2014)

Leading committee: IMCO (EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

**Effective use of rights and opportunities in the single market:** Parliament called on the Commission to put pressure on those Member States that are not complying with single market rules. Many problems relating to the implementation of single market rules are detected through the SOLVIT network. In this regard, Parliament commended the contribution of SOLVIT to administrative and regulatory changes to remedy such problems. The Council is urged to take measures to improve the tasks of public administrations in order to strengthen the cooperation between national authorities and the Commission. The resolution also stressed the need for SOLVIT to have an efficient means of alerting the Commission to internal-market problems arising from non-implementation of EU law that have come to its notice. It highlighted the use of zero-tolerance for non-compliance with, and of peer review in the implementation and transposition of, the Services Directive, as methods to ensure effective application of single market law.

**SOLVIT: helping individuals and businesses solve problems:** Parliament welcomed the new Commission recommendation on the principles governing SOLVIT, paving the way for SOLVIT 2.0. Although the SOLVIT network has achieved tangible results and proved its usefulness, Members noted that there is ample room
for improvement, in particular as regards settling business-related disputes and the time taken to resolve queries. ... Parliament noted that a large majority of SOLVIT clients are citizens, and it stressed the need to unleash the large potential of SOLVIT as a problem-solving tool for businesses. More needs to be done to make businesses, in particular SMEs, more aware of SOLVIT. Parliament drew attention to the fact that SOLVIT is still attracting a large volume of non-SOLVIT cases, and that this is slowing down the handling of SOLVIT complaints. It stressed, therefore, the need for SOLVIT’s remit to be better explained to citizens and businesses.

Member States were called upon to ensure that adequate resources (financial and human) are made available to maintain the SOLVIT network. Parliament ... regretted that many business-related cases that could be handled by SOLVIT were rejected on the grounds that they were too complex, and considered that this was a problem that needs to be addressed locally at those SOLVIT centres which rejected cases.

As regards complaints, Parliament called for better streamlining with other complaint-handling procedures, in particular the EU Pilot. The SOLVIT centres should be bolder and more efficient in responding to complaints and, in particular, in handling more complex cases.

Furthermore, the Commission is called upon to:
- continue monitoring, within the annual report on the single market integration, the performance of the Union’s problem-solving mechanisms - in particular SOLVIT - as part of the Annual Growth Survey;
- strengthen single market governance by establishing a specific pillar of the European Semester, including dedicated country-specific recommendations;
- set up measurable milestones for the desired development of SOLVIT.

Member States should also set their own measurable targets and deadlines for the development of case handling in local SOLVIT centres. Splitting up citizen- and business-related cases for the purpose of monitoring progress could be the way forward. If these targets are not reached, the possibility of replacing the informal procedure by a legislative act should be reconsidered, taking into account existing mechanisms such as those provided for in Directive 2013/11/EU on alternative dispute resolution and Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 on online dispute resolution. The Council is urged to follow Parliament’s ambition in this respect.

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Leading committee: IMCO

Summary

Articles 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39

The Parliament took note of the adjusted structure of the second edition of the Single Market integration report and welcomed the fact that the Commission has thereby responded to its requests. It noted that a number of the measures outlined in that resolution have already led to improved implementation and enforcement of EU law, including more stringent use of the EU Pilot.

The Parliament expressed its opinion that efforts should be made to make the implementation and uniform application of Union law in the Member States more transparent and noted that transposition deadlines are exceeded by an average of nine months, and that there is a rising number of directives for which transposition is overdue by two years or more. It considers that every directive should be transposed in a consistent manner and that all transposition measures should be adopted in order to reflect the compromises reached at Union level. The Parliament stressed that purely quantitative statistics on the implementation
of Single Market legislation are not sufficient and that it is necessary to focus on the quality of how the legislation is implemented within the Member States based on specific key indicators for sectors of the Single Market developed at European level.

The Parliament deplored the average duration of infringement proceedings, in particular the fact that cases dealing with services take longest (49.8 months on average) and considered that infringement proceedings have revealed a number of limitations in terms of addressing and correcting implementation and application deficiencies of Single Market provisions in a swift manner. It called on Member States to work more effectively with the Commission in resolving cases more swiftly and calls on the Commission to carry out further "sweeps" of national measures which are detrimental to the Single Market. It took the view that infringement proceedings should be considered to be a last resort, to be pursued only after attempts have been made to coordinate and correct the situation, and that the Commission should therefore promote the use of the EU Pilot and other proceedings before taking a Member State to the Court of Justice.

The Parliament supported the Commission’s actions to improve the cooperation of national authorities with regard to the functioning of the Single Market and agreed that a permanent IT mechanism facilitating the exchange of relevant information could significantly improve the situation, as a group of national experts meeting a few times per year is hardly the proper way to deal with such a priority matter. It reiterated the importance of the proper functioning of the Internal Market Information (IMI) system.

The Parliament noted that the problem-solving network SOLVIT remains underused and called on the Member States to ensure that adequate resources are provided for the SOLVIT network and the Points of Single Contact, as required by the Services Directive. It further called on the Commission and the Member States alike to take steps to disseminate information about the availability of these instruments among businesses and entrepreneurs and invited Member States to initiate a more intensive and broader exchange of best practices.

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EP Resolution of 23/10/2013 on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation of 2013 priorities, based on 2013/2134(INI)

(P7_TA(2013)0447; A7-0322/2013)

Leading committee: ECON (BUDG, EMPL, IMCO, REGI, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Articles 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77

The Parliament called for full and appropriate implementation of the EU Services Directive. It called on the Member States to remove barriers in the retail sector and excessive restrictions in professional services and regulated professions and for the removal of barriers to the free movement of workers in order to improve mobility and optimise the use of EU human capital.

The Parliament welcomed the fact that, in the European Semester 2013, the Annual Growth Survey has for the first time been underpinned by a report on the state of single market integration, regretted, however, that, despite the strong evidence for the importance of the single market in overcoming the crisis, the 2013 country-specific recommendations do not sufficiently address the growth, consumer-confidence and jobs potential of the proper implementation and enforcement of single market rules. It urged the Member States and the Commission to step up their efforts to enforce single market legislation and to monitor this enforcement, inter alia through regular EU sweeps.

The Parliament reiterated its call on the Commission to strengthen single market governance by establishing, as a specific pillar of the European Semester, an
annual Single Market governance cycle that includes the Internal Market Scoreboard, an annual report on the integration of the Single Market as part of the Annual Growth Survey, European Council guidance to Member States, national action plans aimed at implementing the Single Market guidelines, and dedicated country-specific recommendations.

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Leading committee: IMCO (EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

The resolution stresses the importance of developing **better indicators of Single Market performance**.

... Barriers, borders and burdens to free movement: Parliament regrets that there is a significant number of cases identified where Member States are inappropriately invoking overriding reasons of public interest (Article15 of the Services Directive) for the sole purpose of protecting and favouring their domestic market. It considers that **the use of overriding reasons of public interest should always be objectively justified** and strictly proportionate to the objective pursued, consistent with European Court of Justice (ECJ) case law.

... Parliament asks the Commission to clarify the **concept of proportionality** and issue practical guidance to the Member States on how to apply it. It urges Member States to apply effectively and fully **the freedom to provide services clause** (Article16 of the Services Directive) and to remove double regulatory burdens. Members call on businesses to refrain from **unjustified discriminatory practices** on grounds of nationality or place of residence.

**Smart governance of the internal market for services:** Member States are asked to:

- take an integrated approach to the internal market for services in order to ensure legal certainty for consumers and business, in particular SMEs;
- make greater use of mutual recognition to facilitate the free movement of services, wherever harmonised rules are not yet in place;
- upgrade to second-generation **Points of Single Contact** that are fully functional, multilingual and user-friendly e-government portals.

... Better enforcement: Members call on the Commission to **assist Member States** with the key problems they have identified regarding implementation and application of EU Single Market legislation. They strongly support the Commission’s zero tolerance policy with regard to unjustified restrictions and calls for fast-track infringement procedures to be applied whenever incorrect or insufficient implementation or breaches of the directive by Member States are identified.

**Strengthening transparency and accountability:** Parliament encourages the Commission to pay particular attention to the services sector in Annual Growth Surveys and to include services in the country-specific recommendations. It calls on the national parliaments to engage actively in supporting the enforcement of the directive and asks the Council and its Presidency to place the internal market for services on the agenda for Competitiveness Council meetings on a regular basis.

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EP Resolution of 7/02/2013 with recommendations to the Commission on the governance of the Single Market, based on 2012/2260(INL) (P7_TA(2013)0054; A7-
Extract from the Summary

Parliament requests the Commission to submit as soon as possible, whilst considering as the possible legal basis all relevant provisions of the TFEU relating to the internal market, including Article 26(3) TFEU, a proposal for an act aimed at strengthening the governance of the Single Market in regard to the following:

**Legislation: better evaluating the impacts:**
- strengthen the coordination inside the Commission, better evaluate the need for new instruments and hence improve the coherence before a legislative act is proposed;
- opt for regulations instead of directives, wherever appropriate;
- introduce a 'Single Market Test' to measure the impact of new legislation at national level on the Single Market;
- consider the feasibility of the extension of the scope of Directive 98/34/EC ('Notification Directive') to other sectors.

**Better transposition and implementation:**
- each Member State should transpose every directive in a consistent manner and adopt all transposition measures relating to the whole of a Union legislative act jointly and at the same time;
- make greater use of correlation tables to ensure greater transparency of implementation and uniform application of Union law in the Member States;
- governance of the internal market could benefit from increased and enhanced exchanges of experience and best practices between civil servants at Union and national level;
- beyond mere statistical assessments, there is the need for a qualitative evaluation of implementation which allow to consider which measures have a particular impact and economic relevance for the Single Market;
- it is pertinent to distinguish between non-transposition, which is a clearly identifiable failure by the Member State, and non-conformity with Union law, which is a case of a different understanding of the underlying legislative act;
- Parliament should be provided annually with a list of non-transposed or incorrectly transposed Union legislation in the Member States concerned.

**Better enforcement:**
- there should be a 'zero tolerance' policy in relation to Member States that do not implement the rules of the Single Market properly;
- faster procedures within the Commission and, where appropriate, recourse to interim proceedings before the Court of Justice, in accordance with Article 279 TFEU, should be applied more actively;
- the Commission should promote the use of the 'EU Pilot' and further improve its effectiveness, in order to better detect and correct infringements of Single Market rules;
- the Commission should offer a more extensive use of 'EU sweeps' to Member States in order to facilitate surveillance, in particular by less-equipped and less-prepared national authorities.

**European Semester:** the evaluation of the state of the Single Market should become an integral part of the European Semester, with a Single Market Governance pillar being put in place alongside the Economic Governance pillar. Parliament considers that the Commission's proposal to prepare an annual report on the integration of the Single Market contributing to the evidence base underpinning country-specific recommendations could lay the foundation for a future annual
Single Market cycle within the European Semester.

**Recommendations:** the resolution contains a series of detailed recommendations concerning the content of the proposal: (i) establish a consistent framework for the governance of the Single Market; (ii) determine the Union's objectives and priorities for action in order to improve the operation of the Single Market; (iii) determine the conditions to be ensured to ensure Single Market governance; (iv) define supplementary measures necessary to enhance the implementation and enforcement of the Single Market regulatory framework; (v) provide for the submission, assessment and monitoring of national action plans; (vi) provide for the formulation of distinct Single Market-related country-specific recommendations; (vii) define a Single Market pillar of the European Semester; (viii) increase the democratic accountability and the role of the European Parliament and of national parliaments.

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EP Resolution of 25/10/2012 on the 20 main concerns of European citizens and business with the functioning of the Single Market, based on 2012/2044(INI)
(P7_TA(2012)0395; A7-0310/2012)
Leading committee: IMCO (ECON, EMPL, ITRE, TRAN, JURI, PETI for opinion)

Summary

Extracts from the Summary

**Governance:** Parliament reaffirms the need to strengthen cooperation and interaction between Parliament, the Council, the Commission and Member States.

Members call on the Commission to:
- develop the 'Your Europe' portal in order to turn it into a genuine digital 'one-stop shop' providing citizens and businesses with information about the single market;
- make every effort to deliver a single, live online point of contact for citizens and consumers, via its offices in each Member State;
- analyse the involvement of local and regional authorities in the strategy for expanding the Single Market Information System;
- improve the 'SME test' so as to ensure that it is applied consistently and coherently across all relevant policy areas and is incorporated into the overall assessment of proposals.

**Legislation/Transposition:** Parliament recognises that although the number of infringement proceedings initiated by the Commission has decreased, there were still about 2 100 such proceedings under way at the end of 2010. It notes the large number of petitions received by Parliament's Committee on Petitions relating to the problems citizens face within the internal market, particularly as regards the incorrect transposition or implementation of EU law.

Member States are asked to prioritise the correct and timely transposition of legislation relating to the Single Market and to reduce levels of non-compliance. Members invite them to implement a Single Market test within the framework of their national legislation. Members make a series of recommendations on implementation and particularly call on the Commission to apply zero tolerance to any discriminatory rules and practices by Member States in the field of employment which run counter to EU law, and to initiate appropriate proceedings without delay in the event of non-compliance.

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Market Information System (‘the IMI Regulation’), based on 2011/0226(COD) (P7_TA(2012)0317; A7-0068/2012)

Leading committee: IMCO

Summary


Extract from the Summary

Scope: it is stipulated that IMI shall be used for administrative cooperation between competent authorities of the Member States and between competent authorities of the Member States and the Commission necessary for the implementation of Union acts in the field of the internal market, within the meaning of Article 26(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Those Union acts are listed in the Annex.

Practical arrangements to enable information exchange via IMI: these arrangements should be adopted by the Commission in the form of a separate implementing act for each Union act listed in the Annex or for each type of administrative cooperation procedure and should cover the essential technical functionality and procedural arrangements required to implement the relevant administrative cooperation procedures via IMI. The Commission should ensure the maintenance and development of the software and IT infrastructure for IMI.

SOLVIT: the use of IMI for the technical support of the SOLVIT network shall be without prejudice to the informal character of the SOLVIT procedure which is based on a voluntary commitment of the Member States.

Monitoring and reporting

Article 25 of the Final Act

Monitoring and reporting


2. By 5 December 2017 and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall report to the European Data Protection Supervisor on aspects relating to the protection of personal data in IMI, including data security.

3. For the purpose of producing the reports referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, Member States shall provide the Commission with any information relevant to the application of this Regulation, including on the application in practice of the data protection requirements laid down in this Regulation.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Harbour on behalf of IMCO committee

Summary
Extract from the Summary

Single Market governance: Parliament stresses that poor and late transposition, and inadequate implementation and enforcement of rules, prevent citizens and businesses from taking full advantage of the benefits of the Single Market. It reiterates the need to reduce the transposition deficit of Single Market Directives to 0.5% for outstanding legislation and 0.5% for incorrectly transposed legislation by the end of 2012. The Commission is asked to focus its efforts to improve the enforcement of Single Market legislation, especially in the services and goods sector, which are expected to have the highest potential for boosting economic growth in Europe.

Parliament asks the Commission to:
- pursue Single Market infringements swiftly and vigorously;
- develop a 'proportionality test' to identify disproportionate EU legislation, and to repeal such legislation;
- adopt an action plan to further reinforce and strengthen the role of SOLVIT, Your Europe Advice and the European Consumers’ Centres, among others assistance services, in order to make them more visible to citizens and businesses;
- consider expanding innovative mechanisms, such as the mutual evaluation procedure of the Services Directive, to new areas in order to ensure better application of EU law;
- adopt a user-friendly, regularly updated and easily accessible 'Citizens' Charter', encompassing the various facets of the right to live and work anywhere in the EU;
- monitor the completion of the Single Market within the annual exercise of the European Semester, taking account of the annual Single Market Act (SMA) Governance Check-up and the Scoreboard reporting mechanisms;
- propose a dedicated Growth initiative built on the European semester, based on the SMA and relevant existing decisions, and underpinned by funding from, inter alia, the Structural Funds, project bonds and the Research Framework Programme.

Lastly, Parliament calls on all EU Member States to ensure full and complete implementation of the Services Directive, inter alia, by setting up user-friendly and comprehensive Points of Single Contact and to follow up the mutual evaluation process and the performance checks.

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EP Resolution of 22/05/2012 on the Internal Market Scoreboard, based on 2011/2155(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0211; A7-0153/2012)

Leading committee: IMCO

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Building the regulatory framework of the internal market: Parliament welcomes the Internal Market Scoreboard and SOLVIT as important tools to monitor and identify problems in the transposition and implementation of EU law, but also to identify gaps and bottlenecks in the single market. Members affirm that the timely and correct transposition and implementation of internal market legislation is a crucial prerequisite for the success of the internal market. They call for the Council to commit to reducing the transposition deficit further and to set tougher more realistic transposition and implementation goals for all Member States to fulfil.

...
Parliament calls on the Commission to ensure that infringements of EU law are pursued swiftly by infringement proceedings. An amendment adopted in plenary asks the Commission to put in place a fast-track infringement procedure and to consider establishing an independent body within the Commission responsible for prosecuting cases of internal market infringements and pursuing infringement proceedings after obtaining the approval of the College of Commissioners.

The Commission is also asked to:

- provide support for Member States in the transposition of EU law by developing new tools such as transposition guidelines and a transposition helpdesk;
- take effective action to reduce the duration of infringement proceedings and to report to Parliament on such action;
- explore new ways of ensuring timely and full application of Court judgments and procedures by Member States;
- report to Parliament on its application of Article 260(3) of the Lisbon Treaty regarding the possibility for the European Court of Justice to impose immediate fines at first instance in cases where Member States are found to have reneged on their obligation to transpose EU legislation.

Parliament stresses that Member States should continue to further reduce transposition delays in order to meet the 1% target. It insists that Member States formally accept a reduction in numerical targets limiting the transposition and compliance deficit for national legislation to 0.5% for the transposition deficit and 0.5% for the compliance deficit respectively, and to ensure more effective application of infringement proceedings by means of numerical targets relating to the stages of the procedure. Members consider that special attention and priority should be given to directives whose deadline for transposition into national law has expired by more than a year. They call on Member States to systematically provide proper correlation tables setting out how internal market directives are applied in national regulations.

Delivering the internal market to businesses and citizens: Parliament calls on the Commission to find ways to increase coordination and improve practical cooperation between existing tools such as SOLVIT, Your Europe Advice, the Enterprise Europe Network, European Consumer Centres, the European Employment Service, Internal Market Information System (IMI), the Europe Direct information network and the points of single contact to avoid duplication of efforts and resources and hence achieve more effective management. It calls on the Commission to propose ways of better integrating tools such as SOLVIT with the petitions process of the European Parliament. Emphasising that the SOLVIT network remains largely fragmented and underused, it calls on the Member States to ensure that SOLVIT centres are appropriately staffed. It also calls on the Commission to report on the feasibility of providing Commission staff for the single live points of contact in each Member State, as well as to consider the feasibility of giving SOLVIT a specific legal basis.

Members also recommend further coordination between SOLVIT and the EU Pilot in order to achieve better coordination and exchange of good practices.

The Commission is invited to:

- continue its efforts to offer citizens and businesses an integrated virtual package of information and help services, particularly by further developing the Your Europe portal as the single online gateway to all information and help;
- take action to promote the Your Europe portal in national administrations and to develop cooperation between Your Europe and the websites of the national administrations;
- encourage Member States to further strengthen the points of single contact (PSC) and to provide citizens with information in a clear and practical way, by ensuring and taking full advantage of synergies in the area of information at European level, such as ‘Your Europe Advice’;
- ensure the setting-up of online Points of Single Contact via egovernment portals in all Member States in the official language of the host country and in English;
- report on the main internal market obstacles particular to citizens and consumers with a disability and to arrange for special efforts to be made to remove such obstacles;
Leading committee: IMCO (EMPL, ENVI for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Simplification for citizens: Parliament calls on the Commission and Member States to encourage further mobility among professionals, since the relatively low numbers of mobile professionals is cause for concern and strategies must be devised to tackle this problem.

... Parliament welcomes the overall success of the automatic recognition procedure, but stress that the recognition process under the general system based on professional experience is excessively cumbersome and time-consuming for both the competent authorities and those engaged in certain professions. It calls on the Commission to coordinate and consolidate the various sources of information currently available on issues relating to the recognition of professional qualifications - including National Contact Points (NCPs) and professional bodies - with the Your Europe portal, which signposts the single points of contact currently available under the Services Directive. This will provide professionals, in their own language, with a public interface where they can upload documents, access and print their professional card, and obtain up-to-date information on the recognition process, and administrative information on competent authorities, professional bodies and the documents to be submitted.

Parliament also makes detailed observations on problems with the current Directive and calls on the Commission to:
- enhance the dialogue and exchanges of information within each individual profession, and improve the cooperation between the competent authorities and NCPs at both national and intra-Member State level;
- facilitate networks of competent authorities and professional bodies for the most mobile professions, to exchange general information about national processes and education requirements, and to share best practice and investigate possibilities for deeper cooperation, such as common platforms;
- review the compensation measures, which allow competent authorities to impose an aptitude test or an adaptation period of up to three years.

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Leading committee: IMCO (EMPL for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Members consider that the first priority for the creation of a Single Market in Services is the full and complete implementation of the Services Directive in all Member States and setting up fully operational Points of Single Contact.

... Experiences with the Mutual Evaluation Process: Parliament deplores the delays in the implementation of the Services Directive in some Member States and considers that these have had an impact on the process of mutual evaluation. However, it considers that the mutual evaluation process has proved to be a
worthwhile exercise:

- while the timing of the mutual evaluation process was challenging, it helped to maintain momentum after the implementation of the Directive;
- it enabled a better understanding of the remaining barriers and the situation in each Member State on the part of the European Commission and the Member States;
- it was key in clarifying certain ambiguous situations still prevalent in the provision of services both at national and cross-border level, such as the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and insurance obligations imposed on cross-border service providers;
- the exercise has contributed to the development of a 'European spirit' among national administrations and enabled Member States' administrations to get to know each other better.

... Improving the functioning of the Internal Market for Services: Members take the view that the mutual evaluation process in the Services Directive is an important instrument for identifying further initiatives aimed at improving the functioning of the internal market in services. They urge the Commission to keep Parliament informed about the progress and outcomes of the dialogue held with Member States on the implementation of the Services Directive, and to take further enforcement measures when deemed necessary. The resolution welcomes the internal market performance check initiative and calls on the Commission to involve the European Parliament closely in the performance check initiative.

Members take the view that many national barriers still remain in place, slowing in particular growth in professional business-to-business services. It calls on Member States:

- to ensure that new and remaining requirements are non-discriminatory, necessary and proportionate;
- to ensure complete and proper implementation of the provisions of the Services Directive which were not included in the mutual evaluation process, such as the Points of Single Contact.

The Commission, in turn is asked to:

- concentrate its efforts on unjustified or disproportionate requirements which should be abolished in order to guarantee the smooth functioning of the Single Market;
- continue and step up work with Member States on an individual basis so as to achieve a complete and correct transposition and implementation of the Services Directive in all Member States;
- undertake a comprehensive assessment of the state of play on the provision of cross-border services in the EU including the reasons explaining the moderate growth rate in this sector;
- pay careful attention to the regular checks and evaluations of the work of the Points of Single Contact in Member States.

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Leading committee: IMCO (EMPL, JURI for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Regulating the Single Market: ... Believing that correlation tables contribute to better transposition and significantly facilitate enforcement of the Single Market rules, Members urge Member States to create and make publicly available correlation tables on all Single Market legislation. They point out that in future Parliament may not include reports on compromise texts agreed with Council on the plenary agenda if provisions on correlation tables are not provided for.
Administrative coordination, problem-solving mechanisms and information: Parliament supports the proposals of the Single Market Act that aim at developing further administrative cooperation between the Member States, including extending the Internal Market Information (IMI) System to other relevant legislative areas. Members consider that local and regional authorities could be involved in this process. The Commission is called upon to come up with a roadmap regarding the development and interlinking of different problem-solving tools (such as SOLVIT, the EU Pilot project) to ensure efficiency and user friendliness and avoid unnecessary overlaps. Member States are called upon to develop points of single contact under the Services Directive into user-friendly and easily accessible e-Government centres where businesses can obtain all the necessary information in the relevant EU languages, deal with all formalities and complete the necessary steps by electronic means in order to provide services in the respective Member State. Moreover, Members call on the Commission to submit a legislative proposal on the use of alternative dispute resolution in the EU by the end of 2011 and underlines the importance of its quick adoption.

Transposition and enforcement: the Commission is called upon to use all powers under the Treaties to improve transposition, application and enforcement of the rules of the Single Market. Members believe that the infringement procedure remains a key tool to ensure the functioning of the single market, but stress that consideration should be given to additional instruments which are less time-consuming and cumbersome. The Commission is called upon to: (i) resist any political interference and immediately launch infringement procedures where pre-litigation problem-solving mechanisms fail; (ii) set a benchmark of 12 months for the maximum average time taken to process infringements, from opening the file to sending the application to the Court of Justice. Member States are called upon to reduce the transposition deficit of Single Market Directives to 0.5% for outstanding legislation and 0.5% for incorrectly transposed legislation by the end of 2012.

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Leading committee: IMCO (ECON, EMPL, REGI for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Members consider that Parliament should provide effective monitoring of the process of implementation of the Directive by the Member States, and want the Commission to keep Parliament regularly informed of the state of transposition.

Parliament notes that transposition of the Services Directive is a major challenge for Member States, public administrations and local authorities. The Directive’s impact on the economy, businesses and citizens cannot be evaluated until it has been properly transposed in all Member States. Members invite the Commission to monitor closely the application of the Directive and to issue regular implementation reports, which should take into account the real medium- and long-term effects of the Directive on employment in the EU. After full transposition it is crucial that a comprehensive assessment should be carried out of the impact of the Services Directive.

The resolution sets out concrete proposals for Member States to improve the implementation of the Services Directive.

Evaluation process: Parliament calls on the Commission and Member States to work together in order to promote the development of the internal market for services on the basis of the mutual evaluation process that is provided for in the Services Directive. It considers that the evaluation process is an important tool in determining how implementation of the Directive is progressing in Member States, but that the state of progress with the process does not yet allow its
effectiveness to be evaluated. The process in question must examine whether the rules in force in Member States correspond to the specifications of the internal market and do not create new obstacles. Members want the Commission to carry out a thorough investigation of the potential of this new method in the context of the Single Market Act. They regret the fact that the European Parliament and national parliaments are not more involved in the mutual evaluation process.

Points of single contact (PSCs): Parliament calls on Member States to develop the PSCs into comprehensive eGovernment portals for service providers wanting to set up a business or provide cross-border services. Member States are asked to continue improving the accessibility of PSCs, including by allowing procedures and formalities to be completed through PSCs remotely, by electronic means. They should also improve the quality of the information and procedures available to its users, in particular SMEs, including information and the completion of procedures under labour and tax law relevant to service providers such as procedures related to VAT and social security registration. ... The Commission should make a direct electronic link to the Member States’ PSCs available to service providers in all the EU official languages. Members regret that the advice offered by PSCs does not yet reach prospective service providers and that information on how to contact PSCs is not widely known. They call on the Commission to earmark appropriate funds in its draft budget for 2012 to launch a major Europe-wide PSC promotion campaign to raise awareness of what PSCs can offer service providers. The Commission and Member States are asked to launch well-targeted promotion, information and training campaigns as soon as possible, and to improve the visibility and recognisability of the eu-go domain and to feature case studies of businesses using the PSCs and the benefits they have derived.

Administrative cooperation: Parliament draws attention to the importance of the provisions on administrative cooperation and mutual assistance, and welcomes the growing number of enrolments by the competent national authorities for monitoring of services through the internal market information system (IMI). It also considers it useful to establish cooperation within a European network formed by the Member States’ public authorities and to set up an interchange of information on the reliability of service providers, with a view to eliminating additional controls applied to cross-border activities.

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Leading committee: IMCO
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Citizens and consumers: Parliament is convinced that European citizens’ knowledge of the single market is low, non-existent, confused or even negative, in part because of a lack of political commitment and information and a low level of public awareness. The resolution sets out some of the difficulties encountered by consumers especially in the services sector, and highlights the need to organise the relevant websites, SOLVIT and contact points more effectively. It deplores the fact that only a small percentage of citizens, consumers and SMEs are aware of existing alternative redress mechanisms, or know how to register a complaint with the Commission. Problem-solving systems, such as SOLVIT, need to be strengthened in accordance with Parliament’s report on SOLVIT. Parliament calls on the Commission to initiate an accelerated Treaty infringement procedure if an unresolved SOLVIT complaint reveals a prima facie breach of Community law.

Stronger institutional role in establishing and implementing single market rules: Members ask the Commission to develop new ways, other than formal infringement procedures, to improve the transposition and enforcement of single market rules. They ask it to consider innovative mechanisms, such as the mutual evaluation procedure envisaged in the Services Directive, to encourage peer review and Member State ownership, and to improve informal problem-solving mechanisms such as SOLVIT and EU-PILOT. Parliament calls for the strengthening of Parliament’s role in the areas of application, enforcement and monitoring of single market legislation. It considers that the enhanced role for the EP and the national parliaments under the Lisbon Treaty must entail better
synergism between the two parliamentary levels.

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Leading committee: IMCO (PETI for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Effective problem solving in the internal market: Members stress that problems relating to the implementation of internal market rules are often detected through the SOLVIT network and that SOLVIT experience should be fed into national and EU policy-making. They call for the following:

- inclusion in the Internal Market and Consumer Market Scoreboards of more detailed information on the application and enforcement of internal market legislation, both with a view to increasing transparency and as a useful tool for SOLVIT staff;
- the Internal Market Scoreboard, the SOLVIT Report, the Citizens Signpost Service and the Consumer Market Scoreboard to be published at the same time once a year in order to provide a global picture of the development of the internal market;
- the Consumer Market Scoreboard should include a detailed account of the progress, achievements and shortcomings of SOLVIT;
- immediate action to deal with shortcomings of SOLVIT.

Horizontal problems identified at national level: Parliament commends SOLVIT’S case resolution rate, which has remained high (83%) even though its workload increased in 2008 (rising by 22% to 1000 cases) and despite the fact that some SOLVIT centres are faced with staffing problems. Members States are asked to ensure that their SOLVIT centre has strong political support so that it can persuade the authorities about whom complaints are made to cooperate actively within the SOLVIT procedure and within the relevant deadlines.

Measures to be envisaged: the resolution calls on the Commission and Member States as appropriate, to do the following:

- promote SOLVIT, using all forms of media to ensure a wide outreach to citizens and businesses, especially about how to assert their rights, and to allocate sufficient resources to make this promotion more effective;
- promote online alternative dispute settlement systems within the SOLVIT network;
- promote SOLVIT as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism, by means of national information campaigns;
- set up web pages linked to the European SOLVIT portal, featuring a compilation of successful cases and of best practice with regard to settling disputes by means of this mechanism;
- increase the efficiency of SOLVIT centres by providing civil servants from within the relevant departments in order to facilitate the resolution of cases which are outside the remit of SOLVIT (SOLVIT+), as well as by ensuring proper access to legal expertise for SOLVIT centres within their administration;
- appoint a SOLVIT liaison officer in public services involved in implementing internal market rules, with a view to ensuring better cooperation;
- organise information campaigns on SOLVIT at local, regional or national level, targeting specific groups, such as SMEs, which currently lag behind in terms of awareness of SOLVIT, and exchange best practices so that SOLVIT is promoted as efficiently as possible;
- increase the staffing of SOLVIT centres, using all available means, including alternative financing arrangements;
- analyse the causes of the low success rates of certain SOLVIT centres, as well as the causes of their relatively long case-handling times, in order to provide useful information for the design of a better problem-solving strategy, to the benefit of citizens and businesses in the internal market.
In particular, the Commission is also invited to:

- submit SOLVIT annual reports containing more detailed information and statistical data, which would also allow the effectiveness of each national centre to be assessed, since it is otherwise difficult to make long-term assessments of trends and propose specific targeted measures to improve the situation in individual Member States;
- create a single web portal for all SOLVIT centres at an address that is as easy to find as possible (www.solveit.eu). Members are of the opinion, at the same time, that a marked improvement in the visibility of the SOLVIT network on the Internet is essential and that for this purpose use must be made of both social networking sites and search engines;
- finalise the Single Market Assistance Services project for streamlining information, advice and problem-solving assistance services to make them more accessible and more effective;
- initiate an accelerated Treaty infringement procedure if an unresolved SOLVIT complaint reveals a prima facie breach of Community law.

Parliament requests SOLVIT to:

- refer cases of misapplication of EU legislation which are too complex for it to resolve not only to the Commission but also to Parliament’s Committee on Petitions;
- include on its website a link to Parliament’s Committee on Petitions as well as to the relevant committees of the national parliaments, so that citizens may be made aware of their right to petition Parliament as a means of obtaining non-judicial remedies and solutions through the political and legislative process.

Lastly, Parliament calls on the European Ombudsman to cooperate more closely with the SOLVIT centres and to forward all incoming complaints for which he is not competent to the SOLVIT centre presumed to be competent where those complaints relate to the internal market and could come within the scope of SOLVIT.
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Special report 6/2016 of 26 April 2016

Eradication, control and monitoring programmes to contain animal diseases

Public Health and Food Safety | Agriculture and Rural Development

Summary

Questions asked:
1. Do animal disease eradication, control and monitoring programmes adequately contain animal diseases?
   1.1. Did the Commission have an appropriate approach for the eradication, control and monitoring of animal diseases?
   1.2. Did Member States design and implement appropriate programmes to eradicate, control and monitor animal diseases?
   1.3. Did the programmes adequately consider cost-effectiveness?

Observations:
1. Overall the animal disease programmes that were examined adequately contained animal diseases:
   1.1. The approach taken by the Commission was generally sound, and was supported by good technical advice, risk analysis, and a mechanism for prioritising resources. The Commission provided guidance and facilitated coordination of Member States’ efforts, and established minimum performance criteria to be met by Member State programmes. There have been some notable successes, for example, decreases in cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle, salmonella in poultry, and rabies in wildlife.
   1.2. Member State programmes that were examined were generally well designed and implemented, and Member States had adequate systems to identify animal disease outbreaks and facilitate their eradication.
   1.3. The cost-effectiveness of programmes is difficult to determine, due to the lack of available models for such analysis. There were examples of insufficiently controlled programmes by the Member States or unreasonably high costs.
2. The exchange of epidemiological information and the ready access to historic results could be better supported by the relevant information systems, but was in the process of being improved. The audit also found that some programmes should better specify the actions and controls to be implemented.
3. While the Court’s assessment of the implementation of specific veterinary programmes was overall positive, the eradication of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis, and ovine and caprine brucellosis, posed continuing challenges in some Member States. They found that the EU approach for considering diseases in wildlife should be complemented, notably for tuberculosis, and that the lack of certain vaccines can be detrimental to programme effectiveness.

Recommendations:
In order to further improve the eradication, control and monitoring of animal diseases, the Commission should:
1. Facilitate the exchange of epidemiological information between Member States;
2. Examine whether the existing set of indicators should be updated to provide better information on veterinary control activities and the cost-effectiveness of programmes;
3. Systematically include, when relevant, the wildlife aspect in the veterinary programmes;
4. Support the availability of vaccines for use by the Member States when epidemically justified.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

CONT Working Document of 8/06/2016 on ECA Special Report 6/2016 (2015 Discharge): Eradication, control and monitoring programmes to contain animal diseases (PE582.131v01-00)
Rapporteur: Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]
1. Welcomes the recommendations of the European Court of Auditors and welcomes the Commission’s acceptance;
2. Welcomes that the animal disease programmes were evaluated as successful by the audit and that the technical advice, risk analysis and supporting mechanisms were graded as good; welcomes the positive results of these programmes on the animal health in the EU; encourages the Commission and the Member States to apply the successful approach also in the future;
3. Believes that the extensive output indicators for national programmes for the eradication, control and monitoring of certain animal diseases and zoonoses should be further improved, particularly relating to the technical implementation and economic indicators, which would allow for an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the programmes;
4. Notes from the Commission that establishing of the cost-effectiveness of the programmes is difficult, especially as there are no models available even on the international level; further notes that the cost-benefit of the programmes has been proved by avoidance of spreading disease, avoiding human infection and by saving lives;
5. Notes that the exchange of epidemiological information and the ready access to historic results could be better supported by the relevant information systems, allowing for better coordination of control activities between Member States; notes from the Commission that existing IT tools are being developed to better support the Member States; encourages the Commission to ensure an added value of the developed IT tools for the exchange of necessary information;
6. Considers that the Commission should support the availability of vaccines for use by the Member States when epidemically justified; welcomes that the vaccine/antigen banks have already been put in place for two diseases; encourages the Commission to continue with a risk analyses that might determine a potential need for other vaccine/antigen banks;
7. Takes note that the Commission accepts to ensure that Member States systematically include, when relevant, the wildlife aspect in their veterinary programmes;
8. Notes that the programmes in certain countries were not as successful in eradication of the animal diseases and the progress was rather slow; invites the Commission in cooperation with the Member States to prioritize these specific cases and to prepare a detailed strategy that would help to streamline the eradication of the diseases, in particular of the bovine tuberculosis in the UK and Ireland and ovine and caprine brucellosis in the south of Italy;
9. Notes with concern that the underlying legislation covering the topic of animal disease remains overly complex and crumbled; welcomes that an umbrella piece of legislation - the regulation on transmissible animal diseases ("the Animal Health Law") - has been adopted in March 2016; notes that the new regulation will be applicable in 5 years following the adoption; welcomes that the new regulation will offer streamlined, simpler and clearer rules.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

Leading committee: AGRI (ENVI, PECH, JURI for opinion)

Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

PURPOSE: to introduce a single piece of legislation to regulate animal health in the Union, based on the principle that "prevention is better than cure" in order to better detect and control diseases, as well as to tackle safety risks in a coordinated way.

CONTENT: the Regulation establishes provisions relating to the prevention and control of animal diseases that are transmissible to animals or to human beings. It aims to improve standards and to provide a common system to better detect and control diseases, as well as to tackle health, food and feed safety risks in a coordinated way.

Scope: the Regulation applies to: (a) kept and wild animals; (b) germinal products; (c) products of animal origin; (d) animal by-products and derived products; (e) facilities, means of transport, equipment and all other paths of infection and material involved or potentially involved in the spread of transmissible animal diseases.

Objectives: the new provisions relate to:

- the prioritisation and categorisation of diseases of Union concern and for the establishment of responsibilities for animal health; 
- the early detection, notification and reporting of diseases, surveillance, eradication programmes and disease–free status;
- disease awareness, preparedness and control;
- the registration and approval of establishments and transporters, movements and traceability of animals, germinal products and products of animal origin within the Union;
- the entry of animals, germinal products, and products of animal origin into the Union and the export of such consignments from the Union;
- non–commercial movements of pet animals into a Member State from another Member State or from a third country or territory;
- the emergency measures to be taken in the event of a disease emergency situation.

Delegated and implementing powers: the act constitutes a framework Regulation, which will empower the Commission to determine a significant amount of the details by delegated and/or by implemented, acts. Implementing powers to lay down disease prevention and control measures for emerging diseases is conferred on the Commission. The latter may adopt delegated acts regarding amendments to the list of diseases in Annex II or regarding the restrictions on, prohibitions of or obligations to use certain veterinary medicinal products within the framework of the control of certain listed diseases.

Reporting and evaluation

Article 282 of the Final Act

Evaluation

The Commission shall evaluate this Regulation together with the delegated acts referred to in Article 264 and submit the results of the evaluation in a report to the European Parliament and to the Council no later than 22 April 2026.

Leading committee: ENVI (AGRI for opinion)

**Summary**

Stage reached in procedure (February 2017) - awaiting Parliament 2nd reading

Relevant Articles: 62, 92, 99, 119

**Reporting and evaluation**

Article 162

**Entry into force and application**

1. This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Unless otherwise provided for in paragraphs 2 to 5, it shall apply from ...(101).

*No later than one year after entry into force of this Regulation, the Commission shall provide a comprehensive guidance document, to assist operators and national authorities to effectively implement this Regulation. [Am. 304]*

1a. No later than five years after the entry into force of this Regulation, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council to present the experience gained from the application of this Regulation and consider in particular the reduction of administrative burden on private sector and the efficiency and effectiveness of controls carried out by competent authorities. [Am. 305]


Leading committee: AGRI (BUDG, ENVI for opinion)

**Summary**

Extract from the Summary

The expenditure should aim to attain the general objective of contributing to a high level of health for humans, animals and plants along the food chain and in related areas, by preventing and eradicating diseases and pests and by ensuring a high level of protection for consumers and the environment.

**Maximum rates of grants**: where the Union financial contribution takes the form of a grant, it should not exceed 50% of the eligible costs. This rate may be increased to 75% of the eligible costs in respect of cross-border activities implemented together by two or more Member States in order to control, prevent or eradicate pests or animal diseases. The maximum rate may be increased to 100% of the eligible costs where the activities benefitting from the Union contribution concern the prevention and control of serious human, plant and animal health risks for the Union.

**List of animal diseases and zoonoses**: the list of animal diseases and zoonoses which qualify for grants for the eradication, control and surveillance of the animal diseases and zoonoses is set out in the **Annex to the Regulation**. In order to take account of new scientific or epidemiological developments, the power to adopt acts in accordance with Article 290 TFEU should be delegated to the Commission, in respect of supplementing those lists.

**Eligible costs**: Union financing for measures in the field of animal and plant health should cover specific eligible costs. In exceptional and duly justified cases, it should also cover the costs incurred by the Member States in carrying out other necessary measures. Such measures may include the implementation of enhanced biosecurity measures in case of outbreak of disease or presence of pests, the destruction and transport of carcasses during eradication programmes, and the costs of compensation to owners resulting from emergency vaccination campaigns.

**Reporting and evaluation**

Article 42 of the Final Act

**Evaluation**

1. By 30 June 2017 the Commission shall establish and present to the European Parliament and to the Council a mid-term evaluation report on whether, in terms of their results and impacts, the measures referred to in Chapters I and II of Title II and in Articles 30 and 31 of Chapter III achieve the objectives set out in Article 2(1), as regards the efficiency of the use of resources and its added value, at Union level. The evaluation report shall also address the scope for simplification, the continued relevance of all objectives, and the contribution of the measures to the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It shall take into account evaluation results on the long-term impact of the predecessor measures. The report shall be accompanied, if appropriate, by a legislative proposal to amend this Regulation.

2. By 30 June 2022 the Commission shall carry out an ex-post evaluation of the measures referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article in close cooperation with the Member States. That ex-post evaluation shall examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the expenditure referred to in Article 1 and its impact.

3. The evaluations referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall take account of the progress made by using the indicators referred to in Article 2(2).
4. The Commission shall communicate the conclusions of the evaluations referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

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Leading committee: AGRI (JURI for opinion)

Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

In recent years, as a result of new technology, "inactivated vaccines" against bluetongue have become available which do not pose the risk of undesired local circulation of the vaccine virus to unvaccinated animals. The extensive use of such vaccines during the vaccination campaign in the years 2008 and 2009 has led to a significant improvement in the disease situation. It is now widely accepted that vaccination with inactivated vaccines is the preferred tool for the control of bluetongue and for the prevention of clinical disease in the Union.

In order to ensure better control of the spread of the bluetongue virus and to reduce the burden on the agricultural sector posed by that disease, this Directive amends the rules on vaccination laid down in Directive 2000/75/EC in order to take account of the recent technological developments in vaccine production. The amendments provided for in this Directive should make the rules on vaccination more flexible and also take into account the fact that inactivated vaccines that can also be successfully used outside areas subject to animal movement restrictions are now available.

In addition, and provided that appropriate precautionary measures are taken, the use of live attenuated vaccines is not excluded, as their use might still be necessary under certain circumstances, such as following the introduction of a new bluetongue virus serotype against which inactivated vaccines may not be available.

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EP Resolution of 6/07/2011 on EU legislation on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE) and on related feed and food controls - implementation and outlook, based on 2010/2249(INI) (P7_TA(2011)0328; A7-0195/2011)
Leading committee: ENVI (no committee for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

3. Takes note of the increase in age limits for TSE testing of bovine animals above 72 months in 22 Member States as introduced by the above-mentioned Commission Decision amending Decision 2009/719/EC authorising certain Member States to revise their annual BSE monitoring programmes;
4. Urges the Commission to increase the age limits in the remaining Member States only if supported by sound risk assessments in order not to jeopardise a high level of animal health and consumer protection;

5. Underlines that the surveillance mechanism is an important instrument in monitoring TSE in the EU; expresses its concern about another rise in the age limits for testing in bovine animals in view in particular of the sample size testing which will govern the BSE monitoring system in bovine animals from January 2013; calls on the Commission to inform Parliament about progress and new findings on the sample sizes to be chosen;

6. Urges the Commission to maintain the testing of risk animals as an important element in continuing to monitor the trend of BSE cases in the EU and ensuring the early detection of any possible re-occurrence in the future.

Oral / Written Questions

P-007703-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Krysztof Hetman (PPE) on African swine fever epidemic in Poland
E-007628-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Molly Scott Cato (Verts/ALE) on Bovine TB
P-007397-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Hannu Takkula (ALDE) on Measures to prevent the spread of African swine fever
E-006714-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Joëlle Bergeron (EFDD) on Revision of EU bovine spongiform encephalopathy measures
E-005494-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Michel Dantin (PPE), Arnaud Danjean (PPE), Franck Proust (PPE), Tokia Saïfi (PPE), Anne Sander (PPE), Marc Joulaud (PPE) - Case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in France
E-004996-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE) - Vaccinating livestock against bluetongue
E-003698-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Marc Tarabella (S&D), Eric Andrieu (S&D), Nicola Caputo (S&D), Michel Dantin (PPE), Jean-Paul Denanot (S&D), Maria Noichl (S&D), Clara Eugenia Aguiler Garcia (S&D), Daniel Buda (PPE), Viorica Dâncilă (S&D) on Vaccination in herds
E-003037-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Esther Herranz García (PPE), Pilar Ayuso (PPE), Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso (PPE) - Containing the bluetongue outbreak
E-002987-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Sophie Montel (ENF), Florian Philippot (ENF) - Preventing a recurrence of mad cow disease
E-002905-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Roberta Metsola (PPE) - EU regulation on transmissible animal diseases - communication policy
E-000370-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) - Programmes to eradicate, control and monitor zoonoses
E-000052-16  WQ COM Rule 130 Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) on Measures to control rabies
E-001535-15  WQ COM Rule 130 Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso (PPE) - Case of avian influenza in France
E-001541-15  WQ COM Rule 130 Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso (PPE) - Containing the outbreak of bluetongue disease
E-0011600-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) on African swine fever
E-004806-15  WQ COM Rule 130 Ulrike Müller (ALDE) on Movement of animals between EU Member States under the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES)
O-000145-15  OQ COM Rule 128 Renate Sommer, on behalf of the PPE Group - Introduction of compatible systems for the registration of pet animals across Member States
P-010474-14  WQ COM Rule 130 Norbert Erdős (PPE) - EU funding for avian influenza protection
P-009415-14  WQ COM Rule 130 Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL) - New outbreak of bird flu in Europe
P-004946-14  WQ COM Rule 117 Janusz Wojciechowski (ECR) - European funding to help tackle canine rabies in Romania
E-004609-14  WQ COM Rule 117 Elena Báscues (PPE) - Animal health
P-004448-14  WQ COM Rule 117 Jan Mulder (ALDE) - Budget for animal diseases
E-002470-14  WQ COM Rule 117 Brian Simpson (S&D) - African swine fever
E-001404-14  WQ COM Rule 117 Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) - Rabies programme in Romania
E-010006-13  WQ COM Rule 117 Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL) - Bovine tuberculosis in Europe
E-009555-13  WQ COM Rule 117 Filip Kaczmarek (PPE) - Spread of animal diseases at the EU's eastern borders
E-008543-13  WQ COM Rule 117 Matteo Salvini (EFDD) - Failure to eradicate swine vesicular disease and African swine fever in southern Italy
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<td>The control of bovine tuberculosis in the United Kingdom</td>
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<td>E-001595/2012</td>
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<td>E-010434/2011</td>
<td>Control of classical swine fever</td>
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Special report 7/2016 of 28 April 2016
The European External Action Service's management of its buildings around the world

EU Institutions and Other Bodies | Budgetary control

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Questions asked:
1. Does the EEAS manage delegation buildings well?
   1.1. Do delegation buildings meet the needs of the EEAS and provide value for money?
   1.2. Does the EEAS have effective procedures for selecting the right buildings?
   1.3. Does the EEAS have effective systems for monitoring the continued suitability of buildings and planning necessary changes?

Observations:
1.1. Buildings generally meet the needs of delegations but in some cases do not provide best value for money; space in most office buildings, and some residences, exceeds the building policy ceilings; the EEAS owns buildings which it no longer uses; some charges for co-location in office buildings do not recover full costs;
1.2. There is a structured procedure for selecting delegation buildings but there are some weaknesses at each of the major stages when it is applied in practice: the building-file procedure provides a structured basis for selecting delegation buildings; EU delegations have insufficient expertise to identify suitable buildings and do not receive sufficient support from headquarters; there are some weaknesses in the way delegations present options to headquarters; some Headquarters Building Committee opinions are not timely or convincing;
1.3. Information on the suitability of buildings is not reliable and is not used for planning, which is too short term and particularly weak for owned properties: central monitoring systems do not provide reliable basic information on the suitability of all delegation buildings; planning makes insufficient use of available information and is short term; planning systems for owned properties are particularly weak.

Recommendations:
1. Complete objectives for office buildings:
   The EEAS should include environmental factors, access for disabled people and flexibility as objectives in the building policy for office buildings;
2. Ensure charges to co-located organisations recover full costs:
   The EEAS should ensure charges paid by EU Member States or other EU institutions or bodies hosted in delegation office buildings are consistent and recover full costs. For example, it should charge all tenants for use of common areas and for administrative support. Where the offices are owned, it should include a charge to reflect the rental value of the building. The method for calculating these charges should also be applied to buildings owned by the EEAS, but no longer occupied by a delegation and rented to other organisations;
3. The EEAS should strengthen the application of the procedure for selecting buildings:
   a) produce a building file for all new contracts;
   b) introduce a streamlined building file for rent renewals. Such building files could be limited to demonstrating that the proposed solution continues to meet needs in accordance with the building policy and remains in line with market rates;
   c) compare options in the form of a table to arrive at a sound and balanced overall technical and financial assessment which demonstrates that the selected solution is in line with market rates and gives sufficient consideration to floor space;
   d) produce guidance on how to take into account space rented to other organisations and income generated by co-location;
   e) take decisions promptly to minimise the risk that buildings may no longer be available;

4. Verify market rates:
   EEAS headquarters should use an independent source of information to verify market rates for office buildings and residences, and regularly monitor the consistency of rents with market rates. This monitoring could trigger the renegotiation of a lease or the search for a new building for rent or purchase;

5. Improve the real-estate management information system:
   The EEAS should improve its real-estate management information system, so that it has more reliable and relevant information to feed into the planning process. This information should focus on office buildings, residences, staff accommodation provided by the delegation and owned buildings no longer occupied by delegations. Information on office space per person should be refined by separately identifying office space rented to other organisations, conference rooms necessary to meet the needs of the presidency function and space used by trainees and seconded national experts;

6. Reinforce real-estate management expertise:
   The EEAS should reinforce expertise in real-estate management at headquarters (e.g. through training or recruiting staff with appropriate skills) in order to develop a more strategic approach, improve planning, strengthen support for delegations and realise significant savings from improved management of space;

7. Establish medium-term plans:
   The EEAS should establish rolling medium-term plans for its delegation buildings, covering around 7 years. These plans should include priorities for rentals, purchases, sales, modifications and maintenance. They should use available information on floor space and building condition in order to plan, for the medium term, how to comply with the criteria in the building policy. For example, they should plan to align office space more closely with the number of staff, and use surplus space for co-location where appropriate;

8. The EEAS should enhance systems to identify where purchasing offers better value for money and to manage owned buildings effectively:
   a) apply a tool (e.g. for use in rent-or-buy assessments in building files) and only purchase buildings where this offers better value for money than renting. The EEAS should estimate costs and revenue for the whole life cycle of the building, including financing and maintenance costs. In this renting versus buying comparison, the EEAS should also take into account the residual value of the building, the discount rate and risk factors such as the political or economic instability of the country and the instability of staffing levels for office buildings;
   b) plan major purchases, giving priority to buildings (whether offices or residences) where purchasing offers best value for money;
   c) develop a strategy to maintain owned property, linked with recommendations of health and safety inspections;
   d) protect the buildings-maintenance budget from exchange-rate fluctuations;
   e) plan how to dispose of surplus owned properties before buying or renting something else.
CONT Working Document of 3/06/2016 on ECA Special Report 7/2016 (2015 Discharge): The European External Action Service’s management of its buildings around the world (PE582.129v01-00)
Rapporteur: Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Welcomes the special report dedicated to the European External Action Service’s management of its buildings around the world and sets out its observations and recommendations below;
2. Emphasises that the EEAS and the Member States have a shared interest in further developing local co-operation in the area of management of buildings with a specific and continuous attention to be devoted to security issues, best value for money and the Union’s image;
3. Welcomes the increase in co-location projects of Union delegations with Member States with the signature of 17 co-location memoranda of understanding; encourages the EEAS to further seek ways to extend this good practice; considers that this policy should include innovative approaches aiming at defining both a coordinated strategy of co-location with Member States eager to do so and appropriate cost-sharing arrangements related to buildings and logistics;
4. Regrets the insufficient recording and inaccuracies in the information system for managing delegations office buildings and residences; asks for a regular review of the completeness and reliability of data encoded by Union delegations;
5. Urges the EEAS to reinforce its management control and monitoring tools of all the costs incurred in the building policy in order to ensure an accurate overview and follow-up of all the expenditure; considers that emphasis should be put on the respect of the ceilings defined in the building policy to decrease the total annual rent of delegations offices, the adequacy of contributions paid by co-located entities, the coverage of the running costs involved in co-location situations and the correctness of costs with local market conditions;
6. Believes that legal and technical expertise in real estate management should be swiftly developed while considering any cost-effective alternative options, such as hiring external expertise, like local brokers, to prospect the market or possibly negotiate with landlords;
7. Supports the implementation of a medium-long term strategy identifying all options from investment priorities or possibilities of purchases, renting renewals to the sharing of premises with Member States, taking account also of staff projections and policy planning and development.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section X – European External Action Service, based on 2015/2163(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0156; A8-0136/2016)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

22. Welcomes that co-location projects of Union delegations with Member States continued to be developed in 2014 with the signature of 17 co-location memoranda of understanding, bringing the total number of co-location arrangements to 50; asks the EEAS to continue this trend and to report regularly to Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control on this issue;

23. Emphasises that Union heads of delegation continue to be overburdened with administrative tasks due to the inflexibility of the financial regulation; states that adequate tools should be provided to the heads of delegation, to effectively manage and oversee the delegations without generating excessive administrative burden; welcomes in this context the discussion on the identification of tasks to be possibly performed remotely and the possibility of establishing regional administrative support centres that will alleviate some of those burdens and may form part of a broader future solution; repeats its call on the EEAS and the Commission to consider all solutions to that issue for the purpose of economies of scale;
26. Is concerned about efficiency and efforts of work of the Union delegations abroad; urges the EEAS to regularly pursue its evaluation programme of the delegations and to provide in its annual activity report a synthesis of the main weaknesses and difficulties encountered in the functioning of the Union delegations on the basis of the action plan established for each delegation as a result of the evaluation mission;

31. Calls on the EEAS and EuropeAid to reinforce supervision of the heads of delegation in their capacity as authorising officers by sub-delegation for the Commission with a view to increasing their accountability within the global chain assurance by providing qualitative and exhaustive reporting (with the so-called External Assistance Management Report) in the context of the establishment of the respective EEAS and EuropeAid annual activity reports;

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section X – European External Action Service, based on 2014/2086(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0123; A8-0109/2015)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

6. Notes that for framework contracts awarded by the EEAS, due care has to be ensured in terms of the traceability of operations by recording adequate documentation for each contract regardless of its specific nature; asks EEAS Headquarters to further develop staff skills and awareness of this issue in Delegations and, more generally, on the effective application of related internal control standards; notes that information quality is one of the most important weaknesses identified by the ex ante controls carried out in 2013 and calls for this situation to be swiftly remedied in order to have access to accurate and comprehensive management and administrative information;

41. Urges the EEAS to maximise the benefits of economies of scale by creating new synergies within the EEAS Headquarters and Delegations, as well as in cooperation with Member States and national diplomatic services in the spirit of a true Union external policy and services; notes with satisfaction that the colocation of Union Delegations and Member State diplomatic representations is increasing, even if it continues to be limited; asks the EEAS to continue to seek for ways to further increase colocation;

42. Demands that the building policy of the EEAS be attached to the annual activity report, especially given that it is important that the costs of such a policy are properly rationalised and that such costs are not excessive;

43. Urges the EEAS to provide the discharge authority with the list of building contracts concluded in 2013, including the details of the contracts, the country where the contract is entered in and the length of the contract, as it was done in the 2011 EEAS annual activity report and asks the EEAS to provide the same details of building contracts in its 2014 annual activity report.

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Leading committee: CONT (AFET for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

48. Calls on the EEAS to make greater efforts to save costs by sharing buildings and facilities with the diplomatic services of Member States in delegations; calls on the EEAS to compile a summary – to be submitted to Parliament – showing how many embassies and consulates of Member States in countries with Union delegations have been closed since the EEAS was set up or specifying the countries where the establishment of the EEAS has served to create synergies; notes, however, that Member States should pay their fair share of the costs involved in such colocation and service provision;

62. Demands that the EEAS’s building policy be attached to the annual activity report, especially given that it is important that such costs are properly rationalised and that such costs are not excessive;

63. Urges the EEAS to provide the discharge authority with the list of building contracts concluded in 2012, including the details of the contracts, the country where the contract is entered in and the length of the contract, as it was done in the 2011 EEAS Annual Activity Report and asks the EEAS to provide the same details of building contracts in its 2013 Annual Activity Report.

*******

EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of the Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2011, Section X – European External Action Service, based on 2012/2176(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0133; A7-0099/2013)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

37. Welcomes the fact that the revised Financial Regulation obliges the EEAS to provide a working document on its building policy to the Parliament by 1 June each year; stresses that the revised Financial Regulation allows the EEAS to take loans for the acquisition of its offices and residences; urges the EEAS to maintain cost effective operation and to find appropriate financing solutions consulting the Commission’s Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs;

38. Is concerned over the increasing rental costs of the EEAS’s offices and residences (i.e. an increase of over 50% of the Moscow offices of the Union delegation to Russia from year 2010 to 2011); urges the EEAS to maintain cost effective operation and to provide all the necessary information to the discharge authority;

39. Believes that the forthcoming review of the EEAS is the forum where a detailed analysis can be made of the compatibility between the resources available and the functions to be carried out by the EEAS and any changes required to ensure the highest level of efficiency in its operations; believes that an evaluation of property in use by the EEAS should involve comparisons with other diplomatic missions in the same location rather than between EEAS facilities in very different countries; believes that, in evaluating the price of property, contracts should be actively monitored in relation to the benefit accruing to the Union and that changes should be made where necessary; considers that, in this evaluation, it should be made clear whether the property is used for
purposes other than housing, and stipulated which part of the property is being used and for how long and how; believes also that there should not be any differences between housing which should be similar, without abuses occurring, so that the quality of life as regards housing is similar from one region to another, depending on the availability and cost of the properties; calls for a multiannual plan to be submitted for Union buildings and staff safety and building security in all third countries with Union delegations;

40. Calls on the EEAS to identify and consider, in accordance with its political and contractual obligations, every possible option for making major savings in the long term so as to ensure that the variation in its annual budget – the increase in which, for legitimate reasons, is proportionally greater than that of the other institutions’ budgets – can have a multiplier effect.
**Special report 8/2016 of 24 May 2016**

**Rail freight transport in the EU: still not on the right track**

Transport | Regional Development | TEN-T Programme | European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) | Cohesion Fund (CF) | Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

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### Questions asked:

1. Was the EU effective in enhancing rail freight transport?
   1.1. Has the performance of rail freight transport in the EU, especially in terms of modal share and volume transported, improved since 2000?
   1.2. Has the strategic and regulatory framework set by the Commission and the Member States promoted the competitiveness of rail freight transport?
   1.3. Have the available EU funds targeted the specific infrastructure needs of the rail freight sector?

### Observations:

1.1. The performance of rail freight transport in the EU remains unsatisfactory overall: road remains the leading mode of freight transport in the EU; some Member States have nevertheless managed to increase the proportion of goods transported by rail; the poor performance of rail freight transport has not been helped by the low speed of trains;

1.2. Many strategic and regulatory factors prevent rail freight from being more competitive: rail freight must be made economically attractive so that the EU's transport policy objectives can be achieved; the Commission has made efforts to improve the framework conditions for the transport of goods by rail, but a single European railway area is still a long way from being achieved; rail freight market liberalisation has achieved uneven progress in Member States and certain anti-competitive practices still prevail; traffic management procedures have not been adapted to the needs of the rail freight sector, even within EU rail freight corridors; administrative and technical constraints still hamper the competitiveness of rail freight; the lack of transparency on the performance of the rail freight sector has not stimulated improvements in customer service; charges for accessing rail infrastructure compare unfavourably to those for accessing roads;

1.3. The infrastructure needs of the rail freight sector should be better targeted by EU funding: overall more EU funds were allocated to roads than to rail infrastructure; when allocated to rail, EU funds did not specifically target rail freight needs; examined rail infrastructure projects have delivered or are likely to deliver expected outputs, but so far no general improvements in rail freight transport performance have been achieved; the poor maintenance of the rail network affects the sustainability and the performance of EU-funded infrastructure.

### Recommendations:

1. Rail freight market liberalisation:
   The Commission and the Member States should ensure that the national regulatory bodies possess, and can actually exercise, the necessary powers, independence and resources to carry out the tasks assigned to them, in particular to prevent, together with competition authorities, anti-competitive
practices being committed by infrastructure managers and incumbent railway undertakings;

2. Traffic management procedures:
   a) the Commission and the Member States should, within their respective remits, initiate the adaptation, in particular in rail freight corridors, of the traffic management rules applied by infrastructure managers to the specific needs of the rail freight sector. This regards, for example, the timetable for path allocation and the number and the quality of the paths on offer;
   b) the Commission should, within its remit, initiate the harmonisation of the rules and procedures governing various rail freight corridors to facilitate rail freight operations across Europe, as well as considering how a consistent approach to path allocation could best be ensured across the whole rail network;

3. Administrative and technical constraints:
   a) the Commission, together with the Member States, should simplify and harmonise the procedures for vehicle approval and for issuing safety certificates to railway undertakings. This would be helped by a rapid adoption of the fourth railway package (which involves enhancing the position of the European Railways Agency) by the Parliament and the Council and its proper implementation;
   b) The Commission and the Member States should also assess the possibility of progressively simplifying language requirements for locomotive drivers to make medium- and long-distance rail freight traffic in the EU easier and more competitive;

4. Monitoring and transparency of the performance of the rail freight sector:
   a) the Commission should regularly monitor progress made towards achieving the 2011 Transport White Paper targets for shifting goods from road to rail. In view of the long planning horizons in rail sector (going up to 2050), intermediate targets should also be set in future policy papers;
   b) the Commission and the Member States should evaluate the satisfaction level of rail freight operators, shippers and other users of the entire rail network to promote good quality service for the users of the rail network;
   c) the Commission should take the necessary steps to ensure that Member States effectively participate in the Railway Market Monitoring Scheme (RMMS) and should initiate the harmonisation of quality and performance monitoring across rail freight corridors;

5. Fair competition between different modes of transport:
   The Commission and the Member States should promote a level playing field between the different methods of transport by introducing additional regulatory and/or other measures to support rail freight traffic when necessary. As regards the cost of accessing infrastructure, consideration should be given to externalities such as environmental impacts, congestion or the number of accidents produced by each method of transport.

6. Consistent approach between policy objectives and fund allocation:
   a) the Commission and the Member States should allocate available EU funding for transport infrastructure in line with the EU transport policy objectives, enhancing a sustainable, competitive and efficient rail freight transport system. In particular, EU funds should target as a priority bottlenecks and missing links such as rail connections to ports and cross-border areas, as well as other measures with a potentially high impact on rail freight transport competitiveness such as the renovation of point infrastructure and last-mile facilities;
   b) the Commission should then monitor how much EU funding is actually invested into rail freight projects (or projects with a rail freight component);

7. Selection, planning and management of projects:
   a) the Member States, together with the Commission, should improve the coordination of rail investments in order to maximise their effectiveness and avoid the rail network being developed in a piecemeal fashion. In this context, funding of investments in rail freight corridors should be prioritised;
   b) the Commission and the Member States should assess projects’ capacity to increase rail freight performance and sustainability. Quantitative objectives for
<table>
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<th>CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur</th>
<th>CONT Working Document of 6/07/2016 on European Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 8/2016 (2015 Discharge): Rail freight transport performance in the EU: still not on the right track (PE583.878v01-00)  Rapporteur: Marian-Jean Marinescu (EPP)  [Recommendations by the rapporteur,]  [The European Parliament,]  1. Welcomes the Court’s report, endorses its recommendations and is pleased that the Commission accepts these and will take them into account;  2. Draws the attention to the areas where action by MS and Commission is most needed: market liberalisation, traffic management procedures, administrative and technical constraints, monitoring and transparency of the performance of the rail freight sector, fair competition between different modes of transport, consistent approach between policy objectives and fund allocation, improved coordination between MS and Commission in the selection, planning and management of projects and rail network maintenance;  3. Notes that the Commission did not assess properly the impact of the legislative packages that it has launched since 2000 on the rail sector, in particular the rail freight transport; regrets that the EU funds invested in the several projects cannot be considered cost-effective;  4. Finds that it is in the interest of MS to have a common and mandatory impact assessment of future rail freight transport legislation to ensure that the shortcomings related to incompatibilities of network are effectively overcome;  5. Notes that railway sector is generally very corporative which may affect the perception of the market liberalisation more as a threat than as an advantage;  6. Considers the rail freight transport one key aspects of the single market for goods and invites the Commission to give it a new impetus within the single market strategy; asks for a rail freight transport strategy to be put in place;  7. Asks for a comprehensive evaluation of the Union’s rail freight transport with particular emphasis on the implementation of the Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 including one-stop-shop activity and paths allocation, and an evaluation, in parallel, of freight corridors and CEF corridors including the projects already approved under CEF;  8. Asks for an evaluation of the Member States’ transport strategies drawn up following the Partnership Agreements as regards the cross border harmonisation and operability of TEN-T corridors;  9. Asks for an action plan to support the full and swift implementation of the 4th Railway Package;  10. Regrets that several of the obstacles to developing a strong and competitive European rail transport that were identified by the ECA in its report 8/2010 continue obstructing the progress in the sector.</th>
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<td>8. Rail network maintenance:  The Member States should, in the framework of the business plans and indicative infrastructure development strategies set by the infrastructure managers, ensure the proper maintenance of the rail network (including last-mile facilities), in particular in rail freight corridors. The Commission should verify that Member States implement those strategies.</td>
<td>freight (e.g. volume to be transported, number of freight trains, average commercial speed of freight trains and how it is related to the increase in maximum design speed, etc.) should be systematically included in project applications;</td>
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Resolutions of other committees

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<th>2015/2347(INI) (P8_TA-PROV(2016)0408; A8-0282/2016)</th>
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<td>Leading committee: TRAN (REGI committee for opinion)</td>
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**Summary**

Articles 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48

The Parliament stressed the priority of constructing, modernising and maintaining railway lines for the coherent, sustainable growth of rail transport and cohesion in the central and eastern parts of the EU and calls on the Member States to eliminate cross-border and national bottlenecks and to expand operational capacities with the aim of reaching the 2030 and 2050 modal shift targets laid down in the 2011 Transport White Paper. It stressed that some regions of Central and Eastern Europe have a significant rail network, which however urgently requires infrastructure modernisation and criticised the underinvestment in cross-border railway lines and the low level of passenger rail services in many border areas. The Parliament called on the Member States to (re-)establish missing connections and to remove bottlenecks. It suggested that the railway network should be scrutinised, using the planning methodology for the TEN-T comprehensive and core network, to identify possible further missing links – in particular cross-border links – both between EU Member States and with neighbouring non-Member States. The Members encouraged Member States to develop close and constructive cooperation to close such gaps and to improve territorial integration and cohesion and asked the Commission to provide effective financial support for all such efforts.

The Parliament reiterated its support for the deployment of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) on all TEN-T core network corridors and called on the Member States to adopt clear, long-term rail transport development strategies and to remove barriers to rail projects implemented using EU funding. It underlined the need to step up investment in improving the quality of the railways in order to make them more accessible and attractive in the fields of both passenger and freight transport and to increase their share of the modal split, in accordance with goal no 3 on shifting to other modes as formulated in the EU White Paper on Transport. It further called on the Commission and the Member States to encourage cross-border projects for high-speed railway connections throughout the TEN-T corridors.

The Members noted a lack of road-rail connections to and from ports and highlighted that most airports in Eastern Europe are located close to the rail infrastructure and that integration is still technically possible. They called on the Commission to fully support the further integration of multimodal transport connections (road-railway-airport) in Central and Eastern Europe. The Parliament called on the Commission to continue supporting investment in rolling stock in Central and Eastern European countries, as this will make it possible to restore the potential of rail within those countries’ public transport systems.

The Members highlighted that the sustainable development of a European rail transport infrastructure must not end with the mere construction of the network but has to encompass maintenance measures in order to be cost-efficient in the long run and considered that a significant proportion of the financial means should be dedicated to such measures given the importance of maintenance activities.

The Parliament underlined the importance of the Shift2Rail initiative, especially in the field of freight transport, in order to increase competitiveness and efficiency and welcomed joint international initiatives taken by the Member States in the region with a view to developing and modernising rail infrastructure. It noted that there are many sources of funding available for the railway sector from various EU programmes.

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Summary of TRAN committee recommendations for second reading


Extract from the Summary

The explanatory statement accompanying the recommendation recalled the Parliament’s priorities:

- extend the scope of the Regulation on rail transport statistics to cover data on infrastructure, in particular on European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) deployment, which was one of the priorities of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T);
- Eurostat should make available statistical data on barrier-free stations accessible to persons with reduced mobility and disabled persons as well as on the use of cross-border rail infrastructures;
- statistics on rail accidents should be maintained within the scope of the Regulation and even extended to cover accidents and incidents involving the transport of dangerous goods and accidents involving level crossings;
- Eurostat and the European Railway Agency should closely cooperate in improving statistics on rail accidents and in particular ensure the methodological consistency with regard to accident data on other modes of transport;
- EU citizens should have an easy access - as a one-stop shop - to data related to the implementation of EU policies.

The Council and Parliament agreed that the most efficient and cost-effective way to avoid duplication of work between Eurostat, the Commission and the European Railway Agency (ERA) was to reinforce cooperation between these institutions and ensure that statistical data related to EU policies are easily accessible to EU citizens and stakeholders.

Monitoring and reporting

(6) Article 9 is replaced by the following:

Article 9 of the Final Act

Reports on implementation

By 31 December 2020 and every four years thereafter, the Commission, after consulting the European Statistical System Committee, shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of this Regulation and on future developments.

In that report, the Commission shall take account of relevant information provided by Member States relating to the quality of the data transmitted, the data collection methods used and information on potential improvements and on users’ needs.

In particular, that report shall:

(a) assess the benefits, accruing to the Union, the Member States and the providers and users of statistical information, of the statistics produced, in relation
to their costs;
(b) assess the quality of the data transmitted, the data collection methods used and the quality of the statistics produced.

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EP Resolution of 9/06/2016 on the competitiveness of the European rail supply industry, based on 2015/2887(RSP) (P8_TA(2016)0280; B8-0677/2016)
Leading committee: ITRE (no other committee for opinion)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Martina Werner on behalf of the ITRE committee
Summary

Articles 3, 7, 27, 28, 33

The Parliament recalled the essential contribution of rail in mitigating climate change and in coping with other mega-trends such as urbanisation and demographic change and urged the Commission to support the targets for a modal shift to rail, for both passenger and freight, as formulated in the 2011 White Paper on transport with concrete policy steps and targeted investment. It stressed that even within the European rail market, many EU companies find it difficult and costly to operate across borders because of the fragmentation of the market, both administratively and technically.

The Parliament welcomed the adoption of the technical pillar of the fourth Railway Package and asked for its speedy implementation as a key enabler for a real single market for rail products. It stressed that increased interoperability and a stronger role for the European Railway Agency (ERA) will facilitate the harmonisation of the network and therefore have the potential to bring down costs for the development and authorisation of rolling stock and the European Railway Traffic Management System (ERTMS) trackside. The Members further stressed the need for a full, effective and uniform implementation of the rail network for competitive freight regulation, benefiting both passengers and industry.

The Parliament expects existing EU funding instruments (e.g. CEF, Structural Funds) to be used to the full so that demand is stimulated for rail projects. It highlighted the importance of a successful implementation of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) as one tool to mobilise private capital for the rail sector, and called for further exploration of how private investments can be put in motion for rail projects. The Members asked the Commission and the EIB to intensify advisory support to rail projects through the newly established European Advisory Hub under EFSI, in order to help them attract investment. They believe that the railway sector in Europe will continue to depend heavily on public investment and urged the Member States and public authorities to invest significantly in their mainline and urban railway systems and, where possible, to increase absorption rates of cohesion funds for rail projects.

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Leading committee: TRAN (REGI for opinion)
Summary of the Final Act

Extract from Summary of the Final Act:
**Scope:** the Directive includes a new provision concerning technical specifications for interoperability ('TSIs'), which will apply to existing subsystems. It lays down the provisions relating to, for each subsystem, the interoperability constituents, the interfaces and procedures, and the conditions of overall compatibility of the Union rail system required in order to achieve its interoperability.

... Vehicle authorisation for placing on the market: the Directive provides for a dual system of authorisations in relation to the issuing of vehicle authorisations for placing on the market, depending on the intended area of use. According to this approach, the European Railway Agency (ERA) Agency acts as a one-stop-shop for vehicles intended for cross-border operations, but national safety authorities keep an important role in carrying out the assessments necessary to the issuing of these authorisations. ... The Directive provides that the Agency takes full responsibility for the authorisations it issues, including contractual and non-contractual liabilities.

Placing in service of fixed installations: the Directive provides that the national safety authorities should continue to authorise the placing in service of track-side control-command and signalling, including the European signalling system ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System). In order to reinforce harmonisation of ERTMS and interoperability at EU level, the Agency will be in charge of assessing the technical solutions envisaged conform to the TSIs before any call for tenders relating to ERTMS trackside equipment is launched.

Cooperation between the Agency and national safety authorities: the Directive provides for the option to conclude cooperation agreements between the Agency and one or more national safety authorities in the context of authorisations issued for vehicles intended for cross-border operations.

**Monitoring and reporting**

Article 53 of the Final Act

Reports and information

1. By 16 June 2018, the Commission shall report on the progress made in preparing for the Agency’s enhanced role under this Directive. Additionally, every three years and for the first time three years after the end of the transitional period provided for by Article 54, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the progress made towards achieving interoperability of the Union rail system and the functioning of the Agency in this context. That report shall also include an evaluation of the implementation and use of the registers under Chapter VII and an analysis of the cases set out in Article 7 and of the application of Chapter V, assessing in particular the functioning of the cooperation agreements concluded between the Agency and national safety authorities. For the purposes of the first report, after the end of the transitional period the Commission shall carry out extensive consultations with the relevant stakeholders and shall establish a programme to allow for the assessment of progress. The Commission shall, if appropriate in the light of the above analysis, propose legislative measures including measures for the future role of the Agency in enhancing interoperability.

2. The Agency shall develop and periodically update a tool capable of providing, at the request of a Member State, the European Parliament or of the Commission, an overview of the interoperability level of the Union rail system. That tool shall use the information included in the registers provided for in Chapter VII.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Railway Agency for the financial year 2014, based on 2015/2179(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0180; A8-0106/2016)

Leading committee: CONT (TRAN committee for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

23. Points out that the Agency’s role in ensuring the safety and interoperability of European rail system; welcomes the Agency’s role in following up 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 it receives greater responsibilities, the Agency 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 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;

24. Encourages the Agency to collaborate with Member States in order to increase the number and quality of railway projects, especially ERTMS projects, proposed under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) transport programme; recalls the Parliament’s position in budgetary procedure for recovering of total amounts relocated from the CEF to the European Fund for Strategic Investments.

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Leading committee: TRAN (BUDG, CONT for opinion)


Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: the Regulation on the European Railway Agency (ERA), together with the Directives on rail safety and on interoperability, is part of the technical pillar of the fourth railway package.

The objectives of the Agency are to:

- contribute to the further development and effective functioning of a single European railway area without frontiers, by guaranteeing a high level of railway safety and interoperability, while improving the competitive position of the railway sector;
- follow the development of national railway rules in order to support the performance of national authorities acting in the fields of railway safety and interoperability and to promote the optimisation of procedures.

One-stop shop: the Agency shall establish and manage an information and communications system with at least the following one-stop-shop functions:
• **a single entry point** through which the applicant shall submit its application files for type authorisation, vehicle authorisations for placing on the market and single safety certificates;
• **a common information-exchange platform**, providing the Agency and national safety authorities with information about all applications for authorisations and single safety certificates, the stages of these procedures and their outcome;
• **an early-warning system** able to identify at an early stage the needs for coordination between decisions to be taken by national safety authorities and the Agency in the case of different applications requesting similar authorisations or single safety certificates.

The one-stop shop **must be operational by 16 June 2019**.

Furthermore, the Agency shall:
• act as the system authority to **ensure the coordinated development of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS)** within the Union, in accordance with relevant TSIs;
• monitor the performance and decision-making of the national safety authorities and the notified conformity assessment bodies through audits and inspections;
• monitor the overall safety performance of the Union rail system.

**Cooperation of the Agency with national safety authorities**: the Directive lays down that the Agency and the national safety authorities shall conclude cooperation agreements in the context of vehicle authorisations and safety certificates to facilitate the practical implementation of the new certification and authorisation system.

**Review and evaluation**

**Article 82 of the Final Act**

**Evaluation and review**

1. No later than 16 June 2020 and every 5 years thereafter, the Commission shall commission an evaluation to assess, in particular, the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency and its working practices, taking into account all relevant work by the Court of Auditors as well as the views and recommendations of relevant stakeholders, including national safety authorities, representatives of the railway sector, social partners and consumer organisations. The evaluation shall address, in particular, any need to amend the mandate of the Agency and the financial implications of any such amendment.

2. By 16 June 2023, the Commission, in order to identify whether improvements are needed, shall assess the functioning of the dual system for vehicle authorisation and safety certification, the one-stop shop related thereto and the harmonised implementation of European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) in the Union.

3. The Commission shall forward the evaluation report together with its conclusions thereon to the European Parliament, the Council and the Management Board. The findings of the evaluation shall be made public.

4. On the occasion of every second evaluation, there shall also be an assessment of the results achieved by the Agency, having regard to its objectives, mandate

Leading committee: TRAN (ENVI, IMCO, REGI for opinion)

Summary


Extract from the Summary

Scope: the amended text states that the trans-European transport network comprises transport infrastructure and telematic applications as well as measures promoting the efficient management and use of such infrastructure and permitting the establishment and operation of sustainable and efficient transport services. Inland waterway transport will be covered by the regulation.

Objectives and priorities: the trans-European transport network shall demonstrate European added value by contributing to the objectives laid down in the following four categories:

(a) cohesion through: (i) accessibility and connectivity of all regions of the Union, including remote, outermost, insular, peripheral and mountainous regions, as well as sparsely populated areas; (ii) reduction of infrastructure quality gaps between Member States; (iii) a transport infrastructure that provides for a balanced coverage of all European regions;

(b) efficiency through: (i) the removal of bottlenecks and the bridging of missing links; (ii) the interconnection and interoperability of national transport networks; (iii) optimal integration and interconnection of all transport modes; (iii) cost-efficient application of innovative technological and operational concepts;

(c) sustainability through the promotion of low-carbon transport with the aim of achieving by 2050 a significant reduction in CO2 emissions, in line with the relevant Union CO2 reduction targets;

(d) increasing the benefits for its users through: (i) meeting the mobility and transport needs of its users within the Union and in relations with third countries; (ii) ensuring safe, secure and high-quality standards, for both passenger and freight transport; (iii) supporting mobility even in the event of natural or man-made disasters, and ensuring accessibility to emergency and rescue services; (iv) accessibility for elderly people, persons of reduced mobility and disabled passengers.

Eligibility criteria for projects of common interest: projects of common interest should be economically viable on the basis of a socio-economic cost-benefit analysis and environmentally sustainable and feasible. Member States should carry out ex-ante assessments of the accessibility of infrastructure and of the services connected to it.

Infrastructure and railway transport: railway transport infrastructure of the core network shall meet the following requirements: (i) full electrification of the line tracks; (ii) freight lines with the possibility of running trains with a length of 740 m; (iii) full deployment of ERTMS; (iv) nominal track gauge for new railway lines of 1435 mm.

The particular situation of isolated rail networks should be recognised by way of exemptions from certain infrastructure requirements.
Reporting and review

Article 49 of the Final Act

Updating and reporting

1. Member States shall inform the Commission on a regular, comprehensive and transparent basis about the progress made in implementing projects and the investments made for that purpose. This shall include the transmission of annual data as far as possible through the interactive geographical and technical information system for the trans-European transport network (TENtec). It shall include all relevant data concerning projects of common interest in receipt of Union funding.

3. Every two years starting from 21 December 2013, the Commission shall publish a progress report on its implementation, which shall be submitted for information to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The report shall cover the use of the various forms of financial assistance mentioned in paragraph 1, for the various transport modes and other elements of the core and comprehensive networks in each Member State.

The report shall also analyse the development of the trans-European transport network. It shall also outline the Commission’s coordination of all forms of financial assistance with a view to supporting a coherent application of the guidelines in line with their objectives and priorities.

Article 54 of the Final Act

Review

1. By 31 December 2023, the Commission, having consulted with Member States as appropriate and with the assistance of the European Coordinators, shall carry out a review of the implementation of the core network, evaluating:
   (a) compliance with the provisions laid down in this Regulation;
   (b) progress in the implementation of this Regulation;
   (c) changes in passenger and freight transport flows;
   (d) developments in national transport infrastructure investment;
   (e) the need for amendments to this Regulation.

The evaluation shall also consider, inter alia, the impact of evolving traffic patterns and relevant developments in infrastructure investment plans.

In addition to carrying out that review, the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, shall assess whether new sections, such as certain former cross-border priority projects listed in Decision No 661/2010/EU, are to be included in the core network. The Commission shall present a legislative proposal if appropriate.

2. When carrying out that review, the Commission shall evaluate whether the core network as provided for in this Regulation will comply with the provisions of Chapter III by 2030 while taking into account the economic and budgetary situation in the Union and in individual Member States. The Commission shall also
evaluate, in consultation with the Member States, whether the core network should be modified to take into account developments in transport flows and national investment planning. If necessary, the Commission may submit a proposal for amendment of this Regulation.

For that proposal, the Commission may also specify the date for completion of the comprehensive network as laid down in Article 9(2).

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Leading committee: TRAN

Summary


Extract from the Summary

Management of the railway undertakings according to commercial principles: as requested by Parliament, the shareholders of publicly owned or controlled railway undertakings shall be able to require their own prior approval for major business management decisions in the same way as shareholders of private joint-stock companies under the rules of the company law of Member States. The provisions in this regard shall be without prejudice to the powers of supervisory bodies under this company law relating to the appointment of board members.

Conditions of access to railway infrastructure: the new Directive stipulates that, railway undertakings shall be granted, under equitable, non-discriminatory and transparent conditions, the right to access to the railway infrastructure in all Member States for the purpose of operating all types of rail freight services.

The Commission shall monitor the use of the networks and the evolution of framework conditions in the rail sector, in particular investments made in railway infrastructure, the degree of market opening and harmonisation between Member States, as well as the development of employment and the related social conditions in the rail sector. These monitoring activities are without prejudice to similar activities existing in Member States and to the role of social partners.

Functions of the regulatory body: the regulatory body shall cooperate closely with the national safety authority within the meaning of Directive 2008/57/EC on the interoperability of the rail system within the Community, and the licensing authority within the meaning of the Directive. Member States shall ensure that these authorities jointly develop a framework for information-sharing and cooperation aimed at preventing adverse effects on competition or safety in the railway market.

Cooperation between regulatory bodies: the regulatory bodies shall exchange information about their work and decision-making principles and practice and in particular exchange information on the main issues of their procedures and problems of interpretation of transposed EU railway law. They shall cooperate for the purpose of coordinating their decision-making across the Union. The Commission shall be a member, coordinate and support the work of the network and make recommendations to the network, as appropriate.

Monitoring and reporting
Article 63 of the Final Act

Report

1. By 31 December 2012 at the latest, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions a report on the implementation of Chapter II. This report shall also assess the development of the market, including the state of preparation of a further opening-up of the rail market. In its report the Commission shall also analyse the different models for organising this market and the impact of this Directive on public service contracts and their financing. In so doing, the Commission shall take into account the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 and the intrinsic differences between Member States (density of networks, number of passengers, average travel distance). The Commission shall, if appropriate, propose legislative measures in relation to the opening of the domestic rail passenger market and to develop appropriate conditions to ensure non-discriminatory access to the infrastructure, building on the existing separation requirements between infrastructure management and transport operations, and shall assess the impact of any such measures.

2. In light of the experience acquired through the network of regulatory bodies, the Commission shall, by 16 December 2014, submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions a report on cooperation between regulatory bodies. The Commission shall, if appropriate, propose complementary measures to ensure a more integrated regulatory oversight of the European rail market, in particular for international services. To that end, legislative measures shall also be considered, if appropriate.

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Leading committee: TRAN (ENVI, ITRE, REGI for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Members welcome the 2001 White Paper but note that the major goals of the latter were achieved either only in part or not at all. They make the following recommendations:

- by 2014, the Commission should submit a proposal to provide for the internalisation of the external costs of all modes of freight and passenger transport in accordance with their specific nature, whilst avoiding double charging and market distortions. The revenue from this internalisation of external costs should be used to fund investment in safety, research, new technologies, climate protection and noise reduction in the context of sustainable mobility and in infrastructure.

The Commission is also asked to submit:

- a proposal on social and working conditions by 2013, in order to facilitate the creation of a genuinely integrated European transport market and, at the same time, enhance the attractiveness of the sector for workers. This proposal should be based on an in-depth analysis of the current situation with regard to social and working conditions in all transport modes and the degree of harmonisation between the laws of the Member States, and on an assessment of the impact of developments on the transport labour market over the period to 2020. It should increase employment and improve the
situation of workers throughout the transport sector and take account of new technologies and logistical services which can be used to improve transport services in general and for disabled people in particular;

- by 2013 a coherent, quantitative analysis of the current situation with regard to the level of infrastructure, the density of the transport network and the quality of transport services in all EU Member States. This will provide an overview of the current situation in the EU27, highlight inequalities in the development of transport infrastructure between the Member States and their regions and outline the way transport infrastructure across all modes is currently funded and future investment priorities.

...  

**Rail transport:** (i) the Commission take Member States’ commitments in relation to local public transport and existing service levels into account when proposing further opening-up of the markets; (ii) greater promotion of technical harmonisation and interoperability between the Member States, and in particular harmonisation of the rules on the authorisation of vehicles by 2015; (iii) the Commission to submit, no later than on 31 December 2012, a proposal for a directive containing provisions on the relationship between infrastructure management and transport operations and a proposal for opening-up the domestic rail passenger market which does not detract from the quality of rail transport services and safeguards public service obligations; (v) the Commission to evaluate the impact that the opening-up of the rail freight market has had on single wagonload traffic and, should it emerge that the volume of such traffic has declined, to submit, no later than 31 December 2012, a proposal to allow Member States to support this activity.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Brian Simpson on behalf of the TRAN committee

**Summary**

- Extract from the Summary

Parliament deplores that a large majority of Member States have failed to implement properly the first railway package and considers that this has prevented the development of rail share in transport in general. Given that a full implementation of the first railway package was an absolute priority for Parliament, it was dissatisfied that this has not been respected by the majority of Member States. It also regrets that the Commission has lost five years to act against this failure ... It regrets that the European Commission has not sufficiently focussed its monitoring on the financial foundations of the railway system and urges it to initiate, without delay, the legal proceedings against the 22 Member States in question. ... It requests that the Commission makes public concrete information on the elements not fully implemented in each Member State, especially on the insufficient set up of an independent regulatory body and the lack of implementation of provisions on track access charging. It also asks the Commission to inform Parliament on the different legal interpretations between the Commission and the Member States on the independence of infrastructure managers.

**Independence of infrastructure managers:** Parliament stresses that sufficient independence has to be guaranteed to the infrastructure manager, as the latter has a central role, according to Directive 2001/14/EC, in providing fair access to infrastructure capacity to all applicants through the allocation of railway infrastructure capacity and the levying of charges for the use of railway infrastructure and safety certification. ... It underlines as particularly worrying that insufficient practical and legal safeguards to guarantee the independence of infrastructure managers have been provided, especially when they are part of a railway holding containing also rail transport activities. It requests that Member States not respecting this provision clearly separate the essential task of allocating capacity on the national rail network from any incumbent railway operator through all necessary legal and functional measures.
The lack of powers of regulatory bodies: Parliament is worried by the fact that no sufficient powers and resources have been attributed to regulatory bodies and that this results in a lack of control of competition problems in each national market. It asks the Commission to inform the Parliament on the powers of the regulatory bodies which need to be reinforced by Member States in order to guarantee them real power to monitor their respective railway markets.

Infrastructure financing and charging framework: Parliament notes that although specific provisions relating to the financing of infrastructure and tackling of railway debt were included in the first railway package, the level of investment in rail infrastructure development and maintenance remains largely insufficient in many Member States, with the quality of the existing infrastructure declining in several cases. It therefore urges Member States to mobilise the necessary resources to ensure that new rail transport projects are developed and that the existing infrastructure is adequately maintained.

Track access charging: Parliament expresses concern at the insufficient implementation of provisions on infrastructure charges, especially the absence of performance schemes in order to improve the performance of the railway network and of tariff systems based on the direct costs of rail services, as well as the lack of independent determination of infrastructure charges by the infrastructure manager. It regrets that, due to this lack of implementation, the infrastructure charges appear not to be directly linked to the costs of train services and that the rail market might not be able to bear these high charges. ...

The revision of the first railway package: Parliament stresses that a proper and full implementation of the first railway package is a fundamental condition to create a European rail network and that the absolute priority of the European Commission shall be to pursue this implementation by all legal procedures at its disposal. It urges the Commission to propose a revision of the first railway package by September 2010. It requests the Commission to treat in priority in this revision the problems of the independence of the infrastructure managers, of the regulatory bodies’ lack of resources and powers and to propose an appropriate infrastructure access charging principles that stimulates public and private investments in the rail sector.

********


Leading committee: TRAN

Summary


Extract from the Summary

Purpose and scope: it is specified that the Regulation lays down rules for the establishment and organisation of international rail corridors for competitive rail freight with a view to the development of a European Rail Network for competitive freight. It sets out rules for the selection, organisation, management and the indicative investment planning of freight corridors. The Regulation will apply to the management and use of railway infrastructure included in freight corridors. ...

Criteria for freight corridors: the amended text states that the selection of further freight corridors and the modification of freight corridors shall take account of the following criteria:

- the crossing by the freight corridor of the territory of at least three Member States, or of two Member States if the distance between the railway terminals served by the freight corridor is greater than 500 km;
- the consistency of the freight corridor with the TEN-T, the ERTMS corridors and/or the corridors defined by Rail Net Europe (RNE);
- the integration of TEN-T priority projects into the freight corridor;
- the balance between the socio-economic costs and benefits stemming from the establishment of the freight corridor;
- the consistency of all of the freight corridors proposed by the Member States in order to set up a European rail network for competitive freight;
- the development of rail freight traffic and major trade flows and goods traffic along the freight corridor;
- if appropriate, better interconnections between Member States and neighbouring third countries;
- the interest of the applicants in the freight corridor;
- the existence of good interconnections with other modes of transport, in particular due to an adequate network of terminals, including in the maritime and inland ports.

Selection of further freight corridors: the text stipulates that the creation of a freight corridor shall be proposed by the Member States concerned. For this purpose they shall send jointly the Commission a letter of intent including a proposal drawn up after consultation of the infrastructure managers and applicants concerned taking into account the criteria applicable.

Governance of freight corridors: Member States and infrastructure managers concerned by a freight corridor shall cooperate within the boards to ensure the development of the freight corridor in accordance with its implementation plan.

Measures for implementing the freight corridor plan: the management board shall draw up an implementation plan at the latest six months before making operational the freight corridor and shall submit it for approval to the executive board. The management board shall carry out and periodically update a transport market study relating to the observed and expected changes in the traffic in the freight corridor, as a consequence of its being established.

One-stop shop for application for infrastructure capacity: the management board for a freight corridor shall designate or set up a joint body for applicants to request and to receive answers, in a single place and in a single operation, regarding infrastructure capacity for freight trains crossing at least one border along the freight corridor. The one-stop shop shall, as a coordination tool, also provide basic information concerning the allocation of the infrastructure capacity, including the information. It shall display infrastructure capacity available at the time of request and its characteristics in accordance to pre-defined parameters, such as speed, length, loading gauge or axle load authorised for trains running in the freight corridor.

Capacity allocated to freight trains: infrastructure managers of the freight corridor shall facilitate journey times, frequencies, times of departure and destination and routings suitable for freight transport services with a view to increasing the transport of goods by freight trains running on the freight corridor.

Authorised applicants: a new clause states that applicants other than railway undertakings or the international groupings that they make up, such as shippers, freight forwarders and combined transport operators, may request international pre-arranged train paths and reserve of capacity. To use this train path for freight transport in the freight corridor these applicants shall charge a railway undertaking to conclude a contract with the infrastructure managers.

Quality of service in the freight corridor: the management board of the freight corridor shall promote compatibility between the performance schemes along the freight corridor.

Regulatory bodies: Member States, in order to foster free and fair competition on the freight corridors, shall endeavour to establish a comparable regulatory level. Regulatory bodies shall be easily accessible by the market players. They shall be able to take decisions independently and efficiently.
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Establishing a rail freight corridor based on a comprehensive network

State aid for rolling stock and freight train operators

State aid for rolling stock and freight train operators

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**EU external migration spending in Southern Mediterranean and Eastern Neighbourhood countries until 2014**

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**Summary**

**Questions asked:**

1. Did EU spending from the Thematic Programme for Migration and Asylum (TPMA) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), both established for the 2007-2013 period, in the area of migration have clear objectives and was it effective and well coordinated in 6 of the 11 countries of the Southern Mediterranean and Eastern Partnership?
   1.1. Did migration spending pursue a clear and coherent set of objectives - accompanied by an effective monitoring system - which responded to well-identified needs and priorities in the Neighbourhood countries?
   1.2. Did migration spending achieve its objectives in the Neighbourhood countries?
   1.3. Was migration spending well coordinated among EU bodies and with Member States?

**Observations:**

1.1. Coherence of policy objectives, identification of partner country needs and monitoring instruments need improving: the EU’s external migration spending was governed by a wide range of policy objectives, which were not always interlinked; the identification of partner countries’ needs requires better attention; the monitoring and assessment arrangements need improving; the geographic and thematic priorities were difficult to verify; as the intervention was spread over a wide geographical area, its effectiveness was limited, because it was impossible to assemble a critical mass of funding with which to target real needs in priority regions;

1.2. Weaknesses affected the effectiveness of the EU’s external migration spending (TPMA and ENPI) in the Southern Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership countries: shortcomings in the operational objectives and result indicators made projects’ effectiveness difficult to assess; factors which hindered effectiveness were: (i) political instability; (ii) weaknesses in project management; (iii) delays in project implementation; (iv) some projects appeared to have been more oriented towards Member State interests rather than partner countries; (v) sometimes objectives were too wide and difficult to measure; the Court found effectiveness issues to be in three key areas: (i) unclear / weak link between migration and development; (ii) support measures for returns and readmissions: limited impact and unequal support from non-EU countries; (iii) human rights protection: included in projects audited but not always successfully implemented;

1.3. Coordination was difficult between several partners at different levels: governance was complex; as regards mobility partnerships there is a need to clarify coordination.
**Recommendations:**

1. **Clarify objectives, develop, expand and improve the performance measurement framework and focus available financial resources on clearly defined and quantified target priorities:**
   - The Commission should set clear and specific policy objectives implemented through a coherent set of EU spending instruments. To maximise impact, it should allocate resources to actions and geographical areas in line with clearly defined and quantified priorities. Budget and project management should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to situations of rapid change. The Commission should ensure that result indicators, measurable targets and baselines are defined at project level on the basis of the activities undertaken. Indicators should remain stable over time and be comparable, and quantitative data should be collected systematically. A correlating matrix of objectives and indicators at all levels and for all EU spending instruments should be developed so that policy results can be correctly represented and reported in a comprehensive and coordinated manner;

2. **Develop an appropriate coding in the Commission’s information systems:**
   - The Commission should pursue the introduction of an appropriate coding system for external migration actions or develop an appropriate methodology so as to make it possible to have a more comprehensive overview of migration spending in order to identify and monitor EU spending (by type and place) in this area and to complement the OECD DAC coding system;

3. **Improve project preparation and selection:**
   - The Commission should improve the initial planning of projects by requiring relevant, achievable and measurable objectives (and ensuring that such requirements are clearly embedded in contractual templates and guidelines and, subsequently, applied). Project indicators should include result indicators;

4. **Further consolidate the link between development and migration:**
   - The Commission should further clarify its approach for ensuring that migration positively influences development. It should ensure that programmes and projects place greater emphasis on migration, and should seek to define what policies are necessary to produce positive impacts;

5. **Internal and external dialogue to improve coordination:**
   - The Commission and the EEAS should strengthen the capacities of EU delegations on migration issues. The Commission should seek the development of a funding overview of who finances what under the global approach to migration and mobility (GAMM).
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<td>Calls for continuously refining the strategic understanding and framework of the Union’s migration external policies and policy options with key actors to ensure clarity as well as a coordinated and coherent mobilisation of external migration mechanisms in the short, medium and long term, within or outside the budget framework of the Union;</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Notes that trust funds are part of an ad hoc response which shows that the Union budget and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) mid-term revision is the appropriate forum to address these challenges;</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Considers that there is a crucial need to reconcile the demand on better results with the availability of sufficient funds to ensure a high level of ambition in the design of the Union’s comprehensive and sustainable response to current and future challenges induced by the migration crisis; believes that the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) mid-term revision is the appropriate forum to address these challenges;</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Believes, in this context, that due care should be given to the appropriate targeting of aid to different and evolving external migration’s issues while also ensuring the adequacy of oversight of disbursed funds in order to avoid the risk of misappropriation of funds and double financing;</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Regrets that the European Commission did not provide details of actual payments and calls on the European Commission to follow, assess and review constructively the activities of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency which a need to be disbursed more efficiently and that it needs to fulfil “added value” criteria in order to ensure clarity as well as a coordinated and coherent mobilisation of external migration mechanisms in the short, medium and long term, within or outside the budget framework of the Union;</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Calls the Commission to engage constructively for a better coordination between instruments, mechanisms and relevant stakeholders to achieve migration crisis prevention;</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Welcomes the creation of EU trust funds and the intention to disburse funds more quickly and flexibly needed for a rapid and comprehensive approach to major crises; deplores the fact that they result in bypassing the budget framework of the Union;</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Calls on the Commission to engage constructively for a better coordination between instruments, mechanisms and relevant stakeholders to achieve migration crisis prevention;</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Aknowledges that a comprehensive and coordinated response has to be constantly sought to the extent that the migration crisis poses many challenges that cross various sectors and institutional boundaries;</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Assumes that there is a crucial need to reconcile the demand on better results with the availability of sufficient funds to ensure a high level of ambition in the design of the Union’s comprehensive and sustainable response to current and future challenges induced by the migration crisis; believes that the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) mid-term revision is the appropriate forum to address these challenges;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Notes that trust funds are part of an ad hoc response which shows that the Union budget and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) mid-term revision is the appropriate forum to address these challenges;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Considers that there is a crucial need to reconcile the demand on better results with the availability of sufficient funds to ensure a high level of ambition in the design of the Union’s comprehensive and sustainable response to current and future challenges induced by the migration crisis; believes that the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) mid-term revision is the appropriate forum to address these challenges;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Believes, in this context, that due care should be given to the appropriate targeting of aid to different and evolving external migration’s issues while also ensuring the adequacy of oversight of disbursed funds in order to avoid the risk of misappropriation of funds and double financing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Regrets that the European Commission did not provide details of actual payments and calls on the European Commission to follow, assess and review constructively the activities of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency which a need to be disbursed more efficiently and that it needs to fulfil “added value” criteria in order to ensure clarity as well as a coordinated and coherent mobilisation of external migration mechanisms in the short, medium and long term, within or outside the budget framework of the Union;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Calls on the Commission to engage constructively for a better coordination between instruments, mechanisms and relevant stakeholders to achieve migration crisis prevention;</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Welcomes the creation of EU trust funds and the intention to disburse funds more quickly and flexibly needed for a rapid and comprehensive approach to major crises; deplores the fact that they result in bypassing the budget framework of the Union;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Calls the Commission to engage constructively for a better coordination between instruments, mechanisms and relevant stakeholders to achieve migration crisis prevention;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Aknowledges that a comprehensive and coordinated response has to be constantly sought to the extent that the migration crisis poses many challenges that cross various sectors and institutional boundaries;</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Assumes that there is a crucial need to reconcile the demand on better results with the availability of sufficient funds to ensure a high level of ambition in the design of the Union’s comprehensive and sustainable response to current and future challenges induced by the migration crisis; believes that the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) mid-term revision is the appropriate forum to address these challenges;</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Is of the opinion that management by foresight would be more effective than just responsive policy such as crisis management in the long term;</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Recalls Parliament’s stance towards a holistic approach to migration based on a new policy mix including the strengthening of the nexus between migration and development by addressing the root causes of migration while also advocating a shift in the ways of funding the migration crisis.</td>
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<td>53.</td>
<td>Considers that migration has root causes (in particular of an economic, political, social and environmental nature); considers that development aid should address these root causes, by improving capacity-building, supporting conflict resolution and promoting respect for human rights; emphasises that these causes are linked to an increase in the number of conflicts and wars, human rights violations and a lack of good governance;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78.</td>
<td>Highlights the need for more effective coordination and for an assessment of the implementation, impact and continuity of the various financial instruments available at EU level for third countries in the field of migration, which currently cover areas such as migration policy, international development cooperation, external policy, the neighbourhood policy and humanitarian support, and which mobilised more than EUR 1 billion for more than 400 projects between 2004 and 2014;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.</td>
<td>Stresses the impact EU cooperation instruments have in the field of immigration, asylum and human rights protection; notes the creation of the Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa; calls for assessment and monitoring of the use made of this fund and of similar agreements, such as the EU-Turkey declaration and the Khartoum and Rabat processes.</td>
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AFET and DEVE Draft Report of 29/09/2016 on addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU external action, based on 2015/2342(INI) (PE 589.425v02-00) Leading Committees: AFET, DEVE (BUDG, LIBE for opinion) Indicative plenary sitting date (1st reading/single reading) - 13/03/2017 Articles 3, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21

The Parliament recognises that the humanitarian aid system is dangerously overstretched and that it will never be sufficient to respond to forced displacement crises and welcomes therefore the new policy framework outlined in the Commission communication on 'Forced Displacement and Development' of April 2016. The Parliament also welcomes the new Partnership Framework with third countries as a signal of real political action and stresses that the success depends on the EU’s capacity to offer real, commonly agreed incentives to third countries. It is concerned by the limited offer mainly focused on border management or Assisted Voluntary Return schemes, which constitute only a partial response to the situation and highlights the need to balance and complement this response, focusing on the development of local economies, qualification and regional mobility and improved levels of protection in countries of transit and origin.

The Parliament supports the Commission’s proposal for a new and ambitious External Investment Plan (EIP) to mobilise investments in developing third countries and calls on the Commission to ensure coherence between financing instruments – for example with the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the
European Development Fund (EDF) – and projects in order to focus the EU’s assistance on priorities and to avoid the scattering of funds and efforts. It underlines that without sufficient funding the EU cannot perform the functions it is expected to, nor meet the expectations of the European people.

The Parliament notes that the mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) – or the negotiation of the next MFF at the latest – provides a necessary opportunity for the revision of the external instruments related to migration, and also to increase the EU’s budget in such a manner that it would allow an end to ad hoc instruments and restore the unity of the budget. It further notes that the creation of trust funds and ad hoc financial instruments, while helping to mobilise necessary resources and bringing flexibility to EU action, also undermines the unity of the budget and Parliament’s budgetary authority and calls for Parliament’s greater involvement in supervision of these instruments, including by being part of the steering committees. It recalls that the effectiveness of trust funds depends heavily on Member States’ readiness to contribute and their full involvement.

The Parliament calls on the Commission and the EEAS to provide Parliament and the public with a detailed overview of the various funding instruments and programmes – and how they fit together with Member State programmes – in the 16 priority countries with which the EU engages in high-level dialogues on migration, and under the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM). It recalls that the GAMM remains the overarching framework of the EU external migration and asylum policy, but notes that recent policy initiatives have made limited reference to it and calls for a clarification of the GAMM’s relevance in the current context.

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Leading committee: LIBE (AFET, DEVE, BUDG, EMPL, TRAN, REGI, FEMM, PETI for opinion)

Articles 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112

105. Welcomes the recently established Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and the EUR 1.8 billion pledged to the fund, which has added an additional element to third-country funding; calls on the Member States to continue contributing to the fund;

106. Recommends that, in line with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), the four thematic pillars addressing (i) legal migration and mobility, (ii) irregular migration and trafficking in human beings, (iii) international protection, and (iv) the development impact of migration should be of equal importance in Union external policy and funding;

107. Notes that the Union’s migration policy is implemented through different policy instruments, each having its own objectives, which are not necessarily interlinked, and that there is insufficient coordination of funding between the multiple actors involved; points out that the fragmentation of budget lines and responsibilities creates a management structure that could make it difficult to provide a comprehensive overview on how the different funds available are allocated and ultimately used; points out, furthermore, that such fragmentation makes it harder to quantify how much the Union spends overall on migration policy;

108. Is of the opinion that such a comprehensive overview of Union funding related to migration, both within and outside the Union must be provided, as the absence of such an overview is a clear obstacle to transparency and sound policymaking; notes, in that regard, that one possible option could be a website comprising a database of all Union funded projects related to migration policy; underlines that the need for transparency also extends to budget lines in
order to ensure adequate funding for all objectives of Union migration policy;

109. Recalls that the positive impact of the EU migration funds relies on processes at national and Union level to ensure transparency, effective monitoring and accountability, believes that consideration should be given as to how to make monitoring and evaluation ongoing processes and not only ex-post processes and that the role of the Court of Auditors should be strengthened in that regard; notes that comparable qualitative and quantitative indicators should be established in order to measure the impact of EU funds and help to assess whether those funds have achieved their objectives;

111. Agrees that, while recent budgetary proposals and the additional funding foreseen in the Union’s budget for 2016, including the use of the flexibility instrument, should be welcomed, medium and longer-term funding remain a concern; is concerned that the increase in the amounts proposed for budget lines under AMIF for 2016 have not been accompanied by a proposed revision of the global resources available under that fund for the 2014-2020 funding period; understands that, left as is, the result will be that funding under AMIF will have dried up long before 2020;

112. Encourages the Member States to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by funds which are not directly related to migration policy, but which can be used to fund actions in that area (e.g. integration actions), such as those available under the European Social Fund, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, Horizon 2020, the European Regional Development Fund and the Rights and Citizenship Programme;

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Leading committee: AFET (DEVE, INTA, BUDG, EMPL, ITRE, REGI, CULT, FEMM for opinion)
Summary


Article 2 of the Final Act

Specific objectives of Union support

1. Union support under this Regulation shall focus on promoting enhanced political cooperation, deep and sustainable democracy, progressive economic integration and a strengthened partnership with societies between the Union and the partner countries and, in particular, the implementation of partnership and cooperation agreements, association agreements or other existing and future agreements, and jointly agreed action plans or equivalent documents.

2. Union support under this Regulation shall target in particular:

   (c) creating conditions for the better organisation of legal migration and the fostering of well-managed mobility of people, for the implementation of existing or future agreements concluded in line with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, and for the promotion of people-to-people contacts, in particular in relation to cultural, educational, professional and sporting activities;

Article 5 of the Final Act
### Coherence and donor coordination

1. In the implementation of this Regulation, coherence shall be ensured with all areas of the Union’s external action as well as other relevant Union policies. To that end, measures financed under this Regulation, including those managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB), shall be based on the cooperation policy documents referred to in Article 3(1) and (2) as well as on the Union’s specific interests, policy priorities and strategies. Such measures shall respect the commitments under multilateral agreements and international conventions to which the Union and partner countries are parties.

2. The Union, the Member States and the EIB shall ensure coherence between support provided under this Regulation and other support provided by the Union, the Member States and European financial institutions.

3. The Union and the Member States shall coordinate their respective support programmes with the aim of increasing effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of support and policy dialogue and preventing overlapping of funding, in line with the established principles for strengthening operational coordination in the field of external support and for harmonising policies and procedures. Coordination shall involve regular consultations and frequent exchanges of relevant information during the different phases of the support cycle, in particular at field level. Joint programming shall be implemented whenever possible and relevant. When this cannot be achieved, other arrangements, such as delegated cooperation and transfer arrangements, shall be considered with a view to ensuring the highest degree of coordination.

   The Commission shall report on joint programming with Member States within the report referred to in Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014, and shall include recommendations in cases where joint programming was not fully achieved.

4. The Union, in liaison with the Member States, shall take the necessary steps, including consultations at an early stage of the programming process, to ensure complementarity, proper coordination and cooperation with multilateral and regional organisations and entities, including European financial institutions, international financial institutions, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, private and political foundations and non-Union donors.

5. The documents referred to in Article 7(2) and (3) shall also, to the extent possible, refer to the activities of other Union donors.

### Article 13 of the Final Act

#### Delegation of power

The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 14 to amend Annex II. In particular, following the publication of the mid-term review report, and based upon the recommendations contained in that report, the Commission shall adopt a delegated act amending Annex II by 31 March 2018.

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<td>General principles</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The Union shall seek to promote, develop and consolidate the principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms on which it is founded, through dialogue and cooperation with partner countries and regions.</td>
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<td>...</td>
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<td>8. The Union shall promote effective cooperation with partner countries and regions in line with international best practice. It shall align its support with their national or regional development strategies, reform policies and procedures wherever possible, and support democratic ownership, as well as domestic and mutual accountability. To that end, it shall promote:</td>
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<td>...</td>
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<td>(f) an improved impact of policies and programming through coordination, consistency and harmonisation between donors to create synergies and avoid overlap and duplication, to improve complementarity and to support donor-wide initiatives;</td>
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<tr>
<td>(g) coordination in partner countries and regions using agreed guidelines and best practice principles on coordination and aid effectiveness;</td>
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<tr>
<td>(h) results-based approaches to development, including through the use of transparent country-level results frameworks, based on, where appropriate, internationally agreed targets and indicators such as those of the MDGs, to assess and communicate the results, including the outputs, outcomes and impact of development aid.</td>
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<td>Article 5 of the Final Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographic programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Union cooperation activities under this Article shall be implemented for activities of a national, regional, trans-regional and continental nature.</td>
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<td>...</td>
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<td>3. In order to attain the objectives laid down in Article 2, geographic programmes shall be drawn from the areas of cooperation contained in the European Consensus and subsequent agreed modifications thereto as well as from the following areas of cooperation:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) human rights, democracy and good governance:</td>
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<td>(b) inclusive and sustainable growth for human development:</td>
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<td>(c) other areas of significance for development:</td>
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<td>(!) migration and asylum;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Article 7 of the Final Act
Global Public Goods and Challenges

1. The objective of Union assistance under the 'Global Public Goods and Challenges' programme shall be to support actions in areas to be drawn from:

(e) migration and asylum.

Article 11 of the Final Act
Programming documents for geographic programmes

6. The Commission shall report on joint programming with Member States in the mid-term review report referred to in Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014 and shall include recommendations in cases where joint programming was not fully achieved.

Article 17 of the Final Act
Delegation of power to the Commission

1. The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 18 ...

2. In particular, following the publication of the mid-term review report referred to in Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 236/2014, and based on the recommendations contained in that report, the Commission shall adopt the delegated acts referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article by 31 March 2018.

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EP Resolution of 23/10/2013 on migratory flows in the Mediterranean, with particular attention to the tragic events off Lampedusa, based on 2013/2827(RSP) (P7_TA(2013)0448; B7-0474/2013, B7-0475/2013, B7-0476/2013, B7-0477/2013, B7-0479/2013 and B7-0480/2013)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, ALDE, S&D, EFD, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

27. Calls for better, more efficient cooperation between the EU and third countries to prevent a repetition of such tragic occurrences as those off Lampedusa; considers agreements on migration management between the EU and transit countries to the EU to be a priority for the Union in the near future, including the funding of police facilities and training in law enforcement capabilities, and assistance for these countries – and migrants’ countries of origin – to diversify
and improve their economies, and stresses the need for third countries to respect international law with regard to saving lives at sea, and to ensure the protection of refugees and respect for fundamental rights;

28. Calls for the EU to continue to offer humanitarian, financial and political assistance in crisis areas in North Africa and the Middle East in order to tackle the root causes of migration and humanitarian pressures; calls on the EU, therefore, to monitor and make more democratically accountable the distribution of that funding, in order for such resources to have a positive effect, which has so far been lacking;

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EP Resolution of 14/03/2013 on the integration of migrants, its effects on the labour market and the external dimension of social security coordination, based on 2012/2131(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0092; A7-0040/2013)

Leading committee: EMPL (AFET, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament]

44. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen cooperation with third countries in the field of circular migration and to include them in negotiations and treaties, in particular the Global Approach for Migration and Mobility and the associated Migration and Mobility Dialogues and mobility partnerships;

45. Accepts as an alternative framework, if one of the sides is not ready to enter into the full set of obligations entailed by a Mobility Partnership, the conclusion between the EU and third countries of Common Agendas for Migration and Mobility, while stressing that this should be only a transitional phase;

46. Welcomes particularly, in this connection, the plans to introduce Migration and Mobility Resource Centres (MMRCs) in the partner countries under the Mobility Partnership and Common Agendas, and urges that the idea of such centres should also be proposed to third countries;

47. Calls for action to promote intelligent strategies on circular migration, backed up by the necessary resources and legal guarantees and conditions to create secure jobs and prevent irregular immigration;

48. Notes that successful cooperation of this kind requires a long-term commitment which the EU is uniquely placed to make through its financial instruments, for example by supporting return and integration programmes with a circular migration feature;

50. Stresses that language and skills training before arrival in the host country and preparation for return are useful measures in this connection, and notes the possibility of setting up pre-departure desks in both home and host countries;

51. Bearing in mind that migration and labour market policy should go hand in hand, calls on the Commission, in this context, to strengthen and give priority to the links between labour market demand, circular migration, development, and neighbourhood and foreign policy; welcomes the financial support that the EU has given so far for migration management in third countries, e.g. Migration EU expertise II (MIEUX II) and calls, in the funding of European projects, for the greatest possible synergies to be developed between the European Social Fund and the Asylum and Migration Fund;
59. Strongly encourages the EEAS to seek a more active coordination role in the external dimension of the migration policy process.

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Leading committee: AFET (DEVE, BUDG, EMPL, ITRE, REGI, CULT, LIBE, AFCO for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

62. Recalls that the EU should improve the management and maximise the mutual benefits of migration for development, inter alia by providing better conditions for the establishment of legal migrants in the EU and dealing with the root causes of irregular migration in the partner countries; considers that the EU needs to favour legal labour migration by concluding mobility partnerships, which take account of the demographic, sociological and occupational balance on both sides, and encouraging exchanges of specialists between the EU and third countries; calls upon the Member States to view the mobility debate as an important element of the Neighbourhood Policy that should not be steered primarily by security concerns; stresses the importance of combating illegal immigration and bringing organisations guilty of people-trafficking to justice;

65. Calls on the Member States and the EU to ratify the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; considers that the review of the ENP should facilitate the adoption of specific measures in these fields; agrees with the Commission’s observations concerning the situation with regard to migration for family reasons, and welcomes its forthcoming Green Paper on the subject;

67. Calls on the Council and the Commission to set up a structured dialogue with third country authorities in order to develop a win-win approach to mobility, to ease visa formalities, to make greater use of the opportunities offered by the EU Visa Code while improving and harmonising its application in order to guarantee equal and fair conditions for applicants in all Member States, focusing in particular on the effects of the interdependence between development aid, security, regular migration and irregular migration as defined in the Global Approach to Migration; calls for special attention to be paid to ensuring that partner countries do not suffer from a ‘brain drain’;

68. Calls on the EU to enhance the accessibility and channelling of EU funds into projects aimed at informing migrants of their rights and responsibilities and at protecting their rights, with particular reference to the rights of unaccompanied minors, women and other vulnerable groups; asks the Commission therefore to provide Parliament with a detailed report on the use of EU funds earmarked for neighbouring countries, including under the Commission’s thematic programme for cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum;

75. Considers that the future ENP should take into account the role of the outermost regions in the EU external relations policy; notes that they represent a real opportunity to influence EU external policy since they allow the EU on the one hand to have closer relations with a large number of third countries and on the other hand to tackle complex issues like irregular migration; calls on the Commission to provide greater flexibility as regards innovative funding opportunities for selected cohesion policy projects so as to enable these to become established in, and benefit, both European regions and those in non-member countries.

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Leading committee: AFET (DEVE, LIBE for opinion)

**Summary**

[The European Parliament]

47. Recommends that the financial resources for strengthening the ‘migration-development nexus’ should be allocated more efficiently; recognises the need to improve the arrangements for the complementary and timely mobilisation of the EU’s various financing instruments for its external action;

48. Stresses the need to strengthen LRRD strategies (aimed at linking relief, rehabilitation and development) in order to secure sustainable solutions for displaced persons and refugees; recognises the importance of a coordinated humanitarian response as a precursor to a viable development policy in post-conflict countries;

49. Calls on the VP/HR to invest in expertise and to establish a clear mandate for staff at both headquarters and delegation level in order to achieve better coordination between the Thematic Programme on Migration and Asylum and the geographic programmes under the DCI;

50. Calls for clarification of the respective roles of the EEAS and DEVCO, and for coordination between them; urges DEVCO to play a leading role in the programming phase for migration policy.

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In the Memorandum of understanding between the Italian Government and the Libyan National Transitional Council, a global partnership for migration and development was established. This partnership focused on increased mobility, increased flexibility in European Neighbourhood Policy funding, and control of migratory flows in the southern Mediterranean. Increased support from the European Union for Morocco was also emphasized, as was the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. The Mediterranean Migration Policy with Morocco was a key component of the cooperation agenda.

Regarding the European Neighbourhood Policy, special emphasis was placed on increased cooperation and regional integration in the Maghreb: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. Closer cooperation and regional integration in the Maghreb was highlighted, along with the situation of refugees in Libya. The cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007-2013 was also mentioned.

The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility included initiatives such as the Support from the European Union for Morocco, the Situation of Refugees in Ukraine, and the Urgent EU action to tackle new waves of migration. The Moldova visa facilitation and readmission agreement was also noted. The European Neighbourhood Policy with Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Libya was highlighted, along with the situation of refugees in Libya. The UNHCR's migration policy was also discussed. The European Neighbourhood Policy with Georgia, the European Neighbourhood Policy with Moldova, and the European Neighbourhood Policy with Libya were all mentioned.

The Global Partnership on Migration and Development was emphasized, along with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. The Global Migration Policy and the Global Mobility Agenda were discussed. The Global Action Plan on Migration and Development was also noted. The Global Migration Policy was highlighted, along with the Global Mobility Agenda and the Global Action Plan on Migration and Development.
| E-001149/2011 | WQ.COM Rule 117 | Dominique Baudis (PPE) on Allocation of ENPI appropriations between the ENP East and ENP South |
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| E-010029/2010 | WQ.COM Rule 117 | Renate Weber (ALDE), Marietje Schaake (ALDE), Sonia Alfano (ALDE), Louis Michel (ALDE), Cecilia Wikström (ALDE), Alexander Alvaro (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE) on Request for information on the agreement with Libya |
| E-7525/2010 | WQ.COM Rule 117 | Franz Obermayr (NI) on Gaddafi and EU millions |
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| P-0747/2010 | WQ.COM Iva Zanicchi (PPE) on Reorganisation of the new Commission and subsequent sharing of responsibilities with regard to development policies |
| O-0124/2010 | OQ.COM Rule 115 | Franziska Katharina Brantner, Hélène Flautre, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group, and Véronique De Keyser, on behalf of the S&D Group on Transparency and state of play of negotiations on a framework agreement between the EU and Libya |
| O-0001/2010 | OQ.COM Rule 115 | Sylvie Guillaume, Claude Moraes and Carmen Romero López, on behalf of the S&D on EU readmission agreements with third countries |
| P-6595/2009 | WQ.COM Patrice Tirolien (S&D) on Towards a European wider neighbourhood policy |
| E-6227/2009 | WQ.COM Rule 117 | Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR) on Eastern Partnership programme |
### Questions asked:

1. Is the Commission managing the implementation of the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) appropriately?
   1.1. Is the Commission’s assessment of the quality of Member States’ statistical data (Eurostat) and its interpretation of those data (DG Economic and Financial Affairs), which ultimately lead to recommendations that the Council initiate or take further action in relation to an EDP, adequate?
   1.2. Are the Commission’s monitoring and surveillance tasks adequate?
   1.3. What are the outcomes of the Excessive Deficit Procedure?

### Observations:

1.1. EDP process: improvements are needed to strengthen the basis of the EDP and enhance the objectivity of assessments; an appropriate framework for decisions has been set up, but greater clarity is needed; data quality assessments and economic analyses lack transparency; analyses are carried out according to the rules, but are focused more on government deficit than on debt;

1.2. EDP corrective and surveillance actions: reporting by Member States, monitoring and surveillance by the Commission: Member States’ reporting on corrective action could be improved; monitoring and surveillance by the Commission is subject to increasingly complex rules, lacks transparency and provides a limited assessment of the effect of structural reforms;

1.3. Outcome of the EDP: EDP reforms have introduced tools for enhancing budgetary discipline, but the EDP has not proved fully effective as a corrective mechanism.

### Recommendations:

The Commission (Eurostat) should:

1. Better document and enhance the transparency of its work in relation to in-house verifications. This would give management and other desk officers a clearer overview of the content of analyses. It should establish internal written procedures guiding the work of analysis in the quality assessment and better assess and document its in-house verification of data in areas such as the delimitation of the general government sector and specific government transactions;

2. Enhance its quality assessments by including an examination of the supervisory and control systems in place in Member States, and clearly document its analyses. Written procedures should be drafted and implemented to ensure consistency;
3. Adapt the duration of its dialogue visits to Member States, or carry out more visits, to ensure more complete coverage. It should enhance its direct verifications as part of on-the-spot visits. It should further reduce the time taken to publish its visit reports;

4. Make full use of its powers to enforce action in the areas of completeness, methodological responsibility and delivery of documents;

5. Report to the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) and make public all advice which it provides on methodological issues, in order to enhance transparency. Where confidentiality concerns prevent publication of a document in full, at least a summary should be provided;

6. Better document its internal procedures and criteria for setting reservations or making amendments to data in order to demonstrate that all methodological problems with a potential/actual impact on net lending/net borrowing are addressed in a consistent way;

The Commission [DG Economic and Financial Affairs] should:

7. Further enhance the transparency and clarity of the EDP in the following areas:
   a) Assessment process: the Commission should be more transparent about the key aspects of its analyses. It could achieve this by, for example, devising a methodology to identify and quantify the impact of one-off and temporary measures, by providing sufficiently detailed explanations of its assessments and conclusions in country-specific documents - regarding, notably, the concept of 'unexpected adverse economic events' when assessing effective action - and by establishing a methodological framework to weigh the impact of the relevant factors that it takes into account in its assessments;
   b) Accessibility of data: the Commission should make public all the detailed information needed to perform the calculations on which its analyses are based, thus enabling any interested third parties to replicate the assessments;
   c) Bottom-up assessment: national fiscal councils should be involved in the assessment process by inviting them to provide independent scrutiny of the reliability of the figures and information provided by ministries of finance and used by the Commission in its analyses;
   d) Robustness of analysis: the Commission should consistently make use of all the relevant information made available in its forecasts, abide by the relevant methodologies and disseminate them as widely and promptly as possible;

8. Focus closely on debt developments, especially in heavily-indebted Member States, to prevent debt building to unsustainable levels. Where the 60 % debt threshold is exceeded and the concerned Member State is placed under the EDP, the Commission should ensure that the required adjustments provide for a realistic and credible convergence path towards compliance with the debt rule, in particular by taking into account the initial level of debt. In its EDP recommendations for Member States exceeding the debt threshold, the Commission should, when setting the annual deficit targets, also specify the annual debt-to-GDP levels that are consistent with those targets;

9. In conjunction with the Macro-Imbalances Procedure: make full use of the European Semester in monitoring the implementation of structural reforms for Member States under an EDP, in particular where fiscal structural reforms are included in an economic partnership programme. Besides focusing on legislative aspects, it should seek to assess the effectiveness of the implemented reforms. The Commission should make full use of its powers to ensure that Member States under an EDP meet their commitments with regard to structural reforms;

10. Make clear in its assessments whether the Member States have fulfilled their reporting requirements. It should make use of the possibility to launch infringement procedures when Member States do not comply with their reporting obligations;
In line with existing legislation, the Commission should recommend that the Council step up the procedure and apply sanctions when there is evidence that a Member State has not complied with EDP recommendations and therefore has failed to fulfil its commitment to budgetary discipline under the Treaty.

| CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur | CONT Working Document of 18/04/2016 on the European Court of Auditors’ Special Report N°10/2016 (2015 Discharge): Further improvements needed to ensure effective implementation of the excessive deficit procedure (PE580.539v01-00)
Rapporteur: Brian Hayes (EPP) |
| Recommendations by the rapporteur, |
| 1. Welcomes the findings and recommendations of the European Court of Auditors’ Special Report N° 10/2016 on further improvements needed to ensure effective implementation of the excessive deficit procedure; |
| 2. Recommends that the Commission should improve transparency of the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) through regular communication of its country assessments on compliance with structural reforms proposed under EDP and through greater transparency in the application of the rules; |
| 3. Believes that following consultation with Member States, the Commission should regularly report to the European Parliament on the progress of country-specific EDPs; |
| 4. Recommends the Commission to continue its progress of involving national fiscal councils and ensure that the European Fiscal Board takes a formal role under the EDP; takes note that transparency under the EDP has improved in recent years and recognises that certain information of a politically sensitive nature cannot always be put into the public domain; |
| 5. Recommends that the EDP should focus more closely on the reduction of government debt; notes that as of end-2014 only 13 Member States had debt-to-GDP levels below 60%; points out that several Member States now find themselves heavily indebted, despite the fact that the EU is benefiting from a modest recovery and public debt levels are higher now than they were in 2010; |
| 6. Acknowledges that the debt ceiling rule was only made operational under the EDP in 2011; considers that reducing government debt levels, particularly in heavily indebted Member States, will improve economic growth substantially in the long-term; |
| 7. Recommends to ensure that sufficient flexibility is maintained in the application of EDP rules under the Stability and Growth Pact; emphasises that because unanticipated events can occur in macro-economic policy, a sound economic governance framework needs to be adaptable in order to take account of economic developments; |
| 8. Considers that the Commission should ensure that the application of EDP rules should be closely coordinated with structural reform measures agreed through the European Semester. |

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

| Leading committee: ECON |
| Summary |
| Extract from the Summary |

**Quality of statistics:** the amended text stressed that balance of payments, international trade in services and foreign direct investment (FDI) are of vital
importance in ensuring informed economic policy-making and accurate economic forecasting. ...

**Strengthening obligations regarding reporting and dissemination:** in order to collect the appropriate information, Member States should use all relevant and appropriate sources, including administrative data sources such as business registers or the EuroGroups Register. Transparency could also be enhanced by:

- taking advantage of recent innovations, such as the global legal entity identifier,

... By 2 years after the entry into force of this amending Regulation, the Commission (Eurostat) shall institute pilot studies to be carried out by Member States relating to annual FDI statistics based on the ultimate ownership concept and FDI statistics distinguishing greenfield FDI transactions from takeovers. A report on the findings of the studies shall be prepared by the Commission (Eurostat). It shall be forwarded to the European Parliament and to the Council. No later than 12 months after the date of issuing the report, the Commission shall, where appropriate, and depending in particular on the assessment by the Commission of the result of the pilot studies, make a proposal for amendments to this Regulation.

**Quality criteria and reports:** the quality criteria set out in Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 shall apply to the data to be transmitted in accordance with the present Regulation. Member States shall provide the Commission (Eurostat) with a report on the quality of the data transmitted. The modalities, structure and periodicity of the quality reports shall be defined by the Commission by means of implementing acts.

... **Exercise of the delegation:** the power adopt delegated acts is conferred on the Commission ... for a period of five years from the date of entry into force of this amending Regulation. The delegation of power shall be tacitly extended for periods of an identical duration, unless the European Parliament or the Council opposes such extension not later than three months before the end of each period.

**Review and reporting**

Article 1 of the Final Act

Regulation (EC) No 184/2005 is amended as follows:

... (2) Article 4 is replaced by the following:

'Article 4

Quality criteria and reports

1. For the purpose of this Regulation, the quality criteria set out in Article 12(1) of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 shall apply to the data to be transmitted in accordance with Article 5 of this Regulation.
4. The Commission (Eurostat) shall assess the quality of the data transmitted on the basis of an appropriate analysis of the quality reports, with the assistance of the European Statistical System Committee referred to in Article 11(1), and shall prepare and publish a report on the quality of European statistics covered by this Regulation. That report shall be submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council for information purposes.

(3) Article 5 is replaced by the following:

'Article 5

Data Flows

3. By 20 July 2018, the Commission (Eurostat) shall institute pilot studies to be carried out by Member States relating to annual FDI statistics based on the ultimate ownership concept and FDI statistics distinguishing greenfield FDI transactions from takeovers. The purpose of such studies shall be to establish the conditions, including the methodological framework, to introduce new data collections on annual FDI statistics and to assess the costs of the related data collections, the implied statistical quality, as well as the cross-country comparability.

5. By 20 July 2019, the Commission (Eurostat) shall prepare a report on the findings of the studies referred to in paragraph 3. That report shall be forwarded to the European Parliament and to the Council and, if appropriate, shall identify the remaining conditions which need to be fulfilled in order to develop the methodology referred to in paragraph 2.

7. No later than 12 months after the date of issuing the report referred to in paragraph 5, the Commission shall, where appropriate, and depending in particular on the assessment by the Commission of the result of the pilot studies referred to in paragraph 3, make a proposal for amendments to this Regulation in order to define the methodological and data requirements for annual FDI statistics on the ultimate ownership concept and for annual FDI statistics distinguishing greenfield FDI transactions from takeovers.

(7) Article 12 is replaced by the following:

'Article 12

Reports on implementation

By 28 February 2018 and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of this Regulation. In particular, that report shall:

(a) evaluate the quality of data on balance of payments, international trade in services and FDI;
(b) assess the benefits accruing to the Union, the Member States and the providers and users of statistical information of the statistics produced in relation to the costs;
(c) identify areas for potential improvement and amendments considered necessary in the light of the results obtained.:

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Leading committee: ECON (EMPL, IMCO, AFCO for opinion)

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

33. Acknowledges that the European Semester has become an important vehicle to deliver reforms at national and EU levels by ensuring that the EU and its Member States coordinate their economic policies; regrets however the lack of ownership resulting in an unsatisfactory level of implementation of the country-specific recommendations;

34. Believes that the European Semester should be streamlined and reinforced, without modifying the current legal framework, and that Semester-related documents should be better coordinated, thus increasing focus, effectiveness and ownership to achieve the European goals of good economic governance;

35. Requests that the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) be, where relevant, better coordinated with the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) recommendations so as to ensure consistency between surveillance of the fiscal position and economic policy coordination;

42. Underlines the Commission’s clear differentiation between the preventive and corrective arms of the SGP as regards investment allowing temporary deviation from the Medium-term budgetary objective (MTO), or the adjustment path towards it, within the existence of a safety margin under the preventive arm; calls on the Commission and the Council to be consistent in this domain with the outcome of the co-legislators position regarding the European Fund for Strategic Investments regulation;

43. Asks the Commission to consider in its analyses all important factors, including real growth, inflation, long term public investment and unemployment rates when evaluating the economic and fiscal situations of Member States, urgently addressing the investment gap in the EU by shifting expenditure towards the most productive, sustainable growth and jobs enhancing investment;

44. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the way in which effective actions are taken into account under the EDP is based on clear, numerical quantifiable and qualitative criteria;

45. Insists that the focus on structural deficits since the 2005 reform of the SGP, together with the introduction of an expenditure rule with the 2011 reform as well as the concept of output gap which is difficult to quantify, create uncertainty, complexity and margins for flexibility and thus the discretionary implementation of the SGP; fears that the calculation of potential growth and output, which underpins the assessment of structural deficits, and that of the expenditure rule, are subject to several questionable assumptions which lead to substantial revisions between the Commission’s autumn and spring forecasts, thereby leading to various calculations and diverging assessments as regards the implementation of the SGP;

46. Calls on the Commission, when monitoring and evaluating the fiscal positions of Member States, to consider the practical implications of the agreed fiscal
measures and reforms; calls on the Commission to aim at predictable and consistent policy making, to base its analysis on hard facts and reliable data and to exercise the utmost caution when making use of estimations in concepts such as estimated growth potential for GDP and output gaps.

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Leading committee: ECON (no committee for opinion)


Summary of the Final Act:

Extract from the Summary

The specific objectives of the Regulation are as follows:

(1) Strengthen professional independence of statistical authorities and guarantee minimum standards, applicable across the Union. The heads of national statistical institutes (NSIs) shall:

- have the sole responsibility for deciding on processes, statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical releases and publications for European statistics developed, produced and disseminated by the NSI;
- neither seek nor take instructions from any government or other institution, body, office or entity;
- be empowered to decide on all matters regarding the internal management of the NSI;
- be responsible for the statistical activities and budget execution of the NSI;
- publish an annual report and may express comments on budget allocation issues related to the statistical activities of the NSI;
- be recruited respecting transparent procedures and based only on professional criteria and ensuring that the principle of equal opportunities is respected, in particular with regard to gender.

(2) Consolidate the independence of the statistical authority of the Union (Eurostat) to be consolidated and guaranteed by means of effective parliamentary scrutiny.

(3) Clarify the scope of the coordinating role already attributed to the NSIs in order to achieve more efficient coordination of statistical activities at national level, including quality management, while duly taking into account the statistical tasks performed by the European System of Central Banks (ESCB).

(4) Define the commitment on confidence in statistics . .

(5) Improve access, use and integration of administrative records . .

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Leading committee: ECON

Summary
Stage reached in procedure (February 2017): Awaiting committee decision

Extract from the Summary

**Quality of data:** Parliament underlined that reliable, accurate and useful statistical data are essential for effective surveillance of macroeconomic imbalances. To guarantee this goal, the independence of Eurostat should be strengthened in line with the European Parliament's proposals for the revision of Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

**Quality assurance procedures:** the procedures put in place in the framework of this Regulation shall build on and take into consideration best practices in existing quality assurance procedures. They shall not result in the duplication of quality assurance efforts nor parallel data series.

**Transmission of data to the Commission:** in order to clarify the process for transmission, reporting and communication of the data, Members suggested including a cut-off date for the extraction by the Commission (Eurostat) of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure (MIP) relevant data to compute for each Member State the MIP scoreboard indicators and set up a reference database on MIP relevant data.

... **Provision of data by the Commission:** when the Commission (Eurostat) expresses a reservation on the quality of a Member State's MIP relevant data, the Member State concerned shall be given the opportunity to defend its position.

**Sanctions:** Members suggested that the Council, acting on the recommendations of the Commission, might decide, via a two-step procedure: 1) to impose an interest-bearing deposit and subsequently, if the Commission assesses that the Member States has not complied with the corrective actions, as a last resort measure, 2) inflict a fine on a Member State that has acted intentionally to misrepresent the data or in the case of serious negligence which has impacted on the ability of the Commission to make a true and fair assessment. The Member State shall report to the Commission within a specified deadline on the corrective actions necessary to address and remedy the misrepresentation or serious negligence as well as to prevent similar circumstances to arise in future. The report shall be made public.

... **Role of Parliament:** the Commission shall inform the competent Committee of the European Parliament of any investigation or recommendation made pursuant to this regulation. The competent committee of the European Parliament may offer a Member State which is the subject of a Commission recommendation an opportunity to participate in an exchange of views.

**Review and reporting**

Amendment 49

Article 17

The Commission (Eurostat) shall report at least annually to the European Parliament and to the Council on the activities carried out by the Commission (Eurostat) for the purpose of implementing this Regulation in the context of the European Semester as referred to in Regulation (EU) No 1175/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Amendment 50

Article 18 – paragraph 1
1. By 14 December 2014 and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall review, and submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on, the application of this Regulation. Where appropriate, that report shall be accompanied by a legislative proposal.

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Leading committee: ECON (REGI for opinion)

**Summary**


Extract from the Summary of the Final Act

CONTENT: The Regulation sets up the European System of Accounts 2010 (the ESA 2010 or the ESA). There was a need to revise the European System of Accounts set up by Regulation (EC) No 2223/96 (the ESA 95) in order to take into account the developments in the SNA so that the revised European System of Accounts, as established by this Regulation, constitutes a version of the 2008 SNA that is adapted to the structures of the Member States' economies, and so that the data of the Union are comparable with those compiled by its main international partners.

Policymaking in the Union and monitoring of the economies of the Member States and of the economic and monetary union (EMU) require comparable, up-to-date and reliable information on the structure of the economy and the development of the economic situation of each Member State or region.

**Review and reporting**

**Article 6 of the Final Act**

**Derogations**

The Commission, after consulting the European Statistical System Committee, shall report to the European Parliament and the Council not later than 1 July 2018 on the application of the granted derogations in order to verify whether they are still justified.

**Article 11 of the Final Act**

**Reporting on implicit liabilities**
By 2014, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council containing existing information on PPPs and other implicit liabilities, including contingent liabilities, outside government.

By 2018, the Commission shall submit a further report to the European Parliament and to the Council assessing the extent to which the information on liabilities published by the Commission (Eurostat) represents the entirety of the implicit liabilities, including contingent liabilities, outside government.

Article 12 of the Final Act

Review

By 1 July 2018 and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall submit a report on the application of this Regulation to the European Parliament and the Council.

The report shall evaluate, inter alia:
(a) the quality of data on national and regional accounts;
(b) the effectiveness of this Regulation and the monitoring process applied to the ESA 2010; and
(c) the progress on contingent liabilities data and on the availability of ESA 2010 data.

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Leading committee: ECON (EMPL for opinion)

Summary


Extract from the Summary

Subject matter and scope: it is clarified that the Regulation sets out provisions for enhanced monitoring of budgetary policies in the euro area and ensuring that national budgets are consistent with the economic policy guidance issued in the context of the European semester for economic and budgetary policy surveillance.

Common budget timetable: The main steps shall be the following:
1. In the context of the European semester, the member States shall make public, preferably by 15 April but no later than 30 April each year, their national medium-term fiscal plans in accordance with their medium-term budgetary framework. Such plans shall include at least all the information to be provided in the stability programmes and be presented together with the national reform programmes and the stability programmes.
2. The draft budget for the forthcoming year for the central government and the main parameters of the draft budgets for all the other sub-sectors of the
general government shall be made public annually not later than 15 October.

3. The budget for the central government shall be adopted or fixed upon and made public annually not later than 31 December together with the updated main budgetary parameters for the other sub-sectors of the general government.

Member States shall have in place independent bodies for monitoring compliance with numerical fiscal rules incorporating in the national budgetary processes their medium-term budgetary objective.

**Monitoring and assessment of Member States' draft budgetary plans:**

1. Member States shall submit annually to the Commission and the Eurogroup a draft budgetary plan for the forthcoming year no later than 15 October, which shall be consistent with the recommendations issued in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact. The draft budgetary plan shall be made public when submitted to the Commission. ... The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, will draw up guidelines in the form of a harmonised framework for the specification of the content of draft budgetary plans.

2. The Commission shall adopt an opinion on the draft budgetary plan as soon as possible and no later than end of November. In the exceptional cases where, after consultation of the Member State concerned within one week from the submission of the draft budgetary plan, the Commission identifies particularly serious non-compliance with the budgetary policy obligations laid down in the Stability and Growth Pact, it will request a revised draft budgetary plan to be submitted. The Commission shall adopt a new opinion on the basis of the revised draft budgetary plan as soon as possible and no later than within three weeks from the adoption of the revised draft budgetary plan. At the request of the Parliament of the Member State concerned or of the European Parliament, it shall be presented by the Commission to the parliament making the request after it has been made public.

**Reporting on debt issuance:** with a view to better planning coordination, Member States shall report to the Commission and the Eurogroup, ex ante and in a timely manner, on their national debt issuance plans.

**Economic partnership programmes:** if the Council decides that an excessive deficit exists in a Member State, the Member State concerned shall present to the Commission and to the Council an economic partnership programme describing the policy measures and structural reforms that are needed to ensure an effectively durable correction of the excessive deficit, as a development of its national reform programme and its stability programme. ... The Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt an opinion on the economic partnership programme the implementation of which will be monitored by the Council and the Commission.

**Reporting requirements for Member States in excessive deficit procedure:** the new Regulation provides for close monitoring by means of additional reporting requirements which should enable the avoidance or rapid correction of divergences from the Council’s recommendations concerning the correction of the excessive deficit. These additional reporting requirements shall be applied gradually. In the first instance, the Member States concerned should carry out a comprehensive assessment of in-year budgetary execution for the general government and its sub-sectors taking into account the financial risks associated with contingent liabilities with potentially large impacts on public budgets.

**Economic dialogue:** to increase transparency and accountability, the competent committee of the European Parliament may invite, where appropriate, the President of the Council, the Commission, the President of the European Council or the President of the Eurogroup to appear before the committee to discuss, for example, the specification of the content of the draft budgetary plan. It may offer the opportunity to the Member State concerned by a Commission recommendation or by Council acts to participate in an exchange of views in accordance with the provisions of this Regulation. The participation of the Member State in such an exchange of views will be on a voluntary basis.
Delegated acts: in order to specify the extent of the reporting obligations for Member States in excessive deficit procedure, the power to adopt acts should be delegated to the Commission in respect of the content and scope of this reporting.

Reporting and review

Article 16 of the Final Act

Review and reports on the application of this Regulation

1. By 14 December 2014, and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and to the Council a report on the application of this Regulation, accompanied, where appropriate, by a proposal to amend this Regulation. The Commission shall make that report public.

The reports referred to in the first subparagraph shall evaluate, inter alia:
   (a) the effectiveness of this Regulation;
   (b) progress in ensuring closer coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of economic performances of the Member States in accordance with the TFEU;
   (c) the contribution of this Regulation to the achievement of the Union’s strategy for growth and jobs.

2. By 31 July 2013, the Commission shall report on the possibilities offered by the Union’s existing fiscal framework to balance productive public investment needs with fiscal discipline objectives in the preventive arm of the SGP, while complying with it fully.

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EP Resolution of 20/11/2012 with recommendations to the Commission on the report of the Presidents of the European Council, the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the Eurogroup 'Towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union', based on 2012/2151(INL) (P7_TA(2012)0430; A7-0339/2012)

Leading committee: ECON (BUDG, EMPL, AFCO for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

14. Requests the Commission to submit to Parliament as soon as possible after consultation of all interested parties, with Parliament being a co-legislator, proposals for acts on following the detailed recommendations set out in the Annex hereto;

15. Confirms that the recommendations respect the principle of subsidiarity and the fundamental rights of citizens of the Union;

ANNEX

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO THE CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL REQUESTED

2. An integrated fiscal framework
Recommendation 2.1 on the two-pack

The European Parliament considers that the legislative act to be adopted should aim to regulate as follows:

In the following domains the Commission should be required to implement effectively the compromises that will be reached in the context of the two-pack trilogue negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council:

- creating a common budgetary timeline;
- reforming national budgetary frameworks;
- assessing the budgetary plans including a qualitative assessment of public investments and expenditures related to 'Europe 2020' objectives;
- establishing economic partnership programmes;
- closer monitoring for Member States whose currency is the euro and that are in excessive deficit procedure;
- closer monitoring for Member States whose currency is the euro and that are at risk of non-compliance with their obligation under their excessive deficit procedure;
- reporting on debt issuance;
- an initiative specifying a set of programmes required for mobilising additional long-term investment of around 1 % of GDP for enhancing sustainable growth and complementing the required structural reforms;

Recommendation 2.2 on the communitarisation of the Fiscal Compact

Recommendation 2.3: Taxation

Recommendation 2.4: A central European budget funded by own resources

Recommendation 2.5: gradual roll-over in redemption fund

Recommendation 2.6 for fighting tax evasion

Recommendation 2.7 on ensuring democratic oversight of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM)

Recommendation 2.8 on ensuring democratic accountability and legitimacy of fiscal coordination

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EP Resolution of 13/03/2012 on quality management for European statistics, based on 2011/2289(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0073; A7-0037/2012)

Leading committee: ECON (REGI for opinion)

Summary
The resolution notes that **reliable and accurate statistics are essential** to allow effective economic and budgetary policy making by Member States and at Union level. The success of the Europe 2020 Strategy for Growth and Jobs and the economic governance package, including the European Semester, demands high-quality independent statistics.

**Systematic approach to quality:** Members take the view that **a systemic approach to quality** needs to be taken, which may require a reform of the method of producing European statistics and a **gradual transition from a corrective approach to a preventive approach** to the quality management of European statistics in general and public finance statistics in particular. The resolution supports the Commission’s intention of **proposing amendments to Regulation 223/2009 (Statistical Regulation)** in order to establish a proactive approach to monitoring and assessing public finance data at an early upstream stage in order to allow for corrective action at the earliest possible point.

**Independent statistics:** it also supports the proposal to **establish a legal framework aimed at reinforcing the governance framework**, especially as regards the professional independence of national statistical authorities and Eurostat. Members emphasise that the **independence of the statistical services** must be safeguarded at both national and European level from the threat of possible political interventions.

**Revised codes of practice:** the Commission is asked to submit to the European Parliament and the Council **proposals for legislation aimed at introducing elements of the revised European Statistics Code of Practice** into EU law, with a view to (i) distinguishing clearly between the responsibilities and competences of national statistical agencies and those of Member State governments and (ii) ensuring more transparent and coordinated accountability for data quality. For their part, Member States should make sure that **statistics are accurate across all levels of government.** Parliament also wants the Commission to present proposals ensuring greater independence and greater coherence in the competences of the national courts of auditors in verifying the quality of the sources used to establish national debt and deficit figures and strengthening the coordinating role of the European Court of Auditors.

**Eurostat's powers of investigation:** the resolution welcomes the European Commission’s intention to give Eurostat **greater investigative powers.** It emphasises the need for Eurostat to ensure transparency with regards to its own staff and supports Eurostat’s intention of establishing a **legal framework for 'Commitments on Confidence in Statistics'.**

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Leading committee: ECON (EMPL, JURI for opinion)

**Summary**


**Excessive deficit procedure:** the Commission and the Council should when applying this Regulation appropriately take into account all relevant factors and the economic and budgetary situation of the concerned Member States. The amended text states that implementing the existing excessive deficit procedure on the
basis of both the deficit criterion and the debt criterion requires a numerical benchmark that takes into account the business cycle against which to assess whether the ratio of government debt to gross domestic product is sufficiently diminishing and approaching the reference value at a satisfactory pace. A transition period should be introduced in order to allow Member States subject to an excessive deficit procedure at the date of adoption of this regulation to adapt their policies to the numerical benchmark for debt reduction. This should equally apply to Member States which are subject to a European Union/International Monetary Fund adjustment programme.

Non-compliance with the numerical benchmark for debt reduction should not be sufficient for the establishment of an excessive deficit, which should take into account the whole range of relevant factors covered by the Commission. In particular, the assessment of the effect of the cycle and the composition of the stock-flow adjustment on debt developments may be sufficient to exclude the establishment of an excessive deficit on the basis of the debt criterion. In taking into account systemic pensions reforms among the relevant factors, the central consideration should be whether they enhance the long-term sustainability of the overall pension system, while not increasing risks for the medium-term budgetary position.

Correction of excessive deficits: in order to support the monitoring of compliance with Council recommendations and notices for the correction of situations of excessive deficit, there is a need that these specify annual budgetary targets consistent with the required fiscal improvement in cyclically adjusted terms, net of one-off and temporary measures. In this context, the 0.3% of GDP annual benchmark should be understood as annual average basis. In assessing the case for an extension of the deadline for correcting the excessive deficit, special consideration should be given to severe economic downturns for the euro area or the EU as a whole on condition that this does not endanger fiscal sustainability in the medium term. If a participating Member State fails to act in compliance with the successive decisions of the Council, the decision of the Council to impose sanctions shall be taken as a rule within sixteen months of the reporting dates established in Regulation (EC) No 479/2009. An expedited procedure shall be used in the case of a deliberately planned deficit which the Council decides is excessive.

Surveillance missions: the Commission shall maintain a permanent dialogue with authorities of the Member States in accordance with the objectives of this Regulation. To that end, the Commission shall, in particular, carry out missions for the purpose of the assessment of the actual economic situation in the Member State and the identification of any risks or difficulties in complying with the objectives of this Regulation. When the Member State concerned is a Member State whose currency is the euro or participating in ERM II, the Commission may invite representatives of the European Central Bank, if appropriate, to participate in surveillance missions.

Reporting and review

Article 1 of the Final Act

Regulation (EC) No 1467/97 is hereby amended as follows:

... (14) the following Article is inserted:

'Article 17a

1. By 14 December 2014 and every five years thereafter, the Commission shall publish a report on the application of this Regulation. That report shall evaluate, inter alia:
(a) the effectiveness of this Regulation;
(b) the progress in ensuring closer coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of economic performances of the Member States in accordance with the TFEU.

2. Where appropriate, the report referred to in paragraph 1 shall be accompanied by a proposal for amendments to this Regulation.

3. The report shall be forwarded to the European Parliament and to the Council.

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Leading committee: ECON (EMPL, JURI for opinion)

Summary of the Final Act:

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: on the basis of a compromise reached with the European Parliament, the Council adopted a package of six legislative proposals (“six-pack”) aiming to strengthen economic governance in the EU – and more specifically in the euro area.

They consist of:
- a regulation amending regulation 1466/97 on the surveillance of Member States budgetary and economic policies;
- a regulation amending regulation 1467/97 on the EU’s excessive deficit procedure;
- a regulation on the enforcement of budgetary surveillance in the euro area;
- a regulation on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances;
- a regulation on enforcement measures to correct excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the euro area;
- a directive on requirements for the Member States’ budgetary frameworks.

The main elements of this Regulation are as follows:

Scope: this Regulation sets out the rules covering the content, the submission, the examination and the monitoring of stability programmes and convergence programmes as part of multilateral surveillance by the Council and the Commission so as to prevent, at an early stage, the occurrence of excessive general government deficits and to promote the surveillance and coordination of economic policies thereby supporting the achievement of the Union’s objectives for growth and employment.

European Semester for economic policy coordination: in order to ensure closer coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of the economic performance of the Member States, the Council shall conduct multilateral surveillance as an integral part of the European Semester for economic policy.
coordination.

The European Semester shall include: (a) the formulation, and the surveillance of the implementation, of the broad guidelines of the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union; (b) the formulation, and the examination of the implementation, of the employment guidelines that must be taken into account by Member States; (c) the submission and assessment of Member States' stability or convergence programmes under this Regulation; (d) the submission and assessment of Member States' national reform programmes supporting the Union's strategy for growth and jobs; (e) the surveillance to prevent and correct macroeconomic imbalances and on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances.

Under the European Semester the policy surveillance and coordination cycle starts early in the year with a horizontal review in which the European Council, based on input from the Commission and the Council, identifies the main challenges facing the Union and the euro area and gives strategic guidance on policies.

Discussion should also take place in the European Parliament at the beginning of the annual cycle of surveillance in due time before the discussion takes place in the European Council. When preparing their stability or convergence programmes and national reform programmes, Member States should take into account the horizontal guidance by the European Council.

National parliaments should be duly involved in the European Semester and in the preparation of stability programmes, convergence programmes and national reform programmes in order to increase the transparency and ownership of, and accountability for the decisions taken.

... Medium-term budgetary objective: the obligation to achieve and maintain the medium-term budgetary objective needs to be put into operation, through the specification of principles for the adjustment path towards the medium-term objective. Those principles should, inter alia, ensure that revenue windfalls, namely revenues in excess of what can normally be expected from economic growth, are allocated to debt reduction.

Adjustment path: a faster adjustment path towards the medium-term budgetary objective should be required for Member States faced with a debt level exceeding 60% of GDP, or with pronounced risks in terms of overall debt sustainability.

Temporary departure from the adjustment path: a temporary departure from the adjustment path towards the medium-term objective may exceptionally be allowed: (i) when resulting from an unusual event outside the control of the Member State concerned and which has a major impact on the structural balance of the general government of at least 0.5% of GDP in one single year or; (ii) in case of severe economic downturn for the euro-area or the Union as a whole, on condition that this does not endanger fiscal sustainability in the medium-term, in order to facilitate economic recovery. The implementation of major structural reforms should also be taken into account in allowing a temporary departure from the medium-term budgetary objective or the appropriate adjustment towards it, on condition of maintaining a safety margin with respect to the deficit reference value. A special attention should be paid in this context to systemic pension reforms.

In the event of a significant observed deviation from the adjustment path:

- a warning should be addressed by the Commission to the Member State concerned, to be followed within 1 month by an examination of the situation by the Council and a recommendation for the necessary adjustment measures.
- if the Member State concerned fails to take appropriate action within the deadline specified in a Council recommendation, the Commission shall immediately recommend to the Council to adopt, by qualified majority, a decision establishing that no effective action has been taken. At the same time, the Commission may recommend to the Council to adopt a revised recommendation;
- in case the Council does not adopt the decision on the Commission recommendation that no effective action has been taken, and failure to take appropriate action on the part of the Member State concerned persists, the Commission, after one month from its earlier recommendation, shall recommend to the Council to adopt the decision establishing that no effective action has been taken. The decision shall be deemed to be adopted by
the Council unless it decides, by simple majority, to reject the recommendation within ten days of its adoption by the Commission.

**Principle of statistical independence:** with a view to ensuring that the multilateral surveillance is based on sound and independent statistics, Member States shall ensure the professional independence of national statistical authorities, which shall be consistent with the European statistics code of practice as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on European Statistics.

**Reporting and review**

Article 1 of the Final Act

Regulation (EC) No 1466/97 is hereby amended as follows:

(16) The following Article is inserted:

'Article 12a

1. By 14 December 2014 and every 5 years thereafter, the Commission shall publish a report on the application of this Regulation. That report shall evaluate, inter alia:
   (a) the effectiveness of this Regulation, particularly whether the provisions governing decision-making have proved sufficiently robust;
   (b) the progress in ensuring closer coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of economic performances of the Member States in accordance with the TFEU.

2. Where appropriate, this report shall be accompanied by a proposal for amendments to this Regulation, including to the decision-making procedures.

3. The report shall be forwarded to the European Parliament and the Council.'.

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Leading committee: ECON (EMPL, JURI for opinion)

Summary


Extract from the Summary

**Strengthening governance:** the amended text stresses the need for improved economic governance in the Union, which should be built on stronger national
Ownership of commonly agreed rules and policies and on a more robust surveillance framework at the Union level of national economic policies. Strengthening economic governance should include a closer and more timely involvement of the European Parliament and the national parliaments.

A stronger role for the Commission: the Commission should play a stronger coordination role in the enhanced surveillance procedures, mainly as regards Member-State-specific assessments, monitoring, missions in situ, recommendations and warnings. It should have a stronger role in the enhanced surveillance procedure as regards assessments that are specific to each Member State, monitoring, missions, recommendations and warnings. In particular, the role of the Council should be limited in decision on sanctions and the reversed qualified majority voting in the Council should be used.

Interest-bearing deposit: the Regulation stipulates that if the Council adopts a decision establishing that a Member State failed to take action in response to the Council recommendation referred to in Regulation (EC) No 1466/97, the Commission shall, within 20 days of adoption of the Council recommendation, recommend to the Council to impose the lodging of an interest bearing deposit. The decision shall be deemed to be adopted by the Council unless it decides by qualified majority to reject the recommendation within ten days of the Commission adopting it. The Council may amend the Commission recommendation acting by a qualified majority. Interest-bearing deposit to be recommended by the Commission shall amount to 0.2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Member State concerned in the preceding year. The deposit shall bear the interest rate reflecting the Commission credit risk and the relevant investment period.

Non-interest-bearing deposit: if the Council decides that an excessive deficit exists in a Member State which has an interest bearing deposit lodged with the Commission, or where particularly serious non-compliance with the legal budgetary policy obligations laid down in the Stability and Growth Pact have been identified, the Commission shall, within 20 days of adoption of the Council decision, recommend to the Council to impose the lodging of a non-interest-bearing deposit. The decision shall be deemed adopted by the Council unless it decides by qualified majority to reject the recommendation within 10 days of the Commission adopting it. The Council may amend the Commission recommendation acting by a qualified majority. By derogation, the Commission may, on grounds of exceptional economic circumstances or following a reasoned request by the Member State concerned addressed to the Commission within 10 days of adoption of the Council decision in accordance with Article 126(6) TFEU, recommend to reduce the amount of the non-interest-bearing deposit or to cancel it. The deposit shall be lodged with the Commission. If the Member State has an interest-bearing deposit lodged with the Commission, the interest-bearing deposit shall be converted into a non-interest-bearing deposit.

Imposition of sanctions on manipulation of statistics: Members state that the Council acting on a recommendation by the Commission may decide to impose a fine on a Member State that intentionally or by serious negligence misrepresents deficit and debt data. The fines shall be effective, dissuasive and proportionate to the nature and the seriousness of the breach, the duration of the breach. The amount of the fine shall not exceed 0.2% of GDP. In order to establish the existence of infringements, the Commission may conduct all necessary investigations.

Exercise of the delegation: the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts concerning (a) detailed criteria establishing the amount of the fine; (b) detailed rules on the procedure for the investigations, associated measures and reporting on the investigations, as well as detailed rules of procedure aimed at guaranteeing the rights of defence, access to file, legal representation, confidentiality and temporal provisions and the collection of fines.

Reporting and review

Article 13

Review
1. By 14 December 2014 and every 5 years thereafter, the Commission shall publish a report on the application of this Regulation.

That report shall evaluate, inter alia:
(a) the effectiveness of this Regulation, including the possibility to enable the Council and the Commission to act in order to address situations which risk jeopardising the proper functioning of the monetary union;
(b) the progress in ensuring closer coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of economic performances of the Member States in accordance with the TFEU.

2. Where appropriate, that report shall be accompanied by a proposal for amendments to this Regulation.

3. The report shall be forwarded to the European Parliament and to the Council.

4. Before the end of 2011 the Commission shall present a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the possibility of introducing euro-securities.

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Leading committee: ECON (EMPL, JURI for opinion)


Summary of the Final Act:

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: on the basis of a compromise reached with the European Parliament, the Council adopted a package of **six legislative proposals** ("six-pack") aiming to strengthen economic governance in the EU – and more specifically in the euro area.

... They consist of:

- a regulation amending regulation 1466/97 on the surveillance of Member States budgetary and economic policies;
- a regulation amending regulation 1467/97 on the EU's excessive deficit procedure;
- a regulation on the enforcement of budgetary surveillance in the euro area;
- a regulation on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances;
- a regulation on enforcement measures to correct excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the euro area;
- a **directive on requirements for the Member States’ budgetary frameworks**.

Alongside the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, this directive sets out to ensure that the objectives of EU budgetary coordination are reflected in the Member States’ budgetary frameworks. Accounting, statistical and forecasting practices are brought into line with EU standards. Member states must adopt multi-annual fiscal planning to ensure that medium-term budgetary objectives set at EU level are achieved. They must also introduce rules to promote
compliance with the deficit and debt thresholds.

Its main elements are the following:

**Accounting and statistics:** as concerns national systems of public accounting, Member States shall have in place public accounting systems comprehensively and consistently covering all sub-sectors of general government and containing the information needed to generate accrual data with a view to preparing data based on the ESA 95 standard. Those public accounting systems shall be subject to internal control and independent audits. Member States shall ensure timely and regular public availability of fiscal data for all sub-sectors of general government.

**Forecasts:** Member States shall ensure that fiscal planning is based on realistic macroeconomic and budgetary forecasts using the most up-to-date information. Budgetary planning shall be based on the most likely macrofiscal scenario or on a more prudent scenario. The macroeconomic and budgetary forecasts shall be compared with the most updated forecasts of the Commission and, if appropriate, those of other independent bodies. Significant differences between the chosen macrofiscal scenario and the Commission’s forecast shall be described with reasoning, in particular if the level or growth of variables in external assumptions departs significantly from the values contained in the Commission’s forecasts. The Commission shall make public the methodologies, assumptions and relevant parameters that underpin its macroeconomic and budgetary forecasts.

**Numerical fiscal rules:** each Member State shall have in place numerical fiscal rules which are specific to it and which effectively promote compliance with its obligations deriving from the TFEU in the area of budgetary policy over a multiannual horizon for the general government as a whole. Such rules shall promote in particular: (a) compliance with the reference values on deficit and debt set in accordance with the TFEU; (b) the adoption of a multiannual fiscal planning horizon, including adherence to the Member State’s medium-term budgetary objective.

**Medium-term budgetary frameworks:** Member States shall establish a credible, effective medium-term budgetary framework providing for the adoption of a fiscal planning horizon of at least 3 years, to ensure that national fiscal planning follows a multiannual fiscal planning perspective.

**Transparency of general government finances:** Member States shall establish appropriate mechanisms of coordination across sub-sectors of general government to provide for comprehensive and consistent coverage of all sub-sectors of general government in fiscal planning, country-specific numerical fiscal rules, and in the preparation of budgetary forecasts and setting-up of multiannual planning as laid down, in particular, in the multiannual budgetary framework.

**Reporting and review**

Article 15 of the Final Act

... 3. The Commission shall prepare an interim progress report on the implementation of the main provisions of this Directive on the basis of relevant information from Member States, which shall be submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council by 14 December 2012.

... Article 16 of the Final Act

1. By 14 December 2018 the Commission shall publish a review of the suitability of this Directive.
2. The review shall assess, inter alia, the suitability of:
   (a) the statistical requirements for all sub-sectors of government;
   (b) the design and effectiveness of numerical fiscal rules in the Member States;
   (c) the general level of transparency of public finances in the Member States.

3. By 31 December 2012, the Commission shall assess the suitability of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards for the Member States.

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Leading committee: ECON (EMPL, JURI for opinion)

Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: on the basis of a compromise reached with the European Parliament, the Council adopted a package of six legislative proposals (“six-pack”) aiming to strengthen economic governance in the EU – and more specifically in the euro area.

... They consist of:

- a regulation amending regulation 1466/97 on the surveillance of Member States budgetary and economic policies;
- a regulation amending regulation 1467/97 on the EU’s excessive deficit procedure;
- a regulation on the enforcement of budgetary surveillance in the euro area;
- a regulation on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances;
- a regulation on enforcement measures to correct excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the euro area;
- a directive on requirements for the Member States’ budgetary frameworks.

The main elements of this Regulation are as follows:

**Scope**: this Regulation lays down a system of sanctions for the effective correction of excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the euro area.

**Sanctions**: an interest-bearing deposit shall be imposed by a Council decision, acting on a recommendation from the Commission, if a Council decision establishing non-compliance is adopted in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011, where the Council concludes that the Member State concerned has not taken the corrective action recommended by the Council.

**An annual fine shall be imposed by a Council decision**, acting on a recommendation by the Commission, where:

(a) two successive Council recommendations in the same imbalance procedure as regards excessive imbalances and the Council considers that the Member State has submitted an insufficient corrective action plan; or
(b) two successive Council decisions in the same imbalance procedure as regards excessive imbalances. In this case, the annual fine shall be imposed by means of converting the interest-bearing deposit into an annual fine.

**Reporting and review**

Article 7 of the Final Act

Review

1. By 14 December 2014 and every 5 years thereafter, the Commission shall publish a report on the application of this Regulation.

   That report shall evaluate, inter alia:
   (a) the effectiveness of this Regulation;
   (b) the progress in ensuring closer coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of economic performances of the Member States in accordance with the TFEU.

2. Where appropriate, that report shall be accompanied by a proposal for amendments to this Regulation.

3. The Commission shall send the report and any accompanying proposals to the European Parliament and to the Council.

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Leading committee: ECON (EMPL, JURI for opinion)


Summary of the Final Act:

Extract from the Summary:

CONTENT: on the basis of a compromise reached with the European Parliament, the Council adopted a package of six legislative proposals ("six-pack") aiming to strengthen economic governance in the EU – and more specifically in the euro area.

... They consist of:

- a regulation amending regulation 1466/97 on the surveillance of Member States budgetary and economic policies;
- a regulation amending regulation 1467/97 on the EU’s excessive deficit procedure;
- a regulation on the enforcement of budgetary surveillance in the euro area;
- a regulation on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances;
The main elements of this Regulation are as follows:

**Scope:** beyond budgetary surveillance, the legislative package is aimed at broadening the surveillance of the Member States' economic policies. It establishes a mechanism for the prevention and correction of excessive macroeconomic imbalances, made up of two regulations which outline an "excessive imbalance procedure" and introduce the possibility of fines being imposed on Member States found to be in an "excessive imbalance position" and repeatedly failing to comply with recommendations.

**Detection of imbalances:** the starting point of the new framework is an alert mechanism for the early detection of imbalances, which will be assessed using a "scoreboard" of economic indicators. This will be followed by country-specific qualitative expert analysis.

**Scoreboard:** the scoreboard comprising the set of indicators, shall be used as a tool to facilitate early identification and monitoring of imbalances. It shall comprise a small number of relevant, practical, simple, measurable and available macroeconomic and macrofinancial indicators for Member States. It shall allow for the early identification of macroeconomic imbalances that emerge in the short-term and imbalances that arise due to structural and long-term trends.

**In-depth review:** the Commission shall undertake an in-depth review for each Member State that it considers may be affected by, or may be at risk of being affected by, imbalances. The in-depth review shall build on a detailed analysis of country-specific circumstances, including the different starting positions across Member States; it shall examine a broad range of economic variables and involve the use of analytical tools and qualitative information of country-specific nature. It shall acknowledge the national specificities regarding industrial relations and social dialogue. The Commission shall inform the European Parliament and the Council of the results of the in-depth review and shall make them public.

**Preventive action:** if, on the basis of its in-depth review, the Commission considers that a Member State is experiencing imbalances, it shall inform the Council and the Euro Group and the European Parliament. The Council, on a recommendation from the Commission, may address the necessary recommendations to the Member State concerned. The Council shall inform the European Parliament of the recommendation.

**Opening of the excessive imbalance procedure:** if, on the basis of the in-depth review, the Commission considers that the Member State concerned is affected by excessive imbalances, it shall inform the European Parliament, the Council and the Eurogroup accordingly. Any Member State for which an excessive imbalance procedure is opened shall submit a corrective action plan within a certain deadline. If the Council decides that the member state concerned has taken appropriate action, the procedure will be held in abeyance, and can be closed if the Council concludes that the imbalance is no longer considered to be excessive. On the other hand, repeated non-compliance with the recommendations can in the case of euro area Member States eventually lead to sanctions.

**Reporting and review**

**Article 15 of the Final Act**

**Annual Reporting**

The Commission shall report annually on the application of this Regulation, including the updating of the scoreboard as set out in Article 4 and shall present its...
findings to the European Parliament and to the Council in the context of the European Semester.

Article 16 of the Final Act

Review

1. By 14 December 2014 and every 5 years thereafter, the Commission shall review and report on the application of this Regulation.

Those reports shall evaluate, inter alia:
(a) the effectiveness of this Regulation;
(b) the progress in ensuring closer coordination of economic policies and sustained convergence of economic performances of the Member States in accordance with the TFEU.

Where appropriate, those reports shall be accompanied by a proposal for amendments to this Regulation.

2. The Commission shall send the reports referred to in paragraph 1 to the European Parliament and to the Council.

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EP Resolution of 20/10/2010 with recommendations to the Commission on improving the economic governance and stability framework of the Union, in particular in the euro area, based on 2010/2099(INL) (P7_TA(2010)0377; A7-0282/2010)
Leading committee: ECON (BUDG, EMPL, IMCO, AFCO for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

1. Requests the Commission to submit to Parliament as soon as possible after the consultation of all interested parties, and on the basis of the appropriate provisions of the TFEU, legislative proposals in order to improve the economic governance framework of the Union, in particular within the euro area, and following the detailed recommendations set out in the Annex, to the extent that those recommendations are not yet addressed by the Commission’s legislative proposals of 29 September 2010 on economic governance;

2. Confirms that the recommendations set out in the Annex respect the principle of subsidiarity and the fundamental rights of citizens of the European Union;

ANNEX

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO THE CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL REQUESTED

Recommendation 1: Establish a coherent and transparent framework for multilateral surveillance of macro-economic developments in the Union and in the Member States and strengthening fiscal surveillance
Implement in-depth country specific surveillance, if revealed to be necessary by the scoreboard and by the related qualitative assessment referred to above; further to this in-depth country specific surveillance, Member States have responsibility for deciding on national policies which aim to tackle (prevent and correct) macroeconomic imbalances alongside the need to take into account the Commission specific recommendations and Union dimension of those national policies, particularly for those States in the euro area. Adjustment must be directed to both excessive-deficit and excessive-surplus States, taking account of each country’s specific circumstances, such as demographics, the level of private debt, wage trends compared to labour productivity, employment – especially youth employment – and current-account balances,

Establish a ‘European Semester’ for dealing with potential spill-over effects of national fiscal policies as well as the early identification of excessive budgetary deficits and guarantee the coherence between EU- and national-level actions under the Integrated Guidelines, as well as the fulfilment of the quantitative and qualitative targets, such as growth and employment, which would enable a real and timely contribution by all parties concerned, including national parliaments and the European Parliament, as well as the consultation of social partners,

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP)

The legislative act to be adopted (on the basis of, inter alia, Article 126 TFEU) should aim in particular to strengthen the preventive arm of the SGP and include economically and politically more sensible sanctions and incentives, while taking due account of the structure of the national deficit and debt (including implicit liabilities), the ‘economic cycle’, in order to avoid pro-cyclical budgetary policy, as well as the nature of the public revenues and expenditures needed for growth-enhancing structural reforms; all Member States should aim to make progress but those with larger gaps should generally contribute more towards meeting targets in respect of debt stock and deficits. Demographic evolution should also be taken into account when assessing current account imbalances. The legislative act should aim to:

- Integrate better the ‘debt’ criteria (the ‘sustainability aspect’) in each step of the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) and set up an Excessive Debt Surveillance Procedure (EDSP) on the basis of gross debt levels. The EDSP would require detailed regular reports on the debt and deficit dynamics, their interconnection and development, while taking into account country-specific conditions and allowing different timetables for each Member State to recover to the target values set out in the SGP; the Commission should consult the European and relevant national social partners, as part of the EDSP,
- Take the debt level, debt profile (including maturity) and debt dynamics (an assessment of the sustainability of public finances) more strongly into account in the pace of convergence towards a Member State-specific MTFO to be included in the SCPs,
- As part of the EDSP, establish a clear, harmonised framework to measure and monitor debt dynamics including implicit and contingent liabilities, such as public pension exposures and public guarantees (whether, inter alia, of principal, interest or income-flows) in public-private partnership investments, and the costs of such investments to the national budget throughout the years,
- Establish a country-specific differentiated time frame for the process of fiscal consolidation that will occur no later than 2015, with a view to realigning all public deficit levels with the requirements set out in the SGP,
- Establish a monitoring mechanism including possible public warnings and incremental sanctions and incentives for Member States that have not reached their country specific MTFO or are not approaching it at the agreed pace, as well as possible economic stimulus for countries that have reached their MTFO faster than expected,
- Establish minimum rules and guidelines for national budgetary procedures (i.e. annual and multiannual financial frameworks) in order to fulfil the obligation in Article 3 of the Protocol (No 12) on the Excessive Deficit Procedure. Those national frameworks should include sufficient information on both the expenditure and revenue sides of the planned budgetary actions in order to enable there to be sensible discussion and scrutiny of the
budgetary plans at both national and EU level; in addition, further work on the comparability of national budgets as regards their spending categories and revenues and the political priorities that they reflect is needed,

- Encourage the establishment of early warning budgetary control mechanisms at national level,
- Establish pre-specified and pre-emptive measures within the euro area to be decided under the clear competences of the Commission, both for the preventive and the corrective arm of the SGP, in order to facilitate early warning steps and apply them in a progressive way,
- Enforce and implement such sanctions and incentives for euro-area Member States, taking into consideration the very close interconnections with non-euro-area economies, especially those that are expected to join the euro area, as part of the new multilateral surveillance framework and the enhanced instruments of the SGP and, in particular, a stronger focus of the MTFO,
- Make the necessary changes to the Commission’s internal decision-making procedure, with due respect to the current principles enshrined in the TFEU, in order to guarantee an efficient and rapid implementation of sanctioning mechanisms under its clear competences, especially for Member States of the euro area,
- Ensure that the decision on compliance of Member States with the SGP is taken more independently from the Council by the Commission, in order to respect fully the SGP principles.

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Leading committee: ECON


Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: the credibility of budgetary surveillance crucially hinges upon reliable budgetary statistics. It is of the utmost importance that data reported by Member States under Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 on the application of the Protocol on the excessive deficit procedure annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community are of high quality and reliability. ... However, recent developments have also clearly demonstrated that the current governance framework for fiscal statistics still does not mitigate, to the extent necessary, the risk of incorrect or inaccurate data being notified to the Commission. The amendments made to Regulation (EC) No 479/2009 allow the Commission and Member States to work more effectively together in improving the quality and reliability of government finance statistics.

Permanent dialogue: the Commission (Eurostat) shall ensure a permanent dialogue with Member States’ statistical authorities. To this end, the Commission (Eurostat) shall carry out in all Member States regular dialogue visits, as well as possible methodological visits ... to identify risks or potential problems with respect to the quality of the reported data.

Methodological visits: the methodological visits are designed to monitor the processes and verify the accounts which justify the reported data, and to draw detailed conclusions as to the quality of reported data. The methodological visits shall only be undertaken in exceptional cases where significant risks or problems with respect to the quality of the data have been clearly identified.
Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that institutions and officials responsible for the reporting of the actual data to the Commission (Eurostat) and of the underlying government accounts are accountable and act in accordance with principles established in Regulation (EC) No 223/2009.

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Summary

[The European Parliament,]

1. Considers that the agreement reached on 9 May 2010 to establish a European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism to help both eurozone and non-eurozone countries in financial difficulty represents a crucial moment in European history; deplores the fact that European policymakers did not take decisive action earlier, despite the deepening financial crisis;

5. Underlines that in order to restore sound growth rates and achieve the objective of sustainable economic development and social cohesion priority should be given to dealing with persistent and significant macroeconomic imbalances and disparities in competitiveness; welcomes the recognition of this necessity by the Commission in its communication on economic policy coordination;

11. Considers that Eurostat’s powers should be enhanced, including through the conferral of investigative powers; considers that open and transparent statistical information should be a precondition for obtaining Structural Fund support; takes the view that the Commission must assume responsibility for evaluating the statistics provided by the Member States;

12. Calls for the creation of a 'European Monetary Fund' (EMF) to which eurozone countries would contribute in a manner proportionate to the size of their GDP and through fines determined on the basis of their excessive debt and deficit levels; any Member State would be able to draw from the EMF funds up to the amount it had deposited previously; however, should a country need additional resources or guarantees, it would have to accept a tailor-made reform programme, the implementation of which the Commission would supervise;

13. Asks the Commission to come up with a macroeconomic impact assessment of the package of measures to preserve financial stability in the European Union and to publish a communication on the feasibility, risks and advantages of issuing Eurobonds.

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Leading committee: ECON (BUDG, EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary
Parliament expresses deep concern about the long-term sustainability of public finances in the aftermath of the financial and economic crises, recalling that the efforts made in the framework of the Stability and Growth Pact (SPG) prior to the crises were to a very high degree geared towards meeting the growing demographic challenge.

... Members stress that high debt and deficit levels are a threat to sustainability and will have adverse effects on public health care, pensions and employment. They warn against using the crisis as a pretext not to consolidate public finances, not to decrease public spending and not to implement structural reforms.

Members are deeply concerned that many Member States are in breach of the SGP, and agree with the Commission statement that debt sustainability should be given a very prominent role in surveillance procedures. They urge the Commission rigorously to ensure compliance with the SGP. Whilst pointing to the need to consolidate public finances and reduce deficit and debt levels, Parliament warns against an abrupt ending of support to the real economy, in order to avoid a double dip. It welcomes the Commission’s work on the exit strategy from the present contingency measures, and supports the Commission’s approach based on exit strategies that are differentiated between countries in time and scope. The fiscal exit strategy should be launched before the monetary exit strategy in order to allow the latter to be correctly implemented, thus ensuring that the ECB, which successfully avoided a slip into deflation, can equally well ensure that inflation does not ruin the recovery. Members note that a controlled exit from the deficits is of crucial importance to keep interest rates down and the debt burden limited.

Parliament points out that rising deficits make borrowing more expensive, partly due to the fact that markets assess risks as more serious when the debt burden is increasing faster than economic growth and the ability to pay back loans. It stresses that the current financial crisis has emphasised the direct link between financial market stability and the sustainability of public finances, and emphasises the need for strengthened supervisory legislation on financial markets that include strong mechanisms for consumer and investor protection.

Parliament asks the Commission to carry out studies to assess the quality of the Member States’ debts. It suggests, in particular, that the Commission assess the effects of the fiscal spending deployed by the Member States in order to kick-start their economies, in terms of its impact on production, on government accounts and in stimulating and protecting employment, both in the short and long term. The structural deficit should be one of the indicators used in determining the long-term sustainability of public finances. Members call on the Commission to consider the reduction of long-term sustainability gaps in public finances as an essential part of the EU’s 2020 strategy. They call on Member States, after plugging their sustainability gaps, to reduce their public debt-to-GDP ratio to a maximum of 60%.

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P-005668-14 WQ COM Rule 117 Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE) on Public consumption and public spending figures from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the National Institute of Statistics - possible manipulation.

E-013857-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL) on Germany’s creative accounting.

E-010943-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL) on Changes to the methodology for calculating Member States’ structural deficits.

E-007627-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE) on Independent fiscal councils.


E-000335-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Zbigniew Ziobro (EFDD) on Excessive deficit procedure.

E-000407/2011 WQ COM Rule 117 David Casa (PPE) on EU oversight of transfers of budgetary funds within Member States.

E-003495/2011 WQ COM Rule 117 David Casa (PPE) on Excessive deficit procedure.

O-000306/2011 OQ Rule 115 by Sharon Bowles, on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs - Draft scoreboard for the surveillance of macroeconomic imbalances.


E-8657/2010 WQ COM Rule 117 Theodoros Skylakakis (PPE) on Accuracy of data regarding the 2009 Greek deficit.

E-7546/2010 WQ COM Rule 117 Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE), Georgios Papaionikou (PPE) on European economic governance and national budgets.

E-4645/2010 WQ COM Rule 117 Charles Tannock (ECR) on Inadequacies of excessive debt procedure protocol in calculating government debt.

O-0080/2010 OQ COM Rule 115 Othmar Karas, Sharon Bowles, on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs - The quality of statistical data in the Union and enhanced auditing powers by the Commission (Eurostat).

E-5968/2009 WQ by Hans-Peter Martin (NI) on Excessive deficit procedure.
### Summary

Questions asked:
1. Did EU pre-accession assistance contribute effectively to strengthening administrative capacity to implement reform in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia?  
   1.1. Did the Commission ensure that Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) projects contribute effectively towards strengthening administrative capacity?  
   1.2. Did the Commission use the decentralised management mode effectively to build capacity?  
   1.3. Did the Commission's non-financial assistance effectively support the strengthening of administrative capacity?  

Observations:
1.1. The effectiveness of pre-accession financial assistance in contributing towards strengthening administrative capacity: pre-accession financial assistance did not successfully address some of the significant weaknesses in administrative capacity in key areas; most planned outputs were delivered but they were not always exploited; the impacts of projects were often limited and not always sustainable; there were obstacles to progress on strengthening administrative capacity;  
1.2. The use of decentralised management as a means of building capacity: the country was not ready for the volume and complexity of IPA funds for which management was decentralised; the Commission has taken action but further de-commitment is probable; decentralising management could have been used more widely as a capacity-building tool for the public administration;  
1.3. The contribution of political dialogue to strengthening administrative capacity: although well organised, political dialogue did not contribute significantly to an overall strengthening of administrative capacity; other dialogue mechanisms addressed the need to strengthen administrative capacity but did not result in progress towards removing the underlying obstacles.  

Recommendations:
1. Concrete assistance for ranked priorities:  
   The Commission should concentrate its assistance for strengthening administrative capacity on ranked priorities that take account of significant weaknesses in key areas. Examples of areas in which we noted a need for improvement during our audit are:  
   a) efficiency of the public procurement system, for example by further developing electronic procurement;
b) transparency of public spending, for example by improving the availability and quality of data on corruption cases reported in order to allow scrutiny by civil society and the wider public;

c) internal control, for example by improving the standing and professional skills of internal auditors;

2. Intensified efforts to strengthen capacity:
   In the transport and environment sectors, the Commission should:
   a) intensify efforts to strengthen administrative capacity to contract, implement and manage projects, for example by providing tailored training for contracting authorities, better promoting ‘learning by doing’ activities and providing wider access to JASPERS;
   b) secure strong commitment from the national authorities to bring national legislation into line with EU legislation and strengthen the link between capacity-building and EU support;

3. Improved follow-up of outputs and sustainability of impacts:
   The Commission should make better use of policy instruments to reinforce the commitment by the national authorities to the reform process, including a prolonged and active follow-up of outputs and impacts. This should be closely followed up in the IPA monitoring committees.

4. Better targeted assistance
   IPA projects should be sequenced and part of a coherent approach. When planning projects, the Commission should:
   a) better rank priorities in sequential steps and reflect this when programming and implementing IPA funds;
   b) use a larger part of the IPA allocation to provide fast-track, flexible and targeted support on urgent and sensitive issues of policy and acquis;

5. More use of decentralised management to strengthen capacity:
   The Commission should use the decentralised management mode more selectively with regard to the volume of funds and the complexity and sensitivity of projects to decentralise. Once examples of good practice have been established in the operating structures set up for decentralised management, the Commission should encourage the national authorities to extend these practices to other parts of the administration, for example, to encourage the delegation of decision-making to the appropriate level and to strengthen internal control systems;

6. Use of political dialogue to secure commitment to strengthening administrative capacity:
   In the context of the renewed opportunity for strengthening administrative capacity to better implement reform, the Commission should use political dialogue to:
   a) secure a firm commitment to strengthening the capacity to tackle corruption and improve transparency;
   b) require the country to further build on its ‘track record’ of corruption cases so that it becomes a meaningful tool for assessing progress in the fight against corruption;
   c) increase the focus on monitoring results in reversing the backsliding on public administration reform, including the implementation of legislation in areas such as public procurement and PIFC;
   d) agree targets and deadlines, for a structured approach to tackle obstacles to strengthening administrative capacity to implement key areas of the acquis.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

CONT Working Document of 20/06/2016 on European Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 11/2016 (2015 discharge): Strengthening administrative capacity in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: limited progress in a difficult context (PE583.945v01-00)

Rapporteur: Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP)
[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Welcomes the Court’s report, endorses its recommendations and encourages the Commission to take these recommendations into account when working on strengthening the administrative capacity of Macedonia;
2. Is concerned that limited progress was made in strengthening administrative capacities with no significant progress in implementation of legislation in some key areas such as development of a professional and independent civil service;
3. Notes that only partial progress has been made in tackling corruption and improving transparency;
4. Calls on the Commission to initiate a dialogue with the political leaders across the political spectrum, national authorities and experts on judiciary and law enforcement in order to find an agreement on active fight against corruption and organised crime and on implementation of strict measures and mechanisms to prevent corruption and economic crime in line with the country’s Criminal law;
5. Strongly recommends that the Commission should use the political dialogue and contacts with national authorities in order to improve the efficiency of the public procurement system and transparency of public spending;
6. Calls on the Commission to prioritise the fight against corruption and regrets the absence of an effective government strategy in the fight against corruption;
7. Calls on the Commission to build on the achievements of successful projects, which are sustainable, have a quantifiable added value and were implemented and used in accordance with the regulations, when pursuing IPA II;
8. Welcomes that the Commission has established projects focused towards civil society organisations; calls on the Commission to continue this practice and to establish strong relationships with the local NGOs;
9. Encourages the Commission to design projects that would strengthen rights and position of whistle-blowers in bringing public attention to corruption cases and fraud;
10. Notes from the ECA that although many of the projects were well-managed, the results were not always sustainable or even achieved; further notes that the projects did not always fall into a coherent approach towards strengthening administrative capacity viability of the projects by setting it as a pre-condition of the projects;
11. Calls on the Commission to strictly follow the principles of sound financial management; invites the Commission to help designing projects that would serve as a stepping stone for further investments in the country; encourages the Commission to prioritise projects with high potential in key areas such as public procurement or selection procedures, and to avoid financing projects of a short-term significance;
12. Encourages the Commission to have available funds in the IPA II framework that would be ready at its disposal in order to quickly address urgent matters.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees


Resolution on topical subject tabled by Ivo Vajgl on behalf of AFET committee

Summary

Articles 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 32, 43, 49

The Parliament expressed its concern that the Macedonian public administration and Judicial system remain subject to political influence and urged the government to enhance professionalism, neutrality and independence at all levels and to ensure the full implementation of the principles of accountability, transparency and merit. It underlined the need to enhance administrative capacity and inclusive and evidence-based policy-making in order to ensure effective implementation of policies and lines of accountability and called for the development of a designated training programme for public administration staff, urging the Commission to provide assistance and exchange possibilities in this regard.
The Members supported the government’s plans to increase accessibility to public services by prioritising the development of e-services that would enable the transparency of the public administration. And noted the well-established legal framework and earlier measures as regards judicial reform. They called for political will to depoliticise the appointment and promotion of judges and prosecutors and to ensure the professionalism and independence of the Judicial Council.

The Parliament expressed its concern about widespread corruption, particularly in state and local administration, public procurement and political party financing and urged the government to fight corruption in a non-selective manner, to develop a credible track record on both prevention and prosecution of high-level corruption, and to ensure that all law enforcement and supervisory bodies have sufficient autonomy to act independently. It took note of the adoption of the law on whistleblower protection in November 2015 and urged the authorities to ensure its implementation in line with European standards. The Parliament further stresses the need to strengthen the independence of the police, the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, and to reinforce the Interior Ministry’s staffing and technical capacities for fighting corruption. It called for enhanced scrutiny of potential conflicts of interest and of assets belonging to elected and appointed officials by establishing a central register of such public servants.

The Members remain concerned about the insufficient capacity to programme and absorb Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA) funds and urged the government to strengthen the administrative and financing capacities in order to procure and implement EU funds properly and in a timely manner. They called on the Commission to closely monitor projects financed by the EU in order to avoid misuse of European public money.

The Parliament invited the government to improve the overall level of alignment with the EU foreign policy as the rate of alignment has remained low and invited the government to comply with the EU Common Positions on the integrity of the Rome Statute.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Ivo Vajgl on behalf of AFET committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

16. Urges the government to address the shortcomings in the implementation of IPA assistance, such as the systemic problems of the control system, insufficient intra-institutional and inter-institutional coordination, the backlog in procurement, the low absorption rate and the low capacity of institutions; calls for the strengthening of the link between EU assistance and national reform strategies and for IPA funds to be used to lever far greater budget decentralisation in the country; calls to accelerate programme implementation in order to enhance the impact of EU assistance;

17. Welcomes the adoption of the new legislative framework for the civil service and public employment in February 2014, as a step towards providing for a unified, transparent and accountable public administration; is concerned that, despite legislative progress, the public administration remains fragmented, politicised and subject to political influence; strongly encourages it to enhance its professionalism and independence at all levels; encourages efforts to implement the law, with due respect for the principles of transparency, merit and equitable representation; invites the government to adopt a public financial management reform program;
19. Welcomes the high level of alignment with the legislative acquis and the improving efficiency and professionalism of the courts as a result of comprehensive judicial reforms; is concerned, however, about undue political influence over certain court proceedings, and emphasises that the judiciary should remain independent of all external pressures of the parliamentary and executive branches; stresses the need to ensure proper implementation of judicial standards in line with European norms and best practice; calls for the unification of jurisprudence in order to ensure a predictable judicial system and public trust; calls for improvement of the quality of justice, increased use of non-judicial remedies and alternative dispute resolution, better strategic planning, better access to justice for vulnerable members of society and more involvement of professional and civil society organisations in monitoring judicial independence;

20. Notes the positive developments in the implementation of the 2011-2015 anti-corruption programmes, and the strengthening of the personal and institutional integrity system as well as of interinstitutional and international cooperation; notes the outstanding substantial issues related to the implementation of money-laundering legislation, including cross-border issues, the conduct of national risk assessment and improving operational efficiency; reiterates that an independent and fully functional State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption should be the leading state institution tackling this issue; in order to improve the work of that Commission, calls on the competent authorities to enhance IT interconnectivity between the courts and the prosecution service and to create a central register of public officials;

21. Calls for the more efficient implementation of anti-corruption policies and legislation, particularly in politics, public administration, public procurement and law enforcement, as well as for the enhancement of administrative capacities; urges the country to achieve a track record for convictions in combating corruption, including high-level cases; calls on independent CSOs and media to expose corruption and champion independent and impartial investigations and trials; calls on the public prosecutor’s office to enable adequate and timely investigation of claims in this area.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Richard Howitt on behalf of AFET committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

8. Calls on the European Council to endorse the opening of the screening process, especially for Chapters 23 and 24; believes that the screening will help build on the reform momentum and help the country better address the imminent challenges facing any candidate country such as further enhancing the effectiveness of the rule of law and reforming the judiciary and public administration, as well as strengthening interethnic cohesion;

21. Stresses the need to ensure the professionalism and independence of the public administration through policy improvements at all levels; notes that the law on public employees and the law on administrative servants were approved by the parliament; considers it important that a new legal framework enshrines the fundamental principles of transparency, merit and equitable representation; calls on the government to continue with the necessary reforms in this respect, as also in the fields of public expenditure and public procurement, since this will have positive effects on the quality of governance;

36. Reiterates its call on the Commission and the government to agree to devote a minimum quota of the next programming period of the Instrument for Pre-Accession to secure 15 % payments to non-state actors and ensure that technical assistance to civil society organisations is managed by civil society itself; also urges that the IPA II be further deployed to support efforts to help leverage a target of 9 % of the country’s own budget, to be delivered through
decentralised regional and local government;

37. Commends the country for the reforms previously undertaken which have brought the national legal framework into conformity with international standards; urges the country to increase the transparency of the Judicial Council in order to minimise perceptions that it works under influence and pressure; invites the Commission to consider and analyse respect for European Court of Human Rights judgments in relation to the country, in its future Progress Reports;

39. Calls in particular for the reinforcement of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Unit of the Ministry of Interior, the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office for the fight against organised crime and corruption, and the State Audit Office in budgetary, material and human resources; emphasises further the need to focus on high-level corruption cases and to make greater use of orders for seizure and confiscation of assets, and urges continued efforts to establish a track record for convictions in high-level cases; calls on independent civil society organisations and media to expose corruption and champion independent and impartial investigations and trials; welcomes the continued UNDP-supported efforts of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption to strengthen the preventive aspect of the fight against corruption by introducing comprehensive integrity systems in nine pilot municipalities; supports the national authorities’ intention to complete the amendment of the Law on Prevention of Corruption, expand the integrity system concept nationwide, and provide systematic institutional protection for whistleblowers;

40. Notes that the activities aimed at making the National Intelligence Database (NID) operational are still ongoing, and encourages the country’s authorities to accelerate their efforts in this respect and to establish the National Coordination Centre for the fight against organised crime as soon as possible, in order to provide full support to the fight against organised crime, corruption, fraud, money laundering and other serious offences, including cross-border offences.

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Leading committee: AFET (INTA, BUDG, EMPL, REGI for opinion)

Summary


Extract from the Summary

**General objective:** the objective of the IPA II should be to support the beneficiaries ... in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required ... to comply with Union values and to progressively align to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to Union membership. Through such support, IPA II should contribute to stability, security and prosperity in the beneficiary countries.

**Specific objectives:** a new series of specific objectives have been added:
- strengthening of democracy and institutions, including an independent and efficient judiciary;
- promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, enhanced respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including LGBT, non-discrimination and respect for cultural diversity;
• regional co-operation and good neighbourly relations;
• promotion of reconciliation, peace building, and confidence building measures;
• border management and implementation of migration policy, including the management of migration flows;
• improvement of social dialogue and strengthening of the capacities of social partners;
• strengthening of education and research;
• preservation and restoration of cultural heritage.

Where appropriate, particular attention should be paid to good governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption and organised crime in each of the planned actions.

Incentive measures and performance indicators: progress in these areas should be assessed through performance indicators defined in the draft Regulation. It is also specified that assistance should be managed with a strong focus on results and with incentives for those who demonstrate their commitment to reform through efficient implementation of pre-accession assistance and progress towards meeting the membership criteria. A part of the financial allocation should be earmarked for beneficiary countries demonstrating particular progress.

Reporting and review

Article 10 of the Final Act

Delegation of power

The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 11 to amend Annex II to this Regulation. In particular, following the publication of the mid-term review report, and based upon the recommendations contained therein, the Commission shall adopt a delegated act amending Annex II to this Regulation by 31 March 2018.

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EP Resolution of 22/10/2013 on budgetary management of European Union pre-accession funds in the areas of judicial systems and the fight against corruption in the candidate and potential candidate countries, based on 2011/2033(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0434; A7-0318/2013)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Judicial reform and the fight against corruption: Parliament ... emphasises the Commission's new approach to address justice reforms and home affairs issues early in the accession process. Members note, however, that on average only 2.87% of the total EU pre-accession assistance envelope for the period 2007-2013 is devoted to justice and only 0.52% to the fight against corruption. Parliament also notes that the level of co-financing by domestic authorities differs widely from one country to another... . Parliament is of the opinion that co-financed projects, especially in the areas of the judiciary and the fight against corruption, bring a higher degree of ownership from the beneficiaries. It calls therefore on the Commission to increase, under IPA II, the number of projects co-financed by
domestic authorities.

Parliament regretted that the level of pre-accession assistance invested in judiciary reform and the fight against corruption does not reflect the priority set by the Commission in this respect. It urged the Commission and the beneficiary countries to allocate a more substantial and adequate level of funding to these two sectors bearing in mind the importance of these issues, the severity of the problems faced in the field. It also regretted that the Commission does not have a tool to provide an execution rate in an automated manner for the EU pre-accession projects and called on the Commission to centralise data on a 6 monthly basis on the execution rate of the projects for which EU pre-accession assistance is allocated.

Members stressed that the effectiveness of pre-accession projects implemented in the areas of the judiciary and the fight against corruption depends primarily on the authorities’ political will. They deplored the fact that in most candidate and potential candidate countries there is a lack of strong political support for putting in place effective reforms. The resolution made several recommendations on strengthening the fight against corruption and judicial reform, including the following:

- a clearer definition of the scope of projects in the areas of judicial systems and the fight against corruption;
- Parliament should be kept informed about the implementation of the IPA and the allocation of funds for candidate and potential candidate countries;
- the justice system should be fully independent, more predictable, efficient and fair
- improved professionalism, transparency and efficiency of the judicial systems.

Regarding the fight against corruption, Parliament ... stressed the need for better planning and funding of anti-corruption activities, based on the cooperation of a broad range of stakeholders. It called on the Commission to develop a longer-term and broad-based strategic perspective of EU funding for civil society organisations which are working in transparency and anti-corruption areas at both national and European levels. Parliament also asked the relevant authorities to improve interinstitutional cooperation, especially with law enforcement structures, raise public awareness and develop capacities for planning, enforcing and monitoring anti-corruption activities, as well as to cooperate closely with the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). ... It is concerned that EU pre-accession assistance is not always used in a consistent manner due to the lack of a regional approach and strategy. ... 

Implementation of projects: Parliament noted that pre-accession projects have a time span of between one and 3.5 years. Acknowledging that such deadlines are challenging, Members recommended that the Commission take adequate measures within the framework of IPA II programming and projects which would lead to a longer timescale (five to seven years). They also deplored the chronic delays incurred in the implementation and efficiency of certain projects. ... At the same time, Members are concerned about the complexity of pre-accession assistance rules and called on the Commission to find the right balance between flexibility serving project efficiency and the need to avoid irregularities under IPA II. ...

Performance and sustainability: Parliament ... underlined the fact that despite improvements (on performance), certain projects continue to lack focus. Members insisted on the need for designing qualitative indicators capable of measuring the long-term impact of the projects. They called on the Commission to continue to issue guidance on the utilisation of performance indicators to be used for programming under IPA II. Parliament also called for: (i) strengthening training activities in the field of judicial reform; (ii) improving legislative reforms in line with European standards.

Results-oriented monitoring (ROM): Members acknowledged that the Commission assesses the impact and sustainability of pre-accession programmes through ROM reports, but pointed out that the number of ROM reports is uneven across countries. ... They urged the Commission to develop a comprehensive monitoring action plan including evaluation tools other than ROM reports, such as sector performance assessment frameworks with SMART indicators, in order to make comprehensive monitoring of project outcomes possible over time.
Transparency: Members called for a database listing all of the projects funded under pre-accession assistance programmes whereby all beneficiaries of EU funding are published on the same website, independently of the administrator of the funds. They noted the Commission’s commitment to address these issues by 2015 through the publication of information on IPA assistance in line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (which established common standards for the electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on resources provided through development cooperation).

Lastly, Parliament made a series of country-specific remarks and recommendations: as regards Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Parliament welcomed the progress achieved in the legislative framework for judiciary reform and the installation of the Automated Court Case Management Information System. It expressed its concern that no reporting is available on the effectiveness of IPA projects on anti-corruption in FYROM.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Richard Howitt on behalf of AFET committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

21. Welcomes the continued efforts in advancing the legislative framework for civil and public service and general administrative procedures, notably with regard to the Law on Administrative Servants and the Law on General Administrative Procedures; calls for additional efforts to guarantee the transparency, impartiality and professionalism of public administration, to ensure merit-based recruitment and to strengthen financial control, strategic planning and human resources management;

22. Calls for further efforts to guarantee the independence and impartiality of the judiciary; considers it important to define clear requirements for the dismissal of judges in order to eliminate risks to judicial independence; welcomes the progress in reducing the overall backlog of court cases but urges measures to address backlogs at the Supreme Court and the Administrative Court; urges the gradual rationalisation of the court network and continued support to the Academy for Judges and Prosecutors, in light of its key role in ensuring continuing training, career development and merit-based recruitment;

25. Welcomes the strengthening of the anti-corruption legal framework, including changes to the Law on Conflicts of Interest, but is concerned that corruption remains widespread both inside the country and in the region as a whole; calls for greater efforts regarding the implementation of laws currently in force and urges continued efforts to establish a track record for convictions in high-level cases; welcomes the OSCE-backed programme against corruption, the PrijaviKorupcija.org project allowing corruption to be reported by SMS message and the declaration by ten mayors of zero tolerance of corruption in their municipalities;

51. Encourages the authorities to increase their efforts to introduce e-government as part of the public administration reforms aimed at delivering efficient, accessible and transparent services to citizens and businesses.

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Leading committee: AFET (BUDG for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

8. Is of the view that the set of accession criteria should be adequately translated into clear, specific and measurable objectives in the IPA in order to clearly demonstrate the link between Union-funded policies in the enlargement countries and progress in meeting the general accession criteria;

13. Believes that, in order to maintain the credibility of the enlargement process, the EU’s integration capacity should be evaluated at an early stage and should be properly reflected in the Commission’s ‘opinion’ for each potential candidate state, outlining the major concerns in this regard and the possible ways to overcome them; is of the view that a comprehensive impact assessment should then follow; in this context, emphasises that a successful enlargement process requires that the EU should maintain the capacity to act, to develop, to take decisions democratically and efficiently, to have financial resources to support economic and social cohesion, and to pursue its political objectives;

17. Calls on the Commission to simplify the administration procedure and reduce the administrative burden for the IPA funding, with the aim of making it more accessible to and enhancing the participation of smaller and non-centralised civil organisations, trade unions and other beneficiaries;

19. Strongly emphasises the need to enhance administrative capacities and human resources in order to make them capable of transposing, implementing and enforcing the acquis; takes the view that processes in the framework of enlargement should not be merely ‘technical’, and stresses the need to make the screening process more connected to the realities on the ground; calls on the Commission, therefore, to involve NGOs, trade unions and major stakeholders, as appropriate, in this exercise;

31. Supports the Commission’s commitment to improving the quality of the accession process by making it more merit-based, benchmark-driven and transparent; takes the view that this will make the process fairer and more objectively measurable, thus further enhancing its credibility; in this context, recommends that the progress reports should be clearer in their assessments; stresses that the benchmarks should not set additional conditions for the candidate and potential candidate countries, but should translate the general membership criteria and the objectives of the EU’s pre-accession assistance into concrete steps and results with a view to accession, in full compliance with the negotiating framework;

32. Emphasises the vital importance for the success of the accession process of the fight against corruption and organised crime; calls on the Commission to adopt a new approach to this issue by drawing the attention of the authorities of aspirant countries to individual instances of systemic corruption; calls on the Commission to cooperate closely with the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and with the anti-corruption bodies in the countries concerned; stresses that such a new approach would be highly beneficial for the image of the Union among the citizens of the aspirant countries and would potentially facilitate the fight against corruption;

40. Notes that the global financial crisis and the difficulties of the eurozone have highlighted the interdependence of national economies, both within and beyond the EU; emphasises, therefore, the importance of further consolidating economic and financial stability and fostering growth, also in the candidate and potential candidate countries; in these difficult circumstances, stresses the need to provide adequate and better-targeted pre-accession financial assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries; notes the Commission’s proposal for a new IPA, including increased financial support for the financial perspective 2014-2020; stresses, in this regard, the need to simplify and speed up procedures, as well as to strengthen the administrative capacity
of the beneficiary countries, in order to ensure a high level of participation in EU programmes and to enhance absorption capacity; points out that a comprehensive position of the European Parliament on the IPA will be presented in the course of the ordinary legislative procedure; highlights the importance of national fiscal stability and the increased focus at EU level on economic governance; recommends that the question of sound public finances be properly addressed in the accession process.

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EP Resolution of 14/03/2012 on the 2011 progress report on the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, based on 2011/2887(RSP) (P7_TA(2012)0083; B7-0127/2012)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Richard Howitt on behalf of AFET committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

22. Notes that legal predictability and efficient enforcement of laws are essential for further enhancement of the business environment for domestic companies and foreign investors; calls on the government, therefore, to accelerate efforts to ensure an effective and independent judiciary, as well as a professional, competent and impartial administration, including steps to strengthen the independence and capacities of regulatory and supervisory agencies;

25. Notes the finding of the Progress Report that the independence and impartiality of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption remains fragile; calls for stronger legal and institutional protection of whistleblowers; welcomes the new Criminal Procedure Code adopted in the framework of the wider Criminal Justice Reform, which should improve the investigative procedures for complex organised crime and corruption cases; welcomes the appointment from next year of an investigative team working directly for the Public Prosecutor and hopes this will enable more cases referred by the Commission to lead to actual convictions; calls on the government to provide the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption with the necessary funding and staff; emphasises that political will is crucial in dealing with systemic corruption;

26. Notes the adoption of a wide-ranging legal package aimed at further strengthening the efficiency and independence of the judiciary; welcomes in this regard the efficient work of the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors and the implementation of random distribution of cases; encourages the authorities in charge to continue implementing legislation to combat corruption and improving the independence, efficiency and resources of the judiciary; draws attention to the importance of the court system functioning free from political interference; welcomes the efforts to increase the efficiency and transparency of the court system; stresses the need to build up an enforcement record of prosecutions and convictions against which progress can be measured; calls for the unification of jurisprudence in order to ensure a predictable judicial system and public trust;

49. Notes the progress made in the reform of the judiciary; congratulates the Academy for the Training of Judges and Prosecutors, now enjoying its fifth anniversary, on its work; is concerned at the shortcomings of the Law on Judges, in which there is leeway for political influence through dismissal procedures, but recognises that there is consensus on the need for more objective criteria in this respect; stresses, while welcoming the new focus on the performance of judges, that this cannot be achieved without equal commitment to the quality of judgments, including a commitment to continuous training and merit-based recruitment procedures, and to the principle of judicial independence;

56. Welcomes the adoption of the updated Public Administration Reform Strategy up to 2015 and the entering into force of the Law on Public Servants in April 2011; urges the government to further harmonise the legal framework in the area of civil servants and public employees, including by amending relevant
laws; emphasises the further steps which need to be taken with a view to ensuring a professional and impartial civil service, including at municipal level; welcomes, in this respect, the establishment of a High Administrative Court and encourages the institutions responsible for public administration reform to contribute to accelerating the reform process; insists that appointments on merit and not according to political affiliation can and must be achieved in parallel with efforts for equitable representation;

57. Commends the government on the progress in the area of regional development and in preparing the transfer of management of funds under the IPA; notes with satisfaction the accreditation of national authorities for the IPA components on transition assistance and institution-building, regional development, human resources development and rural development; calls on the government and the Commission to speed up the necessary work with a view to transferring management of the remaining IPA component on cross-border cooperation; reiterates the importance of the IPA as a key tool designed to assist the country in preparing for EU membership, and encourages the government to further enhance inter-ministerial coordination so that the country can fully benefit from available resources.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Kristian Vigenin on behalf of AFET committee
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

12. Welcomes the numerous laws passed for judicial reform and calls for further intensive efforts in the reform of the judiciary, in order to ensure its professionalism, efficiency and independence from political pressures; to this end, underlines that the existing legal framework needs to be implemented swiftly and effectively; is concerned at the continuous role of the Ministry of Justice in the Judicial Council and at the criticism of the Constitutional Court by the government and parliamentarians, which create the risk of subjecting the judiciary to political interference; nevertheless, notes with satisfaction that, in spite of these disagreements, all court rulings have been implemented; welcomes the efforts to increase the efficiency and transparency of the court system, in particular the decreasing backlog of cases in most of the courts; equally, welcomes the entry into force of the law on legal aid;

13. Welcomes the continued efforts in the fight against corruption, manifested amongst other things by implementation of the second round of GRECO recommendations and the entry into force of the amendments to the Criminal Code; encourages the authorities to continue implementing legislation to combat corruption and improving the independence, efficiency and resources of the judiciary; however, recalls that corruption remains prevalent and calls for further intensive efforts to eradicate it; stresses the urgency of effective and impartial enforcement of anti-corruption legislation, in particular on the financing of political parties and on conflicts of interest; draws attention to the importance of ensuring that the court system functions free of political interference; welcomes the efforts to increase the efficiency and transparency of the court system; stresses the need to build up an enforcement record for prosecutions and convictions against which progress can be measured; calls for the unification of jurisprudence in order to ensure a predictable judicial system and public trust;

14. Calls on the Commission to prepare, with its next Progress Report, an assessment of the impact and results achieved from the allocation of EU funds to reform of the judiciary and the fight against corruption; calls on the Commission to provide the Council and Parliament with a more detailed assessment of the efficiency of anti-corruption measures taken by the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the case of public procurement and fraud, and to present
it together with the next Progress Report;

15. Recognises the efforts made in public administration reform but calls for further efforts in the field, which continues to be politicised and lacks capacities and professionalism; welcomes the government’s adoption of a National Strategy for Public Administration Reform and the creation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement’s subcommittee on public administration reform; is concerned at the non-transparent and ad hoc process of converting temporary posts into permanent ones, entailing further politicisation of the administration; calls for the development of a clear human resources strategy, defining the needs of administration in terms of capacities and skills and its implementation through merit-based recruitment and career development; welcomes the increased recruitment of non-majority communities but underlines that it should be carried out on the basis of assessment of needs in the administration, in order to ensure that the skills of new employees match the job requirements;

25. Notes with satisfaction that IPA assistance works well in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; encourages both its government and the Commission to simplify the administration procedure for IPA funding, with the aim of making it more accessible to smaller and non-centralised civil organisations, trade unions and other beneficiaries.

Resolution on topical subject tabled by Kristian Vigenin on behalf of AFET committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

10. Notes the progress achieved in reforming the functioning of the public administration in general, and the passing of the law on civil servants in particular; calls on the authorities to ensure compliance with the law by putting a stop to unlawful promotion practices and the hiring of temporary staff outside the scope of the law;

19. Underlines the important role played by civil society organisations in the country’s ongoing transformation, in relation not only to the reform process and the fight against corruption, but also – equally importantly – to inter-ethnic relations and monitoring of the human rights situation; stresses that such activities should be adequately supported by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance;

25. Urges the authorities to start investing in the maintenance and upgrading of the railway network, which is, both ecologically and economically, a viable alternative to the road system as well as being crucial for the resumption of sound regional cooperation; encourages the country to ensure better integration of its transport system with those of all its neighbouring countries, particularly as regards the public sector, and calls on the Commission to provide the necessary technical and financial assistance within the framework of the IPA;

26. Congratulates the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on its progress in preparing to take over the management of funds under the IPA; notes with satisfaction the accreditation of national authorities for the IPA components on regional development, human resources development and rural development; calls on the country’s government and the Commission to speed up the necessary work with a view to transferring management of the IPA components on transition assistance and institution-building and on cross-border cooperation; stresses the importance of the IPA as an important tool designed to assist the country in preparing for future EU membership.
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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Gabriele Albertini on behalf of AFET committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

20. Congratulates the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the progress it has achieved since the last progress report, and in particular during the last few months; notes with satisfaction that this progress has been acknowledged by the Commission, which has recommended the opening of accession negotiations with the country; calls on the Council to act in accordance with the Commission’s recommendation at the summit to be held in December 2009; expects the negotiations to begin in the near future with the hope that mutually satisfactory solutions to outstanding issues with neighbouring countries can be reached, including the name issue between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece; calls on the governments of both countries to intensify their efforts to this end; recalls the importance of good neighbourly relations and urges the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to be sensitive on issues affecting its neighbours; notes the recent establishment of diplomatic relations with Kosovo, as well as the conclusion of the agreement on the physical demarcation of the border, as a vital contribution to regional stability;

21. Calls on the authorities of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to continue their efforts in the reform process, particularly in the fields of the reform of public administration and the judiciary, anti-corruption policy, women’s rights and inter-ethnic relations, including guaranteeing the rights of persons of all ethnic backgrounds and increasing their participation in public life and administration.

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# Special Report 12/2016 of 21 April 2016

## Agencies' use of grants: not always appropriate or demonstrably effective

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<td>1. How did the agencies manage grants and were they implemented in compliance with the rules?</td>
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<td>1.1. Do agencies choose grants as the most appropriate funding tool and are grant-funded activities properly aligned to the agencies' mission, strategic tasks and objectives?</td>
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<td>1.2. Do agencies' procedures ensure selection of proposals in compliance with the applicable rules and effective monitoring of their implementation?</td>
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<td>1.3. Do agencies measure and evaluate outcomes of grant activity appropriately?</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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<td>1.1. Agencies did not address all funding options, grants were not always the most appropriate tool and agencies' programming documents were not fully aligned with their mandate and strategic objectives: inadequate follow-up of ex ante evaluation contributed to agencies' choice of inappropriate funding tools and poor grant design; incomplete annual programming documents did not fully align agencies' grant actions with their mandates and strategic objectives;</td>
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<td>1.2. Agencies implemented grants in broad compliance with the rules but there were shortcomings in certain grant award, expert selection and internal control procedures: in specific cases grant selection and award procedures did not fully respect basic principles and potential conflict of interest risks persist; agencies generally improved their grant implementation and controls but some weaknesses remain;</td>
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<td>1.3. Whilst grants generally contributed to the audited agencies' policy implementation, agencies failed to set up adequate monitoring systems to measure the overall effectiveness of their grant-funded activities and ex post evaluations were either lacking or incomplete.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
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<td>1. Before launching grants, agencies should explore if grants are the most effective tool. Simplified cost options and direct award should be used whenever justified: Whenever agencies use grant funding for a specific action, this should be based on a thorough analysis of the agency's needs, strategic objectives, EU added value to be achieved, potential candidates to be targeted, as well as the level of competition necessary to achieve cost-effectiveness. Agencies should avail of the simplified cost options whenever appropriate. Grants should be awarded without a call for proposals (i.e., directly) whenever justified by Article 190 of the rules of application for the financial regulation (RAP). Agencies should establish clear guidelines and criteria to assist management in deciding upon the most effective, efficient and economic tool for the implementation of a specific task or activity;</td>
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| | 2. The agencies' work programmes should indicate which activities are to be implemented by grants, the specific objectives and expected results to be achieved by the grant actions, as well as the planned financial and human resources needed to implement the grant actions: When agencies establish their annual work programme, they should set out specific result-oriented objectives for their grant actions which have to be clearly
aligned to their strategic objectives and mandate of the founding regulation. To be a valid financing decision, agencies have to indicate in the annual work programme the financial and human resources authorised for the implementation of the grant actions (budget line and appropriations) as well as essential information on the planned call for proposals (selection and award criteria, maximum grant amount, maximum possible rate of co-financing, time table). In case of multi-annual framework partnerships, annual priorities and expected results have to be set for the specific grants;

3. Agencies applying specific grant procedures should establish formal internal procedures respecting the principles of transparency and equal treatment, and safeguarding against potential conflicts of interest:
   In cases where the agencies’ founding regulations derogate from the Financial Regulation (FR), the agency should establish formal internal procedures for the implementation of the derogation. The internal procedures should, in particular, ensure:
   a) transparency: internal staff members involved in the grant procedures should be formally appointed and clearly authorised by the responsible authority (authorising officer/governing board); consensus reports should clearly justify all major decisions; for each evaluation stage both the underlying criteria and the relative weighting of the evaluation stage should be published in the call for proposals;
   b) equal treatment of candidates: communicate harmonised methodologies and thresholds to all members of the selection panel/committee; establish clearly separated eligibility, selection and award criteria; set selection and award criteria which are neither too specific nor too vague; do not directly appoint external experts; set thresholds for proposals to reach the final hearing stage, and publish in the call;
   c) absence of conflict of interest: formal conflict of interest policies should be established for external experts, internal staff and governing board members involved in the selection and award process; the policy should classify conflict of interest issues considering the accumulated effect of several minor conflict of interest and define effective mitigating measures;

4. Agencies should strengthen their verification system regarding grant project implementation:
   Agencies should establish standardised reporting requirements for the beneficiaries to allow for an efficient and effective monitoring system. The outcomes of ex post controls should be reviewed at least annually to identify and address any potential systemic issues in the ex ante control system. Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) should indicate a maximum amount. Specific agreements implementing recurrent grants and FPAs should be signed prior to the planned start date of the grant action unless duly justified;

5. Agencies should set up grant monitoring and reporting systems based on result and impact-oriented key performance indicators as well as ex post evaluation results:
   For each impact and result-oriented objective set in the multi-annual and annual work programmes, agencies should develop at least one relevant key performance indicator on impact and results. In addition, agencies should carry out ex post evaluations of significant grant actions (including the recurrent grant activities financed on an annual basis) taking into account the need for important data and information from Member States involved to ensure that they are consistent with the strategic objectives set.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

CONT Working Document of 11/10/2016 on ECA Special Report 12/2016: Agencies use of grants: not always appropriate or demonstrably effective (PE585.493v02-00)

Rapporteur: Dennis de Jong (GUE/NGL)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1-3. Welcomes the report and Court’s findings and recommendations, and notes the reply of the Commission and the Agencies involved;

4. States that the agencies’ effective management of grant activities is crucial for the achievement of Union objectives and policies;
5. Notes that the Court has concluded that the agencies audited in general awarded and paid grants in compliance with the rules;
6. States nevertheless that the Court has identified certain shortcomings regarding funding options, award procedures, control systems and performance measurement and has given five recommendations to improve these shortcomings;
7. Notes that an agency’s strategic justification and choice of a funding tool could strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the tool and thereby the implementation of its tasks;
8. Encourages all agencies to have specific guidelines and criteria to assist their choice of the specific funding tool, based on an analysis of the agencies’ needs, its resources, the objectives to be achieved, the potential beneficiaries to be targeted as well as the level of competition necessary and lessons learned from previous choices;
9. Notes the Court’s observation that grant procedures use more restrictive eligibility criteria and weaker financial award criteria than procurement and should therefore not be the default funding option. Adds, however, that a careful balance should be maintained between these weaknesses of grant procedures versus the administrative costs involved in public procurement procedures, and does not therefore agree with the Court’s observation that public procurement should be the default option; Points furthermore to the regulatory framework of some agencies which forces them to use grant procedures;
10. Is concerned by the Court’s observation that the agencies involved failed to set up adequate monitoring systems and ex-post evaluations;
11. Emphasises that performance monitoring and results evaluation is essential to public accountability and to comprehensive information for policymakers; highlights that due to their decentralised character, this is even more relevant for agencies;
12. Calls upon the Agency Network to assist agencies in improving their funding procedures and, in particular, their procedures for performance monitoring in this respect;
13. Highlights in particular the Court’s findings regarding the grant procedures and the need of transparency, equal treatment and avoidance of potential conflicts of interest; calls on the agencies concerned to implement the Court’s recommendation as soon as possible;
14. Calls on the Commission and the agencies who were subject of the audits in this special report to provide the Parliament with an update of the implementation of the recommendations.

### Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

**CONT Draft Report of 30/01/2017** on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2015, based on 2016/2175(DEC) (PE 593.886v01-00)

Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

Vote scheduled in committee (1st reading/single reading) - 23/03/2017

[The European Parliament,]

1. Acknowledges from the Centre that:

   - it further revised its independence policy and has created an internal procedure for the implementation of that policy; notes furthermore that the updated policy was endorsed by the Centre's Management Board in June 2016 and that it requires from all staff to submit a declaration of interests before taking up duty; acknowledges in addition that the revised policy requires all staff involved in a particular procurement procedure to sign a declaration of absence of conflict of interest;

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**CONT Draft Report of 6/02/2017** on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Agency for the Management of Operational
Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (now European Border and Coast Guard Agency) for the financial year 2015, based on 2016/2179(DEC) (PE 593.859v01-00)
Leading committee: CONT (LIBE for opinion)

Vote scheduled in committee (1st reading/single reading) - 23/03/2017

[The European Parliament,]

6. Acknowledges that the implementing rules to the Agency’s financial regulation provide that the authorising officer may waive recovery of an established amount where recovery is inconsistent with the principle of proportionality; acknowledges furthermore that, in line with that principle, and after having received external legal advice, the authorising officer announced the recovery of EUR 600 000, which covers the grants awarded since 2014; takes note that for the same reason the authorising officer announced the decision not to reimburse EUR 200 000 due in 2016; understands that, since the inception of ex-post controls by the Agency and in order to respect the principle of transparency and equal treatment towards the Agency’s beneficiaries, which are Member States' public authorities dealing with border management and migration issues, the authorising officer acted in accordance with the Agency’s best practice of recovering irregular payments referring to the last two years of cooperation;

14. Observes that all issues relating to conflicts of interest are covered by the Agency’s code of conduct, which applies to all staff; notes with satisfaction that the Agency updated in 2016 its internal guidance to staff members on understanding the concept of conflict of interest; notes with concern that the Agency did not provide for any checks of the factual correctness or a process for updating the declarations of absence of conflicts of interest;

15. Notes that the Agency is in the process of finalising its internal whistleblowing rules; asks the Agency to report to the discharge authority on the establishment and implementation of those rules;

17. Notes that in 2015 the Internal Audit Service (IAS) conducted an audit on “Procurement and Asset Management”, which resulted in four recommendations rated as “Important”; acknowledges that the Agency prepared an action plan to address those recommendations;

19. Recalls that in previous years the high and constantly increasing number of grant agreements, as well as the magnitude of related expenditure to be verified by the Agency, indicated that a more efficient and cost-effective alternative funding mechanism could be used to finance the Agency’s operational activities; acknowledges that the Agency’s new founding regulation has removed the term “grants” as the contractual instrument for the operational activities between the Agency and the institutions of the Member States; hopes that this modification will allow the Agency to streamline the financial management of its operational activities; calls on the Agency to inform the discharge authority on further developments regarding this issue.

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CONT Draft Report of 7/02/2017 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Food Safety Authority for the financial year 2015, based on 2016/2174(DEC) (PE 593.881v01-00)
Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

Vote scheduled in committee (1st reading/single reading) - 23/03/2017
4. Acknowledges that the Authority developed an advanced conflict of interest screening tool related to procurement which was set out in a decision by its Executive Director; notes that this tool was designed to prevent conflicts of interest in procurement procedures of a scientific nature;

7. Takes note that the Authority has already committed to introduce two-year cooling-off periods in relation to the following interests: membership of a managing entity or scientific advisory body, employment and consultancy;

12. Notes that, pending the adoption of implementing rules on whistleblowing, the Authority implemented in January 2016 a new standard operating procedure on the handling of requests by whistleblowers facing retaliation; acknowledges that the Authority is awaiting further guidance from the Commission before formulating its internal whistleblowing rules; asks the Commission to provide the additional guidance as soon as possible and calls on the Authority to report to the discharge authority on the establishment and implementation of its whistleblowing rules;

15. Notes that the Authority has launched a number of structured mechanisms to manage its interaction with interested parties in order to ensure that engagement is carried out in a transparent way and to avoid the risk of undue influence; notes that the mechanisms includes public consultations on selected scientific opinions and guidance documents, information sessions for applicants, open scientific plenary meetings, stakeholder meetings, meetings of the Executive Director;

21. Observes that according to the IAC, the Authority’s current internal control system provides reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of the business objectives set up for the processes audited, except for the formalisation and enhancement of ex-ante, interim and ex-post evaluations, and the misalignment between delegation acts and access rights to the ABAC accounting system; calls on the Authority to report to the discharge authority on the actions taken in order tackle the deficiencies of its internal control system.

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CONT Draft Report of 6/02/2017 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2015, based on 2016/2166(DEC) (PE 593.880v01-00)
Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

Vote scheduled in committee (1st reading/single reading) - 23/03/2017

4. Notes that the anti-fraud strategy of the Agency was adopted by its Management Board in November 2014, with the aim of ensuring proper handling of conflict of interest issues and of developing anti-fraud activities especially through prevention, detection, awareness-raising and closer cooperation with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF); takes note that in line with OLAF’s “Methodology and guidance for anti-fraud strategies for EU decentralised Agencies”, the Agency conducted a fraud risk assessment of its activities based on the estimated likelihood and possible impact of fraud;

11. Takes note that the IAC established a risk assessment to select beneficiaries for on-the-spot verifications, resulting in the verification of payments for three different grants to ensure accuracy and reliability of the staff costs claimed; observes that on the basis of the new policy, approved in October 2015, further on-the-spot verifications were conducted in 2016;
7. Notes with satisfaction that the Agency’s Management Board adopted its own internal guidelines on whistleblowing in December 2016; asks the Agency to report to the discharge authority on the implementation of its whistleblowing rules;

8. Notes with concern that the Agency has not undertaken specific initiatives to create or increase transparency regarding contacts with lobbyists.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2014: performance, financial management and control, based on 2015/2205(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0159; A8-0080/2016)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

10. Notes from the Network that the practical implementation of the framework financial regulation by agencies poses in many cases challenges to efficient and simplified budget spending, in particular in the areas of procurement, multiannual programming, indirect grant management and complicated documentation for the consolidation package of the accounts; calls on the Commission and the Network to further explore the possibility of simplifying the rules, taking into account the differing needs of the agencies;

38. Asks the Union institutions and bodies to apply strictly the measures pertaining to discretion and exclusion in public procurement, with proper background checks being carried out in every instance, and to apply the exclusion criteria so as to debar companies in the event of any conflict of interest, this being essential to protect the financial interests of the Union;

21. Acknowledges from the Network that over 80 % of all decentralised agencies have an anti-fraud strategy in place; notes that of the four remaining agencies, three were set to develop and adopt an anti-fraud strategy during 2016 while the fourth, the European Police Office, applies the principles and standards defined in the Commission’s anti-fraud strategy, together with a strong financial model entailing continuous ex-ante and ex-post verification activities; takes note that all adopted strategies take into account the European Anti-Fraud Office’s methodology and guidance for anti-fraud strategies;

22. Acknowledges the agencies’ view that the trust of Union citizens in Union institutions, agencies and bodies is of the highest importance; notes that the agencies have introduced a number of concrete measures and tools to address adequately the risks of actual and perceived conflicts of interest; calls on the agencies to consider a strategy on how to get closer to Union citizens; notes that all agencies have already adopted policies for the prevention and management of conflicts of interest, and that those policies are aligned with the Commission’s guidelines on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest in EU decentralised agencies; notes that those policies include, inter alia, measures for detecting potential risks at an early stage, identification of best practice in other entities such as the Commission, other agencies and the European Anti-Fraud Office as well as conflicts of interest policies for staff and collaborators not covered by the Staff Regulations; invites the agencies to consider the advantages and disadvantages of having common regulations governing conflicts of interest;

31. Notes that the principle of “value for money” and “EU added value” also holds for agencies, which should ensure that citizens are well informed of the results of the agencies’ activities; notes that achieving results is important; emphasises that many agencies do not explicitly include in their annual reports information on the effectiveness and efficiency of their activities in an accountable manner; reiterates that it is important for the Network to become a
member of the new Inter-institutional Working Group on Performance in order to reach a common understanding of performance-based and results-oriented budgeting principles, as well as to identify possible improvements to the performance models currently applied in the agencies; requests that the Court of Auditors provide an evaluation of the agencies’ performance and results in time for the review of the 2016 Multiannual Financial Framework.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2014, based on 2015/2168(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0170; A8-0100/2016)

Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

6. Asks the Agency to apply strictly the measures pertaining to discretion and exclusion in public procurement, with proper background checks being carried out in every instance, and to apply the exclusion criteria so as to debar companies in the event of any conflict of interest;

7. Notes that the Agency’s anti-fraud strategy was adopted by its Management Board in November 2014, with the aim of ensuring proper handling of conflict of interest issues and of developing anti-fraud activities especially through prevention, detection, awareness-raising and closer cooperation with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF); takes note that in line with OLAF’s ‘Methodology and guidance for anti-fraud strategies for EU decentralised Agencies’, the Agency conducted a fraud risk assessment of its activities based on the estimated likelihood and possible impact of fraud;

13. Notes from the Court’s report that the Agency started to implement a new ex-ante and ex-post control policy for grants; takes note that at the time of the Court’s audit, the verification procedures were yet to be documented; acknowledges from the Agency that, when it began implementing the new control policy in May 2014, it prioritised the guidelines for beneficiaries on the preparation of cost statements; acknowledges furthermore that those guidelines were elaborated and distributed to the resource officers performing the ex-ante verifications on grants and are applicable from the financial year 2016;

14. Notes from the Court’s report the weaknesses identified in the Agency’s ex-ante and ex-post verifications; points out that in one case, requested documents were not provided, and in another, ineligible expenditure was included, but the full amount claimed was nevertheless approved; acknowledges from the Agency that, following the observations of the Court, it initiated recovery from the beneficiary concerned in the second case; acknowledges that the Agency will rigorously document any instances of overriding of controls or deviations from established policies and procedures that may occur in the future;

15. Notes with concern from the Court’s report that, although the ex-ante and ex-post verifications are incompatible tasks, the internal auditor was involved in both; acknowledges from the Agency that a formal ex-post verification strategy will be developed ensuring compatibility with the tasks of the Agency’s Internal Audit Capability; acknowledges that the Agency’s internal auditor is to carry out exclusively ex-post controls, including on-the-spot verifications, and verify the effectiveness of the Agency’s ex-ante verification process; expects the Agency to report back to the discharge authority on the progress made with the measures put into action regarding the ex-ante and ex-post control policy.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the

Leading committee: CONT (LIBE for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

1. Acknowledges from the report of the Court of Auditors (“the Court”) on the annual accounts of the Agency for the financial year 2014 (“the Court’s report”) that considerable improvements were noted in both ex-ante and ex-post verifications of expenditure claimed by cooperating countries under grant agreements; acknowledges from the Agency that it introduced in June 2013 a more comprehensive, risk-based system of ex-ante controls, which include the requirement to submit selected supporting documents together with the request for final payment; notes, furthermore, that the system of ex-ante controls is complemented by ex-post controls carried out at the beneficiaries' location or in the form of a desk review, and that the payments not subject to ex-ante controls are subject to ex-post controls;

7. Acknowledges that the Agency developed and adopted rules governing the transparency and the possible conflicts of interests of its Management Board, staff and seconded national experts, in particular the “Frontex Staff Code of Conduct”, the “Code of Conduct for all persons participating in Frontex activities”, and the “Code of Conduct for joint return operations coordinated by Frontex”; acknowledges, furthermore, that the Agency’s Executive Director approved its “Anti-fraud Strategy and Action Plan” in August 2015; notes that that anti-fraud strategy was drafted using both the guidelines for the agencies and those of the European Anti-Fraud Office;

10. Encourages the Agency further to raise awareness of the conflict-of-interest policy among its staff, alongside ongoing awareness-raising activities and the inclusion of integrity and transparency as an obligatory item to be discussed during recruitment procedures and performance reviews;

13. Asks the Agency to apply strictly the measures pertaining to discretion and exclusion in public procurement, with proper background checks being carried out in every instance, and to apply the exclusion criteria so as to debar companies in the event of any conflict of interest, this being essential to protect the financial interests of the Union;

17. Notes with concern from the Court’s report that the high and constantly increasing number of grant agreements, as well as the magnitude of related expenditure to be verified and reimbursed by the Agency, indicates that a more efficient and cost-effective alternative funding mechanism could be used to finance Agency’s operational activities; notes furthermore that in the past years the complexity and administrative burden of the current mechanisms has led to the Court not being able to assure the legality and regularity of the transactions; further notes that in 2015 there was a further increase in the magnitude of operations undertaken by the Agency and the new and specific tasks that it was mandated within the EU Regional Task Force; calls on the Agency to take into account, during the review and reform of its financing mechanisms, the concerns expressed above;

18. Acknowledges from the Agency that one of the recommendations made by its Management Board following the external evaluation of the Agency relates to the facilitation of financial management and calls for the limitation introduced by the Agency’s founding regulation to be abandoned by mentioning grants; notes that contractual relationships between the Agency and the Member States’ authorities could pave the way for more efficient and transparent financial management.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2014, based on 2015/2177(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0168; A8-0103/2016)
Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

1. Acknowledges from the Centre that:
   - its ex-post verification strategy is in place and the ex-post audits covering the period 2012-2013 were performed in 2014 using the interinstitutional framework contract for audits;
   - two audits were selected for its grant verification plan and completed in 2014; notes that for one audit a recovery of 2,9 % of the paid expenses was raised and for the other audit no recovery was necessary;

8. Notes that with regard to its procurement procedures, the Centre has put specific focus on ensuring consistency in all tender documents; emphasises that the Centre’s revised Committee on Procurement, Contracts and Grants is providing an additional quality control mechanism; calls on the Centre in particular to carry out careful checks on conflicts of interest in relation to tenders, procurement, recruitment and contracts in order to strengthen transparency;

9. Asks the Centre to apply strictly the measures pertaining to discretion and exclusion in public procurement, with proper background checks being carried out in every instance, and to apply the exclusion criteria so as to debar companies in the event of any conflict of interest, this being essential to protect the financial interests of the Union;

17. Calls on the Centre to enhance its procedures and practices aimed at safeguarding the financial interests of the Union and to actively contribute to a results-oriented discharge process.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Food Safety Authority for the financial year 2014, based on 2015/2176(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0172; A8-0086/2016)
Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

3. Asks the Authority to apply strictly the measures pertaining to discretion and exclusion in public procurement, with proper background checks being carried out in every instance, and to apply the exclusion criteria so as to debar companies in the event of any conflict of interest, this being essential to protect the financial interests of the Union;

4. Reminds the Authority that the first objective of its independence policy should be its reputation and therefore to make sure that the Authority is free from real or perceived conflicts of interests, in particular with the economic sectors it is de facto regulating;
5. Notes that the Authority put in place a project to improve efficiency and compliance in transactional processing through a centralised strategy, the introduction of planning, monitoring and reporting processes and structure, as well as through centralised finance and procurement processes and structure; notes with satisfaction that this project will allow the Authority to deliver its mandate more efficiently, reducing the time needed to produce outputs and the number of people involved, resulting in a reduction of 14 full-time staff equivalents in 2015;

8. Acknowledges that the Authority launched a project to modify the way it screens and processes the annual declarations of interest in order to ensure better coherence and overall compliance with its rules on declarations of interest; notes, furthermore, that this new system, scheduled to be completed in the course of 2016, foresees centralised screening of the annual declarations of interest and transfer of responsibility from the Authority’s scientific departments to its legal and regulatory department;

9. Notes that in order to attain both working with the top academics in the industry and having the most effective conflicts of interest policy possible, the Authority uses a system to assess the experts’ interests, which takes into account the role of the experts and the mandate of the scientific working group or panel of which the expert would be a member against a number of different criteria; notes, furthermore, that in 2016 the Authority will undertake an examination of the systems it has in place to detect conflicts of interest as part of the regular cycle of review of its independence policy; asks the Authority to inform the discharge authority about the outcomes of the review and the necessary adjustments to the procedures for selecting experts and checking their credentials;

17. Encourages the Authority further to raise awareness of the conflict-of-interest policy among its staff, alongside ongoing awareness-raising activities and the inclusion of integrity and transparency as an obligatory item to be discussed during recruitment procedures and performance reviews.

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Leading committee: CONT (EMPL, LIBE for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

7. Notes that the principle of 'value for money' also holds for agencies and that they should demonstrate that their performance is effective, ensuring that the citizens are well informed of the results of the agencies’ activities; requests the Network to keep the discharge authority closely informed of the use and added value of the common set of principles and handbooks on performance measurement systems and frameworks, multi-annual and annual programming documents, key performance indicators, reporting and evaluating tools;

27. Welcomes that a common set of principles for efficient and effective results oriented management, as well as common guidelines on performance measurement systems, multi-annual and annual programming documents and reporting and evaluation tools have been agreed upon; emphasises that it is important that the Network becomes a member of the new Inter-institutional Working Group on Performance to encourage common understanding of the concept of a good and improved performance; requests that the Court of Auditors provides an evaluation of the agencies’ performance and results in time for the review in the 2016 Multiannual Financial Framework;
28. Is of the opinion that the trend to focus reporting more on effectiveness and results achieved is a positive one; asks that the reporting system be further strengthened in this respect to enhance the democratic accountability of the agencies;

36. Observes that, following the Roadmap action, the Commission published the “Guidelines on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest in EU decentralised agencies” (the “Guidelines”) in December 2013; notes that those Guidelines include provisions concerning the publication of declarations of interests for management board members, executive directors, experts in scientific committees or other such bodies and staff; notes furthermore that the Guidelines provide a clear reference for the policies adopted by the agencies; takes note that a number of agencies have issued or updated their policies on prevention and management of conflicts of interest in order to reflect the Guidelines;

37. Notes that the Guidelines are not legally binding on the agencies and calls upon the Commission to examine how more binding agreements with the agencies can be concluded to promote transparency and to avoid conflicts of interest;

43. Invites the Court of Auditors to follow-up on its Special Report No 15/2012 “Management of conflicts of interest in selected EU Agencies”;

44. Encourages the Commission to conduct regular evaluation of transparency and integrity of the agencies and to make the results of such evaluation publicly available;

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union for the financial year 2013, based on 2014/2113(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0161; A8-0094/2015)

Leading committee: CONT (LIBE for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

2. Acknowledges from the Agency that:
   - several measures were put in place to manage and prevent situations of conflicts of interests including the development of a detailed disciplinary procedure; calls on the Agency to inform the discharge authority on whether or not a specific policy for the prevention and management of conflicts of interests based on the Commission’s guidelines will be adopted,
   - the results and the impact of the Agency’s work on Union citizens are made publicly available on the Agency’s website, mainly through its annual activity report, but also through contacts with the media and civil society organisations,
   - the recruitment procedures examined showed significant shortcomings affecting transparency and the equal treatment of candidates; welcomes the fact that the Agency has implemented procedures aiming to reduce those shortcomings;

3. Regrets that for two consecutive years, the Court found no reasonable assurances as to the legality and regularity of the Agency’s transactions; notes that in order to verify the expenditure claimed by the cooperating countries, the Agency performed the reasonableness checks prior to payment for joint return operations and joint land/sea/air operations; expresses its deep concern that for the grant agreements signed before June 2013, the Agency did not usually
request documentation supporting the cooperating countries' entitlements; stresses the need for the effective analysis of the use of Union funds in joint land/sea/air operations;

4. Notes that the majority of 2013 transactions resulted from grant agreements signed before June 2013; notes furthermore that 2013 grant transactions were not subject to ex post controls as only the grants relating to transactions from previous years are subject to such controls;

5. Notes with concern that due to a lack of sufficient and appropriate evidence on the effectiveness of ex ante and ex post verifications in the 2013 grant transactions, the Court found insufficient insurance as to the legality and regularity of the 2013 grant transactions related to joint land/sea/air operations;

6. Welcomes the introduction of a reinforced and more comprehensive system of ex ante verifications which was introduced for grant agreements signed after June 2013 as acknowledged by the Court; notes furthermore from the Agency that the statistical sample used by the Court in its 2013 audit did not include transactions falling under the reinforced ex ante control system; calls on the Agency to provide the discharge authority with a report on ex post verifications undertaken under the improved verification system and with a detailed analysis of the system's improvements;

10. Regrets that the Agency did not adopt a clear, comprehensive and objective policy for the prevention and management of conflicts of interests; acknowledges that even though the Agency has not yet signed its headquarters agreement, this does not prevent it from adopting internal laws, codes and guidelines that state the necessary definitions, principles and essential requirements for a policy on conflicts of interests; urges the Agency, in addition, to take concrete steps in order to resolve and manage cases concerning conflicts of interests; calls on the Agency to adopt those measures until the end of September 2015 and to inform the discharge authority on the concrete outcome of its conflicts of interests policy;

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2013, based on 2014/2109(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0139; A8-0069/2015)

Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

1. Notes from the Court’s report that regarding the three comments made in the 2012 discharge report, the Court marked two of them as "Not Applicable" and one as "Ongoing"; notes that the ongoing issue concerns ex ante verifications that have not been supported by a sufficient documentation on the eligibility and accuracy of costs claimed; notes with concern that the Centre has adopted ex post verification strategy with a delay of ten months; expects the Centre to inform the discharge authority as soon as the ongoing issue is completed;

2. Acknowledges from the Centre that:
   a) the revised version of the Centre’s comprehensive independence policy, which was to be adopted by the Centre’s Management Board in 2014, has been split into a policy applying to external experts and a policy applying to members of staff; notes that these policies will be ready for adoption by the Centre’s Management Board in 2015; calls on the Centre to inform the discharge authority about the adoption of the abovementioned policies;
   b) the curricula vitae and declarations of interests of the members of its Management Board, Advisory Forum and Senior Management have been made publicly available on the Centre’s website;
   c) the information on its activities’ impact on Union citizens is provided on the Centre’s website, through the publication of several types of documents,
including press releases, newsletters, results of scientific research and specific reports;

13. Takes note from the Centre that the ex post grant verification plan for 2012 experienced delays and was merged with the grant verification plan for 2013; acknowledges that the grant verification plan for 2013 is being implemented with the help of an external audit firm, contracted under the Commission’s framework contract for the supply of technical assistance services in the field of audits and controls; calls on the Centre to inform the discharge authority about the results of the selected audits which are being performed under the 2013 plan.

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Food Safety Authority for the financial year 2013, based on 2014/2108(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0143; A8-0097/2015)
Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

9. Notes from the Authority that following consultation with key partners in 2014, it has clarified and partially reviewed its implementing rules regarding the Policy on Independence concerning declarations of interests; regrets however, that the revised procedure for the screening of annual, special and oral declarations of interests of the members of the Authority’s Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and Working Groups is still under the authority of the Heads of Unit; notes, nevertheless, that that procedure introduced the criteria upon which the screening is based, as well as the role of the screening officer, who has to immediately report any possible conflict of interests to the respective reporting officer;

10. Strongly regrets that the main loopholes in the Authority’s implementing rules have not been closed, despite that review; notes in particular the fact that the assessment of scientists’ interests is performed in reference to the mandate of the panel at stake instead of the Authority’s remit, whereas the latter is used as the scope for the declaration of those interests;

11. Urges the Authority to make concrete efforts to eliminate this possible arbitrary practice from its internal procedures in order to guarantee the Authority’s impartiality with regard to the prevention and management of conflicts of interests and to eliminate any risks; expresses its deep disappointment about the common practice of the Authority to apply a double standards conflict of interest’s policy towards experts from food safety organisations contrary to the policy applied to the other staff; in addition calls upon the Authority to adopt a revolving door policy until the end of September 2015;

21. Notes with concern that the Authority’s annual work programme does not contain sufficient details on planned procurements and grants to support financing decision in the sense of Article 64 of its Financial Regulation’s Implementing Rules; calls on the Authority to remedy this deficiency, as including such details would allow a more effective monitoring of procurements and grants.

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2013, based on 2014/2099(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0141; A8-0083/2015)
Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

8. Acknowledges from the Agency that following the assessment of its exposure to conflicts of interests and the mapping of the existing rules and practices in the Agency, as well as the assessment of the implementation of those rules, it finalised a policy on management and prevention of conflicts of interests which was adopted by its Management Board at its meeting held in June 2014;

10. Takes note from the Court’s report that the Agency has awarded grants under five grant programmes to consortia consisting of environmental institutions and bodies in Europe, United Nations organisations and national environment organisations; observes that the total grant expenditure in 2013 was EUR 13 900 000, representing 31 % of the total operating expenditure; acknowledges that following the Court’s comment of 2014, the Agency intensified its checks on the eligibility and accuracy of staff costs claimed under the grant programmes, as these represent the major part of total costs;

11. Observes that the Agency’s ex ante verifications consist of a desk analysis of cost claims, while on the spot verifications at beneficiary level are rare; notes with concern that existing controls provide only limited assurances as to the eligibility and accuracy of the costs claimed by beneficiaries; acknowledges however that for the transactions audited by the Court, supporting documentation was obtained which provided reasonable assurances as to their legality and regularity.

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Leading committee: CONT (EMPL, LIBE for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

29. Notes with concern that, as was the case in the years before, there are a number of problems identified by the Court of Auditors which affect several agencies, in particular as regards:
   - weaknesses in budgetary planning,
   - potential conflicts of interest;
   - procurement and contract management,
   - lack of transparency or rigour in recruitments,
   - carryovers which are not supported by commitments or are excessively high,
   - weaknesses in verification of grant transactions;

59. Invites the Court of Auditors to monitor the agencies’ progress as regards management and prevention of conflicts of interest; reiterates its call on the Court of Auditors to further follow-up this issue extending the scope of its audit to other agencies, and to present its findings in a future special report on this matter;
62. Welcomes the fact that many of the agencies have put considerable effort into providing information about their policies and practice on conflicts of interest and recognises that many good practices are now already in place, and in particular welcomes, as an example of good practice to be considered by other agencies, the ‘cooling off period’ of non-assignment for a year implemented by EASA, so that anyone new to the organisation is not allocated work on files they had directly worked on in the previous five years;

66. Acknowledges that the conflict of interest policies and procedures for Management Board members, scientific committee members and experts and EMA staff have also been introduced and implemented;

70. Notes with satisfaction that the Commission adopted on 10 December 2013 guidelines on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest specifically addressed to the agencies, in line with the Common Approach; those guidelines concern members of management boards (executive directors, experts, members of boards of appeal, staff members of the agencies, as well as beneficiaries of Union grants and contracts); notes that those guidelines aim to provide a reference for the policies to be adopted and implemented by each agency;

73. Considers that following the publication of the Commission’s guidelines, the agencies may need to redraft their policies for the prevention and management of conflicts of interest to bring them in line with the Commission’s guidelines and the Court of Auditors’ recommendations without hesitation; acknowledges that most agencies planned to review their respective policy on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest based on those guidelines, and calls on the agencies to report to the discharge authority on this matter as well as on the actions taken in the framework of the 2012 discharge follow-up before the end of 2014;

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2011: performance, financial management and control, based on 2012/2214(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0134; A7-0118/2013)

Leading committee: CONT (EMPL, ENVI, LIBE for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

10. Notes with concern that there are a number of problems identified by the Court of Auditors which affect several agencies, in particular as regards:
- carryovers which are not supported by commitments or which appear excessively high,
- lack of transparency or rigour in recruitments,
- procurement and contract management,
- potential conflicts of interest, including at management board level;

43. Welcomes the Commission’s foreseen action on conflicts of interest and, in particular, its intention to come up with guidelines for a coherent policy on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest for members of the management boards and directors, experts in scientific committees, and members of boards of appeal[9], a task for which the Commission itself takes responsibility and has set 2013 as the target year; notes with satisfaction that this task is one of the Commission’s priority actions and milestones; urges the Commission to respect the proposed deadline to implement this action and to report to the discharge authority on its outcome before the end of 2013, attaching to its report the relevant legislative proposals;
44. Notes that, in this regard, the Commission foresees two actions to be undertaken by the agencies in 2013, namely, to adopt and implement a clear policy on conflicts of interest and, in particular, exchange experience and possibly develop a coordinated approach to common problems concerning scientific committees and boards of appeal, and define transparent and objectively verifiable criteria for the impartiality and independence of the members of boards of appeal, and to review selection procedures for members of scientific committees; urges the agencies to report to the discharge authority on the state of play as regards those tasks before the end of 2013;

45. Invites the Commission to bear in mind the need to maintain an adequate balance between risks/benefits as regards the management of conflicts of interest, on one hand, and the objective to obtain the best possible scientific advice, on the other; considers that the proliferation of codes of conduct and ethical guidelines cannot rule out conflicts of interest; takes the view that the adoption of codes of conduct and ethical guidelines is necessary, but not sufficient, and that the eradication of conflicts of interest can only be achieved through the implementation of simple and appropriate rules, and their effective enforcement, as part of a general culture of honesty, integrity and transparency;

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2012 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union Agencies for the financial year 2010: performance, financial management and control of European Union Agencies, based on 2011/2232(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0164; A7-0103/2012)

Leading committee: CONT (EMPL, LIBE for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

21. Notes the weaknesses in procurement procedures; calls on the Agencies to increase the efficiency of their internal control system to avoid or detect persistent errors threatening the legality and regularity of the Agencies' transactions;

22. Urges the Agencies, accordingly, to strengthen their procurement procedures and, in particular, their procurement authorisation at the financing decision and work-programme level; notes, for example, that EMSA’s lack of underlying data to support the financing decision on planned operational procurement may put at risk the validity of the Agency’s decision;

23. Calls also on the Agencies to include in their Annual Work Programmes (AWP) clear information on the global budgetary envelope reserved for procurements and the indicative number and types of contracts envisaged; is concerned that often the Agencies’ AWP do not explicitly disclose all information referred to in the Financial Regulation and its implementing rules; notes that this weakness is mainly found in EMSA and ERA;

26. Calls on the Agencies, in addition, to develop and report on ex-post controls to ensure an adequate follow-up of the potential irregularities; supports in this respect the initiatives which develop a central and coordinated capacity at internal directorate level of each Agency in order to reduce the risk of inefficient use of resources and uncoordinated monitoring of contracts;

35. Urges in particular that the Agencies take action in order to ensure that their AWP is appropriately complete and contains all the information required (i.e. information on all activities carried out by the Agency and on the resources planned per activities) and additionally include detailed information and estimates for the appropriations carried over to the next year;
36. Encourages, in this respect, the Agencies to base their AWP on a template in order to ease comparison; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to draw up a guideline for this template;

49. Urges the Agencies to provide, via their websites, information necessary to ensure transparency, especially financial transparency; urges in particular the Agencies to make available on their website the list of all contracts awarded over the last three years and the list of the Members of their Management Boards with their Declaration of Interests and a list of all enterprises which are involved in PPP contracts or which are in other commercial connections with Agencies; calls on the Commission to continue its efforts to make this information fully accessible and integrate it into its financial transparency system;

52. Calls on the Agencies to adopt effective processes that duly address allegations of conflict of interests within the Agencies and/or the Management Board, in particular in EASA, EEA and EFSA;

54. Calls on the Agencies to carefully file and assess their control systems in order to prevent conflict of interests between their staff and experts working in their Agency; calls, in addition, on the Management Board of the Agencies to adopt and apply the strictest rules and verification mechanisms towards their Members to ensure their full independence from private interests; recalls once more that an Agency’s reputation will be damaged in cases where it is challenged on the ground of conflict of interests, with negative impact to the Union’s reputation;

56. Invites the Agencies, therefore, to provide their responsible committees and the Budgetary Control Committee in Parliament with a detailed overview of the procedures, criteria and verification mechanisms applied to avoid ‘revolving door’ cases and any situations of conflicts of interest; where this role is ensured together with the national counterparts, urges the Agencies to clarify this sharing role to avoid responsibility-related loopholes in cases of conflicts of interest;

57. Reiterates, moreover, its call to the Commission to provide information on the existence and application of regulations and rules on the cooling-off periods and among comparable cases in all the Agencies before the end of 2012.

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Leading committee: CONT
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

5. Is concerned, once again, by the Court of Auditors’ findings that several agencies had deficiencies in procurement procedures;

6. Calls, accordingly, on the agencies to strengthen their internal controls to make sure that contracts and procurement procedures are correctly applied; is, in fact, not ready to accept the chronic inability to put in place a control system which avoids or detects in time persistent errors undermining the legality and regularity of the agencies’ transactions;
7. Urges, in this respect, the agencies to:
   – improve the transparency of estimates and responsibility of projects,
   – strengthen their procurement authorisation at the financing decision and work-programme level,
   – ensure that the disclosure of exceptions in their Annual Activity Report is made in a comprehensive manner,
   – ensure adequate follow up of potential irregularities,
   – develop and report on ex-post controls;

11. Considers it important that the agencies improve their grant management by:
   – carrying out on-the-spot checks on the grant beneficiaries,
   – promoting standard unit costs per categories instead of grants based on reimbursements of eligible costs,
   – clearly describing, communicating and monitoring the actors’ responsibilities,
   – providing an operational plan agreed by all actors;

19. Reminds the agencies of the importance of fully guaranteeing the independence of their staff and experts; encourages, in particular, the agencies to carefully file and assess their controls on this; stresses, in fact, that an agency’s reputation could be affected in cases where it is challenged on the ground of conflicts of interest;

20. Calls on the Commission to provide Parliament with a detailed overview of the criteria applied in order to ensure the independence of recruited staff, in particular with respect to possible conflicts of interest, and to apply dissuasive sanctions where any irregularity is found;

21. Calls on the Court of Auditors to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the agencies’ approach to the management of situations where there are potential conflicts of interest;

46. Notes that performance and effectiveness are not measured in a standardised way; calls on the Interinstitutional Working Group on Agencies to address this issue;

47. Notes that agencies that do include KPIs are mainly based on the procedural and process aspects of performance, not on actual results; encourages the agencies to formulate result-oriented KPIs and calls on the Interinstitutional Working Group on Agencies to address this issue;

49. Urges the agencies to improve the link between their budget and their annual work programme; acknowledges, in fact, that often the Court of Auditors reported insufficiently rigorous procedures for drawing up the budget which led to a considerable number of budgetary transfers affecting most of the budget lines;

50. Welcomes the intention of CEDEFOP and the ECHA to make available Gantt charts for key operational activities; reminds the agencies that these charts outline, in a concise way, the amount of time spent by each staff member on a project and encourage an approach geared towards achieving results.

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Leading committee: CONT

Summary

[The European Parliament.]

4. Deplores the fact that the Court of Auditors again found deficiencies in procurement procedures conducted by several agencies; expresses concern in particular about the Court of Auditors’ finding that in 2008, first, no prior estimate of the market value was made before the procedure was launched and, second, there were recurrent and severe weaknesses in the monitoring of contracts and the programming of procurement operations; stresses that this situation points to major failings in cooperation between the relevant departments of the agencies concerned;

18. Stresses that the agencies must draw up multiannual work programmes in accordance with the multiannual Union strategy in the sector; considers that SMART objectives and RACER indicators should be laid down in the annual work programmes for performance assessment purposes; stresses that each agency’s work programme should also respect the limits of the agency’s budget as authorised by the budgetary authority; calls accordingly on the agencies to consider making a Gantt diagram part of the programming for each of their operational activities, with a view to indicating in concise form the amount of time spent by each staff member on a project and encouraging an approach geared towards achieving results.

Oral / Written Questions

E-015675-15 WQ Council Rule 130 Pascal Arimont (PPE) on Development of the role of Frontex
E-013187-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Marco Zanni (EFDD) on Role of agencies and research centres
E-004059-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Marina Albiol Guzmán (GUE/NGL) on Money spent on Frontex in Spain
E-003877-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Joëlle Bergeron (EFDD) on Frontex budget
E-002542-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Esteban González Pons (PPE) on Functioning of Operation Triton
E-002373-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Renato Soru (S&D) on Effectiveness of Operation Triton
E-010767-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz (ALDE) on Rescue operations
E-009370-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Kateřina Konečná (GUE/NGL) on Purpose of the ECDC
E-009369-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Kateřina Konečná (GUE/NGL) on European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control budget
E-007916-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Rachida Dati (PPE) on Appropriate use of the Internal Security Fund (External borders and visas)
P-007821-14 WQ Rule 130 to the Council by Ska Keller (Verts/ALE) on Joint police operation 'Mos Maiorum'
E-006929-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Sophie Montel (NI), Dominique Bilde (NI), Florian Philippot (NI) on EU agencies - budget reductions
E-006415-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Marc Tarabella (S&D) on Frontex and Operation 'Mare Nostrum'
E-012104-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Hans-Peter Martin (NI) on Information and transparency of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex)
E-011617-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Marc Tarabella (S&D), Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D) on Frontex and migration policy
E-002376/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 Lucas Hartong (NI) on Discharge 2010: European Environment Agency (EEA)
E-012336/2011 WQ COM Rule 117 Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) on European Ombudsman asks for an explanation of the EFSA’s rules and procedures
E-006952/2011 WQ COM Rule 117 Véronique Mathieu (PPE) on Interinstitutional working group on agencies
E-006951/2011 WQ Council Rule 117 Véronique Mathieu (PPE) on Interinstitutional working group on agencies
E-005247/2011 WQ COM Rule 117 Véronique Mathieu (PPE) on Financial control of decentralised agencies
E-003458/2011 WQ COM Rule 117 Claudio Morganti (EFDD) on Frontex: assessment of its work
E-003457/2011 WQ Council Rule 117 Claudio Morganti (EFDD) on Frontex: assessment of its work
E-001321/2011 WQ COM Rule 117 Véronique Mathieu (PPE) on Monitoring the financial management of agencies
| E-7457/2010 WQ COM Rule 117 Andreas Mölzer (NI) on Plan to deal with the proliferation of EU agencies |
| E-2931/2010 WQ COM Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE) on The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) |
| E-1328/2010 WQ COM Angelika Werthmann (NI) on Regulatory agencies |
**Special report No 13/2016 of 1 September 2016**

**EU assistance for strengthening the public administration in Moldova**

Neighbourhood policies and Enlargement | Foreign Affairs

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**Questions asked:**
1. Did EU aid to Moldova contribute effectively towards strengthening public administration in terms of its capacity to effectively and efficiently perform the various governance functions, including the delivery of public services?
   1.1. Did Sector Budget Support (SBS) programmes contribute effectively towards strengthening public administration?
   1.2. Did projects contribute effectively towards strengthening public administration?

**Observations:**
1.1. Budget support had a limited effect in strengthening the public administration in the sectors targeted: the Commission could have responded more quickly to risks and programmes were not sufficiently aligned to national strategies; conditionality was not sufficiently exploited; additional incentive-based funds were not well justified; there was only limited evidence of progress in the sectors targeted by SBS;
1.2. The projects partially contributed towards strengthening the public administration: the projects were relevant, but needs analyses were impaired by weaknesses; the projects were not always well-coordinated with SBS programmes; the results were not always sustainable due to lack of political will and other external factors.

**Recommendations:**
1. Mitigate risks linked to budget support operations:
   The Commission should apply the existing measures in the context of the early warning system more rigorously to prevent or mitigate risks and set out more clearly the course of action to be followed where risks become a reality. Such action should be taken in a timely manner;

2. Align SBS programmes with a well-defined national reform strategy:
   The Commission should better link the budget support programmes to national strategies. It should sequence the aid, ensuring that there is a well-defined national reform agenda. It should specifically appraise the relevance and credibility of the country’s strategy in relation to the available institutional and financial resources;

3. Strengthen the use of conditions and performance indicators:
   The Commission should strengthen its use of conditionality. This should involve: (i) setting clear and relevant conditions and performance indicators to better assess and demonstrate results, (ii) responding firmly, proportionally and quickly where the Moldovan government shows insufficient commitment to comply with what has been agreed;
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| 4. | **Link additional incentive-based funds more clearly to demonstrable progress:**  
     Incentive-based funds should be allocated on a more stringent application of the existing methodology; |
| 5. | **Coordinate projects with SBS programmes:**  
     The Commission should use projects more systematically to prepare or support SBS programmes. SBS technical assistance should be better timed to provide support for SBS programmes from the outset; |
| 6. | **Ensure the sustainability of projects:**  
     The Commission should ensure that sustainability aspects are embedded in the planning of all projects, by more systematically assessing the capacity and political commitment of public authorities to sustain outcomes. |

**CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur**

- **CONT Working Document of 24/10/2016** on ECA Special Report 13/2016 (2015 Discharge): EU assistance for strengthening the public administration in Moldova (PE587.728v01-00)
- **Rapporteur:** Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Welcomes the Court’s report, endorses its recommendations and encourages the Commission to take these recommendations into account when working on strengthening the administrative capacity of the Republic of Moldova;
2. Notes with concern that the EU has only partially contributed to strengthening the public administration and that ECA registered number of shortcomings, including weaknesses in the design and implementation of the audited programmes and projects;
3. Notes however that the European Commission has to operate in a difficult political context and meets with widespread corruption and many weaknesses of public institutions such as excessive bureaucracy, a lack of focus on core functions, a high staff turnover, low efficiency and lack of accountability; further notes that Moldova is hard hit by political instability, economic turmoil, deep poverty and massive emigration;
4. Notes that although the particular political circumstances and external factors played an important role in the success of the budgeted programmes and indeed went in many instances beyond the control of the European Commission, there were concrete weaknesses that could have been addressed by the Commission;
5. Notes that the weaknesses observed by ECA included slow response time of the European Commission to sudden developments, weak aligning of the programmes with Moldovan national strategies, lack of ambitious targets, vague and unclear conditions, and lack of justification for granting additional incentive-based funds;
6. Calls on the Commission to encourage their Moldavian counterparts to develop systematic, clearly formulated national strategies that would include clear, measurable objectives and to better link designing of the programmes in the country to these strategies;
7. Encourages the Commission to make use of ex ante evaluations to clearly assess the financing needs and to create focused and justified budget planning;
8. Calls on the Commission to prioritise the fight against corruption and regrets the absence of a truly effective government strategy in the fight against corruption; welcomes the appointment of the High Level Advisor on Anti-Corruption to the Prime Minister’s office; however reiterates the need for a more ambitious and effective strategy and greater political commitment by the national authorities in order to ensure sustainable results in this respect; calls on the national authorities to focus on the fight against corruption and for more transparency and integrity of the public administration as a matter of priority;
9. Calls on the Commission to continue the dialogue with the political leaders across the political spectre, national authorities and experts on judiciary and law enforcement in order to find an agreement on active fight against corruption and organised crime and on implementation of strict measures and
mechanisms to prevent corruption and economic crime in line with the country’s Criminal law;

10. Encourages the Commission to design projects that would strengthen rights and position of whistle-blowers in bringing public attention to corruption cases and fraud;

11. Notes that the main aid delivery methods are sector budget support (74% of aid) and projects; notes with regret that the budget support had a limited effect in strengthening the public administration;

12. Notes with concern that the method of sector budget support is a highly risky mean of budget distribution, especially in the Moldovan context, in which the public administration is paralyzed by massive corruption and dominated by local oligarchy; invites the Commission to reconsider the methods utilized based on an in-depth risk analysis;

13. Invites the Commission to utilize methods that would bring visible and tangible results for the Moldovan citizens;

14. Notes that the projects designs were generally relevant, although lacked coordination with regard to scope and timing and the technical assistance for the development of administrative capacity came later than needed;

15. Regrets that although projects generally delivered the expected outputs, the results were not always sustainable, for which the political will and external factors are partly responsible; calls on the Commission to build on the achievements of successful projects, which are sustainable, have a quantifiable added value and were implemented and used in accordance with the regulations; calls on the Commission to improve strategic planning and to secure sustainability and viability of the projects by setting it as a pre-condition of the projects;

16. Notes that the projects partially contributed towards strengthening of public administration, however they were not always in line with Moldovan’s administration’s needs or objectives; calls on the Commission to focus the projects more specifically in line with the concrete national needs;

17. Calls on the Commission to continue to follow the principles of sound financial management; invites the Commission to help designing projects that would serve as a stepping stone for further investments in the country and to establish cooperation with the IFIs in this regard; encourages the Commission to prioritise projects with high potential in key areas such as public procurement or selection procedures, and to avoid financing projects with limited prospects of sustainability;

18. Notes with concern that although in 2012 the European Commission has developed a more systematic analysis of risk, high-level steering committees for budget support operations and an early warning system for newly materialized risks, it was not able to detect in a timely manner “the theft of the century”, during which 1 billion US dollars of depositors funds, potentially even including contributions from the EU finances, has been embezzled during a massive corruption scandal; notes that the budget support payments have been eventually put on hold in July 2015 and made its resumption conditional to an improvement of the macro-economic and fiscal situation and the conclusion of an IMF agreement;

19. Calls on the Commission to improve the early warning system and the risk analysis in order to react in a faster and more flexible manner to potential risks;

20. Observes that building and administrative capacity in Moldova is a key issue as the country does not have a full control over its entire territory which gives an incentive to separatist tendencies of pro-Russian minded forces; reminds that Moldova has a European perspective and is therefore a strategic partner for the European Union;

21. Regrets that Moldova’s ongoing political instability has a long-lasting harm to the credibility of the country’s democratic institutions, leading to limited progress towards democracy, decrease in support of the EU integration and increase of the pro-Russian political initiatives;

22. Calls on the Commission to continue its engagement in Moldova, with a view to strengthening the political association and economic integration between the European Union and Moldova; stresses the importance of EU support, guidance, and monitoring on priority reforms aimed addressing the politicisation of state institutions, systemic corruption and public administration reform in order to achieve these objectives.

|---|---|
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

5. Emphasises the need to improve absorption capacity in the Republic of Moldova in order to ensure the efficient implementation of projects and use of financing; outlines the importance of strengthening a mechanism for management, transparency and accountability in order to monitor the absorption and use of EU funds; calls on the parties to identify the training needs required to ensure that the Republic of Moldova is able to carry out its obligations under the Association Agreement and Association Agenda;

6. Stresses the importance of strengthening the stability, independence and effectiveness of the institutions responsible for guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and good governance, and of consolidating the system of protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms; notes, in this context, the significance of previous steps towards reform, such as strengthening the autonomy of the system for appointing judges, having a representative configuration of the Central Electoral Committee, and improving the effectiveness and independence of the Court of Auditors;

21. Highlights the need to continue the work of professionalising and depoliticising central and local public administration, as this too will contribute greatly to the full implementation of the Association Agreement; calls on the Republic of Moldova to carry out the decentralisation strategy in an inclusive manner; points out the importance of effective local municipal authorities and adequate infrastructure in developing rural areas which is a pre-condition for reducing the rate of rural depopulation;

22. Welcomes the political determination to fulfil the requirements of the Association Agreement and praises the modernisation efforts undertaken in the country; is aware, however, of the need to further consolidate democratic institutions and encourages the Government of the Republic of Moldova to continue to work hard on the implementation of the necessary measures; believes that political stability and enduring consensus on reforms, especially as regards the rule of law and independence from state institutions, are of paramount importance to Moldova's European aspirations.

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EP Resolution of 13/11/2014 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part, based on 2014/0083(NLE) (P8_TA(2014)0050; A8-0020/2014)
Leading committee: AFET (INTA for opinion)

Final Act: Council Decision (EU) 2016/839

Summary of the Final Act:

Extract from the Summary

Objectives of the Association Agreement: the Agreement establishes an association between the Parties, aiming at political association and economic integration and leaving open the way for further progressive developments.

Sectoral cooperation: the Association Agreement also provides for a wide range of sectoral cooperation, focusing on support to core reforms, economic recovery...
and growth, governance and sector cooperation in 28 areas, such as: public administration reform, management of public finances, energy and transport, environmental protection and direct action, industrial and small and medium enterprise cooperation, social policies, consumer protection, agriculture and rural development, cross-border and regional level cooperation, education and training, civil society cooperation and youth as well as cultural cooperation.

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EP Resolution of 12/03/2014 on assessing and setting priorities for EU relations with the Eastern Partnership countries, based on 2013/2149(INI)
(P7_TA(2014)0229; A7-0157/2014)
Leading committee: AFET
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

4. Recognises that now more than ever the Eastern Partnership (EaP) societies in favour of integration with the European Union need strong, proactive and immediate support from the EU, which should be provided via different channels and policy sectors ranging from financial assistance to visa facilitation schemes;

5. Considers that the Eastern Partnership project requires a thorough assessment of its effectiveness, including an accurate evaluation of its successes and failures, and that it needs further reflection, a new impetus and a clear vision of the way forward, focusing equally on political cooperation and partnership with the societies of the EaP countries and on aiming to provide a European choice for those societies; urges the EU, therefore, to focus particularly on investing in immediate progress for citizens, and in this context to establish visa-free regimes, to support youth and future leaders, and to devote greater attention to the empowerment of civil society; highlights the importance of the energy, transport and research sectors for the scope of the European integration of the EaP countries;

8. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to reflect on the lessons of the recent evolutions of the Eastern Partnership in terms of the definition of bilateral and multilateral priorities of Union as well as funding under the ENI;

11. Welcomes the 2013 allocations under the 'Eastern Partnership integration and cooperation' (EaPIC) programme, (falling under ENPI), distributed among Moldova, Georgia and Armenia as additional funding to those EaP countries which are making progress in reforms for deep democracy and human rights;

19. Calls for a more tailored approach to individual partner countries; strongly believes that the depth and scope of relations with each partner country should reflect its own European ambition, commitment to shared values, and progress in aligning with EU legislation, assessed on the basis of clear benchmarks and on its own merits; takes the view that the Eastern Partnership architecture must be forward-looking and flexible - institutionally and conceptually – in order to provide long-term incentives for all partners, including the most advanced ones and thus further intensify relations with the EU; recalls that the advancement of the partnership will depend on progress and substantial efforts being made with regard to respect for human rights, reform of the judiciary, public administration reforms, the fight against corruption, and increased citizens' participation in public decision-making;

28. Welcomes, as a positive conclusion of the Vilnius summit, the initialling of the Association Agreements including a DCFTA with the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, regrets, however, that the outcome of the Vilnius summit did not match all expectations, and urges that association agreements be swiftly signed and fully, rapidly and efficiently implemented, where applicable, with the partner countries, in order to support the modernisation and reform process in
those countries, particularly in the fields related to the consolidation of good governance, the rule of law, the protection of human rights and the fight against corruption, and to support the building-up and modernisation of the partner societies’ economies, as well as business-friendly legislation; calls on the EEAS and the Commission to identify areas and fields of cooperation under the association agendas in which implementation could already begin in the short and medium term.

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Leading committee: AFET (DEVE, INTA, BUDG for opinion)

Summary


Extract from the Summary

Effects and impact of measures: the Union’s external action under the instruments to which this Regulation applies should contribute to clear results (covering outputs, outcomes and impacts) in countries benefiting from external financial assistance of the Union. Whenever appropriate and possible, the results of the Union’s external action and the efficiency of a particular instrument should be monitored and assessed on the basis of pre-defined, clear, transparent and, where appropriate, country-specific and measurable indicators, adapted to the specificities and objectives of each instrument.

Certain criteria taken into account: the following criteria to be taken into account in respect of the implementation of actions have been added:

- accessibility for persons with disabilities;
- progress achieved by the partner in respect of human rights and democratic principles;
- the vulnerability of the partners;
- experience gained in the implementation of previous programmes.

Monitoring of progress: the Commission should examine the progress made in implementing the measures of financial assistance taken under the various regulations relating to EU external action.

... Optimising resources: the EU should seek the most efficient use of available resources in order to optimise the impact of its external action. This should be achieved through coherence and complementarity between Union’s Instruments for external action, as well as the creation of synergies between the Union’s external financial Instruments and other policies of the Union. This should further entail mutual reinforcement of the programmes devised under those Instruments, and, where appropriate, using financial instruments that have a leverage effect.

Action programmes and nature of financing: financing decisions should include in an annex the description of each action, specifying: its objectives, main activities, expected results, methods of implementation, budget and indicative timetable, any associated support measures and performance monitoring arrangements and should be approved in accordance with the procedures provided for in Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.

... Other new provisions: new provisions have also been introduced on a technical level to:
- promote local capacity in the framework of procurement;
- strengthen the follow-up, the effectiveness and the eligibility criteria in regard to the granting of **budget support** to third countries;
- clarify the eligibility rules for the various programmes for partner countries;
- monitoring and evaluation of actions implemented at the local level;
- set the general framework for **annual reporting** of funds (mid term (2017) and final (2021)).

**Reporting and review**

**Article 12 of the Final Act**

**Monitoring and evaluation of actions**

1. The Commission shall regularly monitor its actions and review progress made towards delivering expected results, covering outputs and outcomes. The Commission shall also evaluate the impact and effectiveness of its sectoral policies and actions and the effectiveness of programming, where appropriate by means of independent external evaluations. Proposals by the European Parliament or the Council for independent external evaluations shall be taken into due account. Evaluations shall be based on OECD-DAC good practice principles, seeking to ascertain whether the specific objectives, where applicable taking into account gender equality, have been met and to formulate recommendations with a view to improving future operations. Those evaluations shall be carried out on the basis of pre-defined, clear, transparent and, where appropriate, country-specific and measurable indicators.

2. The Commission shall send its evaluation reports to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the Member States through the relevant committee referred to in Article 16. Specific evaluations may be discussed in that committee at the request of Member States. The results shall feed back into programme design and resource allocation.

3. The Commission shall, to an appropriate extent, associate all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation phase of the Union’s assistance provided under this Regulation, and may, where appropriate, seek to undertake joint evaluations with the Member States and development partners.

4. The report mentioned in Article 13 shall reflect the main lessons learnt and the follow-up to the recommendations of the evaluations carried out in previous years.

**Article 13 of the Final Act**

**Annual report**

1. The Commission shall examine the progress made in implementing the measures of the Union’s external financial assistance and, from 2015 onwards, shall submit to the European Parliament and to the Council an annual report on the achievement of the objectives of each Regulation by means of indicators, measuring the results delivered and the efficiency of the relevant Instrument. That report shall also be submitted to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions.
2. The annual report shall contain information relating to the previous year on the measures financed, the results of monitoring and evaluation exercises, the involvement of the relevant partners, and the implementation of budgetary commitments and of payment appropriations broken down by country, region and cooperation sector. It shall assess the results of the Union’s financial assistance using, as far as possible, specific and measurable indicators of its role in meeting the objectives of the Instruments. In the case of development cooperation, the report shall also assess, where possible and relevant, the adherence to aid-effectiveness principles, including for innovative financial instruments.

3. The annual report prepared in 2021 shall contain consolidated information from annual reports concerning the period from 2014 to 2020 on all funding governed by this Regulation, including external assigned revenues and contributions to trust funds, and offering a breakdown of spending by beneficiary country, use of financial instruments, commitments and payments.

Article 17 of the Final Act

Mid-term review and evaluation of the Instruments

1. No later than 31 December 2017, a mid-term review report shall be submitted by the Commission on the implementation of each of the Instruments and of this Regulation. It shall cover the period from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2017 and shall focus on the achievement of the objectives of each Instrument by means of indicators measuring the results delivered and the efficiency of the Instruments.

   With a view to achieving the objectives of each Instrument, that report shall in addition address, the added value of each Instrument, the scope for simplification, internal and external coherence, including complementarity and synergies between the Instruments, the continued relevance of all objectives, and the contribution of the measures to a consistent Union external action and, where relevant, to the Union priorities for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It shall take into account any findings and conclusions concerning the long-term impact of the Instruments. It shall also contain information about the leverage effect achieved by the funds of each financial instrument.

   The report shall be undertaken for the specific purpose of improving the implementation of the Union’s assistance. It shall inform decisions on the renewal, modification or suspension of the types of actions implemented under the Instruments.

   The report shall also contain consolidated information from relevant annual reports on all funding governed by this Regulation, including external assigned revenues and contributions to trust funds offering a breakdown of spending by beneficiary country, use of financial instruments, commitments and payments.

   A final evaluation report on the period from 2014 to 2020 shall be established by the Commission within the interim review of the next financial period.

2. The mid-term review report referred to in the first subparagraph of paragraph 1 shall be submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council, and shall be accompanied, if appropriate, by legislative proposals introducing the necessary modifications to the Instruments and to this Regulation.

3. The values of the indicators on 1 January 2014 shall be used as a basis for assessing the extent to which the objectives have been achieved.

4. Partner countries shall be required by the Commission to provide all the data and information necessary, in line with the international commitments on aid
effectiveness, to permit the monitoring and evaluation of the measures concerned.

5. The longer-term outcomes and impacts and the sustainability of effects of the Instruments shall be evaluated in accordance with the monitoring, evaluation and reporting rules and procedures applicable at that time.

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Leading committee: AFET (DEVE, INTA, BUDG, EMPL, ITRE, REGI, CULT, FEMM for opinion)


Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

General objective: the objective of the ENI II should be to ensure shared prosperity and good neighbourliness involving the Union and the countries and territories listed in Annex I to this Regulation by developing a special relationship founded on cooperation, peace and security, mutual accountability and shared commitment to universal values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights in accordance with the Treaty on European Union.

Specific objectives: a series of new specific objectives have been added to the programme including:

- fight against discrimination in all its forms;
- better organisation of legal migration and cross-border cooperation;
- combating social exclusion;
- promoting innovation;
- enhancing regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations.

Differentiation, incentive measures, performance indicators: progress made in these fields should be evaluated by means of indicators defined in the draft regulation. It is also specified that Union support provided to each partner country should be incentive-based and differentiated in form and amounts, reflecting the partner country’s commitment to and progress in respect to certain criteria such as building deep and sustainable democracy, absorption capacity for aid, capacity to cooperate with the European Union and the level of ambition in regard to the reforms under way. The incentive-based approach shall not apply to support to civil society, people-to-people contacts, including cooperation between local authorities, support for the improvement of human rights, or crisis-related support measures. In the event of serious or persistent regression, such support may be increased. The incentive-based approach under the future Regulation will be the subject of regular exchanges of views in the Council and in the European Parliament.

Follow-up of progress made and reconsideration of support: partner countries’ progress shall be regularly assessed, notably by means of European Neighbourhood Policy progress reports which include trends as compared to previous years. Support may be reconsidered in the event of serious or persistent regression.

General framework of assistance: assistance under this Regulation should be provided in accordance with the European Neighbourhood Instrument (notably the
Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean) and also relevant European Parliament resolutions.

Implementation: provisions have been included to clarify the technical implementation of the ENI II in terms of its strategic planning and programming both for national and cross-border and macro-regional programmes.

Optimisation of resources: the Union should seek the most efficient use of available resources in order to optimise the impact of its external action. This should be achieved through coherence and complementarity between the Instruments for external action, as well as the creation of synergies between the ENI, other Instruments for external action and other policies of the Union. All programming documents should specify as far as possible the activities of other EU donors.

Delegated acts: in order to take account of changes in the enlargement policy framework or of significant developments in the beneficiary countries, the power to adopt acts in accordance with Article 290 on the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union should be delegated to the Commission in respect of adapting and updating the thematic priorities for assistance listed in Annex II of the future Regulation. Following the publication of the Mid-term report and based upon the recommendations contained in the mid-term review report, the Commission shall adopt a delegated act amending Annex II to this Regulation by 31 March 2018.

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Summary

[The European Parliament,]

1. Welcomes the publication of the 2012 progress reports for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) South and East countries, but regrets that, in most cases, the reports, as well as the events that followed, present a mixed picture of progress, stagnation and regression and describe the national situation without evaluating the programmes carried out by the Union or making concrete recommendations regarding the allocation of funds under the EU external instruments or development cooperation assistance and its influence on policy-making in the partner countries; takes the view that those reports should also assess trends by containing data for previous years;

4. Regrets that progress made by partner countries has not always matched the goals set in common with the EU; calls for a concrete evaluation of the effectiveness of the revised ENP; calls for greater efforts to use all instruments and policies at the disposal of the Union in a coherent way under the umbrella of the ENP; calls for the consistent implementation of the incentive-based and differentiated approaches and of the principle of 'more for more' as the cornerstone of the revised ENP; calls, if necessary, for 'less for less' for those ENP countries making insufficient efforts to build a deep and sustainable democracy and to undertake the agreed reforms; underlines that the Union’s baseline support shall also reflect partners' needs in terms of development;

12. Regrets the substantial cuts made to Heading 4 in the 2014-2030 MFF compared to the original proposal from the Commission; underlines that ambitious funding of the Eastern Partnership is crucial for further progress in reforms, the sharing of best practices and achieving and/or maintaining fully-fledged functioning democracies in the EU’s Eastern neighbourhood, these being of vital interest to the EU; believes also that the current balance between the Eastern and Southern parts of the ENP should be maintained, with full respect for the principles of differentiation and the tailor-made approach applied so
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<td>42.</td>
<td>Welcomes the political determination to fulfil the requirements of the Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), as well as the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and the progress with regard to the initialling of the Iasi-Ungheni pipeline project; praises the modernisation efforts undertaken in the country, in particular the increased expenditure on education; calls for the rapid signature and completion of all necessary steps in order to implement the Agreement as soon as possible; is aware, however, of the weakness of the democratic institutions and of the need for the steady reinforcement of those institutions; encourages the Government of Moldova to continue to work hard on the implementation of the necessary measures; believes that political stability and enduring consensus on reforms, especially as regards the rule of law and independence from state institutions, are of paramount importance to Moldova's European aspirations;</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Encourages the initialisation of the Association Agreement, including the DCFTA, at the Vilnius summit, and hopes to see a speedy conclusion of the visa dialogue; recognises the important impact that the implementation of the Association Agreement, free trade and visa-free travel will have on the reform process in Moldova; notes, in this regard, that the most recent political crises have revealed the fragility of the democratisation process conducted so far, and stresses the need to work towards building truly credible independent democratic institutions;</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>Recommends proceeding swiftly with the signing, in the near future (post-Vilnius summit), of the Association Agreement, if the present compatibility with the requirements is sustained;</td>
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[Leading committee: AFET (DEVE, BUDG, EMPL, ITRE, REGI, CULT, LIBE, AFCO for opinion)]

**Summary**

- Welcomes the proposal for the new European Neighbourhood Instrument and the increase of funding for the ENP, as requested in its previous resolutions; considers that the distribution of funds should be flexible and adequate for both regions while keeping the regional balance, with an approach that is driven by performance and centred on commitments and progress as regards reforms in partner countries, as well as on their needs and capacities; notes that more flexibility and simplification should respect the right of democratic scrutiny and be accompanied by increased supervision of the spending;
- Considers that the review of the ENI must be consistent with, and be conducted in the context of, the current evaluation of the 2007-2013 MFF and the negotiations on the post-2013 period, with the aim of not reopening negotiations on the financing of neighbourhood policy during 2012 and 2013;
- Demands a sizeable increase in the Heading 4 ceiling of the EU budget for the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument, given that over the last years despite some progress in promoting enhanced cooperation and progressive economic integration between the European Union and the partner countries, more needs to be done as new challenges and areas for cooperation emerge;
101. Regrets that a high percentage of the ENP funds available are spent on consultancy instead of going to projects and programmes and calls, in this respect, for a quick rebalance in their use under the new instrument;

105. Emphasises that the allocation of resources should be based on a limited number of clearly defined priorities and measurable objectives, in agreement with partner countries, taking into account their needs and based on clear conditionality and on the progress already achieved; underlines that budget support should be used only where there are guarantees for sound budgetary management and that the full range of available tools should be used to better reflect the priorities; outlines, in this context, the need for enhanced public procurement legislation and public finances management of the ENP countries;

107. Points out that although aid can act as a leverage for ENP countries, it is not enough to guarantee sustainable and lasting development; therefore calls on ENP countries to strengthen and mobilise their domestic resources, set up transparent taxation systems, involve the private sector, local governments and civil society effectively in the ENP agenda and aim for their greater ownership of ENP projects;

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Leading committee: AFET (INTA for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Fundamental values and structural reforms: Parliament considers that any negotiations between the parties should go hand in hand with the implementation of structural reforms in the country, as well as the principles of "more for more" and differentiation. These negotiations should also be continued at a steady pace and enable dialogue to be strengthened with all political parties in Moldova.

Fight against corruption: the resolution calls on the Moldovan authorities to maintain strong pressure, coupled with support, to consolidate reforms and achieve tangible progress in the fight against corruption, reform of judicial, prosecution and police services to the benefit of the people. It emphasises in the Agreement the importance of good governance.

Protection of Human Rights and the Media: Parliament stresses the need to include standard conditionality clauses on protection and promotion of human rights reflecting the highest international and European standards. It encourages the Moldovan authorities to adopt comprehensive and effective antidiscrimination legislation both in line and in spirit with the EU legislation and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

European aid and democratic scrutiny of the European Parliament: Members call on the EU to provide sufficient financial and technical support to Moldova to ensure that this country can meet its commitments under the Association Agreement. They ask for clear benchmarks for implementation of the Association Agreement to be given and for monitoring mechanisms, including the provision of regular reports to Parliament to be provided. They invite the EU High Level Advisory Group to the Republic of Moldova to report to the European Parliament on its activities on a regular basis.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Marek Siwiec on behalf of the AFET committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

8. Welcomes the launch of the EaP, which seeks to further political association, economic integration and legislative approximation while supporting political and socio-economic reforms in the partner countries; calls on the Council, the Commission and the EEAS to devise clear benchmarks for monitoring such reforms, noting that the benchmarks should take into consideration the specificities of each partner, including its specific goals and potential; stresses that economic reforms must go hand-in-hand with political reforms and that good governance can only be achieved through an open and transparent decision-making process based on democratic institutions.

16. Underlines the importance of complementing the EU’s bilateral relations with EaP countries with a multilateral dimension by increasing the number of activities and initiatives included in the thematic platforms, paying particular attention to strengthening cross-border projects, stepping up people-to-people programmes, developing incentives for regional cooperation and further enhancing the active dialogue with civil society in order to promote the necessary establishment of open non-governmental institutions and strengthen social cohesion; notes, however, that the bilateral dimension remains prominent, and calls for a clearer and more rigorous differentiation and conditionality, where ambition and commitments are followed by implementation and real progress is followed by concrete steps towards a European perspective; firmly believes that the intensification of ties with the best-performing partners will have a positive effect on the others and could enhance multilateral cooperation;

39. Underlines the need to provide an adequate level of EU funding for cooperation with the neighbourhood and reiterates the value of the ENPI as the ENP financing instrument, which needs to evolve in such a way as to respond more flexibly to the different needs of the neighbouring countries and regions, ensure that there is a direct linkage between the ENP policy objectives and ENPI programming and reflect the performance-based character of the future ENP; emphasises, however, the need to ensure greater flexibility and crisis-responsiveness, as well as better-targeted assistance, aimed in particular at civil society and local levels, ensuring a bottom-up approach and making sure that the financial assistance is not subject to unjustified state interference; underscores the value of monitoring the management and implementation of the various programmes under the ENPI and emphasises that a fundamental criterion for the funding of projects must be their added value for local economic development, taking into account the actual cost of, and the real contribution made by, each project; calls on the Commission and the EEAS to conduct early consultations with Parliament and the civil society stakeholders during the upcoming drafting of the successor instrument;

41. Stresses the importance of maintaining appropriate levels of financing, and is encouraged by the improved coordination of the work carried out by international financial institutions and other donors with a view to improving efficiency and generating synergies; stresses that the EU should also contribute to better use of existing resources by partner countries through a stronger focus on practical cooperation, so as to better empower those countries' institutions to implement the reforms and meet the commitments stemming from the various agreements concluded with the EU; points out that the direct link between performance and financial assistance (e.g. the Governance Facility within the ENPI) needs to be enhanced, especially in the area of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

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Leading committee: AFET

Final Act: Council Decision 2011/283/EU

Summary of the Final Act:

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: by means of this decision, the EU concludes a Protocol on a Framework Agreement on the general principles for the participation of the Republic of Moldova in Union programmes. The Protocol details the specific terms and conditions applicable to Moldova’s participation in each programme, in particular the financial contribution as well as reporting and evaluation procedures that need to be settled in the context of an agreement between the European Commission, acting on behalf of the Union, and Moldova.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA, S&D, ECR

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

4. Welcomes the granting of macro-financial assistance in the form of a grant of a maximum amount of EUR 90 million to the Republic of Moldova with a view to supporting economic stabilisation and alleviating its balance of payments and budgetary needs, as identified in the current IMF programme; stresses the need for the Republic of Moldova to step up efforts to implement structural reforms effectively, notably with regard to the rule of law, the fight against corruption and the business and investment climate;

10. Underlines the need to strengthen the people's confidence in the institutions of the state and in the judicial authorities, especially after the involvement of some officials and officers from law enforcement bodies in the violence that occurred during the events of April 2009 and expects that all those found responsible for the acts of violence shall be brought to justice.

Oral / Written Questions

E-007118-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Olaf Stuger (ENF) on EU aid to Moldova: money down the drain
E-006854-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Olaf Stuger (ENF) on EU aid to Moldova: money down the drain
E-006441-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Urmas Paet (ALDE) on The EU and Moldova
E-006378-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Victor Negrescu (S&D) on Moldovan Republic
P-004507-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Andi Cristea (S&D) on Progress report on the Republic of Moldova
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**Special report 14/2016 of 28 June 2016**

**EU policy initiatives and financial support for Roma integration: significant progress made over the last decade, but additional efforts needed on the ground**

Employment and Social Affairs  |  European Social Fund (ESF)  |  European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

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**Summary**

**Questions asked:**

1. Did the EU policy initiatives and financial support through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) effectively contribute to Roma integration?
   1.1. Did the EU framework and national Roma strategies facilitate the effective use of the ERDF and ESF for Roma inclusion measures in each programme period?
   1.2. Was the ERDF and ESF framework of each programme period designed so as to allow effective support to Roma integration measures?
   1.3. Did projects implemented under the ERDF and the ESF during the 2007-2013 programme period contribute effectively to Roma integration?

**Observations:**

1.1. Progress was made in terms of strategies in place at EU and Member State level, but most improvements came too late to have an impact on the 2007-2013 programme period: EU policy initiative on Roma inclusion was agreed upon in 2011, after the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007; progress at Member State level: National Roma integration strategies had been adopted, but some shortcomings remained;

1.2. More attention was given to Roma integration measures in the 2014-2020 period as compared to 2007-2013 in the field of cohesion policy: despite the lack of mention of Roma integration in the legal framework for 2007-2013, the selected Member States referred to Roma integration in their Operational Programmes (OP); greater focus on Roma issues at EU level was reflected in the ESIF framework for 2014-2020; the OP-level monitoring tools, which were at disposal during the 2007-2013 programme period were ill-suited for measuring the performance of Roma integration measures;

1.3. Most projects were carried out as planned, but 'best practice' criteria contributing to successful Roma inclusion were not always applied and monitoring project performance was difficult: all examined projects were in line with OP objectives, but selection procedures did not specifically aim to select Roma inclusion-related projects; the projects were generally carried out according to plan; indication that better consideration of Roma-specific criteria, such as the common basic principles (CBPs) on Roma inclusion, contributed positively to project performance; the assessing the results for the 2007-2013 period was made more difficult by difficulties in gathering information about Roma people.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Member States should, when revising their National Roma integration strategies (NRIS) or when making amendments:
   a) specify what level of funding is needed to carry out the measures for Roma inclusion proposed in the strategy. NRISs should indicate the funding available
for such measures from the national budget and, through the ERDF and ESF, from the EU budget. The Member States should also formally undertake to ensure that efforts to implement measures in favour of Roma integration are not jeopardised by short-term changes in political priorities;

b) include indicators and target values which deal with anti-discrimination or, more specifically, anti-gypsyism. During the 2014-2020 programme period, these indicators should also be taken into account in the design of measures promoting the inclusion of marginalised Roma communities within the ESIF framework, in line with the requirements of the racial equality directive;

c) ensure that civil society organisations including Roma representatives are systematically consulted and included when Roma integration measures are being planned and implemented;

d) define in more detail the role played by NRCPs in relation to the NRISs, and ensure that the NRCPs’ powers and responsibilities are commensurate with the resources made available to them;

2. The Commission should:

a) make sure, when revising relevant operational programmes, that measures carried out under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are of an inclusive nature and contain provisions aimed at fighting segregation. Segregational practices should be clearly described and explicitly excluded from funding under the ESIF framework (not only mentioned in the recitals), particular attention being paid in this connection to education and housing projects. This would help to reinforce the link between CSRs and the use of the ESIF;

b) make full use in OP monitoring committee meetings of the information contained in the reports which Member States are required to provide from 2016 under the Council Recommendation on Effective Roma Integration measures, as well as of the findings arising from that information. This is to ensure that the areas of weakness identified in the reports are tackled by means of ESIF and/or Member State funds (e.g. by reallocating funds to areas where shortcomings have been identified);

3. Member States should make use of the ‘best practice’ criteria for Roma integration (such as the Council’s 10 CBPs) when making calls for proposals and selecting projects. Where appropriate, calls should be organised to select long-term projects in favour of marginalised Roma communities. Finally, wherever possible, the allocation of ESIF funding should be made subject to the sustainability of projects, without continued EU funding, after their completion. These aspects should also be considered when the 2014-2020 operational programmes are modified;

4. The Commission should ensure, in the next programme period or when revising the operational programmes, that Roma integration objectives included in the NRISs are reflected in the ESIF framework at all operational levels, whenever applicable. In this context, it should ensure that data are collected reliably in order to allow progress to be monitored and evaluated between individual projects and at all levels of administration;

5. Member States should complement the common output and results indicators set out in the ESIF legislation with Roma-specific indicators, where appropriate. These indicators should be aligned with those specified in the NRISs and they should subsequently be used in the monitoring of the 2014-2020 operational programmes. They could build on those developed by the Fundamental Rights Agency in 2016;

6. The Member States should consider acting together, in view of preparations for the next programme period, to seek to ensure legal certainty on the use of ESF to fund any social inclusion measures irrespective of a link to employment. The removal of legal uncertainty would facilitate the Member States in making full use of the ESF for the purpose of social inclusion, including through measures to combat discrimination;

7. The Commission should consider proposing changes to the ESIF legislation to ensure that, from the programme period beginning in 2020, the distribution of funds among the different Member States takes into account specific social inclusion indicators: in particular, the proportion of marginalised groups such as the Roma within the population. It should ensure that any additional ESF funds made available to Member States as a result of this change are earmarked for
8. The Commission should:
   a) work together with the Member States to develop a common methodology which provides relevant data on the Roma population to monitor their social inclusion, in line with national legal frameworks and EU legislation, including existing possible derogations. This should be done at the latest when preparing the next programme period;
   b) encourage Member States, in accordance with national legal frameworks and EU legislation, including existing possible derogations, to collect in a comprehensive manner statistical data on ethnicity within the next two years. Eurostat could include relevant questions in surveys such as the Labour Force Survey and in the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions.

| CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur | CONT Working Document of 27/09/2016 on European Court of Auditors’ Special Report 14/2016: EU policy initiatives and financial support for Roma integration: significant progress made over the last decade, but additional efforts needed on the ground (PES89.414v01-00) Rapporteur: Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

[The European Parliament,]

Having regard to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Directive 2000/43/EC on racial equality, Directive 2000/78/EC on equal treatment in employment and occupation, and Directive 2004/38/EC on freedom of movement and residence within the EU,


2. Points out that the integration of Roma depends on their inclusion and the extent to which they can enjoy the same rights as the entire body of European citizens, of which Roma fully farm part;

3. Draws attention to the common basic principles on Roma inclusion, that is to say, the ten common basic principles discussed at the first meeting of the European Platform for Roma inclusion, held in Prague in 2009, which were subsequently reproduced as an annex to the conclusions issued by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council following its meeting of 8 June 2009.

4. Endorses the recommendations of the Court of Auditors and urges the Commission and the Member States to implement them as quickly as possible;

5. Considers it disappointing that Roma inclusion and integration did not receive the necessary attention during the 2007-2013 programming period; Calls, when the future EU strategic framework is drawn up, for greater account to be taken of the difficulties as regards inclusion and the discrimination with which Roma and other marginalised communities are having to contend;

6. Considers it unfortunate that the Court of Auditors’ investigation failed to cover a wider range of countries where Roma make up a sizeable population, Slovakia, Greece, and France being examples in that category;

7. Calls on the Member States to determine which disadvantaged persons they wish to target, taking into account the needs of those persons and the challenges facing them, and to devote specific attention to Roma populations when allocating European funding;

8. Deplores the fact that, because of its complexity, cohesion policy funding, the only source of financing for Roma inclusion and integration projects and projects to combat discrimination, cannot play its proper role in promoting the inclusion of Roma and affording them access to rights;
9. Considers that each Member State should therefore adopt a road map with a view to gauging the real impact of the laws, regulations, administrative provisions, and funds intended to support Roma and pinpointing areas in which resources and administrative capacity need to be strengthened at national, regional, and local level in order to help set up and manage Roma inclusion and integration projects and projects to combat discrimination against them;
10. Calls on the Commission to provide detailed information about the funding available for Roma and to study the existing obstacles and take them into account for the purposes of simplifying funds;
11. Recognises the importance of making a selection, through the use of European Social Fund (ESI), among long-term projects for marginalised Roma communities;
12. Points to the need to establish more flexible selection criteria for projects to promote the inclusion of Roma and other marginalised communities;
13. Calls on the Commission to ensure, in the next programming period or when revising the operational programmes, that Roma integration goals charted in the NRIIs (national Roma integration strategies) are reflected in the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) framework at every operational level;
14. Urges the Member States and the Commission to produce meaningful harmonised statistics on Roma so as to enable their social, administrative, and economic inclusion to be assessed more accurately;
15. Maintains that exclusion as regards housing, homelessness, exclusion in terms of education, unemployment, and discrimination in access to employment are often the key factors in marginalisation; Points, therefore, to the importance of integrated initiatives, encompassing housing, education, and access to employment, to aid Roma and other marginalised communities;
16. Points out that one major obstacle to combating discrimination against Roma lies in the fact that very few discrimination cases are reported to organisations or authorities such as the police or social services; Calls on the Member States, therefore, to adopt a strategy to remedy institutional discrimination and overcome Roma distrust of the authorities;
17. Calls on the Commission, in partnership with representatives of marginalised communities, and Roma in particular, and with 'specialised institutions', to set up training courses within Member State authorities in order to combat discriminatory practices and set a better example conducive to inclusion through healthy, constructive, and effective dialogue;
18. Points out that the EU has a programme for employment and social innovation, which is backed by EUR 900 in funding for the period from 2014 to 2020 and focuses on vulnerable people and on combating poverty and social exclusion;
19. Asks the Commission to consider setting up a European fund specifically to foster the inclusion of Roma and other marginalised communities, and calls on the Commission to ensure that expenditure under such a fund would be properly supervised;
20. Calls on the Commission to establish a genuine European strategy for Roma inclusion, that is to say, a European action plan devised and implemented at every political and administrative level, involving representatives of the Roma community, and based on the core values of equality, access to rights, and non-discrimination; Maintains that such a strategy must help to promote genuine inclusion of Roma and their access to education, employment, housing, culture, health care, participation in public affairs, training, and free movement within the EU;
21. Points out, however, that Member States have a responsibility to take every measure necessary to support Roma and ensure that national law and rights as a whole are enforced uniformly on their territory, with no discrimination whatsoever.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees


Leading committee: REGI (EMPL and FEM for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

**General principles:** Members recalled the urgent need to tackle the issue of marginalised communities as well as underlined the important role of cohesion.
policy in supporting their economic, social and territorial inclusion. They highlighted that the implementation of the cohesion policy must tackle the crucial challenge of poverty and exclusion of young people and children, adults and people with disabilities.

The Commission is called upon to:

- issue guidance on the definition of marginalised communities, specifying a set of attributes and characteristics of marginalised groups, taking into account the specific situation, challenges and needs of each potential target group with the aim of promoting their socio-economic inclusion, and involving representatives of those communities;
- provide detailed information about the take-up of funding opportunities for marginalised communities.

Furthermore, stressing the importance of access to public service, the resolution called on the Member States:

- to create specialised structures, such as clearing points advising on issues related to access to healthcare, labour market and education;
- to put in place measures to effect a shift in public administrations from a demand-driven approach to a welcoming service approach.

Members also called for: (i) local authorities to encourage the use of ESF funding to support informal learning and lifelong learning projects; (ii) better coordination and stronger links between national strategies for marginalised communities, including National Roma Inclusion Strategies; (iii) children to be made a priority when implementing the EU Framework for National Roma Strategies.

Preparation of programmes: Parliament asked the Commission to take measures to facilitate the inclusion of marginalised communities in the preparation, implementation and assessment of projects, as a tool for empowering the concerned communities. It suggested that recommendations be presented in the context of the European Semester and called on the Member States to act on, and on the Commission to follow up closely, the country-specific recommendations issued on the social inclusion of marginalised communities.

... Implementation of programmes: Members are of the opinion that funds should be used in a more integrated way, including by means of multi-fund programmes, in order to achieve synergies with other EU and national funding instruments. ... The Commission is called upon to offer the technical support needed to improve the administrative capacity of bodies involved in the administration of the Structural Funds and to set up an ad hoc expert group for advice, and promote appropriate training for administrative staff, in order to provide specific knowledge of the difficulties facing marginalised communities. ...

Monitoring and recommendations: EU-funded projects must have a long-term perspective in order to be effective. Members called on the Commission to put in place proactive and participatory mechanisms for monitoring and observing Members States’ actions in the planning and evaluation processes for funds used for marginalised communities.

... The Commission is called upon to provide coherent, consistent and clear guidance on the development, implementation and management of the EU-funded projects related to marginalised communities, including in-depth analyses, best practise examples and policy recommendations, to ensure that marginalised communities are included in EU funds also in view of the forthcoming programming period.

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Leading committee: FEMM (CULT for opinion)

Summary
22. Calls on the Member States to develop specific programmes to ensure that Roma girls and young women remain in primary, secondary and higher education, and also to put in place special measures for teenage mothers and early school leaver girls, to support uninterrupted education in particular, and to provide work-based training; further calls on the Member States and the Commission to take these measures into account when coordinating and evaluating the National Roma Integration Strategies.

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Leading committee: LIBE (AFCO, FEMM, PETI for opinion)

Summary

54. Deplores the increasing tendency towards anti-Roma sentiment in the European Union and expresses its concern at the situation of the Roma in the EU and the numerous instances of persecution, violence, stigmatisation, discrimination and unlawful expulsions, which are contrary to fundamental rights and European Union law; urges the Commission to continue to take action against those Member States that allow institutionalised discrimination and segregation; calls on the Member States once more to effectively implement strategies to foster real inclusion, to pursue strengthened and pertinent action to promote integration, particularly in the fields of protection of fundamental rights, education, employment, housing and healthcare, and to combat violence, hate speech and discrimination against Roma, in line with the Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in Member States of 9 December 2013;

55. Stresses the importance of properly implementing the national Roma integration strategies by developing integrated policies involving local authorities, non-governmental bodies and Roma communities in ongoing dialogue; calls on the Commission to provide for monitoring and better coordination of the implementation; calls on the Member States to cooperate with representatives of the Roma population in the management, monitoring and evaluation of projects affecting their communities, using available funds, including EU funds, while strictly monitoring respect for the fundamental rights of Roma people, including freedom of movement, pursuant to Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States;

56. Deplores the existing discrimination against Roma people in national educational systems and on the labour market; stresses the increased vulnerability of Roma women and children in particular to multiple and simultaneous violations of their fundamental rights; reiterates the importance of protecting and promoting equal access to all rights for Roma children;

57. Urges the Member States to adopt the necessary legislative changes with regard to sterilisation and to financially compensate the victims of coercive sterilisations performed on Roma women and women with mental disabilities, in line with the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR);

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Members expressed their deep concern at the rise of anti-Gypsyism, as manifested inter alia through anti-Roma rhetoric and violent attacks against Roma in Europe, including murders, which are incompatible with the norms and values of the European Union and constitute a major obstacle to the successful social integration of Roma and to ensuring full respect for their human rights.

Underlining the need to combat anti-Gypsyism at every level and by every means, Parliament called on the Member States to:

- implement effectively Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, in order to prevent and eliminate discrimination against Roma, in particular in employment, education and access to housing;
- implement effectively Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law;
- further strengthen the fight against anti-Gypsyism as part of their National Roma Integration Strategies; in this regard, Members stressed the need to ensure that specific measures for women’s rights and gender mainstreaming and considering children a priority when implementing the EU Framework for National Roma strategies.

The Commission, for its part, was called upon to effectively monitor and assess Member States’ compliance with the fundamental values of the EU.

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Summary

[The European Parliament,]

35. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to design tailor-made policies to support quality job creation for the long-term unemployed, senior unemployed people, women and other priority groups hit especially hard by the crisis, such as immigrants, the Roma community and people with disabilities, including measures to promote anti-discrimination policies on the workplace, work-life balance, lifelong learning and training, and to combat the low level of education that affects some of these groups, many of whom are at risk of social exclusion; urges the Commission to demand that each Member State institute a national job plan for job creation in conformity with what they had agreed at the 2012 Spring Council;

36. Calls on the Commission to launch a new initiative aimed at promoting employment opportunities in the Member States for Roma, with measures to promote skills and qualifications, and to fight discrimination and promote job creation, for example through self-employment and entrepreneurship and by using innovative financial instruments;
| 45. | Calls on the Member States to pay special attention to high unemployment rates among disadvantaged groups, giving priority to access to, and integration into, the labour market and the mainstreaming of accession and integration policies, as employment is the key to successful integration. |

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA, EFDD

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

9. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to explicitly consider children as a priority when programming and implementing regional and cohesion policies, such as the European disability strategy, the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies and the EU’s equality and non-discrimination policy; reiterates the importance of protecting and promoting equal access to all rights for Roma children.

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Leading committees: JURI, LIBE and AFCO (AFET and FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

21. Regrets the lack of progress on the implementation of the national Roma integration strategies and the continuing acts of racism towards and discrimination against Roma across the EU, including the segregation of Roma children in education; calls on the Member States to step up their efforts to enforce the fundamental rights and social inclusion of Roma by implementing, as soon as possible, the recommendations set out in the Council Recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States; calls on the Commission and the Member States to support Roma organisations financially and to involve them in all policies affecting Roma;

88. Calls as a matter of urgency for greater transparency, requiring each Member State to report annually on the progress of each specific minority group in matters of labour market integration and equality policy impacts; encourages the European Commission to deliver an ‘annual trend report’ reflecting the comparable indicators on social cohesion that have been agreed upon and put forth as targets, including EU-wide monitoring of the situation of newcomers, long-term residents, naturalised migrants and the children of migrants, broken down by equality grounds (i.e. ethnic/racial, religion/belief, gender, age, sexual orientation and disability), so as to measure progress in social inclusion policies over time; considers that the Open Method of Coordination should be applied to this end.

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Summary

[The European Parliament,]

53. Expresses its concern about the situation of Roma in the EU and the numerous instances of persecution, violence, stigmatisation, discrimination, evictions, relocations and unlawful forced evictions, unlawful registration and ethnic profiling by law enforcement authorities, which are contrary to fundamental rights and European Union law; reiterates its position stated in its resolution of 12 December 2013 on the progress made in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies(34) and calls once more for the effective implementation of strategies to foster real inclusion and for strengthened and pertinent action to promote integration, particularly in the field of fundamental rights, education, employment, housing and healthcare, and to combat violence, hate speech and discrimination of Roma; calls for an end to unlawful forced evictions, to the dismantling of settlements without alternative housing being provided, and to segregation of Roma children in schools and their illicit placement in special schools; calls on the Member States to make greater use of the EU funds placed at their disposal to implement integration projects in cooperation with local authorities, on the front line managing daily new arrivals on their territory;

54. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide an effective response to Roma exclusion by developing integrated policies and implementing the measures set out in the strategies focusing on anti-discrimination measures and measures aiming to increase their employability and access to the labour market in cooperation with representatives of the Roma population, while also ensuring their full participation in the management, monitoring and evaluation of projects affecting their communities, and to allocate sufficient budget resources to this end and ensure the efficiency of spending; calls also on the Commission and the FRA to present common, comparable and reliable indicators to monitor progress in Member States;

55. Believes that the Commission should take strong action in cases of violation of the fundamental rights of Roma in Member States, especially by opening infringement proceedings in the event of failure to allow them access to and the exercise of their economic and social rights, the right to freedom of movement and of residence, the right to equality and non-discrimination and the right to the protection of personal data; calls on the Commission to set up a monitoring mechanism on hate crime against Roma, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the lack of birth registration and birth certificates for Roma residing in the EU; reiterates its call for a targeted approach to the social inclusion of Roma women in order to avoid multiple discrimination; calls for the European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies to be developed into a fully-fledged European Strategy;

57. Considers that no single solution exists for improving the situation of such minorities in all the Member States, but that some common and minimum objectives for public authorities in the EU should be developed, taking account the relevant international legal standards and existing good practices; calls on the Member States to ensure that their legal systems guarantee that persons belonging to a recognised national minority will not be discriminated against, and to adopt adequate measures to promote effective equality, based on the relevant international norms and good practice, inter alia the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities; calls on the Commission to establish a policy standard for the protection of national minorities, including indigenous, traditional ethnic and linguistic minority communities, bearing in mind that they comprise more than 10 % of the total population of the EU, in order to avoid applying double standards that differentiate between candidate countries and Member States; stresses the need for a comprehensive EU protection system for traditional national minorities, regional linguistic groups and constitutional regions accompanied by a functioning monitoring mechanism, following the example of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies; calls on the Member States to provide comprehensive data on violations of the fundamental rights of minorities, so as to allow the FRA and the EU to ensure data collection and reporting.
EP Resolution of 12/12/2013 on the progress made in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, based on 2013/2924(RSP) (P7_TA(2013)0594; B7-0555/2013)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Juan Fernando López Aguilar on behalf of LIBE committee

Summary

Extract from the Summary

The Parliament strongly condemned discrimination and racism against Roma, and called on the Commission to set up an effective EU-wide monitoring mechanism regarding the fundamental rights of Roma, anti-Roma incidents and hate crime against Roma, and to take strong action – including through infringement procedures, where relevant – in cases of violations of the fundamental rights of Roma in Member States. It condemned any attempts to unlawfully limit the right to free movement of Roma and called on Member States to stop illegal expulsions. Member States were urged to put an end to ethnic profiling, police abuse and other human rights violations against Roma, to ensure that bias-motivated offences are punishable and are recorded and investigated properly. Specific training programmes should be created for police and other public officers working with Roma communities.

Funding: Members called on the Commission and its Roma Task Force to continue assessing how Member States spend EU funds earmarked for Roma inclusion, and to report their findings to Parliament and the Council on a yearly basis, and to identify concrete ways to improve the effectiveness of EU funds in the reports. Member States must mobilise sufficient budgetary resources from national budget and EU programmes – primarily from the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development – inter alia through the use of Community-Led Local Development, Joint Action Plans, Integrated Territorial Investments and Integrated Operations in order to carry out the objectives identified in their National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS). In addition, Parliament wanted to see special grant schemes in the form of small and flexible funds for community projects and for mobilising local communities on social inclusion issues.

Implementation of NRIS: Parliament called on Member States to set out in their NRIS concrete targets, timelines and allocated budgets, and to actively involve Roma representatives and civil society in policy development, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in respect of the NRIS and the projects affecting their communities. The Commission was asked to define a timeline and clear and measurable targets and indicators for the implementation of the NRIS, to assist Member States in improving their absorption capacity for EU funds, and to prepare country-by-country reports and country-specific recommendations.

Data: Member States were asked to produce disaggregated data on the socio-economic situation of Roma, the degree to which Roma experience discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, and hate crimes committed against them.

Leading committee: FEMM (EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary
The Parliament recalled that Roma women often face multiple and intersectional discrimination on the grounds of gender and ethnic origin.

In this context, Parliament called for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) focussing on empowering Roma women. It called on Member States that have received, in addition, country-specific recommendations under the European Semester on Roma-related issues, to implement these recommendations swiftly and to fight discrimination. In view of the vulnerable situation of Roma women, Parliament regretted that the lack of efficiency of the EU Framework for NRIS. They asked Member States to develop National Action Plans in the four key priority areas: health, housing, employment, and education, with specific goals and targets, funding, indicators and timeframes; evaluate progress by measuring implementation outcomes.

Defend the rights of Roma women and ensure their integration at all levels of society: Parliament called on Member State governments and local authorities to involve Roma women, through women's organisations, Roma NGOs and relevant stakeholders, in the preparation, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the NRIS. It also proposed numerous measures to be implemented by Member states or with the support of the Commission.

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**Leading committee:** EMPL (BUDG, CONT, REGI, CULT, FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**

**Final Act:** European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013

**Recital (3) of the Final Act**

The European Council of 17 June 2010 called for all common policies, including cohesion policy, to support the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (the 'Europe 2020 strategy'). In order to ensure the full alignment of the ESF with the objectives of this strategy, particularly as regards employment, education, training and the fight against social exclusion, poverty and discrimination, the ESF should support Member States, taking account of the relevant Integrated Guidelines and relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) and Article 148(4) TFEU and, where appropriate, at national level, the national reform programmes underpinned by national employment strategies, national social reports, national Roma integration strategies and national disability strategies. The ESF should also contribute to relevant aspects of the implementation of the flagship initiatives, in particular the "Agenda for New Skills and Jobs", the "Youth on the Move", and the "European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion". It should also support relevant activities in the initiatives on the "Digital Agenda" and "Innovation Union".

**Recital (16) of the Final Act**

Taking into account data protection requirements linked to collecting and storing sensitive data on participants, the Member States and the Commission should regularly evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of ESF support in promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, in particular with regard to disadvantaged people such as the Roma. Member States are encouraged to report on ESF-funded initiatives in the national social reports annexed to their national reform programmes, in particular as regards marginalised communities, such as the Roma and migrants.
Reporting and review

Article 19

Monitoring and evaluation

1. In addition to the functions of the monitoring committee set out in Article 110 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, at least once per year, the monitoring committee shall examine the implementation of the YEI in the context of the operational programme and the progress made towards achieving its objectives.

2. The annual implementation reports and the final report as referred to in Article 50(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 shall include additional information on the implementation of the YEI. The Commission shall transmit to the European Parliament a summary of those reports as referred to in Article 53(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

The Commission shall attend the European Parliament’s annual debate on those reports.

3. As from April 2015 and for subsequent years, and at the same time as the annual implementation reports referred to in Article 50(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the managing authority shall transmit electronically to the Commission structured data for each priority axis or any part thereof supporting the YEI. Indicator data transmitted shall relate to values for the indicators set out in Annexes I and II to this Regulation and, where applicable, to programme specific indicators. They shall relate to partially or fully implemented operations.

4. The annual implementation reports referred to in Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 or, where applicable, the progress report referred to in Article 111(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, and the annual implementation report submitted by 31 May 2016, shall present the main findings of evaluations referred to in paragraph 6 of this Article. The reports shall also set out and assess the quality of employment offers received by YEI participants, including disadvantaged persons, those from marginalised communities and those leaving education without qualifications. The reports shall also set out and assess their progress in continuing education, finding sustainable and decent jobs, or moving into apprenticeships or quality traineeships.

5. The progress reports referred to in Article 52 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 shall include additional information on, and assess the implementation of, the YEI. The Commission shall transmit to the European Parliament a summary of these reports as referred to in Article 53(2) of that Regulation and shall attend the European Parliament’s debate on those reports.

6. At least twice during the programming period, an evaluation shall assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of joint support from the ESF and the specific allocation for YEI including for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

The first evaluation shall be completed by 31 December 2015 and the second evaluation by 31 December 2018.

Article 28 of the Final Act

Review
The European Parliament and the Council shall review this Regulation by 31 December 2020 in accordance with Article 164 TFEU.

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**EP Resolution of 10/10/2013** on the activities of the Committee on Petitions 2012, based on 2013/2013(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0421; A7-0299/2013)

Leading committee: PETI (no committee for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

8. Draws attention to persisting discrimination against citizens on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, belonging to a minority group, age or sexual orientation; warns, in particular, that the Roma population across the EU continues to face obstacles to inclusion; calls, therefore, on the Commission to facilitate intergovernmental cooperation in this area, to provide adequate funding for the implementation of national strategies for Roma inclusion, and to monitor actively whether these strategies are being effectively implemented in Member States;

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**EP Resolution of 21/05/2013** on women’s rights in the Balkan accession countries, based on 2012/2255(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0202; A7-0136/2013)

Leading committee: FEMM (AFET for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

3. Notes with concern that the population in most countries is not fully aware of the existing legislation and policies to promote gender equality and women’s rights and that such awareness rarely reaches the vulnerable or marginalised members of society, especially Roma women; calls on the Commission and the governments of accession countries to foster awareness through the media, public campaigns and education programmes; calls for the personal commitment of government members and officials;

10. Notes with concern the lack of statistical information on gender equality, on violence against women, on access to and availability of contraceptives; calls on the governments of the Balkan accession countries to establish a common methodology for gathering statistical information together with Eurostat, EIGE and other relevant institutes; stresses that specific strategies need to be developed and existing strategies implemented to improve the position of women faced with multiple discrimination, such as Roma women, lesbian, bisexual or transgender women, women with disabilities, women of ethnic minorities and older women;

19. Notes with concern that in most of the Balkan accession countries the process for the social inclusion of Roma has slowed down and, in some cases, even came to a halt; calls on the respective governments to step up their efforts to further integrate Roma citizens and guarantee the elimination of all forms of discrimination and prejudice against Roma; calls on the Commission to enhance its efforts to involve the enlargements countries at whatever stage of accession, and to mobilise the Instrument on Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and the mechanism of the Stabilisation and Association (SAA) process.
EP Resolution of 14/03/2013 on strengthening the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate crime, based on 2013/2543(RSP) (P7_TA(2013)0090; B7-0121/2013, B7-0122/2013, B7-0123/2013, B7-0124/2013 and B7-0125/2013)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, ALDE, S&D, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

5. Recalls its previous requests for a review of Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA, in particular as regards expressions and acts of anti-Semitism, religious intolerance, anti-Gypsyism, homophobia and transphobia;

7. Calls for measures to ensure the implementation of national Roma integration strategies through periodic reviews, monitoring and support to enable local, regional and national authorities to develop and implement effective human-rights-compliant policies, programmes and action for the inclusion of Roma, using available funds, including EU funds, while strictly monitoring respect for fundamental rights and the implementation of Directive 2004/38/EC on the right to move and reside freely;

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Leading committee: LIBE (PETI, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

51. Calls on Member States to collect disaggregated data for all grounds of discrimination, as well as to develop fundamental rights indicators in cooperation with the Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), in order to ensure properly informed and targeted legislation and policies, particularly in the field of non-discrimination and in the context of national Roma integration strategies;

63. Regrets that citizens of Roma origin are subjected to collective expulsion procedures by Member States and deplores the weak reaction of the Commission in certain cases;

64. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the tangible results of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the progress achieved in each Member State; recognises the efforts made by some Member States, but above all the many gaps in most of the strategies presented to the Commission; calls on the Commission to recommend improvements so as to meet more effectively the objectives set out in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies; calls for an analysis to be made of the financial feasibility and sustainability of these strategies and the progress achieved in each Member State in its annual reports to Parliament and the Council;

65. Stresses the importance of implementing properly the national Roma integration strategies by developing integrated policies involving local authorities, non-
governmental bodies and Roma communities in ongoing dialogue under the provisions of the EU Framework; calls on Member States to provide an effective response to Roma exclusion by implementing the measures presented in their national Roma integration strategies and to cooperate with representatives of the Roma population in the management, monitoring and evaluation of projects affecting their communities, by making use of all available EU financial resources;

72. Calls on Member States to allocate sufficient budgetary resources for realising the objectives identified in their national Roma integration strategies; calls on the Council to support and adopt the proposals of the Commission and Parliament regarding the next Multiannual Financial Framework, in particular those enabling the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund to better contribute to the social inclusion of Roma by broadening the range of ex ante conditionalities in order to include the development of national strategies and the mapping of the territorial concentration of poverty.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, ALDE, Greens/EFA, S&D
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

35. Calls on the Commission to examine the implementation of the Racial Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/43/EC(3) ) and the transposition of the Framework decision on combating racism and xenophobia (Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA(4) ), and considers it regrettable that the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies is not legally binding.

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Leading committee: CULT (EMPL for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

5. Notes that among Roma children 20 % are not enrolled in school at all and 30 % are early school leavers; emphasises that although early school leaving (ESL) is more common among boys than girls, traditional Roma communities are a special case, in that, owing to the custom of early marriages, ESL is more frequent among young girls and happens at an earlier age (around 12-13 years) than for boys (around 14-15 years); points out that in the case of traditional Roma communities there is a need for additional positive measures to overcome the ESL which results from these harmful traditional practices;

99. Advocates the targeted, efficient and coherent deployment of the Structural Funds, especially the European Social Fund, with a view to the full implementation of the Youth strategies, in particular for early school leavers, in order to promote social inclusion under specific programmes in each Member State, ensure high-quality education for all and prevent ESL and truancy.

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Leading committee: EMPL (BUDG, CULT, FEMM for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

58. Acknowledges the need to assess, where possible, the effectiveness, impact, coordination and value for money of the use of EU funds – especially the European Social Fund (ESF) – in terms of achieving the poverty reduction target, even where this is not their primary objective, by reducing economic disparities, prosperity imbalances and differences in living standards between EU Member States and regions, and thereby promoting economic and social cohesion; maintains that priority must be given to projects that combine employment targets and strategies with integrated active inclusion approaches, such as projects designed to strengthen intergenerational solidarity at regional and local level or which specifically contribute to gender equality and the active inclusion of vulnerable groups; stresses the importance of effective action for solidarity, including reinforcement, anticipated transfers, and reductions in the Member States’ share of cofinancing in respect of budgetary funding, so as to create decent jobs, support production sectors, fight poverty and social exclusion and avoid creating new forms of dependence; stresses the importance of supporting efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion, facilitate access to quality jobs, promote non-discrimination, guarantee an adequate income and promote access to high-quality services;

60. Emphasises that the European Social Fund is still the main instrument specifically intended to promote social inclusion, and believes it must be strengthened in order to meet effectively the ambitious targets set as part of the Europe 2020 strategy and the Platform against Poverty;

80. Calls for Roma people, and the organisations that represent and work with them, to be actively involved in the drafting and implementation of the national Roma integration strategies up to 2020, so as to contribute to achieving the EU poverty target; calls on the EU and the Member States to implement the European strategy to promote Roma inclusion as soon as possible, and calls on the Member States to propose, by the end of this year, measures to promote the inclusion of Roma in accordance with the European framework for coordinating national Roma inclusion strategies presented by the Commission in April 2011; stresses that, as with the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the inclusion and integration of Roma will require greater efforts in order to achieve their full inclusion – and put an end to the numerous forms of discrimination to which they are subject – by 2020; calls for other marginalised communities, such as immigrants, to be involved in all EU or Member State policies relating to their social inclusion;

81. Highlights the importance of social, health, care and education services in bridging gaps, promoting social integration and combating poverty and social exclusion; recalls their potential to create new jobs, and calls for significant and sustainable investment in these key services and infrastructures and for their further development; looks forward to the Commission’s action plan to address the shortage of health workers.

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Leading committee: REGI (BUDG, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE, TRAN for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]
Stresses the importance of improving infrastructure and services for disadvantaged microregions with a high concentration of socially marginalised people (e.g. the Roma), and also making them affordable.

Leading committee: EMPL (IMCO, CULT, FEMM for opinion)
Summary

78. Asks the Member States, as far as vocational education and training are concerned, to take into consideration the individual needs of low-skilled workers, migrant learners, people belonging to an ethnic minority, vulnerable women, the unemployed, people with disabilities and single mothers; recommends at the same time that particular attention be paid to the Roma minority, since attending school and integration at work are key elements in facilitating the social integration of Roma.

106. Requests the Commission to make the necessary adjustments to the European Social Fund, the Lifelong Learning Programme as a whole, and Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs in order to ensure that funding for specific education and training projects, projects to tackle youth unemployment, and training schemes for older people can be allocated and made more readily accessible in all parts of the EU; calls on the Commission to support Community programmes to help young people to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience which they need in order to find their first job.

Leading committee: LIBE (EMPL, REGI, CULT for opinion)
Summary

Extracts from the Summary

EU Strategy: Parliament calls for an EU Strategy on Roma Inclusion ('the Strategy') as an EU-wide, indicative, inclusive and multilevel action plan, which will be prepared and implemented at all political and administrative level and can evolve as needed. The Strategy must build on the fundamental values of equality, access to rights, non-discrimination and gender equality and be based on the tasks, objectives, principles and instruments defined by the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Member States are called upon to cooperate with the EU and representatives of the Roma population in setting up integrated policies, making use of all the EU financial resources available under the EU funds, and in particular under the ERDF, ESF and EAFRD, to promote Roma inclusion.

Parliament calls on the Member States to appoint a high-level government official or an administrative body to act as national contact points for the transparent and efficient implementation of the Strategy. Priority areas: Parliament calls on the Commission to:

- adopt priority areas for the Strategy, above all fundamental rights, education, culture, employment, housing, healthcare, and participation of Roma in
civil society;

- present in the Strategy a roadmap for introducing binding minimum standards at EU level for the priority areas of education, employment, housing and healthcare;
- define the objectives of the Strategy linked to the priority areas, inter alia by strengthening effective anti-discrimination legislation and ensuring access to quality education and access to the labour market.

Members stress the need for the objectives of the Strategy to be subjected to checking and measurement with regard to the degree of attainment so as to introduce award criteria in favour of compliant Member States and penalties for non-compliance.

Recommendations to the Commission: Parliament invites the Commission to:

- take the leading role in strategic coordination regarding progress in the priority areas and the fulfilment of the objectives relating to the Strategy, in partnership with the Member States and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity;
- establish the Roma task force as a permanent body to take responsibility for supervision, coordination, monitoring, reporting, evaluation, and follow up, there by meeting the need for an independent, multi sector body serving as an ‘external facilitator’ which can assess and balance the various national and sectoral interests in a manner acceptable to all;
- report on the implementation of the Strategy and the national action plans, with an evaluation of results including benchmarks and indicators, and keep Council and Parliament informed on an annual basis, noting that policy effectiveness and ex post evaluation should become a criterion for providing prolonged support,
- incorporate an enlargement dimension into the Strategy by developing pilot projects in candidate countries and potential candidates which guarantee the development of national action plans in line with the EU Strategy;
- adopt the augmented and detailed components of the Laeken indicators in measuring social and territorial exclusion as well as to evaluate progress;
- draw up a European crisis map which identifies and measures those micro-regions within the EU where the inhabitants are hardest hit by poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, on the basis of attributes such as accessibility of workplaces, high rate of unemployment, lack of proper infrastructure and low income;
- bring specific support, including financial support, to micro-regions and directly develop pilot projects that include the participation of mediators in line with the Council of Europe programme and a specific follow-up of the evolution of the implementation of the Strategy;
- allocate dedicated funding in the Cohesion Policy within the next Multiannual Financial Framework explicitly to support the Strategy by creating a performance reserve for the EU Strategy on Roma. This would have the effect of allocating funds on a competitive basis, defined by the criterion how the proposed project or intervention supports and implements the Objectives of the Strategy and could provide vital resources and decisive incentives for the implementation of the Strategy.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by S&D, GUE/NGL, ALDE, Greens/EFA
Summary

[The European Parliament,]
| 14. | Considers that the EU and all the Member States share a responsibility to promote the inclusion of Roma and that this requires a comprehensive approach at EU level in the form of an EU Roma Strategy, based on the undertakings given at the Second European Roma Summit in Cordoba: |
| | - mainstreaming of Roma issues in European and national policies on fundamental rights and protection against racism, poverty and social exclusion; |
| | - improving the design of the roadmap of the integrated platform on Roma inclusion and prioritising key objectives and results; |
| | - ensuring that funding under existing EU financial instruments reaches the Roma and helping to improve their social integration by monitoring the use of resources; introducing new conditionality in order to ensure that the use of funds better addresses the situation of the Roma; |
| 20. | Calls for appropriate funding to be mobilised by the EU and by Member States for projects on Roma integration, for the allocation of these funds to Member States, the use of funds and the proper implementation of projects to be monitored, and for the effectiveness of projects to be assessed, and calls on the Commission and the Council to issue a report on this matter, together with appropriate proposals. |


**Resolution on topical subject tabled by ALDE, EPP, Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL**

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

3. Expresses its concerns at the discrimination suffered by Roma in education (particularly segregation), housing (particularly forced evictions and sub-standard living conditions, often in ghettos), employment (their particularly low employment rate) and equal access to healthcare systems and other public services, as well as the astoundingly low level of their political participation; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that equal opportunity provisions are strictly complied with when the Operational Programmes are implemented, so that projects do not directly or indirectly consolidate the segregation and exclusion of Roma; stresses that on 10 February 2010 it adopted a report on the eligibility of housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities, which makes provision for housing interventions on behalf of vulnerable groups within the ERDF framework, and calls for rapid implementation of the revised regulation so that the Member States can make active use of this opportunity; considers, in this context, that housing is a precondition for ensuring effective social inclusion; calls on the Commission to ensure that the recently adopted Microfinance Facility is accessible to the Roma in order to support their integration into the labour market;

7. Expresses deep concern that, in view of the urgency of the matter, the Commission has thus far not responded to its request of 31 January 2008 to prepare a European Strategy on the Roma, in cooperation with the Member States, with the aim of better coordinating and promoting efforts to improve the situation of the Roma population;

8. Hence, calls once again on the Commission to develop a comprehensive European Strategy for Roma Inclusion as the instrument for combating social exclusion and discrimination of Roma in Europe;

17. Recommends that the Council adopt a common position on structural and pre-accession funding, reflecting the European political commitment to exploit the opportunities provided by these funds to promote Roma inclusion and to ensure that the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion are taken into account in any revision of the relevant Operational Programmes, also looking ahead to the next programming period; urges the Commission to analyse and evaluate the social impact to date of investments using pre-accession and structural funds targeting vulnerable groups, to draw conclusions and to devise new
strategies and rules if this is considered necessary in this field;

21. Stresses the importance of involving local authorities in order to ensure effective implementation of efforts to promote Roma inclusion and combat discrimination; calls on the Commission to develop recommendations for the Member States with a view to encouraging local authorities to make better use of structural funding opportunities to promote Roma inclusion, including objective monitoring of project implementation;

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Luigi Berlinguer on behalf of JURI committee, Juan Fernando López Aguilar on behalf of LIBE committee, Carlo Casini on behalf of AFCD committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

30. Reaffirms that the Union and the Member States must make a concerted effort to integrate vulnerable groups, in particular the Roma community, fully into society by promoting their inclusion in the education system and labour market and by taking action to prevent violence against them;

31. Stresses that, while EU law and policy-makers have adopted an extensive body of law to combat the multiple discrimination suffered by women from minority backgrounds, especially Roma women, no significant progress can be demonstrated; therefore calls on the Member States to review the implementation of all policies related to the phenomenon of multiple discrimination;

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Use of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in Estonia under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

Use of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in Bulgaria under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

Use of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in Malta under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

Use of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in Cyprus under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

Use of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the Czech Republic under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

Amount of housing expenditure covered by the ERDF to the benefit of socially excluded communities under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

Subsidies for the Roma to promote the integration of the Roma into the labour market

Measures to promote the integration of the Roma into the labour market

Developing educational opportunities for Roma children in the EU

The situation of Roma in Western Europe

The situation of Roma in Western Europe

Integration policies on the Roma people and the expulsion of EU citizens
**Special report 15/2016 of 4 July 2016**

**Did the Commission effectively manage the Humanitarian aid provided to populations affected by conflicts in the African Great Lakes Region?**

EU Humanitarian Aid | EU Development Aid | Foreign Affairs

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**Summary**

**Questions asked:**
1. Did the Commission effectively manage its funding for humanitarian aid targeted at populations affected by conflicts in the African Great Lakes region?
   1.1. Did the Commission allocate its funding to well-established priorities?
   1.2. Did the Commission monitor the projects properly?
   1.3. Did the projects achieve their objectives?

**Observations:**
1.1. Funding was allocated to well-established main priorities but there was insufficient clarity at further prioritisation stage: the Commission has properly identified needs for the African Great Lakes (AGL) region; the Commission’s response is appropriate; there was insufficient transparency at the project selection stage;
1.2. Overall, the Commission's monitoring is appropriate although the information obtained could be better used: in most cases, the Commission obtains adequate information on project implementation; follow-up on project implementation is insufficient;
1.3. Most of the projects examined delivered satisfactory results: overall outcomes achieved are positive but in some cases, the Commission’s assessment is not clearly justified; the Commission was responsive to changes but could better justify time extensions granted; there is limited evidence of what is being done to link Relief, Rehabilitation and Development.

**Recommendations:**
1. The Commission should be more transparent in the selection procedure:
   The key stages of the selection process should be clearly documented in order to show that the most appropriate proposals are selected and to ensure that the selection process is transparent. This should be implemented by the next selection phase;
2. Costs of proposals should be better analysed prior to acceptance:
   The Commission should pay more attention to the proposed project costs and these should, in all cases, be assessed for their reasonableness. In this regard, the Commission should insist on the submission by its partners of budgets, which provide the necessary information for analysis. A short checklist could be
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<td>[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]</td>
<td>1. Welcomes the special report dedicated to the review of the risks related to a results-oriented approach for EU development and cooperation action and sets out its observations and recommendations below; 2. Welcomes the findings according to which the humanitarian aid was managed effectively especially in a difficult working environment characterized by insecurity and unpredictability making efficient implementation a real challenge; 3. Calls the Commission to continue its effort towards the linking of Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), when local conditions permit. This could potentially be supported through a permanent LRRD interservices platform. Such a platform could serve, among others, for the identification of potential programmes to be combined; considers that integrated approaches with clearly stated coordination objectives and a coherent country/region strategy</td>
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- introduced to provide evidence of compliance with these control features. This should be implemented by the next selection phase;

- The Commission should make clear the extent to which problems raised for follow-up are resolved: The management document for each project should be revised by the end of this year to include the necessary features to clearly identify issues arising for further action and the follow-up undertaken;

- Better reporting from partners and field staff should enable prompt action to be taken: Partners should be continuously reminded of their responsibilities to report comprehensively and in good time. A checklist for Commission staff should be introduced for the field visits so that the key issues are covered. This should be implemented by the end of this year;

- The Commission should introduce an overall reporting system on the implementation of the Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP): The Commission should introduce a system of reporting at HIP level outlining the main outputs and outcomes, identifying the main lessons learned and best practices to be applied in subsequent years’ HIPs. It should also deal with strategic issues such as what approach to adopt in a protracted crisis;

- The Commission should establish a clear link between results achieved by a project and the assessment used to make the payment: The Commission should better design, structure and document the assessment of an action that is only partially achieved and establish a clear link between the results achieved and the overall conclusion on a project, before authorising final payment. This should be implemented at the earliest possible stage;

- Time extensions and additional funding for projects should be clearly justified: The Commission should provide clear justifications for additional funding and time extensions granted to partners and should respond firmly to all instances of under-performance. This should be implemented for all future requests for extensions;

- The Commission should prioritise the linking of Relief Rehabilitation and Development: All opportunities should be exploited to link efforts in the relief, rehabilitation and development areas. This will involve placing this consideration high on the agenda at key stages in the planning process;
among all stakeholders should be set up wherever possible;

4. Calls on furthermore the Commission services for a better transition from short-term humanitarian activities to long-term development interventions and for a coherent coordination not only among different EU actors but also with national priorities and other international organisations through a common strategy by means of a joint humanitarian and development framework;

5. Considers that a systemic appraisal of the real delivery of humanitarian interventions with an assessment of administrative costs in the region to be performed by focusing more on efficiency and with the development of possible benchmarks for common and regular costs items;

6. Encourages, wherever possible, to better adapting timeframes to the intervention environment to avoid timely and costly extension;

7. Calls on the relevant EU and UN institutions to fully respect and implement the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA); asks the Commission to report to the Parliament on the implementation of FAFA and the related guidelines, and to identify areas needing improvement and make relevant proposals in this regard;

8. Recalls that the reporting from UN and International Organisations should ensure the most possible accurate traceability of funding, comparisons with operational aspects of the aid delivery agreed on at the beginning of the intervention as well as also providing useful feedback to the Commission services; stresses the importance to deliver timely reports to the Commission by its partners organisations to allow a swift management or adjustment of the humanitarian response and funding modalities;

9. Emphasises the need to improve the UN’s accountability and transparency in relation to the use of EU resources and performance in implementing internationally agreed humanitarian and development strategic orientations and goals;

10. Asks the Commission to introduce results assessments at a level of Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIP) to enable benchmarking of HIPs and sharing best practices;

11. Regrets incomplete or insufficiently results-oriented information, thus preventing the Commission from properly exercising its monitoring function;

12. Insists on the need to achieve the highest level of transparency and institutional accountability at all levels by ensuring access to exhaustive and sound budgetary information and financial data related to projects with EU funding, in order to allow Parliament’s scrutiny.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

**EP Resolution of 28/04/2016** with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2015/2154(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0147; A8-0140/2016)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**

456. Recalls that Union development aid and humanitarian aid expenditures often take place in very challenging environments which increase the difficulties when it comes to project implementation, evaluations and expenditure controls; development aid and humanitarian aid are therefore more error prone than other Union policy areas;

457. Notes that according to the Court, 57 % of errors are related to ineligible expenditures; supports the Court’s recommendation to EuropeAid to improve ex ante controls and to make better use of on-the-spot visits in order to detect errors;

466. Recalls that a virtually constant acute lack of payments funds in 2014 exacerbated DG ECHO’s difficulties to adequately respond to the ever-worse humanitarian crises in the Union’s neighbourhood and beyond; welcomes the fact that better adapted appropriations in the 2015 and 2016 Union budgets have largely solved DG ECHO’s payments problem;
20. Urges the EU and its Member States, in view of the way in which the public consultation conducted under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement has evolved, to consider freezing all non-humanitarian assistance to the Government of Burundi until such time as the excessive use of force and human rights violations by government forces, as recorded by the OHCHR, have stopped, and a political solution resulting from a genuine inter-Burundian dialogue has been found, and to reorientate the aid with a view to strengthening civil society; considers that EU aid should tackle the root problems of inequality, poverty and chronic malnutrition in order to achieve the recently approved Sustainable Development Goals;

21. Expresses its deep concern at the continued exodus of Burundian refugees to neighbouring countries; reiterates its support for all humanitarian organisations operating on the ground and for the neighbouring host countries; appeals to the international community and humanitarian agencies to continue to provide assistance to all those who are now refugees and displaced persons as a result of the conflict; welcomes the EU’s commitment to increasing financial support and humanitarian aid to address the urgent needs of these populations;

1. Expresses grave concern about the worsening political and humanitarian situation in Burundi and the wider region; calls for an immediate end to violence and political intimidation of opponents and the immediate disarmament of all armed youth groups allied to political parties; extends its sympathy to victims of the violence and to those who have lost their lives, and calls for immediate humanitarian assistance for those who have been forced to flee their homes;

8. Calls also on the Commission, to this end, to reassess EU aid as a matter of urgency with a view to diverting it, to increasing financial support for civil society and to focusing on humanitarian aid as opposed to central budget support, while keeping in mind the highly commendable role of the Burundian army in the peacekeeping mission in Somalia;

16. Commends the role of humanitarian organisations and the authorities of neighbouring countries which are addressing the needs of those fleeing the crisis and are offering protection for refugees; welcomes the Commission’s announcement of an additional EUR 1.5 million to ease the humanitarian situation;
warns, however, that commitments must be redoubled as a matter of urgency by both the EU and its Member States, given the huge influx of refugees into an already fragile region, reported outbreaks of cholera and alarming reports of sexual violence; underlines the importance of a long-term strategy for not only medical and nutritional assistance but also reintegration and psychological assistance for those forced to flee.

EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2014/2075(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0118; A8-0101/2015)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

206. Notes with concern the growing discrepancy between the Union's international commitments, its ambitious policy frameworks and new tools (such as the post-2015 development agenda and the External Financing Instruments for the period 2014-2020) on the one hand, and on the other hand its inability to honour the commitments it has taken vis-à-vis its global partners and other bodies, in particular with regard to humanitarian aid due to the availability of insufficient payment credits;

207. Considers that this situation entails not only a high political and reputational risk for the Union's credibility as the world's first donor but may also endanger the fiscal stability of partner countries by leaving financial gaps in their budgets; fears that this discrepancy may become very apparent in 2015, when the overall level of Official Development Aid (ODA) will largely undershoot the collective target of 0,7 % of Union GNI by year-end;

208. Emphasises that 2013 was the second consecutive year that humanitarian aid through the Union budget exceeded EUR 1,3 billion in commitments due to the occurrence of a high number of humanitarian crises that caused immense human suffering; deplores the impact that the lack of payment appropriations had in this crisis year on DG ECHO’s activities, which could only be maintained through rearranging payment schedules, resulting in a carry-over of EUR 160 million in payment arrears at year end; calls on the Council to comply with the payment plan agreed with Parliament;

209. Regrets the reputational damage already suffered due to these ad hoc measures and points to the paradox between the increase in humanitarian crises worldwide in recent years and the operational measures the Union has taken to deal effectively with sudden-onset crises (such as the opening of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre in May 2013) on the one hand and the lacking payment appropriations on the other hand; is alarmed that this situation may be aggravated if adequate budget reinforcement is not ensured.

EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the eighth, ninth and tenth European Development Funds for the financial year 2013, based on 2014/2077(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0120; A8-0102/2015)

Leading committee: CONT (DEVE for opinion)

Summary
[The European Parliament,]

70. Reiterates its stance on the troubling situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), particularly regarding the reform of the judiciary system as well as the rule of law situation, public finances, and the issue of decentralisation;

71. Welcomes the Court of Auditors' assessment regarding Union development aid funded with EDF means; agrees that the lack of political will as well as the lack of absorption capacity largely account for only minimal success in improving governance in the DRC;

72. Acknowledges that the DRC is widely recognized as one of the most fragile states in the world; strongly suggests the development of binding KPIs and benchmarks for reliable improvement assessment; also strongly suggests that KPI and benchmarks be drafted in a realistic manner;

73. Asks the Commission and the EEAS to provide the most recent list of priorities for European development aid in the DRC as a follow-up from last year's discharge report, which suggested a more limited number of priorities to allow for a better and more focused development aid strategy.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Greens/EFA, ECR, ALDE, EFDD, GUE/NGL, S&D, EPP
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

12. Calls on the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative and the Member States to continue working towards a clear and principled EU policy vis-à-vis Burundi that addresses the ongoing serious human rights violations, in line with the EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights; calls on the Commission to consider launching consultations with Burundi under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement with a view to its possible suspension from the Agreement and to take any appropriate measures while those consultations are being conducted;

15. Calls on the European Union and the Member States to release the funds required to address the humanitarian situation in this part of the world and to work in collaboration with UN bodies in particular on the chronic malnutrition situation.

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EP Resolution of 3/04/2014 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2013/2195(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0287; A7-0242/2014)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]
109. Deplores that the Commission’s DG for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection was unable to honour EUR 60 million of its payment obligations in a timely way in 2012 (and EUR 160 million in 2013) with grave consequences for both vulnerable people and those NGOs trying to support them; given the urgent lifesaving nature, rapid project cycle and modest budget (EUR 2 per citizen per year) involved in the Union emergency response, calls on the Commission and the budgetary authority to recognise the exceptional nature and specificity of these actions by ensuring matching levels of commitment and payment appropriations for humanitarian aid in the annual budgetary cycle;

269. Welcomes the Commission’s “Transparent Aid” initiative(36) providing comprehensive and timely information about humanitarian and development aid and potentially helping to reduce double funding;

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EP Resolution of 3/04/2014 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth European Development Funds for the financial year 2012, based on 2013/2206(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0290; A7-0176/2014)

Leading committee: CONT (DEVE for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

51. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS, in coordination with other development partners, including Member States, and with a view to programming for the 11th EDF and the design of future Union programmes, to pay increased attention to ensuring an appropriate balance of aid between all provinces, especially the poorer ones, in order to avoid geographical disparities in the distribution of development aid; calls for combined support at a central level for programmes at provincial level that link political and territorial decentralisation with improved natural resource management strategies and infrastructure rehabilitation and development; reconsiders Union support for the improved management of natural resources on the basis of a comprehensive needs assessment;

53. Asks the Commission and the EEAS to promote improved DRC government accountability through increased support to strengthen the capacity of national oversight institutions, in particular the specialised committees of the National Assembly and the supreme audit institution;

55. Insists that EDF funding should support the long-term restructuring of central judicial bodies in DRC in order to ensure the sustainable establishment of the rule of law in the country; notes in this respect REJUSCO and PAG, two programmes which were granted EUR 7,9 million and EUR 9 million from the 9th EDF; regrets that those programmes failed to achieve their anticipated outcomes and takes note that the Commission’s contribution has consequently been reduced for REJUSCO and stopped in the case of PAG; calls on the Commission to assess the specific shortcomings encountered during the preparation and implementation of those two programmes in order to develop more sustainable programmes on the judicial reform with better-tailored objectives under the 11th EDF;

56. Considers at the outset of programmes and regularly during their implementation, the need to assess the likelihood and potential impact of the main risks to the achievement of programme objectives by appraising the relevance and credibility of the country’s policies and action plans for improving governance in relation to the available institutional and financial resources and by monitoring progress against commitments made by the DRC authorities; calls for the
establishment of measures to prevent or mitigate risks and to clearly define the course of action to be followed if risks become a reality;

57. Believes that the Commission should focus its objectives on a limited number of priorities, set out a time frame with regular evaluation assessments which is better adapted to the programme environment and provide for flexibility during programme implementation so that objectives can be adapted promptly where appropriate;

58. Considers that the Commission should strengthen their structured political and policy dialogue with the DRC; notes that this will involve, in full respect of the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement (in particular Article 96 thereof), (i) setting clear, relevant, realistic and time-bound targets which are mutually agreed upon with the national authorities, (ii) periodically assessing compliance with the agreed targets as part of the regular political dialogue with the government, and (iii) considering, after careful deliberation, the adaptation or, in exceptional cases, the suspension or termination of the programme if the DRC government shows insufficient commitment to compliance;

59. Urges the DRC government to adopt the necessary measures for improving the functioning of the thematic working groups and to monitor the implementation of those measures.

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EP Resolution of 11/12/2013 on the EU approach to resilience and disaster risk reduction in developing countries: learning from food security crises, based on 2013/2110(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0578; A7-0375/2013)
Leading committee: DEVE

Summary

Extract from the Summary

The Parliament welcomed both the Commission’s 2012 Resilience Communication and its objectives, as well as the document entitled “Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis-Prone Countries 2013-2020” and its priorities. It called on the Commission together with the European External Action Service (EEAS), to implement its proposals and priorities and to ensure that consistent progress is made on achieving its objectives.

EU approach to resilience: Parliament called on the Commission to actively integrate resilience measures into both the humanitarian and the development sides of programming. It stressed that there needs to be a stronger link between short-term humanitarian responses and longer-term development programming and that this should fit into the overall resilience approach. For the Parliament, the main focus of the EU’s resilience approach must be the most vulnerable, poorest and most marginalised populations, who have high exposure to risks. In the long term, this approach should address the deterioration of the ecosystem, particularly agriculture, water, biodiversity and fish resources. Members called on the Commission to target fragile countries in its resilience agenda.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) as an essential component of resilience: Parliament highlighted that effective disaster response management takes into account the setting in place of a framework allowing for the immediate mobilisation of all necessary resources within the development and aid programmes. It called on the EU, its Member States and its partner countries’ governments to improve and develop DRR strategies in developing countries by implementing risk assessment programmes and enhancing early warning systems, particularly in fragile and crisis-prone countries.
Better coordination of efforts and improved funding methods: Parliament recalled that according to a study, EUR 800 million could be saved annually in transaction costs if donors concentrated their aid efforts on fewer countries and activities. In this respect, it underlined the importance of nomadic livestock keepers and pastoral populations for improving nutritional processes. At the same time, the resolution encouraged increased collaboration between the public sector and the private sector on DRR and resilience. It urged the Commission to draft a proposal that establishes rules on public-private partnership, including social and ecological impact assessments, to prevent, for example, the exacerbation of land-use conflicts or conflicts over access to water, particularly to protect smallholder farmers. It also recommended increased collaboration with non-EU countries and international and regional institutions when it comes to disaster preparedness, as well as disaster response and reconstruction.

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Leading committee: DEVE (AFET, INTA, BUDG, FEMM for opinion)

Summary


Recital (14) of the Final Act

Particularly in those situations where needs are most urgent and poverty both most widespread and deepest, Union support should be geared at strengthening the resilience of countries and their populations to adverse events. That should be done through the appropriate mix of approaches, responses and instruments, in particular by ensuring that the security-oriented, humanitarian and development approaches are balanced, consistent and effectively coordinated, thereby linking relief, rehabilitation and development.

Article 2 of the Final Act

Objectives and eligibility criteria

...  
5. Actions covered by Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 (15) and eligible for funding under that Regulation shall not be funded under this Regulation, except where there is a need to ensure continuity of cooperation from crisis to stable conditions for development. In such cases, special consideration shall be given to ensuring that humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development assistance are effectively linked.

Article 5 of the Final Act

Geographic programmes

3. In order to attain the objectives laid down in Article 2, geographic programmes shall be drawn from the areas of cooperation contained in the European Consensus and subsequent agreed modifications thereto as well as from the following areas of cooperation:
(c) other areas of significance for development:

(i) migration and asylum;
(ii) linking humanitarian relief and development cooperation;
(iii) resilience and disaster risk reduction;
(iv) development and security, including conflict prevention.

4. Further details of the areas of cooperation referred to in paragraph 3 are set out in Annex I.

Article 12 of the Final Act

Programming for countries and regions in crisis, post-crisis or situations of fragility

1. When drawing up the programming documents for countries and regions in crisis, post-crisis or situations of fragility or prone to natural disasters, due account shall be taken of the vulnerability, special needs and circumstances of the countries or regions concerned.

   Proper attention should be given to conflict prevention, State and peace building, post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction measures, as well as to the role of women and the rights of children in those processes.

   Where partner countries or regions are directly involved in, or affected by, a crisis, post-crisis or situation of fragility, special emphasis shall be placed on stepping up coordination between relief, rehabilitation and development amongst all relevant actors to help the transition from an emergency situation to the development phase.

   Programming documents for countries and regions in a situation of fragility or prone to natural disasters shall provide for disaster preparedness and prevention and for managing the consequences of such disasters and shall address vulnerability to shocks and strengthen resilience.

   


   Resolution on topical subject tabled by ECR, EPP, S&D, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA

   Summary

   [The European Parliament,]

   13. Calls on the international community, including the EU, the AU and the UN to continue to do everything possible to provide more coordinated and effective aid to people in the eastern DRC and to contribute to efforts to respond to the humanitarian disaster;
14. Welcomes the mobilisation of an additional EUR 10 million by the Commission to deliver urgently needed relief to 2.5 million people in the DRC, which brings EU emergency aid to the DRC and the Great Lakes region to EUR 71 million in 2013, making the EU the country’s largest humanitarian donor.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of its Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2012/2167(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0122; A7-0116/2013)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

242. Is concerned that EuropeAid’s and DG ECHO’s supervisory and control systems were again found to be only partially effective; points, in particular, to the need to improve those systems in delegations; calls on the Commission to set aside sufficient resources for delegation staff to perform monitoring and supervision activities in a timely and satisfactory manner; welcomes the introduction of the new version of the six-monthly External Assistance Management Report in July 2011, which aims to strengthen the accountability links between delegations and EuropeAid headquarters;

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2012 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth European Development Funds for the financial year 2010, based on 2011/2212(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0156; A7-0100/2012)
Leading committee: CONT (DEVE for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

67. Points out the significance of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) in order to strengthen the links between relief, recovery and development and to ensure a smooth transition from humanitarian aid to development aid; stresses that there is still much work to be done to improve the coordination, efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of LRRD;

68. Urges the Commission to ensure that EDF funding is coordinated with other instruments (Food Facility, Food Security Thematic Programme, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, Non-State Actors/Local Authorities Thematic Programme, Instrument for Stability, Pilot Project Rural Micro-Finance); calls on the Commission to ensure better coherence and complementarity between humanitarian aid and development aid, both at policy level and in practice, and to put greater emphasis on disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness, as well as to strengthen the resilience of the population at risk;

69. Points out that the Union needs a wide range of tools for development cooperation adapted to different contexts as there is no one-size-fits-all in development aid; in particular, emphasises the need for specific tools and working methods in dealing with failed states or with deeply undemocratic countries such as Eritrea, which refuses aid to its people in spite of a rampant food crisis;

Leading committee: CONT (DEVE for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Efficiency and effectiveness of the ECHO control, monitoring and supervision system: Parliament notes that the relations between ECHO and its partner NGOs are governed by the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), while the method used for budget implementation is direct centralised management. In this context, it welcomes the enhanced flexibility and efficiency afforded by the 2008 FPA, by comparison with the 2005 FPA, including a more result-oriented approach. Members call on the Commission to continue refining the measures which will improve the efficiency of cooperation with FPA partners in the post-2012 FPA. They stress that improving the efficiency of cooperation and reducing the excessive administrative burden for FPA partners is important, while at the same time ensuring a high level of accountability and transparency.

International organisations, the United Nations: Parliament recalls that relations between ECHO and its UN partners are governed by the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). It stresses that the terms for and the implementation of control and follow-up of EU funds under joint management have demonstrated serious weaknesses. It urges the Commission to agree, notably with the UN agencies, on the measures required to be able to rely on the audit work carried out by UN bodies and to reinforce and enhance the assurance gained from the existing checks, including verifications. The resolution stresses that the control requirements for indirect management of the EU funds must be as rigorous as those for shared management. In general, Parliament regrets the general character of UN reports, in which insufficient information is provided on results. It calls on the Commission to ensure that UN reports contain sufficient information concerning the results – i.e. the output and outcome – of projects within the reporting time scale. Members also deplore the difficulties the European Court of Auditors (ECA) has encountered in accessing information about the actions carried out by UN partners. They stress that the ECA must provide the ECA with the necessary access to information and thus fulfil the FAFA verification clause. The resolution welcomes the positive results of the discussions with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), as a result of which the WFP and UNICEF changed their rules to make their internal audit reports available to DG ECHO. In this regard, Members call on DG ECHO to conduct similar negotiations with the other UN agencies without delay in order to ensure easy and unbureaucratic access to their internal audit reports. Members also welcome the current efforts of the Working Group on Accountability for and Audit of Disaster-Related Aid established in the framework of the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). Members point out that, since the revelations of misuse of UN funds for humanitarian and development activities by the Government of North Korea in late 2006, there has been broad criticism regarding the lack of transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of the management of funds by the UN. They regret that the UN reform in matters of transparency and accountability has not yet made any significant progress and stress that EU Member States need to demonstrate more political will, determination and coherence to advance the reform and ensure greater accountability. They call on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy to prioritise this issue and play a facilitating role.

Efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of EU humanitarian aid managed by DG ECHO: Parliament calls for the diversity of the actors involved in financing and implementing the European humanitarian programmes – the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, NGOs – to be borne in mind, given that disasters often transcend national borders and require multilateral, coordinated responses. It encourages the work being done to strengthen the capacities of local stakeholders and increase assessment and rapid response capabilities on the ground through DG ECHO’s offices as well as field experts. The resolution points out that accurate and coherent needs assessment is an essential prerequisite for the effective implementation of humanitarian
aid.

**FPA partners**: Parliament regrets the complexity of the administrative access procedures, the excessive administrative charges, which are very high for NGOs, and the difficulties experienced with undergoing audits, given the lack of human resources, and call for the tools used to be appropriate to the specific requirements of the humanitarian sector and to local requirements. It commends DG ECHO’s efforts to promote the use of innovative approaches such as the cash-based approach, and in particular unconditional transfers, which are directed at the most vulnerable groups. Members note that, by using local markets, these approaches can be more efficient than assistance in kind, and do not necessarily carry a greater fiduciary risk.

Noting that there are issues relating to the provision of complete procurement files and the establishment of better-documented and solid procurement procedures, the resolution notes that the following issues must be addressed by the FPA partners: (i) establishing appropriate internal control mechanisms, (ii) improving their financial cost allocation systems and making them more transparent, (iii) improving weaknesses in their accounting systems and their management’s commitment to quality standards, (iv) establishing a risk management process for the whole organisation and (v) raising awareness of the dangers of fraud and corruption.

Members stress the need to solve the issues relating to subcontracted implementing partners. They deplore the lack of proper procedures, and of oversight and proper management by FPA partners of their implementing partners. They call in particular for:

- a genuine and continuous involvement of beneficiaries in the planning and management of aid;
- putting in place a formal mechanisms to provide complaints/feedback from the beneficiary to the partner concerned or clear rules on the protection of whistleblowers;
- an improved distribution and post-distribution monitoring of aid.

**Budgetary issues**: Parliament draws attention to the frequent topping up of DG ECHO’s budget, either through the use of the Emergency Aid Reserve or through transfers from other budget lines from the external aid heading of the EDF. It considers budget top-ups to be a structural issue. It stresses the necessity to draw up a realistic budget, allocating appropriations for natural disasters or humanitarian actions on the basis of confirmed experience with spending in previous years. The resolution stresses the fact that the European Union must strengthen its reaction capacity, given the growing number of major natural disasters. It recalls, with this in mind, that Parliament has for many years been calling for a more realistic humanitarian budget in the interests of remedying the chronic underfunding of the relevant budget lines. Members welcome the recent Commission communication on the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, which provides for an increase in the humanitarian aid instrument budget of EUR 6.4 billion over this period (i.e. an annual average of EUR 915 million, as against EUR 813 million in 2007-2013). They also note with satisfaction the increase in the Emergency Aid Reserve for the same period, bringing it up to EUR 2.5 billion, as well as the proposal for unspent funds in the reserve to be carried over to the following year, and ask the Commission to ensure that these funds continue to be earmarked principally for urgent humanitarian needs.

Moreover, they ask for:

- the EU budget to support actions designed to anticipate disasters, prepare for them, avert them and react more quickly to them, as well as measures to ensure greater flexibility in launching development measures as a means of emerging from crisis situations;
- more and better-managed resources to be deployed to guarantee continuity of aid in the transition phase between emergency and development;
- particular care for children, as well as expectant mothers and mothers of young children, with regard to the provision of food, clothing, evacuation and transportation, and of medical facilities with a view to preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, as priority areas under the existing financial mechanisms;
• the primary focus of this transitional, rehabilitation-oriented phase between emergency aid and development to be capacity-building in local institutions and a high level of involvement of local NGOs and associations in the planning and implementation phases;
• clearer guidance to guarantee transparency and ensure that consortia do not negatively affect the diversity of the NGO community, with particular reference to small and medium-sized organisations

**Need for sustainability, coherence and complementarity:** in general, Parliament points to the significance of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) in order to strengthen the links between relief, recovery and development and to ensure a smooth transition from humanitarian aid to development aid. It stresses that there is still much work to be done to improve the coordination, efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of LRRD. It calls on DG ECHO to focus more closely on the sustainability of humanitarian actions and urges DG ECHO and other relevant Commission services to put greater emphasis on DRR and disaster preparedness, strengthen the resilience of the population at risk through capacity building, training and public awareness measures, and establish efficient early-warning systems in disaster-prone and crisis-hit countries, in order to enable them to react appropriately. Members call on DG ECHO to carefully consider the possible negative effects of humanitarian aid. …

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[EP Resolution of 18/01/2011 on implementation of the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: the mid-term review of its action plan and the way forward, based on 2010/2101(INI) (P7_TA(2011)0005; A7-0375/2010)]

Leading committee: DEVE

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament notes that there has been a dramatic increase in the number and severity of natural disasters, that the incidence of complex crises is rising and that the provision of aid is becoming increasingly difficult and dangerous. It advocates increased funding for humanitarian aid to reflect the growing number of humanitarian interventions, and calls on the budgetary authority to transfer all or part of the emergency reserve allocation to DG ECHO's initial budget, underlining the importance of achieving the OECD/DAC target of 0.7% of GNI by 2015. Realistic budgets should be drawn up, allocating appropriations for natural disasters or humanitarian action on the basis of repeated experience with spending in previous years. In addition, the resolution calls for additional efforts to be made to speed up the funding of operations following disasters and the simplification of procedures for budgetary implementation.

Noting that the increasing involvement of non-humanitarian bodies in responding to humanitarian crises carries with it a major risk of confusion between the military and humanitarian roles and blurs the boundaries of impartial and independent humanitarian aid, Parliament calls for an increase in funding and the development of capabilities and resources in order to ensure that humanitarian aid and civil protection remain purely civilian tasks. It recalls the importance of maintaining a balanced overall response while devoting particular attention to 'forgotten crises'.

**Humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law (IHL):** the resolution emphasises that EU humanitarian aid is not a crisis-management tool and deplores the increasing politicisation of humanitarian aid and its consequences in terms of respect for the 'humanitarian space'. It calls for military and civilian personnel, and humanitarian workers involved in disaster response or humanitarian operations, to act in accordance with the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality, and hopes that specific training in international humanitarian law will be provided at the EEAS. The Commission is asked to ensure that additional funding is earmarked for promoting IHL among those who bear arms, among young people and among politicians and civil society.
A joint framework for the delivery of aid: Parliament makes several observations on the issues of quality, coordination and consistency in the delivery of EU humanitarian aid. It points out that the provision of aid must be based solely on identified need and the degree of vulnerability. More specific attention ought to be directed at the most vulnerable groups of people, such as women, children and forcibly displaced persons. The evaluation process needs to be further improved, particularly with regard to the application of vulnerability criteria, especially regarding women, children and disabled groups. Parliament encourages the Commission to pursue its work in specific fields such as nutrition, protection, gender and sexual violence, refugees, returnees and IDPs and calls for the issues of gender and reproductive health to be systematically integrated into the emergency healthcare aspect of humanitarian response.

Continuity of aid: Parliament calls for swift implementation of the new European strategy to support disaster risk reduction in developing countries. It advocates a substantial increase in the funding allocated to this aspect of policy. It goes on to deplore the fact that there has still been little practical progress on linking emergency aid, rehabilitation and development, in spite of the numerous political undertakings given in that regard in recent years. The resolution calls for more resources with the aim of assuring the continuity of aid and a focus on flexibility and complementarity among existing financial arrangements in the phases of transition from emergency to development.

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EP Recommendation to the Council of 14/12/2010 on setting up an EU rapid response capability, based on 2010/2096(INI) (P7_TA(2010)0465; A7-0332/2010)

Leading committee: DEVE (AFET for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

1. Addresses the following recommendations to the Council:

(a) acknowledges that the inclusion of civil protection and humanitarian aid within the portfolio of a single Commissioner responsible for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response creates better synergies within the Commission and helps enhance the coherence of the overall EU disaster response;

(b) calls for greater integration between civil protection and humanitarian working methodologies within DG ECHO, while preserving their specific features by maintaining a clear distinction and demarcation of roles between them, in order to maximize synergies and complementarities and to enhance efficiency; calls also for military and civilian personnel and humanitarian workers involved in disaster response or humanitarian operations to act in accordance with the principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality;

(c) reiterates that the use of civil protection resources, where deployed in any humanitarian crisis, should be needs driven and complementary to, and coherent with, humanitarian aid, in accordance with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the United Nations guidelines (Oslo guidelines), with a view to ensuring compliance with the humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence;

... 

(i) calls also, in the context of operations following a natural disaster, for better coordination between the humanitarian agencies and the civil protection mechanisms of the Member States and DG ECHO, and any future European civil protection force;

(k) encourages the Council to adopt, under the ordinary legislative procedure, measures (to be proposed by the Commission) for improving the predictability and the forward-planning capacity of the current EU civil protection mechanism, which is currently based on ad-hoc and voluntary contributions from Member States; suggests that these measures may include arrangements tested under the EU Preparatory Action including EU-level assets, voluntary pooling of resources, mapping of existing capacities, identification of scenarios and the development of further training activities;
(l) calls also for realistic budgets in which appropriations for natural disasters or humanitarian action are allocated on the basis of previous years’ spending;

(n) recommends that the EU civil protection force be based on the principles that it should:
- be based on an assessment of needs, with the participation of all humanitarian actors,
- be civilian,
- operate under the banner of the EU,
- observe international humanitarian law,
- respect the voluntary nature of the Member States’ participation in the intended arrangements,
- be based on the principle of burden-sharing,
- be open to contributions from non-EU countries,
- recognise the UN’s overall role in coordinating international relief outside the territory of the European Union,
- be organised on a preventive basis, according to specific scenarios;

(r) underlines the need to develop a comprehensive and proactive approach in response to disasters, coordinating the various means of action available to the Union and its Member States, such as crisis management (civil and military), financial assistance and development or social and environmental policies; believes in this context that the transition between disaster response and post-disaster reconstruction should be managed more efficiently; recalls the proposal to set up a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps in accordance with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty (Article 214(5)), and with a view to the European Year of Volunteering 2011 encourages the European Commission and the Council to work, together with the European Parliament, on the rules and procedures for the operation of the Corps as soon as possible, especially in the light of similar initiatives taken by some Member States;

(s) reminds the Council that the use of military assets and capabilities in disaster response, particularly for logistics, transport and infrastructure support for humanitarian aid operations, should be exceptional, used as a ‘last resort’ and always in compliance with existing agreements such as the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the Oslo guidelines on the use of military and civil defence assets in international disaster relief;

(w) encourages the utilisation of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) system to keep potential crisis areas under surveillance, allowing for better preparedness in sending humanitarian support, and stresses the critical importance of establishing a follow-up mechanism on EU efforts and assessment of deployed assistance;

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by S&D, EPP, Greens/EFA, ECR, ALDE
Summary
[The European Parliament,]

3. Remains extremely concerned by the worsening humanitarian situation in eastern DRC, following the atrocities carried out against the local population, as highlighted by two recent reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; is concerned, in particular, by recent reports of deliberate killings by
13. Deplores the increasing acts of violence against aid workers, which is having serious repercussions for the humanitarian situation on the ground; urges the authorities to launch thorough investigations into each and every incident and calls for protection to be immediately stepped up;

14. Stresses the need for continued and increased funding in humanitarian aid to eastern DRC, given the increasing number of internally displaced persons and deteriorating conditions; to this end, supports the appeal launched on 30 November 2009 by the UN, alongside 380 aid organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to raise USD 7.1 billion for humanitarian work in 2010; urges all Member States to contribute their fair share.

**Special report 16/2016 of 30 June 2016**

**EU education objectives: programmes aligned but shortcomings in performance measurement**

**Education  |  Employment and Social Affairs  |  European Social Fund (ESF)**

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<tr>
<th>Policy Area</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Employment and Social Affairs</th>
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<td>Report No / Date / Title</td>
<td>Special report 16/2016 of 30 June 2016  EU education objectives: programmes aligned but shortcomings in performance measurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
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<td>1. Were EU education objectives adequately considered in the Operational Programmes (OP) and related projects for 2007-2013 and in the design of OPs for the 2014-2020 programme period?</td>
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<td>1.1. Were EU education objectives adequately addressed in the 2007-2013 European Social Fund (ESF) OPs and projects?</td>
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<td>1.2. Did the Commission support Member States during the establishment of 2014-2020 OPs with a view to improving them compared to the previous programme period?</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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<td>1.1. Assessment of 2007-2013 operational programmes: EU education objectives are addressed in the examined 2007-2013 ESF operational programmes; there was insufficient link between financial reprogramming of operational programmes and the targets set; the performance of examined projects could not be systematically demonstrated;</td>
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<td>1.2. Assessment of the establishment of operational programmes for the 2014-2020 programme period: the Commission supported Member States in establishing 2014-2020 operational programmes; the examined operational programmes were consistent with EU education objectives; the performance monitoring arrangements were improved, but with some limitations; there are difficulties in linking education measures to employment prospects.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
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<td>1. The Commission should consider specifying the result indicator(s) on outcomes for which baseline and target values should be set for each investment priority.</td>
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<td>Target implementation date: during the preparation of the next programme period;</td>
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<td>2. Where modifications to OPs are requested by Member States, the Commission should:</td>
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<td>a) encourage the establishment of a clear link between OPs’ investment priorities and appropriate quantified and measurable result indicators;</td>
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<td>b) ensure that Member States provide explanations for the reprogramming of financial allocations, including both qualitative and quantitative information on the expected change in output and results indicators.</td>
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<td>Target implementation date: immediately;</td>
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<td>3. Member States should ensure that:</td>
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<td>a)</td>
<td>there is a clear link between the selected projects and the achievement of EU education objectives embedded in the OP;</td>
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<td>b)</td>
<td>appropriate result indicators are put in place to demonstrate the actual effects of the project on the final participants in a systematic manner and to monitor progress towards achieving the OPs' education objectives.</td>
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<td>Target implementation date: immediately;</td>
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4. Where relevant, the Commission and the Member States should better target OPs' funding on measures which reinforce the link between education and employment, and should ensure that outcomes are monitored appropriately.  
Target implementation date: immediately.

Rapporteur: Derek Vaughan (S&D) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| [Recommendations by the rapporteur,] | 1. Welcomes the Court’s report, endorses its recommendations and is pleased that the Commission accepts these and will consider them;  
2. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has implemented previous ECA recommendations in its 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) legal framework, thus providing for ensuring better value for money, i.e. via a performance framework and reserve, ex-ante conditionality, common output and result indicators;  
3. Stresses that a focus on performance and results is needed and is pleased that the new regulatory framework for the 2014-2020 programming period includes provisions for reporting on results from Member States;  
4. Notes the shortcomings in performance measurement particularly in the setting of targets and output/result indicators at projects implemented in the 2007-2013 period; regrets that the result indicators are still not fully reliable and expects the weakness to be corrected for the second half of the 2014-2020 programming period;  
5. Welcomes the trend in the reduction of the number of early school leavers and in tertiary education attainment; invites the MS to align their specific national targets to the EU target for better achievement of the education objectives;  
6. Notes that the target employment rate of recent graduates in the EU has been set at 82% by 2020 and four of the five visited MS have still not attained this target; points out that those four MS faced a serious economic crisis from which they are now starting to recover; believes it is still possible for those MS to attain and even surpass this target;  
7. Emphasises the importance of maintaining a sufficient level of EU investment in education, given the strong link between educational attainment and employability. |

| Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees | CONT Own Initiative Report on Control of spending and monitoring of EU Youth Guarantee schemes cost-effectiveness, based on 2016/2242(INI)  
Leading committee: CONT (BUDG, EMPL, CULT for opinion)  
Stage reached in procedure (February 2017) - Awaiting committee decision  
******  
CULT Own Initiative Report on Academic further and distance education as part of the European lifelong learning strategy, based on 2016/2142(INI) |
Leading committee: CULT (FEMM for opinion)

Stage reached in procedure (February 2017) - Awaiting committee decision

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Leading committee: CULT (CONT, EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

General recommendations: Parliament recommended making sure that the different programmes at EU level dealing with youth policies are well communicated, implemented, coordinated, in order to respond to new needs with a view to the social and educational challenges to come. It views the open method of coordination as an appropriate but still insufficient as a means for framing youth policies that needs to be complemented by other measures. Members reiterated their call for closer cooperation and exchange of best practices on youth issues at local, regional, national and EU level, as well as clear indicators and benchmarks in order to allow for monitoring of progress.

Priorities for the next cycle (2016-2018): given the EU’s alarmingly high youth unemployment, the high percentages of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), and the challenges of youth poverty and social exclusion, Parliament stressed that the next cycle (2016-2018) should contribute to the two objectives of the EU Youth Strategy:

- by identifying and tackling the causes of youth unemployment, such as early school leaving (the Europe 2020 headline target whereby the proportion of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%);
- by fostering entrepreneurship among young people;
- by investing in education, internships, apprenticeships and vocational training in the skills that reflect labour market opportunities, needs and developments;
- by facilitating the transition to the labour market in terms of measures ensuring better coordination of education programmes, employment policy and labour market demands.

Employment and education: Parliament called on Member States to make the best use of available EU and national policies and financial frameworks in order to promote appropriate investment in young people and the creation of quality and secure jobs. It insisted on the need to:

- fully implement the Erasmus+ programme, especially its apprenticeships facet;
- improve opportunities for vocational education and training (VET) students to do work placements in neighbouring countries;
- boost information and communication technologies (ICT) training in order to equip all young people with the relevant skills and basic digital skills useful for the labour market;
- pursue youth and education programmes that empower young women and girls in traditionally male-dominated sectors where they are under-represented, such as entrepreneurship, ICT, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM);
- continue the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and ensure better coordination at all levels between education and training curricula and the needs of the changing labour markets;
- ensure better coordination at all levels between education and training curricula and the needs of the changing labour markets;
• implement measures to facilitate young people’s transition from education to work, including by ensuring quality internships and apprenticeships;
• take measures to incentivise entrepreneurship in all forms of education by creating a more entrepreneur- and start-up-friendly environment for the launch of business start-ups, and enhance the role of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme;
• encourage Member States to establish quality dual education and vocational training systems.

Financial resources: Parliament underlined the importance of strategic investment, including from the European Structural and Investment Funds, in particular the European Social Fund, for regional development, competitiveness and the creation of high-quality traineeships, apprenticeships and sustainable jobs. Members called for targeted and simplified measures to enhance Member State capacity to make use of available funding through the European Structural Funds, the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Cohesion Fund, the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), the Youth Employment Initiative, Youth on the Move, Your First Eures Job, Horizon 2020 and programmes and actions in the area of citizenship. Member States were urged to fully implement and monitor the effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee. This guarantee should also focus on education and training for unskilled or low-skilled unemployed young people, so as also to cover young graduates and those who have completed vocational training. The age limit under the Youth Guarantee should go from 25 to 29.

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Leading committee: CULT
Summary

Extract from the Summary

The ET2020 Strategic Framework: Parliament regretted that huge problems in terms of quality, accessibility and socio-economic discrimination still remain unsolved in education and training, and believes that more ambitious, coordinated and effective policy actions at both European and national level should be delivered. However, it welcomed the narrowing of the number of ET2020 priority areas to six enumerating specific issues from which Member States can choose to fulfil accordingly their own needs and conditions, but noted that the effectiveness and the operational aspect of ET2020 need to be enhanced and a work programme adopted. Members also welcomed the proposed extension of the work cycle from 3 years to 5, in order to better implement the long-term strategic goals and work on issues such as underachievement of pupils in some study fields, low participation rates in adult learning, early school leaving, social inclusion, civic engagement, gender gaps and employability rates of graduates.

... Parliament welcomed the new ET2020 priority of improving support for teachers and raising their status, which is essential for them to be able to command the necessary respect, thus making their profession more attractive.

Parliament strongly believe that investing in early childhood education and care (ECEC) brings greater returns than investing in any other stage of education. It pointed out that investing in the early years of education has been proven to reduce later costs.

Quality of education and training: Parliament called for the development of good practices in assessing qualitative progress and investment in the use of quality data with stakeholders at local, regional and national level, notwithstanding the relevance of the indicators and benchmarks used in the ET2020 framework.
Concerned that the level of youth unemployment in the EU remains high and that the employment rate of higher education graduates has decreased, Member States are called upon to channel investment into inclusive education which responds to societal challenges with regard to ensuring equal access and opportunities for all.

Parliament highlighted that the side-effects of the Bologna process and student mobility should be examined and evaluated and that educational institutions should apply flexibility when using modules and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Parliament stressed the importance of an overall framework of recognition of qualifications and diplomas as key in ensuring cross-border educational and labour mobility.

It noted that particular attention should be given to simplifying and rationalising existing EU instruments on skills and qualifications directed to the wider public.

EP Resolution of 19/01/2016 on skills policies for fighting youth unemployment, based on 2015/2088(INI) (P8_TA(2016)0008; A8-0366/2015)
Leading committee: EMPL (CULT for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament recalled that the lack of relevant skills for available jobs and an education and training mismatch are important factors causing youth unemployment.

Co-operation, participation, partnerships: Parliament called for closer and structural co-operation and interaction between schooling and vocational education, public administration, business, civil society, especially student and youth organisations, with a view to better matching skills to labour market needs. It welcomed the tools for skills development and the forecasting of skill needs proposed by the Commission and highlighted the fact that skills development should encourage the development of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills, which are widely useful in an economy. However, Parliament also stressed that more ambitious action and investment is needed.

Better use of EU funds: Parliament called for greater financial resources to be used to spread information on European financing instruments and to broaden, in universities and businesses, the knowledge and skills that are necessary for seeking funds, studying and managing funding projects. In order to guarantee that EU funds are used properly, it is paramount that a supervisory and monitoring system be implemented in order to ascertain how those funds are being used. It called in particular for an EU award for the best projects in combating youth unemployment, which could be linked to the pan-European contest 'European youth award' and to the 'European prize', or youth employment in the social economy'. Member States are called upon to act, as soon as possible, on education- and labour market-related country-specific recommendations in the European Semester and other Commission recommendations.

Skills for employability: Parliament stressed the urgent need to improve the qualifications and motivation of advisors working at public employment agencies, so that they can proactively respond to the needs of young job seekers, help them to gain additional qualifications and identify the skills they need for the job market. It called on the Member States to examine best practices in the school career guidance system where pupils are monitored from an early school stage to the first steps in the labour market. It also encouraged the Member States and all relevant stakeholders to share good practices in this regard and to further develop monitoring and forecasting tools. Parliament pointed out the lack of high-quality career guidance in the Member States and the need to improve the quality of career guidance in schools and to provide ongoing professional training for careers advisors. Member States are called upon to examine best practices.
in the school career guidance system where pupils are monitored from an early school stage to the first steps in the labour market. In addition, Member States are encouraged to promote and support opportunities for professional mobility among young apprentices to enable them to develop their skills through contact with other training systems and other types of business. Emphasis is given to the importance of developing ‘soft skills’ and to promoting non-formal and informal learning and training and studies, which adopt innovative approaches.

Overall, Parliament encouraged the Member States to urgently incorporate new technologies in the learning process, and to intensify and improve ICT and digital skills training. Measures need to be developed to encourage girls to engage in STEM subjects and establish quality career guidance to support them in continuing their professional careers in this field.

Certification: the resolution noted that despite high youth unemployment rates in some Member States and unfilled job vacancies in others, intra-EU labour mobility remains low. It recalled therefore the importance of the mobility of workers for a competitive labour market, and stressed the need to reduce the linguistic and cultural barriers that are liable to restrain it by providing sector-specific language courses and training on intercultural communication for the unemployed.

Parliament emphasised the importance of addressing skills shortages and mismatches by promoting and facilitating mobility for learners, as well as cross-border recognition of qualifications, through a better use of all EU tools and programmes, such as Erasmus+, the European Qualifications Framework, the European Skills Passport, the Youth Guarantee, the Europass CV, the Entrepreneurial Skills Pass, EURES, Knowledge Alliances, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, the European Credit Transfer System, the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). It encouraged the optimal use of existing EU funding such as the Erasmus+ programme. It also called on the Member States to rapidly and effectively implement the Operational Programmes of the Youth Employment Initiative.

New generation, new opportunities, new challenges: lastly, Parliament noted that young people, raised in an era of rapid technological progress have not only potential, talents and skills, but also values and priorities that differ from those of previous generations.

It is therefore necessary to:

- put in place programmes and initiatives that would overcome the gap between generations;
- propose more flexible education and training systems;
- provide that recruitment and employment services staff should be well trained and equipped with skills that would give them an understanding of the new generation;
- ensure equal access and training to digital tools to all.

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EP Resolution of 10/09/2015 on creating a competitive EU labour market for the 21st century: matching skills and qualifications with demand and job opportunities, as a way to recover from the crisis, based on 2014/2235(INI) (P8_TA(2015)0321; A8-0222/2015)
Leading committee: EMPL (CULT for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

The resolution stressed the need for continued efforts to bring education, training and labour markets together, and underlined the importance of making
employment law more comprehensible for workers and employers, of eliminating barriers to employment and of promoting legal security for companies and employees. It also stressed the importance of the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) initiative. Recalling that professional mobility is a fundamental factor, Parliament highlighted the importance of EU initiatives aimed at stimulating mobility and creating opportunities, such as ERASMUS+, the European Qualifications Framework, the Europass CV, the European Skills Passport, and the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES), which should be made an essential tool in the EU job market.

Members stressed:

- the need to unlock the great economic potential of women in Europe and to create the appropriate conditions for women to progress in their career and pursue higher positions in companies or start their own businesses;
- the importance of active labour policies, lifelong learning and improving people’s ability to adapt to technological change. Education and training investment is necessary to assist the youth of today.

**Anticipation of future skills needs**: Members considered that, in order to anticipate future skills needs, labour market stakeholders, including employers’ and employees’ organisations, and education and training providers must be strongly involved at all levels, in particular in designing, implementing and evaluating vocational qualification programmes. They called for:

- a better understanding of present and future skills needs, and for the enhancement of the existing EU Skills Panorama, in order to better identify skills gaps and deficits in specific sectors, occupations and regions;
- more integrated partnerships and trust between schools, higher education establishments, businesses and other relevant authorities with a view to estimating labour needs for the future.

**Continuous education and training for all labour market actors**: Parliament stressed the need to strive for a more flexible and individual approach to career development and lifelong education and training across one’s personal career path. It recognised the importance of fostering work-based learning apprenticeships as an alternative route to employment. It suggested that training and requalification programmes for the unemployed, especially for the long-term unemployed, as well as skills assessment programmes, should be offered to people to enhance their chances on the labour market.

Members underlined the need to:

- give tailor-made guidance and counselling to jobseekers on how to look for a job or on which further education and training to undertake in order to ensure that their skills and competences are transferable,
- increase the adaptability of the workforce as a way to counter future shortages; calls on the Member States to use the structural funds, especially the European Social Fund, for this purpose;
- ensure measures targeting the long-term unemployed respect take-up options and that training is affordable and decent and address their actual needs
- use the Youth Guarantee as a tool to assist young people in the school-to-work transition;
- ensure equal opportunities, and access to education and training, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

The resolution also advocated:

- strengthening connections between education and employment by better targeting measures aimed at reducing the rate of early school leaving (ESL) to below 10% by 2020, as agreed in the Europe 2020 strategy. Dual vocational training through apprenticeships and similar work-based learning systems should be given more consideration as this tends to favour integration into the labour market and a smoother transition from education to work; better synergies between education systems and the labour market.
• **exchanging best practices** between Member States, and regional and local authorities, as well as to compare and measure their effectiveness, in particular in relation to dual and vocational education and apprenticeship and traineeship systems;

• **nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit from an early age.** There is a call for support and incentive measures for start-ups, SMEs, microenterprises and social economy actors. Member States should reduce the tax burden on labour

• **developing new skills and new jobs**, particularly in the context of the digital expansion, building the energy union, creating jobs through investing in research and development and innovation.

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Leading committee: EMPL (CULT for opinion)


Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: this Regulation introduced an additional provision in Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 on the additional initial pre-financing for operational programmes supported by the YEI. In light of the persistently high levels of youth unemployment in the Union, the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) was established to provide support to young persons not in employment, education or training in the most affected regions.

In order to address the budgetary constraints faced by Member States at the initial stage of the programming period and taking into account the urgent need to address youth unemployment and the specific features of the YEI, the Regulation increases the level of the initial prefinancing paid to operational programmes supported by the YEI in 2015 **from 1% to 30%**.

To ensure that the additional initial prefinancing amount is used for the immediate implementation of the YEI, that amount should be reimbursed to the Commission should the Union contribution from the YEI not amount to an adequate level in interim payment applications submitted to the Commission within 12 months after the entry into force of this Regulation.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Marita Ulvskog on behalf of EMPL committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

2. **Expresses regret that the Annual Growth Surveys and Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) adopted so far as part of the annual European Semester**
cycles have not been sufficiently aligned with the Europe 2020 employment, poverty reduction and education targets; regrets that the importance of social security systems as key instruments for stabilising the economy, as well as society, and reducing poverty is not taken sufficiently into account; calls for more determined efforts to guide and coordinate EU policies, so as to help strengthen the Single Market with a view to tackling obstacles to its performance and reaping its potential to boost smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and create jobs; calls on the Commission to ensure that the future CSRs make the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets a priority;

7. Calls for the introduction of a system of dual education, to operate at national or regional level in flexible form, and for the creation of an efficient Employment Service with close links to the European network; calls, furthermore, for the application of genuine lifelong learning (LLL) concepts and measurements on the labour market with a view to boosting the qualification levels of older workers;

20. Believes that Member States must be more responsive to labour market needs, notably by ensuring strong links between the world of education and the world of work;

25. Welcomes the announcement by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker concerning a comprehensive investment programme to fight unemployment; stresses the need for increased investments (in infrastructure, research and development, green jobs, innovation and the completion of the internal digital market) that are targeted at keeping and creating jobs in keeping with the Europe 2020 strategy investments and look beyond inputs alone in order also to take account of real policy outcomes; stresses that such investment could, with a view to longer-term benefits, be targeted at high-quality formal and non-formal education infrastructures and at eliminating barriers in order to improve equality of access; encourages linking these investments to concrete employment and poverty-related goals, given that investment in areas such as high-quality public services is also important to meet the goals of an inclusive society;

41. Calls on the Commission to take new concrete measures in the fields of education and innovation policies in order to strengthen the complementarity between growth and fighting inequality;

46. Regrets the fact that the Multiannual Financial Framework adopted for 2014-2020, with a budgetary allocation of EUR 960 billion, represented the first ever net reduction in the EU budget; considers that the MFF is not sufficient to help achieve the employment and social targets of the Europe 2020 strategy; considers, therefore, the mid-term review of the MFF to be of paramount importance for reshaping the strategic orientation of the EU's expenditure towards a job-rich economic recovery;

48. Stresses the need for employment, poverty reduction and education targets to be more precisely monitored and for the more timely production of comparable statistics; calls, therefore, for real-time unemployment figures and 'at risk of poverty or social exclusion' indicators, especially at NUTS 3 level, with a view to assessing the actual situation on national labour markets;

49. Calls on the Commission to establish a specific youth employment target and/or a specific integrated guideline on youth employment on the occasion of the mid-term-review of the Europe 2020 strategy.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Greens/EFA, EPP, S&D, ALDE

Summary

Extract from the Summary

**Youth Guarantee - Youth employment:** Parliament called for an efficient monitoring of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and called on the Commission to propose a European legal framework, introducing minimum standards for the implementation of the youth guarantees, including the quality of apprenticeships, decent wages for young people and access to employment services, and also covering young people aged between 25 and 30, where the existing recommendations on youth guarantees are not respected by Member States. It also called for the reduction of youth unemployment to be made a specific objective under the European Semester. It also called for measures to combat youth unemployment to be included in the Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) and the national reform programmes (NRPs). The Commission is called upon to closely monitor and review the introduction of such measures with the comprehensive involvement of Parliament. In addition, the Commission is called upon to accelerate the establishment of the Youth Employment Initiative and the Member States are encouraged to consider extending the Youth Guarantee to young people under 30 years of age.

Whilst recalling the fundamental role of the Structural Funds, Parliament stressed that the Youth Employment Initiative should not prevent Member States from using other EU programmes, e.g. under the European Social Fund or ERASMUS+, to finance broader projects related to youth, especially on young entrepreneurship, poverty and social inclusion.

**Vocational education and training:** Parliament recalled that the EUR 6 billion allocated to the YEI are not sufficient to combat youth unemployment in a lasting manner. It called on the Commission and the Member States to make the Youth Guarantee a priority and to increase its budget allocation for the overall period 2014-2020 when deciding on the compulsory post-electoral revision of the MFF 2014-2020, which is due to take place at the end of 2016 at the very latest.

It urged Member States to implement preventive action against early dropout from school or from training or apprenticeship schemes in order to significantly increase young persons’ employability and life opportunities.

... Parliament urged Member States to associate youth employment policies with quality and sustainable working contracts in order to tackle increasing structural precariousness and underemployment.

... Lastly, Parliament stressed the importance of focussing on stimulating entrepreneurship, particularly amongst younger people and graduates, promoting graduate internship and placements in small businesses and micro-enterprises.

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Leading committee: EMPL (BUDG, CONT, REGI, FEMM, CULT for opinion)

Summary

ESF Missions: the amended Regulation established the mission of the European Social Fund (ESF), including the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the scope of its support, specific provisions and the types of expenditure eligible for assistance.

The ESF shall improve access to the labour market, enhance social inclusion, combat poverty, promote education, skills acquisition and lifelong learning, and mobilising a range of policies targeting the most disadvantaged people. Its main missions were the following:

- promote employment, **improve access to the labour market**, paying particular attention to those who are the furthest from the labour market and support voluntary labour mobility;
- facilitate the **adaptation of workers** to industrial change and changes to production system needed for sustainable developments;
- support the **transition between education and employment for young people**;
- promote **gender equality**, non-discrimination and equal opportunities;
- support **active and healthy ageing**, including through innovative forms of work organisation.

... 

**Consistency and thematic concentration:** the strategy and actions set out in the Operational Programmes must be consistent and respond to the challenges identified in the National Reform Programmes, as well as, where relevant, in their other national strategies that aim to fight unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

Member States shall concentrate the ESF allocation to each operational programme on up to **five** of the investment priorities.

... 

**Youth Employment Initiative:** this will target all **young persons in eligible regions under the age of 25** not in employment, education or training, residing in the eligible regions, who are inactive or unemployed (including long-term unemployed), and registered or not as seeking work.

... 

The resources for the YEI may be **revised upwards for the years 2016 to 2020** in the framework of the budgetary procedure in accordance with Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020.

**Sound financial management:** Member States should refrain from adding rules which complicate the use of funds for the beneficiary. The ESF should complement other Union programmes and close synergies shall be developed between the ESF and other Union financial instruments.

**Reporting and review**

**Article 19 of the Final Act**

**Monitoring and evaluation**

1. In addition to the functions of the monitoring committee set out in Article 110 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, at least once per year, the monitoring committee shall examine the implementation of the YEI in the context of the operational programme and the progress made towards achieving its objectives.

2. The annual implementation reports and the final report as referred to in Article 50(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 shall include additional information on the implementation of the YEI. The Commission shall transmit to the European Parliament a summary of those reports as referred to in...
Article 53(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013.

The Commission shall attend the European Parliament’s annual debate on those reports.

3. As from April 2015 and for subsequent years, and at the same time as the annual implementation reports referred to in Article 50(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, the managing authority shall transmit electronically to the Commission structured data for each priority axis or any part thereof supporting the YEI. Indicator data transmitted shall relate to values for the indicators set out in Annexes I and II to this Regulation and, where applicable, to programme specific indicators. They shall relate to partially or fully implemented operations.

4. The annual implementation reports referred to in Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 or, where applicable, the progress report referred to in Article 111(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and the annual implementation report submitted by 31 May 2016, shall present the main findings of evaluations referred to in paragraph 6 of this Article. The reports shall also set out and assess the quality of employment offers received by YEI participants, including disadvantaged persons, those from marginalised communities and those leaving education without qualifications. The reports shall also set out and assess their progress in continuing education, finding sustainable and decent jobs, or moving into apprenticeships or quality traineeships.

5. The progress reports referred to in Article 52 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 shall include additional information on, and assess the implementation of, the YEI. The Commission shall transmit to the European Parliament a summary of these reports as referred to in Article 53(2) of that Regulation and shall attend the European Parliament’s debate on those reports.

6. At least twice during the programming period, an evaluation shall assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of joint support from the ESF and the specific allocation for YEI including for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

The first evaluation shall be completed by 31 December 2015 and the second evaluation by 31 December 2018.

Article 28 of the Final Act

Review

The European Parliament and the Council shall review this Regulation by 31 December 2020 in accordance with Article 164 TFEU.

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Recital (83) of the Final Act

Given the urgent priority of addressing youth unemployment in the Union’s most affected regions, as well as in the Union as a whole, a YEI is created and funded from a specific allocation and from targeted investment from the ESF to add to and reinforce the considerable support already provided through the ESI Funds. The YEI should aim to support young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training residing in the eligible regions. The YEI should be implemented as a part of the Investment for growth and jobs goal.

Reporting and review

Article 53 of the Final Act

Reporting by the Commission and debate on the ESI Funds

1. The Commission shall transmit each year from 2016 to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, a summary report in relation to ESI Fund programmes based on the annual implementation reports of the Member States submitted under Article 50 as well as a synthesis of the findings of the available evaluations of programmes. In 2017 and 2019 the summary report shall form a part of the strategic report referred to in paragraph 2.

2. In 2017 and 2019, the Commission shall prepare a strategic report summarising the progress reports of the Member States, which by 31 December 2017 and 31 December 2019, respectively, it shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions and those institutions shall be invited to hold a debate on it.

3. The Council shall debate the strategic report in particular with regard to the contribution of the ESI Funds to the achievement of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and shall be invited to provide input to the spring meeting of the European Council.

4. Every two years from 2018, the Commission shall include in its Annual Progress Report to the spring meeting of the European Council a section summarising the most recent of the reports referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, in particular with regard to the contribution of the ESI Funds to progress made towards the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Article 57 of the Final Act

Ex post evaluation

1. The ex post evaluations shall be carried out by the Commission, or by the Member States in close cooperation with the Commission. Ex post evaluations shall examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the ESI Funds and their contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth taking account of the targets established in that Union strategy and in accordance with specific requirements established in the Fund-specific rules.
2. Ex post evaluations shall be completed by 31 December 2024.

3. The ex-post evaluation of the dedicated programmes referred to in point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 39(4) shall be carried out by the Commission and completed by 31 December 2019.

4. For each of the ESI Funds, the Commission shall prepare, by 31 December 2025, a synthesis report outlining the main conclusions of ex-post evaluations.

Article 151 of the Final Act

Review

The European Parliament and the Council shall review this Regulation by 31 December 2020 in accordance with Article 177 TFEU.

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EP Resolution of 22/10/2013 on Rethinking Education, based on 2013/2041(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0433; A7-0314/2013)

Leading committee: CULT (EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

The Parliament welcomed the Commission communication, in particular its strong focus on combating youth unemployment through investing in skills, calling for the modernisation of higher education systems, as well as promoting world-class vocational education and training (VET). It also welcomed actions to address the shortages of well-qualified teachers and trainers.

... Recalling the headline targets and goals to which the EU has committed itself under the Europe 2020 Strategy, Parliament called on the Member States to make public expenditure and investments in education, training, research and innovation a priority. It recalled that budget cuts in these fields will have a negative impact on education. In parallel, Parliament strongly supported the observation of national situations and the launch of a debate at Union level with relevant stakeholders on investment efficiency and benefits in education and training. It urged the Council to adopt promptly the horizontal anti-discrimination directive which is key to guaranteeing genuine equality and combating bias and discrimination, including at school. It urged Member States to improve open access to all educational and scientific materials, with the aim of lowering costs for education and research, particularly in the light of recent budget cuts in these areas throughout the Union.

... Parliament urged the Member States to promote the attractiveness and improve the labour market relevance of VET, make it an integral part of the education system and ensure its quality, in particular through the introduction of entrepreneurial and ICT training. Parliament invited Member States and local and regional authorities, in cooperation with education institutions, to include elements of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum content in basic education, vocational training and higher education.

... Parliament drew attention to the added value of experience abroad in helping early school-leavers and young people without educational qualifications to find...
jobs. It considered that the Erasmus+ programme is an excellent framework through which to enable people in this category, too, to receive part of their vocational training abroad.

Members called on the Member States to:
- implement swiftly the European Youth Guarantee;
- invest in early labour-market activation mechanisms and employment schemes;
- halt the decline in spending on support for youth employment and education.

**Financing:** Parliament called for an integrated approach which harnesses the financing possibilities offered by the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund and national sources of financing for the achievement of smart growth. It stressed the role of the ESF in supporting investment in education and training, skills and lifelong learning. It urged, therefore, for the safeguard of the minimum overall share for the ESF as 25% of the budget allocated to cohesion policy.

In parallel, Parliament noted that the Commission Communication does not specify any concrete implementation measures for cooperation between the educational sector and different social and business partners. The Commission is called on to seek support and initiatives actively, as well as other forms of cooperation with the private sector for the improvement of education. The Member States are called upon to improve cooperation and partnerships between businesses and the education sector at all levels.

On the other hand, Parliament called on the Commission and Member States to reflect carefully on the concept of cost sharing as a way of funding education. It called for further cooperation between education institutions and providers, the business sector, social partners, civil organisations, and local, regional and national authorities, as well as employment services in order to exchange best practices, to promote partnerships and to work towards providing quality placements.

Parliament urged the Member States to invest in lifelong learning for teachers, so as to assist in their professional and personal development, and also to promote the status of teachers’ and improve their working conditions. It called for teachers to be valued and given proper recognition in order to improve the quality of teaching provided to pupils.

Parliament considered that all Member States should make a major effort to reduce dropout rates, thereby meeting the EU 2020 headline targets which are aimed at a figure below 10%. It stressed the need to focus on low-skilled adults and on the role played by adult education and training in reaching out to these groups, as well as focusing on intergenerational learning.

Member States are urged to monitor and evaluate regularly – with the involvement of relevant stakeholders, whether their education system and programmes have managed to reach out to the members of vulnerable social groups and if they have taken the necessary steps to reform their education systems.

Lastly, the Commission is called upon to monitor whether the Member States have taken the necessary steps to reform their education systems in order to achieve the above-mentioned goals.

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**Leading committee:** EMPL (REGI, CULT, FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**
Extract from the Summary

Parliament emphasises that national and EU policy measures to boost youth employment should be coherent and mutually reinforcing.

In this context, Parliament invites the Commission and the Member States to take measures to:
- where there is more than 25% youth unemployment in the regions, develop a one-year relief plan to tackle youth unemployment by creating jobs for at least 10% of the young people affected;
- avoid wasting available resources by checking the possibility of applying examples of best practices from other Member States to their own labour markets;
- provide active support to Member States that agree to reform their vocational training systems;
- draw up qualitative guidelines for a modern dual education system, backed up by a list of broadly defined, non-academic key occupations in Europe;
- ensure the involvement of student and youth organisations in the reforms under way;
- prioritise the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in their educational programmes;
- encourage and support the participation of young people and especially women, through education, civil society and quality youth initiatives, in democratic life.

Avoidance of budget cuts and significant investment in measures in favour of young people: Parliament is deeply concerned at the budget cuts in the Member States in the area of education, training and youth policy, which could result in young people being locked out of both education and employment. It invites the Member States and regional and local authorities to set up integrated territorial development strategies, including training and employment components, starting with measures to avoid early school leaving.

Parliament highlights the role of the proposed EU Loan Guarantee Facility for full-time Master’s students in the EU and third countries in further facilitating youth mobility and contributing to multidimensional university ranking.

Youth Guarantee: while welcoming the decision of the EPSCO Council on 28 February 2013 to agree on a Council recommendation on implementing a Youth Guarantee, Parliament invites the Member States to take action to implement Youth Guarantee schemes in an ambitious manner at national level. It calls for the extension of the target groups to include young people under the age of 30, including graduates and those leaving training systems without qualifications. Parliament informs the Member States that it intends to monitor closely all Member State activities to make the Youth Guarantee a reality. It also stresses that efforts and funding aimed at implementing Youth Guarantee schemes should not discourage the structural efforts and reforms that are required to make the education systems and labour markets in some Member States fit for the future. Parliament calls on the Commission to provide in all its programmes for measures aimed specifically at tackling youth unemployment, following an integrated global approach. As specifically regards the provisions to be set in place in regard to the Youth Guarantee, Parliament proposes a series of measures designed to bring about tangible and effective results.

Plan of action on youth employment: Parliament calls on the Commission and Member States, in cooperation with youth stakeholders and with Parliament, to develop a plan of action on youth employment identifying short-term, medium-term and long-term measures. It recommends that, in Member States with a dual vocational training system, there should be an ‘alternative apprenticeship’ scheme, and thus a Youth Guarantee scheme, in the form of vocational training with more than one employer for young people under the age of 18 who cannot obtain an apprenticeship.

Partnerships between businesses and the educational sector and traineeships: Parliament calls on the Member States to improve cooperation and strengthen
partnerships between businesses and the educational sector at all levels, with the aim of linking curricula more closely to the demands of the labour market. It invites the Commission and the Member States to propose a Quality Framework for Traineeships, making sure that traineeships are tailored to the needs of young people to develop relevant skills. Parliament stresses the need to encourage all undertakings of a certain size to offer traineeships under a dual training scheme unless they are in major financial difficulty, and to **recruit trainees at the end of their traineeships.**

... **Preventing early school-leaving and discrimination in schools:** Parliament calls on the Member States to intensify their efforts to reduce early school leaving in order to achieve the goal set out in the EU 2020 strategy of a dropout rate no higher than 10% by 2012. It invites the Member States to make use of a wide range of measures to fight early school leaving and illiteracy, e.g. reducing class sizes, providing assistance for pupils who cannot afford to complete their compulsory education, etc.

... **Align measures financed under the Structural Funds with the fight against unemployment:** Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States, when making decisions relating to the 2014-2020 programming period, to lay down more stringent and quantifiable criteria concerning the setting, monitoring and evaluation of Structural Fund objectives, with specific targets relating to the fight against youth unemployment, which should also be measurable in terms of gender ... . It also calls for consideration to be given to a further adaptation of the ESF in order to provide additional support in the areas of young women's training, access to employment and childcare. It calls on the Member States to make full and coordinated use of the available EU funding (ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF), thus enabling young people to play an active part in the economy and society.

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Leading committee: CULT (EMPL, REGI for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

2. Recalls the Commission's proposal that in the context of the ongoing negotiations on the new Multiannual Financial Framework funding for youth and education policies should be increased to address current and future challenges; stresses that communication between youth task forces is essential and should be promoted, as well as communication on action undertaken and results achieved so far;

3. Considers that the budget allocated for the fight against youth unemployment in the future MFF, namely EUR 6 billion, is insufficient and should be significantly increased in the negotiations;

9. Notes the impact of the first cycle of the Youth Strategy (2010-2012); stresses that the framework for cross-sectoral involvement of the Commission, the Member States and relevant stakeholders represents a good start but needs to be strengthened in the future by improving access to employment, education and training, thereby combating poverty and exclusion, while also using a cross-sectoral approach to spread practices across the relevant sectors;

15. Welcomes the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport; underlines the need for robust funding for this programme and for both a separate chapter and a separate budget allocation for the youth part;

16. Stresses that Member States and businesses should invest more in the right skills and diversify the types of training for jobs in demand, notably in
technological sectors, by creating more flexible curricula, integrating entrepreneurship and transversal skills, in order to better adapt to future labour market developments; stresses the importance of enhancing youth mobility in particular by the early learning of foreign languages; calls on Member States to establish dual vocational education and training systems as an effective way of linking educational to labour market demands and reducing youth unemployment;

17. Calls on the Member States to guarantee the total transferability of acquired social benefits so as not to jeopardise welfare protection for young workers who have opted for mobility;

19. Recognises that the new 'Horizon 2020' programme is an appropriate framework for boosting research, innovation and excellence in science; warns, however, that spending cuts in education in some Member States are jeopardising its objectives; calls on the Member States to establish the key priorities under the programme and to take full advantage of it;

21. Urges the Member States to strengthen, and remove existing cross-border barriers to, vocational training, orientation and apprenticeships, traineeships and internships, so as to make this form of education valued on a basis of equality, increase its connections with other educational pathways in a lifelong learning perspective, and better match the supply and demand of work-based training opportunities for young people, thereby improving mobility and employability, particularly in border regions;

31. Welcomes the recent commitments by the Member States and the Council to launch new youth initiatives with precise funding measures; calls on the Council to initiate similar policies in all Member States under the umbrella of a 'New Deal' for young people;

33. Believes that early intervention and proactive labour market policies represent a shift from dealing with the symptoms of multi-generational deprivation towards identifying and managing risks early in life in order to prevent unemployment and facilitate reintegration; draws attention especially to those who are most marginalised and at greatest risk of unemployment;

34. Draws attention to the problems of inequalities at school level, truancy and the need to reduce dropout rates EU-wide; stresses the importance of increased funding in order to guarantee equal access to education as well as to reduce early school-leaving; points to the need to improve links and cooperation between actors in education, vocational training and youth work; calls for flexible learning pathways at EU and national level;

35. Identifies the education-to-work transition as an especially important moment for young people, given that the beginning of their careers has a significant impact on their future development; stresses, in this connection, the important role that early childhood development can play in breaking the vicious intergenerational cycle of low human development for disadvantaged children; calls on the Member States to strengthen the provision of advice and guidance services at an early stage in order to improve young people’s ability to make sufficiently informed decisions about their future careers, thereby making it easier for them to acquire the necessary skills and to find work relevant to the needs of the labour market; emphasises the potential for job creation in sectors such as the green economy, health, social services and ICT;

36. Stresses the importance of improving the policies aimed at easing the transition from education to employment by ensuring quality apprenticeships and traineeships;

37. Asks the Member States to target young people who are not in education, training or employment, in order to offer them quality learning and training so that they can gain the skills and experience they need to enter employment, including, for some, by facilitating their re-entry into the educational system.
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Pervenche Berès on behalf of the EMPL committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

45. Urges the Member States to take strong measures to fight youth unemployment, in particular through preventive action against early dropout from school or from training or apprenticeship schemes (e.g. by implanting a dual educational system or other equally efficient types of framework), and to develop comprehensive strategies for young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs);

48. Notes that social investment in youth may take a wide range of forms, including: developing partnerships between schools, training centres and local or regional businesses; providing targeted quality training and high-quality youth internship programmes; vocational schemes in cooperation with enterprises; senior employee sponsorship schemes aimed at the recruitment and training of young persons on the job or at securing a better transition from education to work; encouraging young people's participation in society; and promoting regional, European and international mobility, by means of further progress towards the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills; also stresses that social investment can go hand in hand with efficient incentives, such as employment subsidies or insurance contributions for young people that will guarantee decent living and working conditions, in order to encourage public and private employers to hire young people, invest in both quality job creation for young people and continuous training and upgrading of their skills during employment, and support entrepreneurship among youth;

69. Stresses that the European Social Fund should become more clearly oriented towards active measures that actually meet employers' needs;

70. Welcomes the Commission's emphasis on the European Social Fund as the main instrument intended to foster social investment; strongly supports, in this respect, allocating at least 25 % of cohesion policy funding to the ESF and earmarking 20 % of ESF allocations in each Member State for promoting social inclusion and combating poverty;

72. Calls, as a matter of urgency, for the frontloading of the EUR 6 billion allocated for the new Youth Employment Initiative in the first years of the Multiannual Financial Framework in order to address youth unemployment and implement youth guarantees; stresses that the costs of implementing youth guarantees across the eurozone are estimated at EUR 21 billion by the ILO; calls, therefore, for the allocation to be revised upwards in the context of a revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework; welcomes the extension of the eligibility group for the youth guarantee to those aged under 30.

EP Resolution of 16/01/2013 on a Youth Guarantee, based on 2012/2901(RSP) (P7_TA(2013)0016; B7-0007/2013)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Pervenche Berès on behalf of the EMPL committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

45. Urges the Member States to take strong measures to fight youth unemployment, in particular through preventive action against early dropout from school or from training or apprenticeship schemes (e.g. by implanting a dual educational system or other equally efficient types of framework), and to develop comprehensive strategies for young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs);

48. Notes that social investment in youth may take a wide range of forms, including: developing partnerships between schools, training centres and local or regional businesses; providing targeted quality training and high-quality youth internship programmes; vocational schemes in cooperation with enterprises; senior employee sponsorship schemes aimed at the recruitment and training of young persons on the job or at securing a better transition from education to work; encouraging young people's participation in society; and promoting regional, European and international mobility, by means of further progress towards the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills; also stresses that social investment can go hand in hand with efficient incentives, such as employment subsidies or insurance contributions for young people that will guarantee decent living and working conditions, in order to encourage public and private employers to hire young people, invest in both quality job creation for young people and continuous training and upgrading of their skills during employment, and support entrepreneurship among youth;

69. Stresses that the European Social Fund should become more clearly oriented towards active measures that actually meet employers' needs;

70. Welcomes the Commission's emphasis on the European Social Fund as the main instrument intended to foster social investment; strongly supports, in this respect, allocating at least 25 % of cohesion policy funding to the ESF and earmarking 20 % of ESF allocations in each Member State for promoting social inclusion and combating poverty;

72. Calls, as a matter of urgency, for the frontloading of the EUR 6 billion allocated for the new Youth Employment Initiative in the first years of the Multiannual Financial Framework in order to address youth unemployment and implement youth guarantees; stresses that the costs of implementing youth guarantees across the eurozone are estimated at EUR 21 billion by the ILO; calls, therefore, for the allocation to be revised upwards in the context of a revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework; welcomes the extension of the eligibility group for the youth guarantee to those aged under 30.
2. Calls on the Member States' ministers for employment and social affairs to agree on a Council recommendation during the EPSCO Council in February 2013 aimed at implementing Youth Guarantee schemes in all Member States; emphasises that the Youth Guarantee is not a job guarantee but an instrument ensuring that all young EU citizens and legal residents up to the age of 25 years, and recent graduates under 30, receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education or apprenticeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education; stresses that Youth Guarantee schemes should effectively improve the situation of NEETs; underlines that Youth Guarantee schemes should be eligible for specific forms of European funding, especially in the Member States with the highest youth unemployment rates;

3. Takes the view that Union funding of Youth Guarantee schemes should play a key role, that the European Social Fund (ESF) in particular should be structured to enable the Youth Guarantee to be financed, and that the ESF should therefore be allocated at least 25% of Structural and Cohesion Funds; believes, however, that an appropriate balance between EU and Member State funding should be striven for;

6. Notes that Youth Guarantee schemes should be accompanied by a quality framework in order to ensure that the education, training and jobs offered include appropriate pay, working conditions and health and safety standards;

8. Calls on the Member States to reform, in particular, education and training standards for young people, in order to significantly increase their employment and life opportunities.

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Leading committee: CULT (EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Investment in education: Members point out that some Member States have pursued budget cuts in education and training in light of the current economic situation. They believe, however, that *those investments with the greatest strategic value should be safeguarded and even increased*. They emphasise that the Union's multiannual financial framework anticipates that *education and related sectors will obtain the biggest percentage increase* under the EU's long-term budget, which must be approved. ... Parliament wants Member States to *target a total investment of at least 2% of GDP in higher education*, as recommended by the Commission in the Annual Growth and Employment Survey, being the minimum required for knowledge-based economies. It recalls that, in order to be competitive in the future with the new global powers, Member States are required to achieve the basic Europe 2020 objectives which, in the field of education, can be expressed as reaching 3% in investments for research, increasing to 40% the number of young people with a university education, and reducing early school leaving to below 10%. Parliament proposes that Member States *deduct investments in education and training from the national deficit calculation of the fiscal compact*.

Youth: Members feel that a *special focus should be given to young people* ... In this regard, the Commission and Member States are asked to:
- make further efforts to elaborate clearer and more targeted youth policies at EU level which are tailored to meet society's new challenges;
- implement measures targeted at young people likely to leave school early or who are not in education, training or employment, so that they can gain
the skills and experience they need to enter employment;

- give special attention to vocational education and training in tertiary education, taking into account the diversity of national education systems;
- step up their efforts to ensure that young people can gain real work experience and quickly enter the job market;
- monitor how quickly young graduates obtain employment appropriate to their education and knowledge after they complete their education, make an assessment, on the basis of this information, of the quality of education and training systems and of the need and possibility to make adjustments;
- work consistently on the introduction, implementation and further development of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, Europass and the European Qualifications Framework;
- provide support, including financial support, for informal and non-formal education within the framework of the new programmes for education and youth, as well as for citizenship.

...Education from an early age: with regard to mobility, Members note that, although a European area of education and training is emerging, the objective of removing obstacles to mobility has not been achieved yet, and the mobility of learners in vocational education and training (VET) remains low. They believe that it is vital to promote mobility through ambitious community programmes for education and culture, in particular through exchanges of teachers, students and pupils, and especially in the language field. ... Parliament stresses the importance of early childhood education, and regrets that the Commission does not give adequate coverage to the issue of early school development, particularly its linguistic dimension, despite the fact that it comprises a basic objective of the Europe 2020 strategy. It strongly believes that investing in early childhood education and care (ECEC) brings greater returns than investing in any other stage of education.

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EP Resolution of 24/05/2012 on the Youth Opportunities Initiative, based on 2012/2617(RSP) (P7_TA(2012)0224; B7-0233/2012)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Pervenche Berès on behalf of the EMPL committee

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

3. Welcomes the statement made by the European Council calling on the Member States to introduce national schemes akin to the Youth Guarantee, and urges the Member States to back up this plea with swift and concrete measures at national level so as to ensure that young people are either in a decent job, education or (re-) training within four months of leaving school;

13. Calls on the Member States to improve the quality and awareness, and thereby the status, of vocational education and training, which is a crucial alternative to higher education;

15. Calls on the Member States to introduce and assess new binding youth targets with particular attention to quality and youth-targeted policy strategies in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives to be included in their National Reform Programmes;

21. Considers it particularly important to allocate resources to young people when drawing up the Financial Framework for the years 2014-2020, focussing particularly on young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs);

23. Welcomes the Commission's proposal to promote the labour mobility of young people as part of the new Programme for Social Change and Innovation so as
to encourage them to seek jobs in Member States and regions facing skills and labour shortages; calls in this context for a stronger focus on the situation of young people, especially with regard to the transition from education to employment, the reduction of early school leaving and the quality of traineeships and apprenticeships; stresses that promoting labour mobility needs to go hand in hand with better social protection and with reducing obstacles to mobility in terms of social rights and social security coverage, especially for young workers at risk;

25. Calls on the Member States to introduce dual education systems for all occupations not requiring higher education, including targets for companies of a certain size to offer apprenticeships and incentives to employ young people;

26. Calls on the Member States to develop a more coordinated strategy between national educational and training plans and labour market needs, not just in the short term but particularly in the medium and longer terms, so as to avoid the oversizing of certain sectors, to favour the development of new niche markets and to move resources from sectors that are losing jobs to developing sectors such as the sustainable economy;

28. Is particularly concerned about the negative impact that the substantial budget cuts in education in some Member States will have on the difficult situation facing young people and on the implementation of the proposals in the Youth initiative; calls on the Commission to make sure that recommendations to Member States on regaining fiscal sustainability do not undermine or destroy policies and programmes aimed at promoting youth employment and social inclusion and/or preventing the marginalisation and detachment of young people from the labour market.

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EP Resolution of 20/04/2012 on modernising Europe’s higher education systems, based on 2011/2294(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0139; A7-0057/2012)
Leading committee: CULT (FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

**Funding higher education systems:** Parliament ... insists once again that Member States should reach the target of investing 2 % of GDP in education. Members consider that mainly public and also private funding is of primary importance for the modernisation of higher education systems ... Member States and higher education institutions are called upon to expand scholarship and funding programmes for those institutions and to develop innovative methods of funding mechanisms which can contribute to more efficient functioning of higher education institutions, complement public funding without increasing the pressure on households and make higher education accessible to all. Parliament expresses regret at the significant cutbacks to education budgets in several Member States, as well as the constant increase in education fees, which is leading to a significant increase in the number of vulnerable students. As EU level, Parliament calls for the EU budget for 2014-2020 under the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund to include spending on higher education related to investments in university infrastructure and academic staff.

**The transition from higher education to the labour market:** Parliament calls on higher education institutions to adapt to new challenges by creating new fields of study that reflect the needs of the labour market, taking into account the development of science and technology by maintaining an appropriate balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. It urges the Commission to present its proposal for a quality framework for traineeships. ... Members call for a commitment to more flexible and innovative learning approaches and to delivery methods that are always centred on students' needs. Parliament stresses the need for cross-border higher education institutions and enterprises to cooperate in practical programmes and in shaping students' future
careers by (i) identifying the specific development pathways, expectations and challenges that will await them in the labour market; (ii) developing mechanisms and management strategies that facilitate the transfer of innovative ideas and research results into society and business.

... 

Mutual recognition of qualifications: Parliament calls on the Member States and these institutions to develop clear, integrated pathways that allow learners to progress from other types of education into higher education and to change between different tracks and types of institutions. It emphasises, however, the need to maintain the diversity of educational pathways and programmes, teaching methods and university systems in the EU. Members take the view that it is consequently necessary to develop a national qualification framework, while at the same time promoting the mutual recognition of degrees and qualifications across all Member States. All EU countries are urged to implement the national qualification frameworks linked to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Qualifications Framework and to develop, and provide financial support for, mutual recognition. In this context, Members stress the need to strengthen student mobility through Erasmus and for the home university to recognise qualifications acquired while studying at other universities. Parliament supports the Commission's proposal to improve recognition of study undertaken abroad.

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Leading committee: CULT (IMCO for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament ... calls for a strengthening at EU level of support for the Bologna Process, in particular as regards:

- the mutual recognition of academic qualifications,
- the harmonisation of academic standards;
- the promotion of mobility, the social dimension and employability, active democratic participation, the analysis of implementation of the Bologna principles, and the elimination of administrative obstacles.

Parliament calls on Member States to reiterate their commitment to the Process, recalling the key role of the latter in European Higher Education Area (EHEA), by strengthening the system of funding in order to achieve the growth targets set in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

... 

Consolidation: in general, Parliament considers that the Bologna Process and the Erasmus programme have boosted student mobility and have the potential to contribute to enhanced labour mobility, but it regrets that mobility rates still remain relatively low. Welcoming a new generation of educational programmes through enhanced funding, based on social criteria, and the opening of the programme to a larger number of students, it insists, nevertheless, that in no case must mobility create discrimination against students with limited financial resources. It calls on Member States to fulfil the commitment to full portability of loans and grants, and significantly improve financial support for mobile students that matches the increases in new EU programmes.

In turn, the EU is asked to:

- consider how existing legislation on the rights to freedom of movement can be enhanced through guaranteeing portability of loans and grants;
- consolidate a system of quality assurance at both European and Member State level in order to guarantee mutual trust and facilitate recognition of academic qualifications.

... 

Parliament emphasises that measures to promote employability, such as lifelong learning, and the development of a broader range of skills suitable for the
labour market must be top priorities in order to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity goals; in that connection, strongly supports exchanges of university teachers and students, the university-business dialogue, apprenticeships and the skills passport.

... European action: welcoming the Commission’s proposal to increase significantly the funds devoted to European education and training programmes, Parliament calls on the Commission to devote a significant proportion of these funds to supporting the modernisation of higher education and the modernisation of university infrastructures. It encourages the Commission to find solutions that enable access to these programmes also for students experiencing financial difficulties.

Parliament also calls on Member States and the EU to determine whether courses of study could include a compulsory training period to be completed at a university in a Member State other than the student’s home country.

With regard to the recognition of qualifications, it calls, as part of the revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive, for a comparison of national minimum training requirements and for more regular exchanges between the Member States, competent authorities and professional bodies. It suggests in particular, that the recognition of credits obtained under the Erasmus Programme by partner universities should be a compulsory element for all institutions participating in student exchanges supported by EU funding in order to strengthen the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). More generally, Parliament calls on the Commission, Member States and higher education institutions to develop a comparative table that would indicate the number of ECTS credits awarded for courses. It also calls for development of an effective strategy for the full harmonisation of academic titles throughout the European Union with possible reverse recognition (including older academic titles) since the establishment of the Bologna Process.

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EP Resolution of 15/02/2012 on the proposal for a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, based on 2011/0390(CNS) (P7_TA(2012)0041; A7-0011/2012)
Leading committee: EMPL (no committee for opinion)

Final Act: Council Decision No 2012/238/EU
Summary of the Final Act
Recital (4)

The examination of the Member States’ draft national reform programmes, contained in the Joint Employment Report adopted by the Council on 17 February 2012, shows that Member States should continue to make every effort to address the following priorities: increasing labour market participation and reducing structural unemployment; developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs and promoting job quality and lifelong learning; improving the performance of education and training systems at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary education; promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.

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Leading committee: CULT (EMPL for opinion)
Summary
EU policies: Parliament welcomes the Commission proposal for a Council recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving (ESL). It believes that, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, a European framework for comprehensive strategies to tackle ESL could provide a useful guide for Member States in ascertaining the correct approach to upgrading existing policies and developing their National Reform Programmes.

The resolution warns that the possible public spending cuts in the education sector on account of the economic crisis and the budgetary austerity policies being implemented in Member States will have adverse effects, in that they will further increase the numbers of early school leavers in the EU. It stresses that investing more money in combating ESL can have the long-term effect of preventing young people from becoming dependent on social security. Members advocate the targeted, efficient and coherent deployment of the Structural Funds, especially the European Social Fund, with a view to the full implementation of the Youth strategies, in particular for early school leavers, in order to promote social inclusion under specific programmes in each Member State, ensure high-quality education for all and prevent ESL and truancy.

Lastly, the resolution calls for:
- an in-depth analysis of the problem of ESL in all the Member States;
- more funds and improved accessibility for the EU’s Lifelong Learning Programme;
- the promotion of the visibility of the Comenius action programme on individual pupil mobility, which can contribute to reducing ESL.

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Leading committee: EMPL (ITRE, REGI, CULT, FEMM for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Fully supporting the Commission’s flagship initiative as part of Europe 2020, the Parliament asks the Commission to strengthen the employment policies in the following areas:
- **education and training:** Parliament considers that qualifications and skills should be strengthened for all age groups. Reinforcing human capital and employability by means of updating skills will mean placing Europe on the path of recovery;

**Ensuring the availability of a skilled labour force:** Parliament considers that it essential to substantially boost investment in education, research and innovation, and accordingly takes the view that, in order to encourage Member States to move in this direction, special consideration should be given to public spending on education, research and innovation when Member States’ medium-term budget objectives are assessed.

In order to ensure the availability of a skilled work force, the resolution makes several recommendations, the main ones being as follows:
- ...
implement policies that offer alternatives with regard to education, training and employment for people with disabilities;

promote European centres of excellence within new academic specialisations for tomorrow’s jobs and the growth of clusters of innovative enterprises;

integrate ICT competences, digital literacy, entrepreneurship and transversal key competences such as communication in foreign languages and competences for personal fulfilment and development;

support language learning and the development of language teaching;

develop training programmes for teachers;

set up a European quality framework for traineeships, setting up decent working conditions and rules to prevent trainees from being used to replace regular employment;

strengthen, in the forthcoming legislative initiative on professional qualifications the mutual recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications and move towards a mechanism for enhanced mutual recognition of competences;

…

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Leading committee: EMPL (IMCO, CULT, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament considers that education and training are key factors for successful participation in the labour market ...

Recognising the importance of modernising vocational education and training as well as the importance of both initial and continuing vocational education, Parliament recommends, inter alia, the following:

- the Member States are called upon to make use of the positive experience with the dual system within Vocational Educational and Training (VET) in example countries, where the system has led to the longer-term integration of young workers into the labour market and to higher employment rates for young workers;

- the Member States are called upon to ensure that vocational training and life-long-learning are geared more closely to the needs of the labour market and allow for entry into and mobility within it ...

- the Member States should establish and implement quality assurance systems at national level and develop a competence framework for teachers and trainers and the Commission is encouraged to develop and update regularly a chart giving a region-by-region picture of training qualifications and demand;

- the link between education and training, particularly the pathway from vocational to higher education, demands that the opportunities for link-ups between vocational training and university education be expanded, with special emphasis on integrating them into mechanisms for the provision of career information, guidance and counselling;

- better cooperation among the Member States’ different education systems – bridging those differences and ensuring mutual recognition of certificates and diplomas among the Member States – should be emphasised in order to heighten cross-border collaboration and aid mobility;
• ...  
• the Commission and the Member States are called upon to render the European Social Fund management more flexible bearing in mind the changing nature of the labour market;  
• the Member States and the Commission are urged to further improve the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Members point to best practices in this field, especially with ESF-funding, which prove that the recognition of skills, wherever they are learned, leads to more successful integration into the labour market.

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Leading committee: CULT (EMPL for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

General remarks and financial support: Parliament points out that investing in education is without doubt essential for sustainable growth and development and that financing youth programmes and education should not be regarded as a cost to be met now, but rather as an investment in the future of Europe. In this context, it regrets that the national schedules drawn up by Member States as a further contribution to meeting the educational objectives of the 'EU 2020' strategy are, according to the Commission, inadequate. For Members, one of the goals of higher education must be to ensure employability, but it must also nurture their creativity and innovativeness.

Welcoming the Youth on the Move (YoM), Members call on the Commission, in its proposal for a new multiannual financial framework (MFF), to increase progressively investment in mobility and youth programmes, such as Lifelong Learning (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius, Grundtvig), Marie Curie, Erasmus Mundus and Youth in Action, in their present form, as well as in the European Voluntary Service. They also call for these programmes to be promoted more effectively and for their target population groups to be made more aware of the opportunities they provide.

Taking the view that education and training must be a priority for the European Union and that this objective should be reflected in the next MFF, Parliament calls for the educational programmes aimed at promoting mobility to be extended beyond 2013 and asks the Commission to increase the funding allocated to such programmes when future framework programmes are drawn up. The Member States should make greater investment in education and training systems at all levels and support financially the implementation of mobility programmes. Members propose that Member States target a total investment of at least 2% of GDP in higher education.

Youth and mobility: Parliament calls for the active involvement of young people at all stages of EU programmes. In this context, it asks the Commission to come up with a Green Paper on Youth Participation. Parliament also focuses on the following points:

• on the issue of early school-leaving, Parliament calls for action to be taken at an early age in order to reduce early school-leaving to below 10%, as agreed under the EU 2020 Strategy. It emphasises that early school-leaving, as a known factor increasing the risk of future exclusion from both employment and society, must be dramatically reduced;

• as regards mobility, several measures are proposed to promote the mobility of young people from European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries but also of teachers and of workers in the field of youth and education. Particular attention should be paid to those who are most at risk, to categories of young people with fewer opportunities and to those seeking a 'second chance' to get back into education. Parliament calls on the Commission to
urgently take measures to encourage mobility generally, and more particularly for young people who are disabled or young people with children;
• as regards linguistics, Parliament reminds Member States to introduce the learning of the 'mother tongue plus two' languages at an early stage in life and in early childhood education.

Parliament also urges the Member States to promote mobility in the context of training and employment by:
• increasing awareness and making information easily accessible to all those young people interested;
• highlighting the added value of mobility at the early stages of education;
• ensuring that learning outcomes from mobility experiences between Member States are validated; and
• reducing administrative burdens and stimulating cooperation between the relevant authorities across the Member States.

Members call on the Commission to facilitate learning and employment mobility by:
• strengthening the EU’s education and youth programmes, such as Erasmus, Leonardo and Youth in Action;
• enhancing the implementation of existing European instruments and tools, such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and Europass; and
• developing the new tools that it has already examined, such as the Youth on the Move website, the Youth on the Move card, the European skills passport and the pilot project ‘Your first EURES job’.

Resolution on topical subject tabled by ECR, EPP, Greens/EFA, S&D, ALDE
Summary
[The European Parliament,]

3. Stresses that the Europe 2020 strategy must close the gap between its declared ambitions, the resources available and the methodology used; calls for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to reflect the ambitions of the Europe 2020 strategy; calls on the Commission to clarify the budgetary dimension of the Flagship Initiatives as these priority action plans cut across all policies funded through the EU budget; strongly urges the Commission to make proposals on the establishment of new own resources so as to provide the Union with real and autonomous financial resources;

4. Emphasises that Europe 2020 requires reforms and very substantial and early public and private investments in a wide range of projects; notes that these require the mobilisation of both existing and new innovative instruments and revenues;

18. Welcomes the initiative of the flagship ‘Youth on the Move’; insists that quality of and access to relevant education is a constant prerequisite for a sustainable social market economy; underlines, consequently, that, if Member States aim to achieve the common targets of economic development and those set for education, proper investment will be crucial in their educational and training systems, including in vocational education and training; regrets, however, that the flagship leaves core subjects, such as participation in society or youth poverty, unaddressed; calls for stronger proposals on inclusion;

19. Calls on the Commission to continue to adequately fund existing mobility and youth programmes such as Lifelong Learning (Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius,
Grundtwin), Youth in Action and Marie Curie; believes that this would make an important contribution to the fight against youth unemployment and towards reach a 75% employment rate;

20. Underlines that Youth on the Move cannot alone tackle the alarming youth unemployment all over Europe; calls for all Member States to set up, as part of their National Reform Programmes, a national strategy to tackle youth unemployment and secure young people access to education and training; underlines that youth policies must be seen in connection with policies on education, employment and social inclusion; strongly supports the proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European Youth Guarantee and urges the Council to adopt it as soon as possible.

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Summary

[The European Parliament,]

4. Believes that the Europe 2020 targets and objectives can be achieved by use of this instrument with a view to supporting SMEs and adjusting education systems and vocational education and training (VET) to the needs of SMEs;

6. Believes also that, in order to achieve the Europe 2020 targets, considerable emphasis needs to be put on updating education systems and VET, on decent work, including the fight against precarious and undeclared work, on gender equality and the creation of conditions for reconciling work and private life, and on ensuring that people currently excluded from the labour market can gain access to it;

7. Considers that the ESF must be strengthened as the main engine underpinning the Europe 2020 strategy; stresses the importance of Member States' using the ESF to invest in skills, employment, training and retraining activities with a view to creating more and better jobs;

16. Underlines the importance of the ESF as a key tool in combating unemployment and in improving education and life-long vocational training for employees – especially in the current employment crisis – as well as combating poverty and exclusion.

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EP Resolution of 6/07/2010 on promoting youth access to the labour market, strengthening trainee, internship and apprenticeship status, based on 2009/2221(INI) Leading committee: EMPL (CULT for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament calls on the Commission to expand financial capacity for, and to ensure better use of, the European Social Fund, to earmark a minimum of 10% of this fund for projects targeting young people. It urges the Commission and the Member States not to jeopardise the running of small and innovative projects.
through excessive control and to review the effectiveness and added value of programmes, such as "Youth in Action", in terms of job opportunities for young people. It urges the Member States to improve their targeting of youth and to prioritise business-education provider co-operation as the right tool with which to combat structural unemployment.

**Education and transition from education to employment:** Parliament calls on the Member States to intensify efforts to reduce early school leaving in order to achieve the goals set out in the EU 2020 Strategy of no more than 10% of early school leavers by 2012. ... Member States are called upon to support apprenticeship schemes and to incite companies to provide training opportunities for young people even in times of crisis.

**Strategies and governance tools at EU level:** Parliament suggests that the Council and the Commission come forward with a European Youth Guarantee securing the right of every young person in the EU to be offered a job, an apprenticeship, additional training or combined work and training after a maximum period of 4 months’ unemployment. It calls on the Commission to evaluate annually existing youth benchmarks and the Youth Guarantee. The resolution suggests setting up of a permanent EU youth taskforce involving youth organisations, Member States, the Commission, Parliament and the social partners to monitor developments on youth employment.

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Leading committee: CULT (no committee for opinion)

**Summary**

**Extract from the Summary**

**Improve the quality of education:** Parliament considers it vital to introduce policies seeking to improve the quality of education and training for all students to meet the needs of the labour market, with emphasis on language learning. ...

In its resolution, Parliament makes the following points:

**Pre-primary education:** Parliament ... draws attention to the Barcelona targets (that aimed at providing childcare by 2010 for at least 90% of children between three years old and the mandatory school age and for at least 33% of children under three years of age and making childcare affordable for as many people as possible);

**Primary and secondary education:** Parliament underlines the need to continue to develop language acquisition ... ... It calls for a comprehensive strategy for key competence acquisition, ranging from reform of school curricula through to professional development of teachers, and for greater efforts in the fight against dyslexia;

**Higher education:** Parliament calls for enhanced mobility between higher education institutions, the business world and vocational education and training to promote student-centred learning and the acquisition of competences such as entrepreneurship, intercultural understanding, critical thinking and creativity, which are increasingly needed on the labour market. To this end, existing obstacles within the EU should be urgently addressed, with a special focus on the obstacles related to financial and recognition barriers, so as to enhance mobility. Parliament stresses the need to (i) encourage research programmes; (ii)
coordinate curricula with the demands of the labour market; (iii) modernise courses and, in general, accelerate the Bologna Process. ... ;

**Vocational education and training:** Parliament expresses its concern regarding the rising rates of youth unemployment, especially in the context of the current economic crisis. This is why it calls on the Member States to guarantee the greatest possible flexibility on labour markets so that young people can easily find work. Recalling its belief in the importance of training, Parliament calls for new measures in the following areas: (i) the promotion of study periods and traineeships for vocational training students in other EU countries; (ii) further modernisation of vocational training programmes by taking into account the key competences; (iii) adoption of a model for the recognition of educational credits relating to citizenship skills for young people taking part in volunteer and community service work; (iv) improved transition between secondary vocational education and training and higher education;

**Lifelong learning:** Parliament ... supports the objective of raising adult participation in lifelong learning from 12.5% to 15% by 2020, and calls on universities to facilitate wider access to studying, diversify and broaden the student base and amend study programmes to make them attractive to adults returning to study. The Commission and Member States are asked to take even more decisive action to lifelong learning institutions such as 'Second Chance Schools'. …

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Leading committee: CULT

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Recalling the important role of the Comenius, Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, Parliament reiterates its political priority of considering those programmes as a cornerstone in the development of the EU youth strategy, especially for the next generation of multiannual programmes. Parliament points out the need to mobilise and to adapt the EU programmes and social funds for youth, to facilitate access to them and to simplify the procedures for access. It stresses, in particular, how important it is to devise a practical, non-bureaucratic approach in this area.

Parliament considers that even more effort should be made to promote the mobility of young people within Europe and that, in mobility programmes, there must be sufficient scope for and attention devoted to exchanges of young people outside formal education. It calls on the Commission to devote special attention to the mobility of youth workers, and for the special visa regime (which currently exists for students) to be extended to youth workers.

... **Education and training:** Parliament encourages Member States to intensify the interaction between the sides of the knowledge triangle (education, research, innovation) as a key element for growth and job creation. It recommends promoting common criteria for stronger mutual recognition of non-formal education and vocational training, for example by speeding up the adoption of the EQF system for the recognition of qualifications, transparency and the validation of skills. Member States are also strongly encouraged, in the context of increased funding, to promote learning and training mobility for all young people. Parliament strongly encourages Member States, in the context of increased funding, to promote learning and training mobility for all young people, which is a key factor for gaining learning and working experience.

With regard to the problem of school drop-out, Parliament calls for measures to be taken to ensure that as high a percentage of young people as possible complete their period of compulsory education. Member States are urged to do their utmost to meet the strategic objectives and to reach the benchmarks fixed under the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (“ET 2020”), particularly as regards low achievers in basic skills, and early
Oral / Written Questions

| E-007739-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Péter Niedermüller (S&D) Misuse of funding for education in Hungary |
| E-007373-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Andrejs Mamikins (S&D) Timing of the start of planning of the EU Structural Funds for the next period, 2020-2027 |
| E-007322-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Benedek Jávor (Verts/ALE) Use of funds earmarked to promote inclusion |
| E-007176-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Cátálin Sorin Ivan (S&D) Early school-leaving |
| E-005745-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Eider Gardiazabal Rubial (S&D), Javi López (S&D), Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D) Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) |
| E-005297-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Norica Nicolai (ALDE) Teacher exchange program - continuing professional development for teachers |
| E-005090-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Tibor Szanyi (S&D) Education and Training 2020 Programme (ET 2020) in Hungary |
| E-004613-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Maria Grapini (S&D) Reducing early school leaving and fostering success at school |
| E-004371-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Brian Hayes (PPE) Youth unemployment funding |
| E-003235-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Mario Borghezio (EFDD) EU funds for educational projects |
| E-003018-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D) Need for more initiatives and funding to combat youth unemployment in the EU |
| E-002304-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Dietmar Köster (S&D) Lifelong learning |
| E-000491-16 | WQ COM Rule 130 Theodoros Zagorakis (PPE) Reducing the school dropout rate |
| O-000133-16 | OQ COM Rule 128 Thomas Händel, on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on Establishing a Skills Guarantee Initiative |
| O-000094-16 | OQ COM Rule 128 Thomas Händel, on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on Youth and Employment Initiative |
| E-015069-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D) The need to earmark more EU funding to the fight against child poverty in Europe |
| E-015061-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Hugues Bayet (S&D) Priorities for fostering inclusive education |
| E-014685-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Ernest Urtasun (Verts/ALE) Potential misappropriation of funds from the European Social Fund (ESF) |
| E-013605-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Andrejs Mamikins (S&D) Education and training development in the EU until 2020 |
| E-013107-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Claudia Tapardel (S&D) European Youth Guarantee |
| E-012732-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Steeve Broisy (ENF), Dominique Bilde (ENF), Sophie Montel (ENF), Louis Aliot (ENF) EU funding in support of the integration of marginalised communities |
| E-012641-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE) Follow-up question: OLAF investigations into the Greek Office for Vocational Education and Training (OEKE) - OF/2011/0704 - and fresh allegations of organised fraud involving EU funds |
| E-012436-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Daniel Buda (PPE) Lack of funding for NEETs |
| E-011790-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Milan Zver (PPE) Youth on the Move |
| E-011562-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso (PPE) Implementation of programmes for marginalised communities or disadvantaged groups |
| E-011329-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Isabella Adinolfi (EFDD) Monitoring of the Youth Guarantee |
| E-008756-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Ivan Jakovčič (ALDE) ET 2020 |
| E-008492-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Hugues Bayet (S&D) Status report at the mid-point of the Education and Training 2020 programme (ET 2020) |
| E-007773-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Marlene Mizzi (S&D) Funding for education |
| E-005545-15 | WQ COM Rule 130 Louis Aliot (NI), Joëlle Mélin (NI), Dominique Martin (NI), Dominique Bilde (NI), Sophie Montel (NI), Marie-Christine Arnautu (NI),
Mireille D’Ornano (NI), Jean-François Jalkh (NI), Edouard Ferrand (NI), Marie-Christine Boutonnet (NI), Gilles Lebreton (NI), Philippe Loiseau (NI) The Court of Auditors casts doubt on the Youth Guarantee

E-005389-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Lara Comi (PPE) Information on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
E-002352-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Aldo Patriciello (PPE) Promoting European youth initiatives
E-001811-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE) Investment in construction of kindergartens and schools from the OP for Regional Competitiveness
E-001451-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Marlene Mizzi (S&D) Funding for the education of poor people in Europe
E-000982-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Siôn Simon (S&D) Completion of tertiary education
E-000981-15 WQ COM Rule 130 Siôn Simon (S&D) Early leavers from education and training
E-009468-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Hugues Bayet (S&D) Achievements of 'Youth on the Move'
E-009320-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Aldo Patriciello (PPE) Language learning and promotion of multilingualism
E-008899-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Rosa Estarás Ferragut (PPE) Inclusive education as a fundamental element of the Europe 2020 Strategy
E-008145-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Roberta Metsola (S&D) Educational opportunities for adults
E-007702-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Therese Comodini Cachia (PPE) Education
E-007026-14 WQ COM Rule 130 István Ujhelyi (S&D) European principles in education
E-005754-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D) Funding for education from the European Social Fund
E-001893-14 WQ COM Rule 117 Gaston Franco (PPE) Professional training in Europe
E-001325-14 WQ COM Rule 117 Rosa Estarás Ferragut (PPE) Youth Guarantee
E-001200-14 WQ COM Rule 117 Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D) Implementation of the Youth Guarantee
E-012028-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D) Early school leaving
E-011072-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE) Progress in 'Education and Lifelong Learning' Operational Programme in Greece
E-010907-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Angelika Werthmann (ALDE) Early school leavers
E-010409-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI) Partial use of the EU Structural Fund for the EU Youth Strategy
P-010137-14 WQ COM Rule 130 Werner Langen (PPE) EU funding for Rhineland-Palatinate 2007-2013
E-007588-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Filip Kaczmarek (PPE) Vocational training for minors
E-001055-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) Payment of teachers under the Operational Programme for Human Potential (POPH)
E-000626-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL) Availability of structural fund appropriations for the transport of children with special needs to education centres
E-000280-13 WQ COM Rule 117 Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD) The European Social Fund
E-011144/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D) Commission recommendations for reducing youth unemployment
E-011099/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 Mario Mauro (PPE) Possibility of using European funds for technical higher education in regional projects
E-009740/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL) Withholding of funding for the transport of pupils with special needs to specialised education centres
E-009051/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) Budget shortfall for the Erasmus programme and other ESF programmes
E-008463/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 David Casa (PPE) Education and Training 2010 programme
E-008082/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 Glenis Willmott (S&D) European Social Fund (ESF) funding
E-006972/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 Oreste Rossi (EFD) Lifelong learning - future challenges
E-006481/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 Angelika Werthmann (NI) Early school leaving
E-006045/2012 WQ COM Rule 117 Timothy Kirkhope (ECR) Improved budget monitoring mechanisms - disaggregated data on children
Agenda

Programme for education, training, youth and sport for the years 2014

Paweł Zalewski (PPE), A

- 2532/2010
- 3294/2010
- 3825/2010
- 3833/2010
- 5294/2010
- 6398/2009
- 8597/2010
- 8930/2010
- 010545/2010
- 002252/2011
- 002597/2011
- 007473/2011
- 008070/2011
- 008262/2011
- 009287/2011
- 009697/2011
- 009871/2011
- 010143/2011
- 010438/2011
- 010900/2011
- 012611/2011
- 000306
- 000774
- 001232
- 002016
- 002586
- 002638
- 003539
- 004287
- 004316
- 005021

WQ COM Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL) Training courses for the unemployed
E-2025/2010 WQ COM Marietje Schaake (ALDE) and Lena Ek (ALDE) E-skills in the EU
E-1633/2010 WQ COM Diogo Feio (PPE) Europe 2020 strategy
E-1044/2010 WQ COM Daniel Caspary (PPE) 2010 progress report on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010 work programme'
H-0609/2010 OQ COM Rule 116 Barbara Matera (PPE) Young people and the labour market
H-0526/2010 WQ COM Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D) Education reform as part of the "Europe 2020" strategy
H-0260/2010 OQ Council Rule 116 Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D) Improving education levels and reducing early school-leaving
The EU institutions can do more to facilitate access to their public procurement

### Summary

**Questions asked:**
1. To what extent do EU institutions facilitate access to their public procurement?
   1.1. Do the EU institutions have robust systems that foster participation whilst protecting the Union’s financial interests?
   1.2. Do the EU institutions make the right procedural choices to increase participation in their procurement procedures?
   1.3. Do the EU institutions to the greatest extent possible remove hurdles that make life difficult for potential tenderers?
   1.4. Do the EU institutions ensure in a comprehensive and systematic manner that the outcomes of their procurement procedures are transparent and that they learn from one another?

**Observations:**
1.1. The EU institutions manage to keep the number of serious errors low in their procurement procedures but participation therein is not systematically monitored: in contrast to the situation in shared management with Member States, few serious errors or irregularities are reported in connection with the EU institutions’ procurement; the EU institutions have robust systems and capable staff to keep the risk of errors and irregularities under control; most EU institutions do not systematically measure the level of participation in their procurement procedures;
1.2. The rules to be followed and the procedural choices made at the start of the procurement process are not sufficiently geared towards increasing participation: when revising their procurement rules in 2015, the EU institutions did not facilitate access to procurement by simplifying rules and clarifying grey areas to the fullest extent possible; not all procedural choices fostered competition on the broadest possible basis;
1.3. Unnecessary hurdles make life difficult for potential tenderers who want to identify procurement opportunities offered by the EU institutions and benefit from them: the visibility of the EU institutions’ procurement activities on the internet is poor; for e-tendering and e-submission the EU Institutions create unnecessary hurdles for economic operators by not using harmonised solutions in a swift manner; for economic operators who consider that they have been unfairly treated it is difficult to obtain a rapid review of their complaints and compensation for damages;
1.4. Transparency of results and mutual learning are not systematically enforced: information on the outcome of the EU institutions’ procurement activities is not accessible in a way which would allow effective monitoring by the discharge authority and the wider public; learning from best practices is not fully exploited.

**Recommendations:**
1. In order to facilitate the monitoring of the accessibility of their procurement activities, all EU institutions should collect and analyse data, procedure by procedure and for each type of procedure, not only on the number of offers or requests to participate initially received but also on the number of offers which were taken into account for the final award decision.
2. For the upcoming 2016 revision of the EU Financial Regulation the Commission should propose a single rulebook for public procurement. Therein, participation of small and medium-sized enterprises should be explicitly encouraged. Furthermore, rules on market prospection prior to building contracts and on the language regime for procurement procedures should be included. Deviations from the 2014 Procurement Directive should be justified. Target implementation date: 2017 as part of the revised EU Financial Regulation;

3. The EU institutions should proactively use preliminary market consultations wherever appropriate with a view to preparing the procurement procedure and informing economic operators of their procurement plans and requirements. Target implementation date: Immediately;

4. The EU institutions should divide contracts into lots wherever possible to increase participation in their procurement procedures. Target implementation date: Immediately;

5. The EU institutions should create a common electronic one-stop shop for their procurement activities allowing economic operators to find all relevant information in a single online location and to interact with the EU institutions through this website. Procurement procedures including communication on rules applicable, business opportunities, relevant procurement documents, submission of tenders and all other communication between institutions and economic operators should all be managed via such a one-stop shop. Target implementation date: 2018;

6. The Commission should propose amendments to the EU Financial Regulation to allow for a rapid review of complaints from economic operators who consider that they have been unfairly treated. Such a review should take place before economic operators may turn to the EU Ombudsman or to the EU Courts. Target implementation date: 2017 as part of the revised EU Financial Regulation;

7. To allow effective ex post monitoring of their procurement activities the EU institutions should set up a single public repository of information related to their procurement contracts which could be developed as part of TED eTendering. Target implementation date: 2018;

8. OLAF should improve its case management system to produce reports and statistics on the different types of allegations under investigation and the outcome of these investigations. Target implementation date: 2017;

9. The EU institutions should use peer reviews for mutual learning and exchange of best public procurement practice. Target implementation date: First peer review to start in 2018.
1. Welcomes the findings and recommendations of the European Court of Auditors’ Special Report N°17/2016 (2015 Discharge): The EU institutions can do more to facilitate access to their Public procurement;
2. Calls on increased transparency of public procurement within EU institutions, as well as at national level, through public availability of documents and data on public procurement; considers that the visibility of the EU institutions’ procurement activities on the internet is poor, the information is insufficient, unclear and spread over many different websites;
3. Strongly supports the recommendation of the Court for the EU institutions to create a common electronic one stop shop for their procurement activities, allowing economic operators to find all relevant information in a single online location and to interact with the EU institutions through this website; believes that procurement procedures, including communication on rules applicable, business opportunities, relevant procurement documents, submission of tenders and all other communication between institutions and economic operators should all be managed via such a one stop shop;
4. Requests that the Commission’s website on European funds paid to all member states should be published in one of the three working languages of the institutions and include the same data for all member states, at least the value, the object of the contract, the name of the contractor, the name of subcontractors (if any), the length of the contract and if any additional documents exist; points out that this will enable NGOs from all member states and the citizens to observe how the money is spent and the cost efficiency of the projects;
5. Insists that it is the role of the contracting authorities to ensure a public procurement which is market-based, generating a sufficient amount of tenders and providing balanced access to all economic operators; agrees with the Court that for the ongoing 2016 revision of the EU Financial Regulation the Commission should propose a single rulebook for public procurement; Emphasises that participation of small and medium sized enterprises should be explicitly encouraged, contrary to the current situation where only large operators are in advantage; Considers that rules on market prospection prior to building contracts and on the language regime for procurement procedures should be included in the single rule book and deviations from the 2014 Procurement Directive should be justified;
6. Recalls that the use of restricted procurement procedures by the contracting authorities discourages potential tenderers, blocks transparency and information on how the taxpayers’ money is used; emphasises that the Council used restricted procedures for the vast majority of its tenders and that all EU institutions taken together awarded 25% or more of their contracts following a restricted procedure between 2010 and 2014; requires that such procedures be used in a very limited number of cases, with proper justification;
7. Takes note that the Parliament publishes a complete annual list on its website of all its contractors who obtained contracts with a value of more than 15 000 euros, but it does not publish all its contracts; encourages all institutions to make available full information on all contractors and contracts awarded through public procurement, including cases of direct awarding or restricted procedures;
8. Stresses the need for wider publicity and contract notices transparently published for all operators; reminds that, according to the findings of the Court, “the European Parliament used a negotiated procedure to conclude a ‘building contract’ for 133.6 million euros for a building in Brussels although the building did not exist when the contract was signed on 27 June 2012”, ignoring the rule that only existing buildings are covered by the exception from tendering on the broadest possible basis provided in Article 134 (1) of the RAP; strongly underlines that all unfinished buildings or buildings not yet constructed have to be subject to open and competitive award methods and believes that this policy should extend to all building contracts, given the complexity of contracts and the large amounts of funds involved;
9. Agrees with the Court that the EU institutions should divide contracts into lots wherever possible to increase participation in their procurement procedures; underlines that in 2014 the Council awarded a framework contract for 10 years, with a value over 93 million euros, for management, maintenance, repair and adaptation of technical installations in its present or future buildings to a single company without splitting it into lots; mentions that the Commission proceeded in the same way in 2015 for its 5-year contract “Your Europe Advice” - the European Union’s free legal service, with a value of nearly 9 million euros; emphasises that lack of division along with excessively long duration of framework contracts (10 or 7 years, with a record of 17 years on a contract awarded by the Council for the Justus Lipsus building) crushes competition, encourages opacity and potential corruption; asks therefore all institutions to
put an end to these proceedings, which are fully opposing the spirit of transparency and good practice, that the EU should promote;

10. Requires that all EU institutions develop and implement adequate tools and methods for audits and evaluations, in order to acknowledge and signal the presence of irregularities; reiterates that better monitoring, detection, analysis, and reporting technology are needed in order to fight fraud and corruption; insists that this knowledge has to be made available to Member States as well; emphasises the central role of the whistle-blowers in revealing wrongdoing and reminds that all European institutions and agencies must adopt internal binding rules for the protection of whistle-blowers, according to Article 22c. of the EU Staff Regulation, entered into force on January 1st, 2014;

11. Agrees with the Court that the Commission should propose amendments to the EU Financial Regulation to allow for a rapid review of complaints from economic operators who consider that they have been unfairly treated; notes that such a review should take place before economic operators may turn to the EU Ombudsman or to the EU Courts;

12. Considers that law enforcement in public procurement can be ensured first and foremost by establishing competent and independent investigative bodies and agencies focusing on the investigation of corruption in public procurement; points out that EU institutions and member states should share information and intelligence on public procurement among themselves as well as with OLAF, Europol, Eurojust and other investigative bodies; strongly recommends that the institutions with investigative powers, particularly OLAF, improve their case management system to produce reports and statistics on the different types of allegations under investigation and the outcome of these investigations;

13. Welcomes the Court’s conclusion that the EU institutions need to set up a single public repository of information related to their procurement contracts in order to allow effective ex post monitoring of their procurement activities;

14. Stresses that central collection of public procurement data helps build meaningful, accurate and detailed statistics with the objective to prevent, detect and investigate corruption in public procurement and take the appropriate countermeasures; stresses that adding data fields in the central procurement databases (including TED) could hint at red flag situations with respect to irregularities in public procurement; calls on the EU institutions to ensure that such databases are filled out in a timely and complete way;

15. Underlines the role of investigative journalists and NGOs in ensuring transparency in the public procurement process and detecting fraud or potential conflicts of interests; strongly believes that the above-mentioned categories should have full access to ARACHNE, ORBIS and other related instruments and databases allowing to detect any suspicions of conflict of interest or corruption in public procurement in European institutions as well as in all member states, particularly with regard to acquisitions made using European funds;

16. Urges all institutions and agencies to always publish CVs and declarations of interests for middle and high management, members, experts and any type of leading bodies or structures, even in cases of experts detached from member states, as the CVs of such experts should be publicly available at all times; underlines that a declaration of absence of conflict of interest which some institutions and agencies still use is not the appropriate document to publish, given that assessment of presence or absence of conflict of interest should always belong to an independent third-party organisation or body;

17. Calls on the European Court of Auditors to regularly publish track records of all abuses related to whistleblowing cases as well as all situations of conflict of interest or revolving doors detected during monitoring or auditing processes and requests the Court to publish at least annually special reports on policy and cases of conflict of interest found in all European agencies and joint undertakings, in particular those related to industries;

18. Welcomes the recommendation of the Court for the EU institutions to use peer reviews for mutual learning and exchange of best public procurement practice.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

| CONT Draft Report of 8/02/2017 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2016/2151(DEC) (PE 593.832v01-00) |
| Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion) |

Stage reached in procedure (February 2017) - Awaiting committee decision
Vote scheduled in committee (1st reading/single reading) - 23/03/2017
221. Fully endorses the Court's 11 recommendations issued in its report of 11 November 2015 on the annual accounts of the European Schools for 2014 comprising accounting, staff, procurement procedure, control standard and payment issues.

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CONT Draft Report of 6/02/2017 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015, Section II – European Council and Council, based on 2016/2153(DEC) (PE 593.847v01-00)
Leading committee: CONT
Stage reached in procedure (February 2017) - Awaiting committee decision
Vote scheduled in committee (1st reading/single reading) - 23/03/2017

[The European Parliament,]

2. Notes with satisfaction that in its annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2015 ("the Court's report"), the Court observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect to the audited topics related to the human resources and the procurement for the European Council and Council.

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CONT Draft Report of 8/02/2017 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2015, Section I – European Parliament, based on 2016/2152(DEC) (PE 593.979v01-00)
Leading committee: CONT
Stage reached in procedure (February 2017) - Awaiting committee decision
Vote scheduled in committee (1st reading/single reading) - 23/03/2017

[The European Parliament,]

71. Notes with satisfaction that Parliament publishes a complete annual list on its website of all its contractors who obtained contracts with a value of more than EUR 15 000 including the name and address of the contractor, the type and subject of the contract, its duration, its value, the procedure followed and the relevant directorate-general;

72. Takes note that this list goes beyond the transparency requirements set out in the EU Financial Regulation; encourages all the Union institutions to make available full information on all contractors and contracts awarded through public procurement, including cases of direct awarding or restricted procedures;

73. Supports the Court's conclusion that the Union institutions need to set up a single public repository of information related to their procurement contracts in
order to allow effective transparency and ex post monitoring of their procurement activities;

85. Notes with concern that despite the fact that in the field of DG ITEC the acquisition of new hardware comprises an amount of more than EUR 35 million on an annual basis, there is no clear policy for environmental and social sustainable procurement and invites the secretary-general to develop an action plan in this regard to make sure that in the future all calls for tender will include environmental and social selection criteria of hardware;

100. Recalls that the Court recommended in its annual report that Parliament “review the existing control framework for the implementation of budget appropriations allocated to political groups and in addition, that Parliament provide better guidance through reinforced monitoring on the application by the groups of the rules for authorisation and settlement of expenditure, and for procurement procedures”.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2015/2154(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0147; A8-0140/2016)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

440. Fully endorses the Court's 11 recommendations issued in its report of 11 November 2015 on the annual accounts of the European Schools for 2014 comprising accounting, staff, procurement procedure, control standard and payment issues;

441. Calls on the Commission to report on the progress made by the European Schools in implementing the Court's recommendations and the Commission’s action plan by 1 July 2016;

452. Regrets the significant delays in procuring essential equipment and services for missions under the CSDP and the resulting negative effect on the missions' functioning; recalls that in its 2012 special report on Union assistance to Kosovo related to the rule of law, the Court pointed out this inefficiency and concluded that the procurement rules laid down in the Financial Regulation "are not designed for CSDP missions where fast and flexible responses are sometimes necessary"; deplores that the recent revision of the Financial Regulation did not produce the necessary changes to the financial rules; reiterates its view that management of the relevant budget lines should be delegated to the civilian operation commander, in the same way as has been done for heads of Union delegations;

511. Draws attention to the fact that in 2014 no projects were financed under the CEF since the first call for project proposals closed in March 2015 and that the CEF debt instrument to be managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB) was not approved until the end of 2014; notes that in 2014 the Court examined six transactions in the transport sector (DG Mobility and Transport) and found that two out of the six transactions were affected by quantifiable errors; is thus satisfied because of the decrease in the percentage of affected transactions in 2014 (33 %) compared to 2013 (62 %) and 2012 (49 %); calls on the Commission and other relevant actors to ensure compliance with public procurement rules and costs eligibility of future transport projects.

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8. Emphasises the Court of Auditors’ recommendation that Parliament reinforce its checks on the costs reimbursed by European political parties to their affiliated organisations, develop appropriate rules for European political parties on public procurement and monitor their application through appropriate checks and better guidance; insists on full transparency on the expenditure by European political parties and that in future the competent committee examine and discuss this information in detail in the context of the ordinary discharge procedure;

136. Highlights the need to implement Green public procurement for all contracts and calls for tenders; calls for ambitious binding targets for green contracts, notably in the areas of food and catering, vehicles and transport, sanitary and water equipment, paper, waste management, IT and imaging equipment, lighting, cleaning, and furniture.

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60. Ask the Secretary-General to fully implement the spirit and the letter of the Financial Regulation with regard to green and economically efficient public procurement by reinforcing Parliament’s procurement strategy in this respect.

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CONTENT: the Regulation amends the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union. The aim of the new Regulation is to align the procurement
procedures used by the EU institutions for awarding contracts to the new procurement rules applicable to member states, set out in directives 2014/24/EU and 2014/23. In addition, **concessions for works and services** are introduced for the first time in the Financial Regulation and are subject to the same types of procedures as public contracts.

The revised Financial Regulation provides for the following:

- Respect for environmental, social and labour law obligations ...
- Single early detection and exclusion ...
- Exclusion of economic operators and Reasons for exclusion ...
- Conflicts of interest and grave professional misconduct ...

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[**EP Resolution of 29/04/2015** with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2014/2075(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0118; A8-0101/2015)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

228. Regrets the significant delays in procuring essential equipment and services for missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the resulting negative effect on the missions' functioning; recalls that in its Special Report No 18/2012 entitled “European Union assistance to Kosovo related to the rule of law” the Court of Auditors denounced this inefficiency and concluded that the procurement rules laid down in the Financial Regulation “are not designed for CSDP missions where fast and flexible responses are sometimes necessary”; urges the Commission to consider a revision of the relevant rules;

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[**EP Resolution of 29/04/2015** with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section I – European Parliament, based on 2014/2078(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0121; A8-0082/2015)

Leading committee: CONT

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

101. Highlights in this context the need to implement the concept of Green Public Procurement for all contracts and call for tenders; calls for escalating and ambitious binding targets for green contracts, notably in the areas of food and catering, vehicles and transport, sanitary and water equipment, paper, waste management, IT and imaging equipment, lighting, cleaning, and furniture;

102. Notes that the majority of the contracts awarded in 2013 were service contracts (61 %) with a total value of EUR 374 million and that three Directorates-General awarded 14 contracts with a value of more than EUR 10 million; stresses the need to ensure that those high value contracts should be specially subject to adequate control systems that monitor continuously the execution of orders;
105. Takes note that exceptional negotiated procedures accounted for 39% of the negotiated procedures launched in 2013; is concerned that Parliament made use of the exceptional negotiated procedure in 2013 to award 56 contracts and requests that not only the total number of contracts is indicated but also the aggregate value of those contracts;

106. Takes the view that authorising officers should offer comprehensive and transparent justifications for making use of an exceptional negotiated procedure; requests that information be compiled by the Central Financial Unit in the annual report on contracts awarded to the discharge authority.

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Leading committee: CONT
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

5. Emphasises the fact that in the annual report concerning the financial year 2012, the Court of Auditors included observations on the European Council and the Council concerning errors in the design of procurement procedures; notes that one error relates to the performance of a negotiated procedure and that another relates to the application of a selection criterion;

6. Notes the Council's reply that "the Council and European Council have a solid centralised procurement framework in place that was recently adapted to the new Financial Regulation and rules of application and will be reinforced with the design of new templates of contracts and invitations to tender as well as the development of specific training courses on how to define and apply selection and award criteria";

7. Shares the Court of Auditors' recommendations that the authorising officers of the European Council and the Council should improve the design, coordination and performance of procurement procedures by means of appropriate checks and better guidance.

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EP Resolution of 16/04/2014 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section I – European Parliament, based on 2013/2196(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0428; A7-0246/2014)
Leading committee: CONT
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

15. Notes that administrative and other expenditure comprises expenditure on human resources (salaries, allowances and pensions), which accounts for 60% of total administrative and other expenditure, and expenditure on buildings, equipment, energy, communications, and information technology is considered as a low risk area; points out that according to the Court of Auditors, the main risks regarding administrative and other expenditure are non-compliance with
the procedures for procurement, for the implementation of contracts, for recruitment and for the calculation of salaries and allowances;

17. Notes that the Court of Auditors’ audit examined 18 of Parliament’s procurement procedures; stresses that the Court of Auditors found weaknesses in the application of an award criterion in one case and in the management and documentation of the procurement procedure in another case;

18. Recommends that authorising officers improve the design, coordination and performance of Parliament’s procurement framework and procedures through appropriate checks and clearer guidance; notes that the implementation of the new Financial Regulation and its Rules of Application should be accompanied by the design of new templates of contracts and invitations to tender, as well as the development of specific training courses on how to define and apply selection and award criteria;

21. Regrets that the Court of Auditors’ examination of a sample of procurement procedures showed that errors persist in the design, coordination and performance of procurement procedures and that, therefore, the Court of Auditors’ analysis of the progress made is that its previous recommendation is, in most respects, still being implemented; reiterates its call to secure real progress, without further delay, on all control mechanisms for public procurement in order to overcome the shortcomings identified by the Court of Auditors, as well as to guarantee the most competitive prices for the goods and services acquired;

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EP Resolution of 3/04/2014 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2013/2195(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0287; A7-0242/2014)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary
[The European Parliament,]

64. Urges the Commission to tackle the problem of ‘frontmen’ being used for the purpose of obtaining public contracts and calls for every stage of public procurement procedures to be published on Internet, ensuring maximum transparency, and identifying subcontractors also;

86. Welcomes the fact that the Court of Auditors decided in 2012 to treat serious procurement errors made by all Union institutions and bodies as quantifiable, as it already did for the Member States and international organisations; notes that the Court of Auditors has not backdated its approach to cover procurement activities by the Union institutions and bodies which took place before 2011;

306. Recalls that the size of the SACHA II contract, and the full set of specific brand name products defined therein, was so large that only a very small number of contractors (two) could participate in the open, public tender; urges the Commission to prepare smaller open, public tenders to enable more actors to participate in such procurement and with a larger diversity of offers.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section I – European Parliament, based on 2012/2168(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0124; A7-0063/2013)
[The European Parliament,]

36. Regrets that the Court of Auditors found weaknesses in the application of selection and award criteria for 2 out of 10 procurement procedures of Parliament that it audited relating to the maintenance of buildings and to printing services; calls again on the Bureau to reconsider all control mechanisms for public procurement in order to guarantee the most competitive prices for the goods and services that are offered;

37. Regrets that due to a reduction in administrative burden for low value contracts, aimed at increasing SME participation in tenders for these contracts, the administration does not dispose of the number of SMEs that secured low value contracts; therefore the Secretariat General is not able to show whether or not the reduction in administrative burden actually led to an increased SME participation and thus the effectiveness of the measures taken; requests to monitor the number of SMEs that secured low value contracts;

39. Points out that among the more significant conclusions set out in the Internal Auditor’s annual report were the following:
- ... that for certain Directorates-Generals’ procurement processes there is a need to better substantiate recourse to exceptional negotiated procedures and to ensure that the outcome of negotiation is based on documented analyses that are measurable against relevant value-for-money benchmarks;
- ... that in several occurrences the evaluation methodology applied for public procurement process was not sufficiently documented in the evaluation reports and minutes or it differed from that announced in the tender specifications and that the evaluation method defined in the specifications must give sufficient weighting to the price criterion in relation to other criteria and must ensure the use of the best ‘price-quality’ ratio;

40. Notes and supports the views expressed by the Internal Auditor as to:
- ... the importance of ensuring that, during a public procurement process, the evaluation committee fully, clearly and comprehensively substantiates its conclusions in its report and that the evaluation process is free from any indication of unequal treatment of the tenderers;

80. Emphasises that it is essential that public procurement processes are consistent with and help to meet Parliament’s needs; stresses that they should comply with the regulatory requirements and the fundamental principles governing public procurement, with the contract provisions and with the criteria used in the tender evaluation procedure, and be subject to adequate control systems to monitor the execution of orders issued using the framework contracts;

81. Draws attention to the fact that, during public procurement procedures, different interest are involved, but not always aligned between the public and the private sector and that public procurement is a high-risk area which requires continuous close attention and where constant advanced planning of the needs is critical;

82. Stresses that, as a result of a complex legal environment and highly complex factual necessities, there are, at each stage of the procurement process (initially assessing needs, preparing the call for tender, drawing up the calls for tender and the specifications, contacting tenderers, opening of tenders, evaluating tenders, taking the award decision, concluding contracts) significant risks to the achievement of objectives;

83. Recalls that during public procurement the likelihood of potential conflicts of interest should not be dismissed but addressed properly and that Parliament
should reinforce and maintain in place its verification mechanisms to enable a proper management and prevention of potential conflicts of interest;

84. Notes that, in 2011 and 2012, the Internal Audit Service carried out a comprehensive audit of the public procurement process and of contract implementation in DG ITEC and that the final report adopted on June 2012 comprised a six-point action plan to address the issues raised; notes further that it was agreed with DG ITEC’s management that that action plan would be implemented by 31 December 2012; points out that that tender specifications are by nature highly complex in that they combined multiple lots, technical profiles and contract implementation methods;

85. Welcomes the fact that the abovementioned audit concluded that DG ITEC has succeeded in remedying many of the procedural deficiencies observed during the first transversal audit of procurement in 2005 and 2006; ... 

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EP resolution of 9/10/2013 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on the discharge for implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2011, Section II – European Council and Council, based on 2012/2169(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0406; A7-0310/2013)

Leading committee: CONT

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

4. Emphasises the fact that in the annual report concerning the financial year 2011, the Court of Auditors included observations on the European Council and the Council concerning procurement procedures relating to cleaning services and the purchase of service clothing and shoes, in which certain weaknesses in the application of selection and award criteria were identified;

5. Notes the Council’s explanations concerning the procurement shortcomings and its assurance of full respect of the spirit and the principles of the Financial Regulation;

6. Shares the Court of Auditors’ recommendations that authorising officers should improve the design, coordination and performance of procurement procedures through appropriate checks and better guidance; recommends the stricter application of the procurement rules, with which all the Union institutions are bound to comply;

7. Notes that the Council did not provide any further reply to the Court of Auditors’ recommendation relating to the appropriate checks and better guidance of procurement procedures.

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EP resolution of 10/05/2012 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2011/2201(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0153; A7-0098/2012)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)

Summary
Views from a Foreign Affairs policy perspective

237. Notes that most non-quantifiable errors identified by the Court of Auditors concern faults in procurement procedures and in the extension of contracts; reiterates, in common with previous discharge procedures, its concerns about the significant vulnerability of these two sectors to fraud and mismanagement.

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2012 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010, Section I – European Parliament, based on 2011/2202(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0155; A7-0120/2012)
Leading committee: CONT
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

24. Regrets that the Court of Auditors found errors, inconsistencies and other weaknesses in the procurement procedures of Parliament that it audited; points out the recent measures taken to improve these procedures and encourages its administration to make further improvements in this area of work; welcomes development of the IT tool Webcontracts, established in 2010, which allows contract work to be carried out online;

25. Calls on the Bureau to reconsider all control mechanisms for public procurement in order to guarantee the most competitive prices for the goods and services that are offered;

105. Encourages DG ITEC to strive to better prepare procurement procedures, in particular in the case of framework contracts, which are often complex, by stipulating contracting obligations on deliverables and results rather than simple output and by better defining Parliament’s needs and objectives; suggests that, rather than using penalty clauses, Parliament should seek compensation from a supplier or service provider who fails to deliver or use the threat of the loss of future work, in the case of framework contracts.

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2011 with observations forming an integral part of the Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2009, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2010/2142(DEC) (P7_TA(2011)0194; A7-0134/2011)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

149. Is concerned by the high rejection rates in countries with decentralised implementation, i.e. where Union Delegations control procurement files ex-ante; underlines that national authorities in those countries seem to have difficulties in implementing decisive improvements which are necessary for waiving the
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<th>Commission’s ex-ante controls; invites the Commission and candidate countries to improve dialogue and ensure effective cooperation;</th>
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<td>150.</td>
<td>Notes the Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 12/2009 on the effectiveness of the Commission’s projects in the area of Justice and Home Affairs for the Western Balkans;</td>
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<td>151.</td>
<td>Welcomes the Court of Auditors’ positive assessment on the supervisory and control systems applied in the area of humanitarian aid; nevertheless, invites the Commission to give greater attention to and derive full benefit from the follow-up of weaknesses revealed by its audits on implementing partners and monitoring the extent of the use of humanitarian procurement centres;</td>
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**EP Resolution of 10/05/2011** with observations forming an integral part of the Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2009, Section I – European Parliament, based on 2010/2143(DEC) (P7_TA(2011)0196; A7-0094/2011)

Leading committee: CONT

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

27. Stresses the need to develop, in-house, the high-quality property expertise that is essential in order significantly to improve the planning and procurement of the future purchases and long-term leases of Parliament’s buildings; points out the crucial importance of improved inter-institutional cooperation;

55. Stresses that the value of procurement contracts amounts approximately to a third of Parliament’s overall budget and that public procurement is the area most vulnerable to mismanagement; therefore repeats its request to regularly evaluate the procurement systems and in particular to perform internal controls on the contracts awarded in negotiated and restricted procedures;

56. Asks the Secretary-General to report whether the increase of the ceiling for low-value contracts from EUR 25 000 to EUR 60 000 in 2007 has facilitated access by small companies as intended, without substantially weakening scrutiny of the procurement process; notes that these contracts made up only 0,76 % in value but 39,29 % in number of the total contracts awarded;

73. Notes and supports the views expressed by the Internal Auditor as to:
   - the general need to improve the preparation and planning of procurement procedures and the prior assessment of needs;
   - the fact that, in spite of improvements to the central guidance and support for the procurement process, and the useful tools and standard documents devised, departments are not using these systematically;
   - the fact that there is also a need for urgent IT development to support both the procurement process and the management of contracts;
   - ... |

114. Notes with concern the weaknesses in the procurement procedure in DG Finance identified by the Internal Auditor in the course of the procurement process audit according to which, in the case of procurement for banking services, a lack of sufficient prior-needs assessment led to problems with tender specifications and also pointed to substantial risks, although the audit also showed that current arrangements provided appropriate levels of protection against key risks; stresses the urgent need to improve the operation of controls so that they address the identified risks more effectively;
122. Stresses the need for more and better IT tools to support the procurement process; welcomes in this context the launch by DG ITEC on 20 December 2010 of WebContracts Version 2.3 which supports the framework contracts, specific order forms and specific contracts for services linked to a framework contract.
Special report 18/2016 of 21 July 2016

The EU system for the certification of sustainable biofuels

Renewable Energy | Environment

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<th>Policy Area</th>
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<td>Report No / Date / Title</td>
<td>Special report 18/2016 of 21 July 2016</td>
<td>The EU system for the certification of sustainable biofuels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>Short summary of questions asked, observations, findings and recommendations</td>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
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<td>1. Have the Commission and Member States set up a reliable certification system for sustainable biofuels?</td>
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<td>1.1. Does the Commission's recognition of voluntary schemes ensure that the certified biofuels are sustainable?</td>
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<td>1.2. Does the Commission ensure that recognised voluntary schemes operate as intended?</td>
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<td>1.3. Are national data relating to the share of biofuels in total transport fuels reliable?</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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<td>1.1. The Commission's recognition assessment framework did not include some important sustainability aspects related to biofuel production: the respect of EU environmental requirements for agriculture was not ensured; methodology for non-mandatory sustainability issues is not applied; the impact of indirect land-use changes (ILUC) was not considered; verification of the origin of waste or residues used for the production of biofuels is weak; highly biodiverse grassland was not consistently protected until recently; insufficient consideration was given to transparency and governance;</td>
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<td>1.2. Supervision of voluntary schemes was lacking: the operation of the schemes was not adequately supervised; the required improvements to their procedures were not appropriately enforced;</td>
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<td>1.3. The statistics of biofuel certified as sustainable might be overestimated because Member States included biofuels whose sustainability was not verified and because the origin of the biomass used for double counted biofuels was insufficiently verified.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Comprehensive assessment of voluntary schemes requesting recognition:</td>
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<td>For future recognitions, the Commission should carry out a more comprehensive assessment of voluntary schemes. In particular, the recognition assessment framework should also verify that the schemes:</td>
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<td>a) assess the extent to which the certified biofuel production entails a significant risk of negative socioeconomic effects, such as land tenure conflicts, forced/child labour, poor working conditions for farmers, dangers to health and safety, and of indirect land-use changes (ILUC) emissions. To this end, the Commission should require voluntary schemes to report once a year based on their certification activities any relevant information concerning the abovementioned risks. The Commission should take account of such voluntary schemes' reports when fulfilling its own reporting obligations as laid down in the RED (Directive 2009/28/EC);</td>
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<td>b) effectively verify that EU biofuel feedstock producers comply with EU environmental requirements for agriculture;</td>
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<td>c) provide sufficient evidence of the origin of waste and residues used for the production of biofuels;</td>
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2. Ensuring appropriate governance and transparency of voluntary schemes:
   For future recognitions, the Commission should:
   a) assess whether the voluntary schemes' governance reduces the risk of conflict of interests;
   b) request that voluntary schemes set up an official website where minimum transparency requirements will be made publicly available. Those requirements include, at least: official contact details (address, telephone, email); information on the governance of the voluntary scheme and the qualifications and experience of its managers and key staff; complete list of the certification bodies operating under the scheme; detailed lists of valid, expired and withdrawn certificates (with dates); audit reports; information on the voluntary schemes' complaints/enquiries system and information on infringements detected. The voluntary schemes should undertake to update the information disclosed in a timely manner;

3. Supervision by the Commission:
   The Commission should with immediate effect supervise recognised voluntary schemes by:
   a) checking that the schemes' certification operations comply with the standards presented for recognition;
   b) requesting voluntary schemes to set up transparent complaints systems which should, as a minimum, have the following features: (i) be easily accessible on their websites; (ii) be informative on how complaints should be made, on the timeframe of the procedure and on the possibility of appealing against the rejection of complaints; (iii) cover both complaints against certification bodies and economic operators under the voluntary scheme; (iv) have a tracking system based on registers. The Commission should systematically verify information contained in the registers and take action if deemed appropriate;

4. Collection and reporting of data on sustainable biofuels:
   In order to increase assurance on the reliability of data on sustainable biofuels, the Commission should propose to the Member States that they support their statistics with evidence on the reliability of the biofuels quantities reported. This might be in the form of an overall certificate/declaration issued by the entity in charge of collecting data on sustainable biofuels and transmitting it to the national authority, which sends it to Eurostat;

5. Harmonisation of the definition of wastes used for production of advanced biofuels:
   Although the definition of feedstock that may be used to produce ‘double counted’ biofuels is now set out in the amended RED, the possibility that a substance is considered waste in one Member State, but not in another, remains. In order to ensure comparability of the statistics on sustainable biofuels and to increase the assurance on the reliability of data on advanced biofuels, the Commission should propose to the Member States as soon as possible a harmonisation of the definition of waste substances, not included in the RED list, used for the production of advanced biofuels in the installations existing before the adoption of Directive (EU) 2015/1513 amending the RED.
2. Notes that the European Union is considered to be a leader in global environmental policy, setting environmental standards at international level and providing best practice on protecting the environment and maintaining a competitive presence in the global market; notes that in its 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) the EU makes it an objective for 2050 to ‘live well, within the limits of our planet’; notes that one of the priorities is to ensure that ‘prosperity and healthy environment stem from an innovative, circular economy where nothing is wasted and where natural resources are managed sustainably, and biodiversity is protected, valued and restored in ways that enhance our society’s resilience’;

3. Notes that the EU made a commitment in the RED (Directive 2009/28/EC) to ensuring that by 2020 the share of energy from renewable sources used in all forms of transport is at least 10 %, which can be achieved only through substantial use of biofuels; notes, however, that production of biofuels may itself be linked to certain risks in relation to land use and that it is therefore necessary to ensure its sustainability;

4. Stresses that the establishment of an effective and reliable system for certification of sustainable biofuels constitutes one of the important steps towards fulfilment of the policy priorities stated in the 7th EAP; notes that the sustainability of biofuels is certified by voluntary schemes recognised by the Commission; regrets that the ECA did not find the EU certification system for the sustainability of biofuels to be fully reliable;

5. Notes with regret that the Commission’s recognition procedure does not take account of some of the key aspects of sustainability and fair trade, such as land tenure conflicts, forced or child labour, poor working conditions for farmers, dangers to health and safety and the impact of indirect land-use changes, which in different contexts are considered extremely relevant; considers this to represent an inconsistency in the Commission’s policies; calls on the Commission to redevelop its assessment procedures in a more comprehensive manner and to include these aspects in its verification procedure for the voluntary schemes; calls on the Commission to require voluntary schemes to report once a year on the basis of their certification activities and relevant information concerning the abovementioned risks;

6. Notes that to date the Commission has submitted two reports on the impact of EU biofuel policy on social sustainability in the EU and third countries and on the availability of foodstuffs at affordable prices; notes with regret that the information contained in the reports was rather limited and provided only unclear conclusions; calls on the Commission to improve the reporting system and to provide the European Parliament with a detailed analysis in order to inform the public about these important issues;

7. Notes with great concern that the production of biofuels can compete with cultivation of food crops and that massive dissemination of crops grown for biofuel production can have an immense impact on environmental and health standards in developing countries, for example in South America and South Asia, and that this can lead to massive deforestation and a decline in traditional agriculture, which has long-term socioeconomic impacts on local communities; regrets that the Commission’s reports do not address wider development issues in developing countries; calls on the Commission to adopt a more consistent and coherent approach towards its policies on environment, energy, development and other related issues; calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the impact of ILUC;

8. Notes with regret that the Commission has granted recognition to voluntary schemes that do not have appropriate verification procedures to ensure that the origin of biofuels produced from waste was indeed waste or that the biofuel feedstock cultivated in the EU in fact fulfilled the EU’s environmental requirements for agriculture; calls on the Commission to verify that EU biofuel feedstock producers actually comply with the EU’s environmental requirements for agriculture; calls on the Commission to provide sufficient evidence of the origin of waste and residues used for the production of biofuels;

9. Notes with concern that some recognised schemes were insufficiently transparent or had governance structures comprising only representatives of a few economic operators; calls on the Commission to ensure that the voluntary schemes are free of conflicts of interest and to provide for effective communication with other stakeholders;

10. Calls on the Commission to further ensure transparency of the voluntary schemes and economic operators by requiring the schemes to set up an official website providing publicly available detailed information on the voluntary schemes, their certification procedures, staff employed, certificates issued, audit reports, complaints, and the economic operators they cooperate with;

11. Notes with concern that the Commission does not supervise the functioning of recognised voluntary schemes and thus cannot obtain assurances about the quality of certifications; notes with regret that a specific complaint system is lacking, which prevents the Commission from verifying that the complaints are dealt with correctly; calls on the Commission to introduce a supervision system that will ascertain whether the voluntary schemes’ certification complies
with the standards laid down for recognition; calls on the Commission to request that the voluntary schemes set up transparent, user-friendly, informative and accessible complaints systems on their websites; calls on the Commission to supervise the complaints systems and to take action if necessary;

12. Welcomes the fact that the Commission issues guidance notes to the voluntary schemes which contribute to promoting best practice and to increased effectiveness; notes, however, that the notes are not binding and are not fully implemented; invites the Commission to consider making the guidance notes binding for the voluntary schemes in order to ensure that the requirements are fulfilled;

13. Notes that the Member States are responsible for ensuring that the statistics concerning sustainability of biofuels reported to the Commission are reliable, but that there is a risk of overestimation of the statistics; calls on the Commission to introduce a requirement for the Member States to support their statistics with appropriate evidence in the form of, for example, a certificate or declaration issued by the entity in charge of collecting data on sustainable biofuels and transmitting them to the national authority, which sends them to Eurostat;

14. Reiterates that the data submitted by the Member States are often not comparable, because of varying definitions; invites the Commission to harmonise the definition of waste substances not previously included in the RED list used for the production of advanced biofuels in installations existing before the adoption of Directive (EU) 2015/1513 amending the RED;

15. Notes with concern that the specific value (double counting) of biofuels produced from waste and residues increases the risk of fraud; points out that there is a need for dialogue between the Commission and the Member States on monitoring and fraud prevention; invites the Commission to initiate such a dialogue;

16. Welcomes the example of a voluntary scheme mentioned in the ECA report which sets high standards for sustainable production aimed not only at preventing ecological damage, including by protection of soil, water and air, but also at safeguarding appropriate working conditions and protection of employees’ health on farms, as well as respect for human, labour and land rights; considers this to be an example of best practice; invites the Commission to consider creating a platform for the voluntary schemes where best practices could be exchanged;

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

Leading committee: ITRE (ENVI, REGI, AGRI for opinion)
Summary

The European Parliament,

70. Notes that the target of 10 % renewables by 2020 in the transport sector is significantly lagging behind, partly owing to the challenges for a biofuel-based renewable strategy for transport; recalls that transport is the only sector in the EU where GHG emissions have risen since 1990; points out that renewable energies are key to achieving sustainable mobility; calls on the Member States to increase their efforts to deploy sustainable measures in the transport sector such as demand reduction, a modal shift towards more sustainable modes, better efficiency and the electrification of the transport sector; calls on the Commission to develop a framework for the promotion of the use of electric vehicles fed by renewable electricity and to improve the legislative framework so that it offers prospects for biofuels with high GHG-efficiency, taking into account indirect land use change (ILUC) in the period after 2020;

84. Calls on the Commission, given the need for greater synergy and consistency in European policies, to lay down sustainability criteria for bioenergy, taking into account a thorough assessment of the functioning of existing EU sustainability policies and the circular economy policies; recalls that a strengthening of EU energy security should be achieved through the sustainable use of own resources, in line with the objective of improving resource efficiency;

85. Urges caution with regard to the growing trend of use of forest biomass as a leading EU renewable energy source, which can have potentially damaging effects on climate and the environment unless sustainably sourced and properly accounted for; notes that the climate impacts of bioenergy must be accounted for in the long term, given the long periods needed to achieve parity times by harvested forests;
86. Notes that bioenergy already accounts for 60% of renewable energy in Europe and that its use is set to continue to grow; stresses the need to clarify, as a matter of urgency, the greenhouse impacts of the various uses of forest biomass for energy and to identify the uses that can achieve the greatest mitigation benefits within policy-relevant timeframes;

87. Emphasises that the production of biofuels should not interfere with food production or compromise food security; believes, however, that balanced policies to promote increased European yields in feedstock crops such as wheat, maize, sugar beet and sunflowers could include provision for biofuel production, taking account of ILUC, in a way which could provide Europe’s farmers with a secure income stream, attract investment and jobs into rural areas, help address Europe’s chronic shortage of (GM-free) high-protein animal feed, make Europe less dependent on fossil fuel imports; believes that in cases of market oversupply of the agricultural products referred to, the production of biofuels and bioethanol would represent a temporary outlet which would maintain sustainable purchase prices, safeguard farmers’ incomes during crises, and serve as a market stability mechanism; stresses the need to encourage the integration of uncultivated arable land which is not being used to produce food into the production of bioenergy, with a view to meeting national and European renewable energy objectives.

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Leading committee: ITRE (AFET, INTA, ENVI, TRAN for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

125. Notes that the current EU biofuels policy has been widely criticised for not taking into account greenhouse gas emissions associated with indirect land-use change (ILUC), which can be triggered when existing agricultural production shifts to uncultivated land, both inside and outside the EU;

126. Considers that a sustainable approach for meeting the EU’s energy security targets should not further expand the use of biofuels grown on land, and that improving the fuel efficiency of vehicles, reducing transport demand, reducing intensive livestock and increasing the use of biofuels from waste and residues that do not cause additional land-use change are better options;

127. Looks forward to, and insists on support for, projects and investments that capitalise on waste carbon as a commodity for low-carbon chemicals and advanced biofuels (i.e. by using microbes that are grown on carbon-rich waste gases and that are transformed into fuels and chemicals that displace those made from fossil resources (or first generation biofuels)), thereby reducing emissions and pollutants from industrial processes such as steel manufacturing;

169. Urges the Commission to develop an initiative on the EU’s global technology and innovation leadership on renewable and low-carbon energy technologies, including wave energy, floating solar technologies and biofuels produced from algae, and to boost public and private research, development and innovation activities in these fields.

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The aim of the new Directive is to start the transition from conventional biofuels to biofuels that deliver substantial greenhouse gas savings ("advanced/second generation biofuels). It also establishes a clear legislative framework for the production of biofuels, while protecting existing investments in the sector. The main elements of the new Directive are:

Capping conventional biofuels: the Directive seeks to limit the contribution that conventional biofuels (with a risk of ILUC emissions) make towards attainment of the targets in Directive 2009/28/EC so as to address the impact of indirect land-use change given that current biofuels are mainly produced from crops grown on existing agricultural land. It is also provided that the calculation of biofuels in the numerator, the share of energy from biofuels produced from cereal and other starch-rich crops, sugars and oil crops and from crops grown as main crops primarily for energy purposes on agricultural land shall be no more than 7% of the final consumption of energy in transport in the Member States in 2020.

Promoting advanced biofuels: each Member State shall seek to achieve the objective of there being a minimum level of consumption on their territory of biofuels produced from feedstocks and of other fuels. To that effect, by 6 April 2017, each Member State shall set a national target, which it shall endeavour to achieve. A reference value for this target is 0.5 percentage points of the 10% target for renewable energy in transport.

Member States and the Commission should encourage the development and use of schemes which can reliably prove that a given amount of biofuel feedstock produced in a given project did not displace production for other purposes. Member States and the Commission should explore the possibility of setting out criteria for the identification and certification of such schemes.

The voluntary schemes shall regularly, and at least once per year, publish a list of their certification bodies used for independent auditing, indicating for each certification body by which entity or national public authority it was recognised and which entity or national public authority is monitoring it. In order in particular to prevent fraud, the Commission may specify the standards of independent auditing and require all voluntary schemes to apply those standards. The Commission may repeal decisions recognising voluntary schemes in the event that those schemes fail to implement such standards in the time frame provided for. By 6 April 2017, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council that shall analyse the following: (i) transparency, particularly in relation to the accessibility of the scheme, the accessibility of a list of certified operators and relevant certificates, and the accessibility of auditor reports; (ii) market updates of the scheme, the amount of feedstocks and biofuels certified, by country of origin and type, the number of participants; (iii) options for entities to be authorised to recognise and monitor certification bodies; (iv) criteria for the recognition or accreditation of certification bodies; (v) rules on how...
the monitoring of the certification bodies is to be conducted.

**Reporting and review**

**Article 3 of the Final Act**

**Review**

1. The Commission shall at the latest by 31 December 2016, submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council including an assessment of the availability of the necessary quantities of cost-efficient biofuels on the Union market from non-land using feedstocks and non-food crops by 2020 and of their environmental, economic and social impacts, including the need for additional criteria to ensure their sustainability, and of the best available scientific evidence on indirect land-use change greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production of biofuels and bioliquids. The report shall, if appropriate, be accompanied by proposals for further measures, taking into account economic, social and environmental considerations.

2. The Commission shall, by 31 December 2017, submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council reviewing, on the basis of the best available scientific evidence:
   
   (a) the effectiveness of the measures introduced by this Directive in limiting indirect land-use change greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production of biofuels and bioliquids. In this respect, the report shall also include the latest available information with regard to the key assumptions influencing the results from the modelling of the indirect land-use change greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production of biofuels and bioliquids, including measured trends in agricultural yields and productivity, co-product allocation and observed global land-use change and deforestation rates, and the possible impact of Union policies, such as environment, climate and agricultural policies, involving stakeholders in such review process;
   
   (b) the effectiveness of the incentives provided for biofuels from non-land-using feedstocks and non-food crops under Article 3(4) of Directive 2009/28/EC including whether the Union as a whole is expected to use 0.5 percentage points in energy content of the share of energy from renewable sources in all forms of transport in 2020 from biofuels produced from feedstocks and from other fuels listed in part A of Annex IX;
   
   (c) the impact of increased demand for biomass on biomass-using sectors;
   
   (d) the possibility of setting out criteria for the identification and certification of low indirect land-use change-risk biofuels and bioliquids that are produced in accordance with the sustainability criteria set out in Directives 98/70/EC and 2009/28/EC, with a view to updating Annex V to Directive 98/70/EC and Annex VIII to Directive 2009/28/EC, if appropriate;
   
   (e) the potential economic and environmental benefits and risks of increased production and use of dedicated non-food crops grown primarily for energy purposes, also by using data related to existing projects;
   
   (f) the relative share of bioethanol and biodiesel on the Union market and the share of energy from renewable sources in petrol. The Commission shall also assess the drivers that affect the share of energy from renewable sources in petrol, as well as any barriers to deployment. The assessment shall include costs, fuel standards, infrastructure and climatic conditions. If appropriate, the Commission may make recommendations on how to overcome any barriers identified; and
   
   (g) determining which Member States have chosen to apply the limit on the amount of biofuels produced from cereal and other starch-rich crops, sugars and oil crops and from crops grown as main crops primarily for energy purposes on agricultural land towards achieving the target set out in Article 7a of Directive 98/70/EC, and whether issues with implementation or achievement of the target set out in Article 7a of Directive 98/70/EC have arisen. The Commission shall also assess the extent to which biofuels produced from cereal and other starch-rich crops, sugars and oil crops and from crops grown as main crops primarily for energy purposes on agricultural land are being supplied to meet the target set out in Article 7a of Directive 98/70/EC above the

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levels that can contribute to the targets in Directive 2009/28/EC. The assessment shall include an evaluation of the indirect land-use change impact and of the cost-effectiveness of the approach taken by the Member States. The report shall, if appropriate, also provide information on availability of financing and other measures to support progress towards achieving the share of 0,5 percentage points in energy content of biofuels produced from feedstocks and of other fuels listed in part A of Annex IX, in the share of energy from renewable sources in all forms of transport in the Union as soon as possible, if technically feasible and economically viable. The report referred to in the first subparagraph shall, if appropriate, be accompanied by legislative proposals, based on the best available scientific evidence, for:
(a) introducing adjusted estimated indirect land-use change emissions factors into the appropriate sustainability criteria set out in Directives 98/70/EC and 2009/28/EC;
(b) introducing further measures taken to prevent and fight fraud, including additional measures to be taken at Union level;
(c) promoting sustainable biofuels after 2020 in a technology-neutral manner, in the context of the 2030 framework for climate and energy policies.

3. The Commission shall, if appropriate in light of the reports by the voluntary schemes in accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 7c(6) of Directive 98/70/EC and the second subparagraph of Article 18(6) of Directive 2009/28/EC, submit a proposal to the European Parliament and to the Council for amending the provisions of those Directives relating to voluntary schemes with a view to promoting best practice.

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Leading committee: ITRE

Summary


Extract from the Summary

Political purpose: Parliament stated that obtaining an overall picture of the development of investment in energy infrastructure in the Union is essential for the development of the Union’s energy policy and for the Commission to perform its tasks in the field of energy.

Data and information on projects: the Regulation proposes to establish a common framework for the notification to the Commission of data and information:
- on investment projects in energy infrastructure in the sectors of oil, natural gas, electricity - including electricity from renewable sources, electricity from coal and lignite, and cogeneration of electricity and useful heat;
- on investment projects related to bio-fuel production and the capture, transport and storage of carbon dioxide produced by those sectors

Content of the notification: Parliament clarified that Member States should be required to include the following information in the notification: relevant information concerning delays and/or obstacles to the implementation of an investment project, where Member States, their delegated entities or the specific body concerned possess that information.
Confidentiality: the Commission should ensure that the IT resources needed to receive, store and carry out any processing of the data or information on energy infrastructure guarantee the confidentiality of the data or information which is notified to it pursuant to this Regulation.

Monitoring and reporting: it is stated that the cross-sector analysis of the structural evolution and perspectives of the Union's energy system should aim in particular at identifying potential future gaps between the demand and supply of energy that are of significance for the Union's energy policy, including for the functioning of the internal energy market. The analysis should put an emphasis on potential future deficiencies and flaws in the production and transmission infrastructure.

Reporting and review

Article 10 of the Final Act

Monitoring and reporting

1. On the basis of data and information forwarded and, if appropriate, of any other data sources including data purchased by the Commission, and taking into account relevant analyses such as the multi-annual network development plans for gas and for electricity, the Commission shall forward to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee and shall publish every two years a cross-sector analysis of the structural evolution and perspectives of the Union's energy system.

...
The European Parliament,

13. Welcomes the on-going revision of the Union’s biofuel legislation in order to mitigate the negative effects of indirect land-use change (ILUC), and to promote the market for, and development of, more advanced biofuels that should allow greater use to be made of non-food raw materials such as waste, residues and ligno-cellulosic and cellulosic materials;

14. Recalls that ILUC factors for biofuels and bioliquids, as well as binding sustainability criteria for the use of solid and gaseous biomass, should be included in the Renewable Energy Directive and the Fuel Quality Directive; calls on the Commission to propose a Biomass Framework Directive covering all applications of biomass (energy, fuels, materials and chemicals) and introducing a biomass hierarchy;

28. Emphasises that bioeconomy policies must be better designed to ensure a cascading use of biomass; calls, in this respect, for the development of a legal instrument that will pave the way for a more efficient and sustainable use of this precious resource; stresses that such an instrument should establish a cascading use principle in the ‘pyramid of biomass’, taking into account its different segments and strengthening it at its highest levels; points out that such an approach would lead to a hierarchical, smart and efficient use of biomass, to value-adding applications and to supporting measures such as coordination of research along the whole value chain;

37. Takes the view that there are a number of excellent tools (public procurement, standardisation, tax incentives, certification systems and specific labelling) that could secure a sufficient supply of sustainable and high-quality bio-based products as well as provide resource-efficient production systems; believes that reform of the current legislation is required; calls on the Commission to develop sustainability criteria for the use of biomass on which also market-creating tools should be based;

4. Calls on the Commission to promote measures to increase feedstock potentials in a sustainable manner, better mobilise such feedstocks, collect biodegradable waste – avoiding extensive transportation – and ensure that biomass use remains within ecological boundaries and does not reduce the carbon sink function; considers it urgent, in this context, to establish sustainability criteria for biomass energy use in order to ensure the availability of biomass for more resource-efficient purposes, preventing incentives for the transformation of biomass into energy from creating market distortions and reducing its availability for producers.

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EP Resolution of 21/05/2013 current challenges and opportunities for renewable energy in the European internal energy market, based on 2012/2259(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0201; A7-0135/2013)

Leading committee: ITRE (INTA, ENVI, REGI, AGRI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

4. Notes that the more intensive development of renewable energy sources (RES) in the Member States is likely to lead to increased use of biomass, which will in turn necessitate the framing of detailed sustainability criteria for gaseous and solid biomass;
5. Points out that, within the RES sector, the current and expected contribution of biomass and of other controllable energy resources should be made more visible to stakeholders in order to foster a fair and balanced decision-making process;

6. Calls on the EU to guarantee that the promotion of renewable resources in the production and use of energy will not jeopardise food security, high-quality sustainable food production or agricultural competitiveness;

7. Notes that a number of elements of the food system are vulnerable to higher energy costs and that this could have adverse effects for producers and consumers;

8. Recognises that the potential for reducing carbon dioxide emissions by increasing the use of biomethane in vehicles for short and long distances, particularly in heavy duty vehicles, and the use of electricity in vehicles for short distances within cities, is significant;

9. Is convinced that waste recovery represents an opportunity for further developing RES and achieving the goals of a European energy plan;

35. Recognises that gas infrastructure will play an important role in the development of renewable energy across Europe; points out that biogas, as a renewable energy, can easily be fed at present, as biomethane, into the existing gas grid infrastructure and that new technologies such as ‘power to hydrogen’ and ‘power to gas’, will further benefit the future low-carbon economy framework, making use of existing and new infrastructures that should be promoted and developed.

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EP Resolution of 14/03/2013 on the Energy roadmap 2050, a future with energy, based on 2012/2103(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0088; A7-0035/2013)

Leading committee: ITRE (AFET, ENVI, IMCO, REGI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

36. Notes that the Energy Roadmap 2050 scenarios imply a higher amount of biofuels; believes that, in this regard, the Commission should support the move to third generation biofuels based on food crop waste products, and to impose similar conditions on imported biofuels;

37. Asks the Commission to present a proposal on how to increase efficiency in the deployment of renewable sources of energy within the EU and its regions; believes that, in the medium term, market groups for renewables at regional level could be created;

108. Draws attention to the complex relationship between energy, food supply and security developments, particularly with regard to unsustainable first generation biofuels which may have a negative social and environmental impact on developing countries; recommends, therefore, a step-up in investment and development of sustainable advanced biofuels from agricultural waste products and algae.

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EP Resolution of 15/03/2012 on a Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050, based on 2011/2095(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0086; A7-
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

43. Calls on the Commission to develop a biomass supply policy to encourage sustainable biomass production and use; emphasises that this should include sustainability criteria for different biomass taking into account lifecycle carbon profiles of different sources, with priority being given to securing first value from biomass raw materials rather than their use for energy; insists that meeting the EU’s biofuels target must not adversely affect food and feed production or lead to a loss of biodiversity;

44. Calls, therefore, on the Commission to follow a broader approach on the issue of ILUC and to promote adequate protection of the environment in third countries affected by land use change bilaterally and multilaterally in order to take account of the greenhouse gas emissions attributable to changes in land use patterns; this could be achieved through the introduction of additional sustainability requirements on certain categories of biofuels imported from third countries.

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EP Resolution of 19/01/2012 on the farm input supply chain: structure and implications, based on 2011/2114(INI) (P7_TA(2012)0011; A7-0421/2011)

Leading committee: AGRI (ENVI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote investments in energy saving and renewable (wind, solar, biomass, biogas, geothermic etc.) energy production on-farm or in local partnership projects (wind, solar, biogas, geothermic etc.) promoted by local stakeholders with a special focus on using waste and by-products;

21. Urges the Commission and the Member States to make sure that public support measures for biomass and agro-fuels – including biogas – do not contribute to unsustainable competition for resources between food and energy production, which must be organised sustainably.

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Leading committee: ENVI (ITRE, AGRI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]
72. States that the current 'biofuel' criteria developed by the Commission are not suitable in the case of biomass and calls for the development of new legally binding sustainability criteria for biomass promoted for the use of energy; states that the Commission should consult the work and the findings of Forest Europe so as to develop criteria which factor in possible risks of distortion in the renewable energy market, do not rely on the carbon neutrality assumption, address indirect emissions, and do not undermine the EU 2020 renewable energy and biodiversity targets; notes that detailed implementation of the criteria should be left to the local level, taking into account site-specific conditions.

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Leading committee: ENVI (ITRE, AGRI for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

11. Considers bio-waste to be a valuable renewable resource for the production of electricity and biofuel for transport and for feeding into the gas network through conversion of biogas into biomethane (mainly methane – 50% to 75% – and carbon dioxide), and calls on the Commission to analyse and promote ways of using bio-waste to produce biogas;

12. Stresses that diverting bio-waste from landfills needs to be increased; notes, in this context, that bio-waste can contribute to the EU target of at least 20% renewable energy by 2020 and also that of the EU Fuel Quality Directive; recalls that the Renewables Directive supports the use of all types of biomass, including bio-waste for energy purposes, as a renewable source of energy, and that bio-fuels from waste count double towards the 10% renewable energy target in transport; calls, therefore, on Member States to consider energy recovery from the biodegradable parts of waste in their national legislation as part of an integrated waste hierarchy policy and urges them to share best practice ideas;

28. Underlines the fact that in many Member States some infrastructure is already in place but that financial incentives are required to create and establish the potential markets in compost and digestate, bioenergy and biofuel from bio-waste;

29. Underlines the environmental advantage of producing transport fuels from bio-waste; calls for Member States, in the light of the waste hierarchy, to take this into account when they implement the revised Waste Framework Directive, and for the Commission to reflect this in its implementing guidelines;

30. Urges the Commission to include in all current or additional impact studies in the matter the question of what type of economic incentives, funds or aids could be mobilised or created for the development and implantation of technologies permitting the proper management of bio-waste.

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Leading committee: AGRI (ITRE for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]
16. Calls for the speeding up of administrative simplification and of research and development work on the exploitation and utilisation of biomass found on farms (farm and forest waste), biogas from livestock farming and other sustainable agrofuels, provided that the latter do not jeopardise food security;

17. Stresses that the principle of sustainability must be enforced when using biomass; considers therefore that its use as close as possible to the place of production of the agricultural raw materials must be encouraged as this would reduce energy loss caused by transport;

18. Points out that the use of biomass for heating might significantly reduce the harmful impact of climate change, and therefore calls on the Commission and the Member States to award rural development funding to rural public institutions switching to heating systems based on bioenergy;

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Leading committee: ITRE (ENVI, JURI for opinion)

Final Act: Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 617/2010
Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: obtaining an overall picture of the development of investment in energy infrastructure in the Union is essential for the Commission to perform its tasks in the field of energy. The availability of regular and up-to-date data and information will enable the Commission to make the necessary comparisons, evaluations or to propose relevant measures based on appropriate figures and analysis, in particular concerning the future energy supply-demand balance.

Subject matter and scope: this Regulation establishes a common framework for the notification to the Commission of data and information on investment projects in energy infrastructure in the oil, natural gas, electricity, including electricity from renewable sources, and bio-fuel sectors, and on investment projects related to the capture and storage of carbon dioxide produced by these sectors. It applies to investment projects of the types listed in the Annex on which construction or decommissioning work has started or on which a final investment decision has been taken. Member States may furthermore submit any estimated data or preliminary information on investment projects of the types listed in the Annex on which construction work is scheduled to start within five years and to those which are scheduled to be decommissioned within three years, but for which a final investment decision has not been taken.

Reporting and review

Article 10 of the Final Act

Monitoring and reporting

1. On the basis of data and information forwarded and, if appropriate, of any other data sources including data purchased by the Commission, and taking into account relevant analyses such as the multi-annual network development plans for gas and for electricity, the Commission shall forward to the European
Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee and shall publish every two years a cross-sector analysis of the structural evolution and perspectives of the energy system of the Union. This analysis shall aim in particular at:

(a) identifying potential future gaps between energy demand and supply that are of significance from an energy policy perspective of the Union;

(b) identifying investment obstacles and promoting best practices to address them; and

(c) increasing transparency for market participants and potential market entrants.

On the basis of this data and information, the Commission may also provide any specific analysis deemed necessary or appropriate.

Article 11 of the Final Act

Review

By 23 July 2015, the Commission shall review the implementation of this Regulation, and present a report on the results of this review to the European Parliament and to the Council. In the review, the Commission shall, inter alia, examine the possible extension of the scope to include the extraction of gas, oil and coal.

Oral / Written Questions

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### Questions asked:
1. Were financial instruments an efficient mechanism to implement the EU budget during the 2007-2013 programme period?
   1.1. Were financial instruments appropriately sized in view of market needs?
   1.2. Did financial instruments succeed in attracting private capital?
   1.3. Were financial instruments providing revolving financial support?
   1.4. Did financial instruments prove to be a cost-efficient method to implement the EU budget?

### Observations:
1.1. A significant number of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) financial instruments were oversized and, by the end of 2014, continued to face significant problems in disbursing their capital endowments (on average, around 57% of all capital endowment paid from the Operational Programmes (OP) to the financial instruments had been used). A contributing factor to the excessive initial capital endowments was the Member States’ intention to avoid de-commitments throughout the 2007-2013 programme period;
1.2. Overall, financial instruments in both shared and central management were not successful in attracting private capital;
1.3. So far, only a limited number of ERDF and ESF financial instruments have been successful in providing revolving financial support;
1.4. For ERDF and ESF financial instruments, high levels of management costs and fees compared to the actual financial support to final recipients which also appear to be significantly higher than those of centrally managed instruments or private-sector investment funds;

### Recommendations:
1. As regards the ex ante assessments for financial instruments:
   a) the Commission’s ex ante assessment for centrally managed instruments should systematically include an analysis of the 'lessons learnt' to date.
   Target implementation date: whenever a new instrument is established;
   (b) the Commission, in addition to the 'lessons learnt', should also assess the effect of major socioeconomic changes on the rationale of the instrument and the corresponding contribution required from the EU budget in the context of their respective mid-term reviews for all centrally managed financial
1. Instruments.
   Target implementation date: as soon as mid-term reviews are carried out;

2. The Commission and the Member States should aim at optimising the size of specific ERDF and ESF funds to take, wherever possible, advantage of the significant economies in the cost of operating funds. The Commission should provide additional guidance to Member States on how to set up such financial instruments within Member States or at Union level (which are managed directly or indirectly by the Commission).
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016 (for the Commission); when establishing the financial instruments (for Member States).

3. The Commission should provide in the financial regulation (and subsequently in sectorial regulations) a definition for the leverage of financial instruments applicable across all areas of the EU budget, which clearly distinguishes between the leverage of private and national public contributions under the OP and/or of additional private or public capital contributions, and takes into account the type of instrument involved. This definition should clearly indicate how the amounts mobilised by the EU and national public contributions are determined, possibly following the OECD’s guidelines on the subject.
   Target implementation date: at revision of financial regulation and for the sectorial regulation at mid-term review;

4. For ERDF and ESF financial instruments under the 2007-2013 programme period, the Commission should ensure that Member States provide complete and reliable data on private contributions on capital endowments, both through the OPs and in addition to them.
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;

5. For ERDF and ESF financial instruments, the Commission should provide additional guidance to Member States on how best to apply the provisions on preferential treatment to attract more private capital without allocating excessive risks to public contributors to the financial instruments’ endowments.
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016.

6. For centrally managed financial instruments, the general risk-sharing principles which may have an impact on the EU budget should be defined in the legislation governing the instrument concerned.
   Target implementation date: when making its proposals for the establishment of new financial instruments or the revision of existing ones.

7. For all financial instruments funded from the EU budget during the 2014-2020 programme period, the Commission should ensure that only structures which are in line with its own recommendations and actions with regard to tax arrangements are implemented by Member States, the Commission itself and the European Investment Bank (EIB) group.
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016;

8. The Commission should take appropriate measures to ensure that Member States maintain the revolving nature of the funds during the required 8-year period after the end of the eligibility period for the 2014-2020 programme period. This could be achieved by requiring the use of an explicit clause in the funding agreement to ensure that the funding is used for the intended purposes.
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016.

9. The Commission should provide guidance in respect of the provisions allowing financial instruments to continue to be used into the following programme period, in particular for cases where fund managers are selected on the basis of public procurement.
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016.
10. In view of the upcoming closure of the 2007-2013 programme period, the Commission should:
   a) ensure that Member States report comprehensive information on management costs and fees incurred and paid by March 2017.
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;
   b) clarify that the ceilings for management costs and fees need to be applied to the actual capital endowment used by the financial instrument, i.e. the contribution from the OP that has been used to provide financial support to final recipients.
   Target implementation date: by the end of March 2017;

11. As regards the performance-based remuneration of fund managers in the 2014-2020 programme period:
   a) the Commission should make a legislative proposal aiming at a revision of the existing provisions in the CPR to strengthen the incentive effect of these arrangements.
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016;
   b) Member States’ managing authorities should make extensive use of the existing performance-based elements of the remuneration for fund managers when negotiating funding agreements. This could be complemented by the use of additional elements on a voluntary basis.
   Target implementation date: immediately;

12. The Commission should carry out a comparative analysis of the implementation costs of grants and repayable financial support, mainly through financial instruments, for the 2014-2020 programme period with a view to establishing their actual levels. Such information would be particularly relevant for preparing legislative proposals for the post-2020 period and determining an adequate level of technical assistance.
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

CONT Working Document of 18/11/2016 on ECA Special Report 19/2016: Implementing the EU budget through financial instruments - Lessons to be learnt from the 2007-2013 programme (PE585.498v02-00)
Rapporteur: Marco Valli (Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Welcomes the findings and recommendations of the European Court of Auditors’ Special Report N° 19/2016: Implementing the EU budget through financial instruments - Lessons to be learnt from the 2007-2013 programme;
2. Regrets that the overall view of the financial instruments could not describe a successful action to improve the investments in EU; notes that the Commission, in primis, and Member States have assumed higher risks and regrets that there was no significant private-sector contribution to them;
3. Stresses the high levels of management costs and fees compared to the actual financial support to final recipients; points out that specific ERDF and ESF funds size should be revised to take, wherever possible, advantage of the significant economies in the cost of operating funds;
4. Considers that the Commission is in a privileged position to provide additional guidance to Member States on how to set up such financial instruments within Member States or at Union level (which are managed directly or indirectly by the Commission); stresses the importance of the importance of ensuring that financial instruments are not subject to unacceptable tax avoidance schemes;
5. Is concerned that tax rulings were used in some cases to make financial instruments more attractive for private-sector investors; regrets that the Commission considers that advance tax agreements cannot be considered per se as going against its own policy; calls the Commission to prevent any form of tax ruling concerning the use of EU financial instrument;
6. Shares the view that lessons learnt from the audited programming period (2007-2013) be reflected when setting up the financial instruments for the European Structural and Investment Funds; considers in particular that proposals should be oriented towards performance and results rather than mere
7. Regrets that the legal basis in the previous period made it possible for Member States to freeze part of the contribution in the accounts of the banks and financial intermediaries managing the funds, without being actually used for its intended purposes; notes the modifications introduced by the Commission in its closure guidelines; calls the Commission to actively monitor the situation in order to avoid such practice;

8. Endorses that the leverage effect should illustrate the extent to which private funding has been attracted by both the Union’s and Member States’ initial financial contributions; regrets that the findings from Court special report show that the financial instruments in both shared and central management were not successful in attracting private capital; considers that Member States’ co-financing of FIs should be seen, together with the Union contribution, as a part of public funding;

9. Request the Commission to provide a definition for the leverage of financial instruments applicable across all areas of the EU budget, which clearly distinguishes between the leverage of private and national public contributions under the OP and/or of additional private or public capital contributions, and takes into account the type of instrument involved;

10. Draws attention to the need to provide ab initio clear and concrete estimated leverage for future financial instruments funds; expects that the Commission ensures, for the ERDF and ESF financial instruments under the 2007-2013 programme period, that Member States provide complete and reliable data on private contributions on capital endowments, both through the OPs and in addition to them;

11. Is of the opinion that before taking a decision for financial engineering measures of relevant infrastructural projects, the Managing Authorities should make sure that their proposal is duly justified by an independent ex-ante evaluation of high quality, based on a standardized and commonly agreed methodology; supports that before approving the operational programmes, that include relevant infrastructural projects, the Commission should verify their consistency with the independent ex-ante evaluation and ensure the quality of the latter;

12. Recommends to managing authorities that the fund manager’s remuneration be linked to the quality of investments actually made, as measured by their contribution to the achievement of the strategic OP objectives and to the value of the resources returned to the operation from investments undertaken by the instrument;

13. Strongly supports that the Commission should carry out a comparative analysis of the implementation costs of grants and financial instruments (in central and shared management) for the 2014-2020 programme period with a view to establishing their actual levels; notes that such information would be particularly relevant in view of preparing the legislative proposals for the post-2020 period; asks for a complete performance evaluation before the end of 2019 in order to consider the future of such instruments.
coverage of all 11 thematic objectives, compulsory ex-ante assessment, and creation of tailor-made and off-the-shelf solutions and reporting mechanisms, contribute to the implementation of financial instruments;

8. Recognises that financial instruments offer advantages such as leverage and revolving effects as well as higher risk investments, including private capital through high-quality bankable projects; acknowledges that financial instruments come with certain disadvantages: slower implementation, higher complexity, and high management fees and implementation costs; notes that grants represent preferable investments in some policy areas, such as the ones covered by the ESF;

10. Recalls that the positive experience of using financial instruments in the 2007-2013 programming period was accompanied by a number of performance issues: late start of operations, inaccurate market assessment, diverging regional uptake, overall low disbursement rates, low leverage effect, problematic revolving, high management costs and fees and inadequately large endowments;

11. Notes that implementation delays will affect disbursement rates, revolving and leverage; recalls the fact that delays in the 2007-2013 period contributed irreversibly to sub-optimal performance of ERDF and ESF financial instruments; emphasises that all necessary steps should be taken to mitigate the negative effects of delayed implementation, especially regarding the risk of limited use and impact;

13. Welcomes the Commission’s actions in optimising regulation; emphasises that, despite the improvements, complexity still exists and issues such as the long set-up time and the administrative burden for recipients are disincentives to use financial instruments; calls on the Commission to work closely with the EIB and the EIF to make access to ESI Funds microcredit, loans, guarantees, equity and venture capital as easy as using grants;

16. Welcomes the existing technical assistance practices provided by the Commission and the EIB Group through the fi-compass platform; regrets that the on-the-ground support services to authorities and especially to recipients of financial instruments, including EFSI, are limited; calls for a joint technical assistance plan by the Commission and the EIB comprising financial and non-financial advice as well as capacity building, targeted at national authorities as well as fund managers.

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EP Resolution of 13/09/2016 on implementation of the thematic objective ‘enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs’ – Article 9(3) of the Common Provisions Regulation, based on 2015/2282(INI) (P8_TA-PROV(2016)0335; A8-0162/2016)

Leading committee: REGI

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

6. Encourages the Member States and regional authorities to consider the use of the financial instrument opportunities; emphasises the need to ensure the transparency, accountability and scrutiny of such financial instruments and of the SME Initiative Programme aimed at financially supporting SMEs; highlights that financial instruments should always be used consistently with the goals of cohesion policy, and that proper technical and administrative support should be provided;

9. Notes the lack of evidence on the outcomes and results achieved by financial instruments and the loose link between those financial instruments and the overarching objectives and priorities of the EU; calls on the Commission to further improve the provision of grants instead of primarily promoting the use of
financial instruments;

10. Notes that in the 2007-2013 programming period several obstacles, such as the effects of the economic crisis, the complex management of structural funds and administrative burdens, as well as limited access to financing for SMEs and complexity of implementation of support schemes, led to an insufficient absorption of such funds by SMEs; warns that the underlying reasons for the low absorption rate need to be addressed in order to avoid any recurrence of the same problems in the 2014-2020 programming period, and that excessive bureaucracy prevented some SMEs from applying for the available funds; regrets the too general and incomplete nature of the existing studies on the efficiency and real impact of the ESI Funds on SMEs and asks the Commission to rapidly prepare an assessment of this issue, in cooperation with the Member States, and submit it to Parliament; stresses that poor administrative capacity may hinder the successful and timely implementation of TO 3;

13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure enhanced coordination and consistency among all EU investment policies targeted at SMEs; notes that enhancing the synergy between ESI funding and other policies and financial instruments targeted at SMEs will maximise the impact of investments; welcomes the plan to ease access to ESI Funds through the introduction of a 'seal of excellence' for projects which have been evaluated as 'excellent' but are not financed by Horizon 2020; urges the Member States, in partnership with relevant social and economic stakeholders, to create either a one-stop shop at regional level, thus promoting the already existing ones, or a consolidated platform for the various EU financing instruments aimed at SMEs, as well for administrative support for preparation and implementation of projects;

18. Emphasises Parliament's role in the supervision of results-oriented implementation of cohesion policy; calls on the Commission to identify and reduce, at the earliest possible stage, obstacles preventing the efficient use of funds for SMEs and start-ups, to identify potential synergies among ESI Funds and between ESI Funds and other SME-relevant funds, and to provide specific recommendations for action and guidance aimed at further simplifying, monitoring and assessing the use of such financial instruments; notes that there are increased difficulties in this sector, especially in outermost regions and in those areas where the poor quality of key infrastructure leads to low amounts of private investment.

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Leading committee: BUDG (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, CULT, LIBE, AFCO and FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

63. Believes that the mid-term review/revision provides for an excellent opportunity for the first-time assessment and evaluation of the functioning of the EU policies and programmes concerned, as well as the operation of the MFF flexibility provisions and special instruments, and expects the Commission to supply an analysis identifying the shortcomings of the current implementation system; pays particular attention to the assessment of the impact on the implementation process of the new elements introduced in the current programming period, such as ex-ante conditionality under cohesion policy; considers that the mid-term review/revision of the MFF should also take stock of the performance of funds allocated in view of the achievement of their objectives; invites the Commission to come up with concrete proposals to address the possible deficiencies and to improve and rationalise the implementation environment for the remaining years of the current MFF, in order to ensure the most efficient use of scarce financial resources and to reduce the administrative burden for the beneficiaries;
34. Is of the opinion that, in order to act effectively, the EU needs a new financial and fiscal strategy; considers that the Commission should, to this end, propose measures based on the following principles and elements:

- mobilising adequate resources swiftly; it is inevitable to reform the system of financing the Union by strengthening genuine own resources or introducing new ones, in order to make the Union budget more stable, more sustainable and more predictable; at the same time, it is important to respect the principle of universality and to improve transparency;
- for maximum results, EU budgetary instruments must be managed with close attention to performance and cost-effectiveness, while ensuring compliance and protecting EU financial interests;
- the EU should take steps to put together resources for responding to the challenges of high youth and long-term unemployment and the internal and external dimensions of the refugee emergency;
- after only two years of implementation, the multiannual financial framework (MFF) has reached its limits; furthermore, without a comprehensive mid-term revision of the MFF, the EU budget will be unable to address additional financial needs and new political priorities, and unable to avoid the resurgence of a payment crisis; calls on the Commission to present a review of the functioning of the MFF before the end of 2016 and to take decisive action to revise the ceilings of the MFF upward and expand its flexibility to respond to circumstances not foreseen in 2013;
the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) needs to be managed in a way that enables all Member States to undertake high levels of strategic investment in line with the EFSI regulation and ensures that funding for investment is contributing to the transition to a sustainable economy and society; the Commission's proposal for the EFSI's next phase should be based on these objectives;

- effective implementation of cohesion policy for 2014-2020 should be accompanied by preparations for its post-2020 phase, respecting its true nature as set out in the Treaties, its importance for the development of the single market and its potential as an investment tool accessible to all regions in the EU; synergies between the European Structural and Investment Funds, the EFSI and other EU funding instruments should be strengthened with a view to accelerating smart, green and inclusive growth, with a credible balance between grants and financial instruments being developed and avoiding any decrease in cohesion policy budget;

- the Commission should present proposals to reduce the bureaucratic complexity of the CAP for farmers; the Commission should further devise improved instruments to deal with extreme crises on the agricultural markets; believes that framework legislation at EU level is necessary to tackle unfair trading practices in the food supply chain so as to ensure that European farmers and consumers may benefit from fair selling and buying conditions.

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EP Resolution of 11/05/2016 on acceleration of implementation of cohesion policy, based on 2016/2550(RSP) (P8_TA(2016)0217; B8-0562/2016)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Iskra Mihaylova on behalf of REGI committee
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, bearing in mind that in many Member States the economic crisis has caused liquidity shortages and a lack of public funds available for public investments, and that cohesion policy resources are becoming the main source of public investment, to fully apply and use the existing flexibility under the Stability and Growth Pact; asks the Commission, moreover, to conduct a permanent dialogue with the Member States which asked for the application of the current investment clause, with a view to maximising the flexibility relating to growth and jobs investments; calls on the Commission, furthermore, to encourage involvement of the EIB in the form of increased technical and financial support in the preparation and implementation of projects for any Member State that requires it; considers that financial instruments, if implemented effectively on the basis of proper ex ante assessment and combined strategically with grants, can significantly increase the impact of financing, thus helping to overcome the negative effects of shrinking public budgets and to develop revenue-generating projects; stresses that clear, consistent and focused rules on Financial Instruments to help simplify the preparation and implementation process for fund managers and recipients, which recognise the different development levels of financial markets across the Member States, can help realise this ambition; believes that condensing all relevant regulation on Financial Instruments into a single, easily accessible and comprehensible document, and avoiding unnecessary re-revision of related guidance part-way through funding periods, unless legally required, would also assist in this process.

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Leading committee: CONT (INTA, BUDG, REGI, ECON for opinion)

[The European Parliament,]
15. Considers, however, that the presentation of the EIB’s activities in the 2014 Activity Report is not fully consistent with the PPGs for 2014; regrets, furthermore, the lack of information on the results achieved by the different EIB financial instruments and initiatives that were in place in 2014; recommends that, in communicating information about its activities, the EIB should focus not primarily on the volume of investments made but rather on their effect;

16. Expects the EIB to contribute to the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy by presenting information about its activities and their contribution to achieving the strategy’s targets;

17. Invites the EIB to consider drawing up, in 2015, a more comprehensive and analytical report on its annual activities which would adequately summarise the information from its thematic reports and correspond more fully with the requirements of Article 9 of the EIB Statute;

18. Welcomes the new information provided by the working document on financial instruments accompanying the draft budget; regrets, however, the lack of a global overview of the annual commitments and payments to the EIB, and expects further details;

19. Emphasises that investment, structural reforms and sound budgetary policies must be part of an overall strategy;

35. Notes that EUR 19.9 billion, or 29 % of total EIB financing inside the EU in 2014, were for operations supporting cohesion; regrets, however, that there is no information about the number of projects supported by the EIB Group under the relevant sectors or the financial instruments or applied initiatives related to this cross-cutting policy objective;

37. Welcomes the enlarged role the EIB Group will play in implementing cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 programming period; believes that this is a step in the right direction towards improving synergies between the EIB and ESI Funds; calls for the improvement of its activity in line with the TFEU Protocol (No 28) on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion; considers that there is a need to strengthen cooperation between the Commission, the EIB and local and regional bodies to ensure that the financial instruments are used effectively to boost territorial development and cohesion; welcomes the partnership between the Commission and the EIB in setting up the fi-compass advisory platform; firmly believes that there is a need to simplify the rules governing the support given by the ESI Funds to financial instruments under the EIB;

51. Is worried that many projects selected during the warehousing phase would have found access to financing under normal conditions and do not meet the additionality requirement; recalls that the EFSI guarantee was meant to enable the EIB to take more risks while maintaining its triple-A rating; stresses that it will be extremely vigilant in monitoring compliance with this criterion;

52. Expects the EIB group to be particularly watchful with regard to compliance with Article 140(6) of the Financial Regulation, which provides that financial instruments ‘shall not generate undue advantages, in particular in the form of undue dividends or profits for third parties’, given fears that the EFSI could in some way contribute to the ‘socialisation of risks and privatisation of profits’ in the light of financing experiences in cases such as the Castor project in Spain or the Passante di Mestre project in Italy.

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2015/2154(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0147; A8-0140/2016)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

Competitiveness for growth and jobs

190. Notes that especially for Horizon 2020, very advanced innovative financial instruments represent one of the key areas for practical implementation; welcomes in this regard the launch in 2014 of a new range of products under “InnovFin - EU finance for Innovators” as a joint initiative launched by the European Investment Bank Group (EIB and EIF) in cooperation with the Commission;

191. Asks the Commission to present information in future discharge procedures about the implementation of the InnovFin which covers the Union budget share taking part in this financial instrument;

192. Points out that certain sectors and policy fields, such as railway infrastructure or theoretical or basic research, are less suited to financing via financial instruments, and thus risk being excluded from the scope of Union activities;

Economic, social and territorial cohesion

221. Calls on the Commission to provide the Member States with stronger incentives to boost the use of innovative financial instruments in their regional policy, while taking into consideration lessons learnt from the period 2007-2013 in order to avoid blocking funds in financial instruments;

235. Agrees with the outline of the joint audit strategy for the 2014-2020 period where priority for thematic audits will be given to two areas: the reliability of systems for reporting performance data (a new feature linked to the result orientation of the policy) and financial instruments;

263. Notes that according to the recent and very comprehensive study that correctly evaluates the practice of FEI in cohesion policy in the 2007 – 2013 period, FEI have many advantages, but still some weaknesses which should be overcome; the analysis however shows that their use among the Member States differs radically; calls on the Commission to analyse the main reasons behind such dramatic differences among Member States and to find an effective incentive for them to be more active in using FEI in those fields where they have proved to be successful;

264. Notes that there is a visible difference between the volume of financial resources put into the Financial Engineering Instruments (FEI) and the amount redistributed to final recipients; is of the opinion that this could mean that some substantial amounts were only “parked” into FEI to avoid the risk of de-commitment; calls on the Commission to contribute to eliminating this negative feature of FEI utilisation and considers the new provision for 2014-2020 for payment to FEI in tranches as a positive step in this direction;

265. Notes that the pronounced boom in FEI use will necessarily lead to a completely new approach to spending public money by public administration authorities and audit and control bodies, which to an extent requires a “new culture” in the environment for innovative financial instruments; calls on the Commission to test an adequate preparedness of this environment;

266. Notes that FEI could substantially contribute to efficiency, effectiveness and economy in ESIF utilisation, if they are wisely implemented, as they are
naturally focused to reach a result, or to generate performance; calls on the Commission also to reflect this kind of benefit in the Union budgetary expenditure policy;

267. Takes note of the information that, by 2014, a total of 53 financial instruments, primarily limited to supporting SMEs, have been implemented across 7 Member States financed by the ESF and that a total of 16 716 SMEs (out of which 11 286 micro-enterprises) have been reached with a total ESF budget of EUR 472 million;

268. Recalls that the implementation of FEI during the programming period 2007-2013 was slow due to:
(a) the complexity of rules;
(b) in some cases over-allocation of resources as compared to the real needs;
(c) implementation in a time of financial crisis;

269. Welcomes the fact that during the 2014–2020 programming period, the regulatory framework foresees that the use of FEI is based on a compulsory “ex-ante assessment” with the view to identifying investment needs and helping to avoid the over-commitment of Union funds;

270. Welcomes also the creation, together with the European Investment Bank, of a common financial instruments technical advisory platform (Fi-compass) to support the implementation of FEI throughout 2014-2020.

Natural resources

324. Notes that utilisation of FEI in this area is absolutely negligible and rather exceptional;

325. Regrets that the Court detected grave deficiencies as to the revolving and leverage effects of the funding’s facilities in rural development and concluded that FEI had been unsuccessful during the period 2007-2013(24); requests that the Commission implement measurements to provide sufficient incentives for beneficiaries to allow for substantial added value;

326. Notes that the Commission has launched a conformity clearance procedure to get detailed and precise information on the risk of a conflict of interest concerning the State Agricultural Intervention Fund in the Czech Republic and stressed that failure to take the necessary measures to prevent a conflict of interest could ultimately require the Czech competent authority to withdraw the accreditation of the paying agency and/or could lead to the application of financial correction by the Commission; asks the Commission to proceed rapidly and to report to the Parliament on this issue by June 2016; asks OLAF to report without delay to the Parliament on its decision whether or not to open a case;

327. Notes that after the end of the eligibility period of FEI, resources returned to the funds from investments can be used by Member States and become national resources under the current legal framework; regrets that by this means resources initially linked to specific financial instruments can be eventually transferred to different sectors and individual undertakings; calls on the Commission to increase the incentive for Member States to spend these resources within the same sector;

330. Requests that:
   ...
       (i) the Commission encourage Member States to establish a single financial instrument which is able to provide both loans and guarantees, thus increasing
its activity and critical mass;
(j) the Commission set appropriate standards and targets for leverage and revolving effects in order to increase the effectiveness of the financial instruments for the programming period 2014-20;

Transport and Tourism

514. Encourages the Commission to continue closely supervising the implementation of innovative financial instruments for leveraging Union investment and attracting new sources of funding for TEN-T infrastructure projects, such as the Marguerite Fund, Loans and Guarantees for debt (LGTT) and the Project Bond Initiative (PBI), and to ensure that the Union budget contribution to these instruments is managed and used appropriately.


Summary

[The European Parliament,

1. Considers that the Commission should introduce detailed guidelines on simplification in order to make the Member States and their regions aware of their task of eliminating, or at least significantly reducing, the administrative burden and gold-plating arising at national and local levels in the processes of procurement, project proposal selection and monitoring and control activities, including avoiding frequent changes in rules, simplifying language and standardising procedures, as well as focusing the EU budget on tangible results; states furthermore that an integrated EU regional funding package delivered via a single interface or ‘one-stop shop’ could be an option, thus moving towards common processes and procedures wherever possible;

5. Urges the Commission and the Member States to promote simplification of the rules governing financial instruments within ESI Funds with a view to aligning them more closely to beneficiaries’ needs and ultimately improving their use.


Summary

[The European Parliament,

24. Underlines that cohesion policy legislation provides for the extended use of financial instruments – in order to double their contribution to about EUR 25-30
billion in 2014-2020 – by extending their thematic scope and offering more flexibility to Member States and regions; highlights the role of financial instruments in mobilising additional public or private co-investments in order to address market failures in line with the Europe 2020 strategy and with cohesion policy priorities; supports, in particular, the risk-sharing 'SME initiative', and calls on the Commission to make all efforts to make financial instruments easily usable and tempting for Member States and regions, thus ensuring that the doubling of contributions to financial instruments is achieved on its own merits and that stakeholder ownership of this target is well established; emphasises the need to ensure transparency, accountability and scrutiny for financial instruments that involve EU money;

25. Warns, however, that the EFSI should not undermine the strategic coherence and long-term perspective of cohesion policy programming; stresses that a re-direction of Structural Funds would be counterproductive and can therefore not be accepted, as it would put their effectiveness – and the development of the regions – at risk; points out that the financial allocations to Member States agreed on under Heading 1b in the MFF for 2014-2020 cannot be modified for the purposes of the EFSI; emphasises that the replacement of grants by loans, equity or guarantees, while having certain advantages, must be carried out with caution, taking into account regional disparities and the diversity of practices and experiences between regions concerning the use of financial instruments; points out that the regions most in need of investment stimuli often have low administrative and absorption capacities;

31. Points out that irregularities stem to a considerable degree from complex requirements and regulations; underlines that the number of irregularities in the implementation of cohesion programmes could be reduced through the simplification of management and procedures, early transposition of the newly adopted relevant directives and reinforcement of administrative capacity, notably in the less developed regions; stresses, therefore, the need to minimise the administrative burden for beneficiaries when ensuring the verifications necessary to ensure proper use of ESIF appropriations, as well as the need for efforts to optimise and improve the flexibility of management and control systems, place greater focus on risk assessment and correct the allocation of responsibilities among all authorities, while at the same time not undermining established strengthened control procedures, in order to prevent irregularities more effectively and, as a consequence, avoid financial corrections and interruptions in, and suspensions of, payments; is concerned about the low rates of disbursement of financial instruments to beneficiaries, in particular in view of the objective to increase the use of these instruments; asks, in this regard, the Member States, the managing authorities and other relevant stakeholders working with these financial instruments to make full use of the technical assistance provided through the Financial Instruments-Technical Advisory Platform (FI-TAP) and the fi-compass;

64. Stresses the crucial importance of administrative capacities; calls on policy makers at all governance levels to favour targeted technical assistance for the implementation of cohesion policies in general, and in particular for the extended use of financial instruments in combination with the ESIF.

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Leading committee: CONT (ECON, REGI for opinion)

Summary


Extract from the Summary

Subject matter: this Regulation establishes a European fund for strategic investments (EFSI), an EU guarantee and an EU guarantee fund. In addition, this
Regulation establishes a European investment advisory hub (EIAH) and a European investment project portal (EIPP). The EFSI should be part of a comprehensive strategy designed to address uncertainty surrounding public and private investments and to reduce the investment gaps in the Union.

The Commission and the EIB should conclude an agreement that specifies the conditions laid down in this Regulation for their management of the EFSI.

**Purpose:** the Commission shall conclude an agreement with the EIB on the management of the EFSI and on the granting of the EU guarantee, in accordance with the requirements of this Regulation. The purpose of the EFSI shall be to support investments in the Union and to ensure increased access to financing for companies having up to 3000 employees, giving priority to small and medium enterprises and small mid-cap companies, through the supply of risk bearing capacity to the EIB.

**Reporting and review**

Article 18 of the Final Act

Evaluation and Review

1. By 5 January 2017, the EIB shall evaluate the functioning of the EFSI. The EIB shall submit its evaluation to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

2. By 5 January 2017, the Commission shall evaluate the use of the EU guarantee and the functioning of the guarantee fund. The Commission shall submit its evaluation to the European Parliament and the Council. That evaluation shall be accompanied by an opinion of the Court of Auditors.

3. By 30 June 2018 and every three years thereafter:
   (a) the EIB shall publish a comprehensive report on the functioning of the EFSI, which shall include an evaluation of the impact of the EFSI on investment in the Union, employment creation and access to financing for SMEs and mid-cap companies;
   (b) the Commission shall publish a comprehensive report on the use of the EU guarantee and the functioning of the guarantee fund.

4. The EIB, in cooperation with the EIF as appropriate, shall contribute to and provide the necessary information for the Commission evaluation and report under paragraphs 2 and 3 respectively.

5. The EIB and the EIF shall, on a regular basis, provide the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission with all of their independent evaluation reports which assess the impact and practical results achieved by the activities of the EIB and the EIF under this Regulation.

6. By 5 July 2018, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report containing an independent evaluation of the application of this Regulation.

7. In the event that the report referred to in paragraph 6 concludes that the EFSI:
   (a) is achieving its objectives and that maintaining a scheme for supporting investment is warranted, the Commission shall where appropriate submit a legislative proposal to amend this Regulation with a view to setting the new investment period, ensuring continuation of investment and appropriate
financing;
(b) is not achieving its objectives and that maintaining a scheme for supporting investment is warranted, the Commission shall where appropriate submit a legislative proposal to amend this Regulation with a view to addressing the flaws identified, setting the new investment period, ensuring continuation of investment and appropriate financing;
(c) is not achieving its objectives and that maintaining a scheme for supporting investment is not warranted, the Commission shall where appropriate submit a legislative proposal to ensure a smooth termination of the EFSI, while preserving the EU guarantee for the operations already approved under this Regulation.

8. The report referred to in paragraph 6 shall be submitted without delay by the Commission in the event that the approved projects absorb in full the amount of the EU guarantee available before 5 July 2018.

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Leading committee: CONT (ECON for opinion)

[The European Parliament,]

19. Invites the EIB to be more proactive in providing its technical expertise in all key areas of activities with high growth potential throughout all Member States; recalls that technical and financial advice is an efficient means of helping project delivery and speeding up disbursements and real investment; believes, therefore, that EIB expertise should be augmented and made available at early stages in projects co-financed by the EU and the EIB, and in ex-ante appraisal of large scale projects, including through the Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS) instrument;

20. Urges the EIB, in the current context of critically low absorption rates in many Member States, to enhance efforts to support Member States’ absorption capacity of EU resources, including Structural Funds, by further developing additional joint risk-sharing instruments and by adapting the existing ones already funded by the EU budget;

46. Supports the initiatives of the EIB Group on innovative financings for SMEs and mid-cap companies through the launching of Horizon 2020 and COSME financial instruments and the Risk Sharing Instruments (RSI) in order to encourage banks to provide financial resources by means of loans and guarantees, and to ensure the provision of long-term risk capitals;

57. Emphasises the need to increase the level of awareness and understanding among potential investors and beneficiaries of the existence of innovative financial tools; encourages the setting up of a communication policy to promote the visibility of various actions carried out by the EU, through these new financial instruments, via the EIB; stresses, furthermore, that extensive and systematic access to project information, as well as greater involvement on the part of project beneficiaries and local civil society – which could be improved through EIB-financed investments – should be ensured;

58. Calls on the EIB to establish an action plan to simplify access to information and funding for SMEs, focusing in particular on the administrative formalities for access to funding;

60. Reiterates with concern that a considerable number of outstanding issues remain unresolved in this area, notably the lack of transparency (especially concerning information about the final beneficiaries), the difficulty in assessing the economic and social impact of the loans (resulting in a flawed targeted...
approach) and the reliance, via outsourcing of responsibilities, on financial intermediaries for carrying out the due diligence; urges the Bank to provide details on its approach to accelerate measures addressing these issues and asks for a stringent list of criteria for selection of these financial intermediaries to be established by the EIB jointly with the Commission and be made publicly available.

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EP Resolution of 14/01/2014 on EU Member States preparedness to an effective and timely start of the new Cohesion Policy Programming period, based on 2013/2095(INI) (P7_TA-PROV(2014)0015; A7-0007/2014)
Leading committee: REGI (BUDG for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

34. Highlights the fact that for many Member States, transferring methods and mechanisms from the 2007-2013 programming period to the post 2013 period will be a major issue; stresses that ensuring that ongoing projects continue to be effective while new projects are being developed is also a challenge;

38. Welcomes the fact that, on the basis of successful experiences from the previous round of funding, Member States are seeking to enhance the leveraging of private sector funding in order to open up alternative sources of funding to complement traditional financing methods; stresses that, at a time of heavy fiscal constraint and reduced lending capacity on the part of the private sector, the increased use of financial instruments can foster public-private partnerships, achieve a multiplier effect with the EU budget, open up alternative sources of finance and guarantee an important financing stream for strategic regional investments; highlights, therefore, the importance of setting out clear rules for using innovative financial instruments, such as loans, guarantees and equity investments, as complements to grants in order to encourage cooperation between enterprises, public sector organisations and educational institutions.

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EP Resolution of 10/09/2013 on the implementation and impact of the energy efficiency measures under Cohesion Policy, based on 2013/2038(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0345; A7-0271/2013)
Leading committee: REGI (ITRE for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Members note that European Structural and Investment Funds could help provide incentives for private investment in energy-efficient products, transport modes, buildings, industry, works and services.

The resolution stresses that the European Structural and Investment Funds could help provide incentives for private investment in energy-efficient products. In the financial framework for 2014-2020 – in which the share of funding set aside for energy efficiency is greater than before – care must be taken to facilitate access by local and regional authorities to these funds.

... Role of financial instruments: the resolution stresses that a combination of grants and Financial Instruments (FI) can serve as a successful and innovative approach to leverage private funding, create new models of private-public partnerships and enhance innovation.
The Commission is invited to: (i) present without delay proposals for off-the-shelf FI to be available in support of EE measures; (ii) improve further the targeted financial support of the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and the European Energy Efficiency Fund (EEEF) for EE projects.

Member States are called upon to share best practices in the design of national energy efficiency funds, whereby European Structural and Investment Funds can be used as equity contributions, or similar, and be aligned with additional funding sources from the private sector.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of its Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2012/2167(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0122; A7-0116/2013)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

Follow-up to the 2010 discharge resolution
Monitoring of financial engineering instruments

5. Welcomes the follow-up given by the Commission to Parliament’s request for greater transparency as regards the Financial Engineering Instruments (FEIs), in particular by making the reporting by Member States on financial and implementation issues in the relevant legislation a compulsory procedure(13), and notes that the Summary report on the progress made in financing and implementing FEIs announced by the Commission in its report on the follow-up to the discharge for the 2010 financial year (COM(2012)0585) was transmitted in due time to Parliament; further notes that the latter provides data on the description of the FEIs and their implementation arrangements, identification of the implementing entities and amounts of assistance paid to and by the FEIs;

6. Notes that the amount of structural funds implemented through FEIs has continued to increase over the period 2007-2013, in particular for instruments targeting enterprises; points out that more than 90 % of the amounts actually disbursed to final recipients went to enterprises; asks the Commission to clarify what percentage of the amounts actually dispersed went to truly private enterprises, as opposed to majority publicly owned enterprises;

7. Notes with concern that FEIs for urban development and energy efficiency/renewable energies account for only 17 % of the amount paid to all FEIs at the end of 2011 and, moreover, that the flow into concrete urban projects remained slow;

8. Endorses the lessons learned by the Commission pursuant to the abovementioned summary report as to the Member States’ reporting, as follows:
   – the process of the collection of data by managing authorities and their transmission to the Commission should start as early as possible;
   – Member States should be encouraged to provide input covering more than just the amounts committed to the funds and the number and type of final recipients;
   – the Commission should provide more guidance to the Member States;
9. Notes that the Commission has charged a group of experts to draft a report on the use of the ERDF in support of FEIs; considers this to be a first step and is worried that the expert evaluation network’s analysis reveals a number of serious problems, for example, the lack of evidence to determine whether the scale of support matches the size of the gaps in the market for loans and equity finance; the lack of evidence from which to assess whether the size of venture capital funds set up with ERDF support is large enough to be viable; the paucity of data on the costs of setting up and operating FEIs relative to non-repayable grants; and the complexity of the regulations and uncertainty surrounding their interpretation;

10. Calls on the Commission to take concrete steps to significantly improve the use of the FEIs with a view to better protecting the Union’s financial interests;

11. Reiterates that Parliament invited the Commission to evaluate objectively and critically the experiences with FEIs in the Cohesion policy for the programming period 2007-2013, to provide a risk assessment considering different FEIs separately, as well as taking into account the risk structure of beneficiaries of the FEIs, and to report annually to Parliament, in time for the respective discharge procedure, on the use of FEIs in Member States, including comparable indicators on the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of FEIs, and also on how the Commission coordinates, ensures consistency and mitigates the risk of overlapping across the policy areas;

**Employment and social affairs**

206. Recalls the need to monitor and measure the performance of financial instruments against policy goals - Europe 2020 objectives - in order to be able to identify shortcomings and to make progress; calls for performance information and data be available on annual basis; is of the opinion that in context of the current economic and financial crisis the need for multi-criteria performance data on ESF interventions is crucial.

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**Leading committee:** ECON (CONT for opinion)

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

4. Encourages the use of risk capital and financial instruments reflows for new investments in line with the EIB lending mandate;

7. Stresses the need to make greater use of the existing joint initiatives of the Commission and EIF/EIB Group such as JEREMIE that finance small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in combination with the Structural Funds (also ELENA or EPEC), in order to offer technical and financial advice services, as well as instruments such as PROGRESS and JASMINE for funding microfinancing projects, especially in those regions of the EU where the unemployed have extreme difficulty finding a job; in parallel, encourages the Commission to make available to the EIB/EIF adequate budgetary resources for this purpose, in order to increase the number of projects financed by these programmes,

15. Considers that in order to develop joint EIB/EU financial instruments an appropriate framework should be put in place in a timely manner to monitor the EIB’s activities and to increase its democratic accountability by involving Parliament and the Council; this framework should allow the EIB to continue to assess projects on their own merits, in order to ensure the long-term sustainable use of EIB capital resources, and should address the need to avoid excessive administrative burdens for managing entities, financial intermediaries and final beneficiaries;
16. Recommends that the implementation of EIB/EU financial instruments should be based on ex ante policy objectives and criteria, combined with a transparent and efficient ex post reporting system that will preserve the independence of the EIB as regards project selection and due diligence;

22. Encourages the EIB to continue developing risk-sharing instruments in cooperation with the Commission, in order to optimise the risk capacity of the EU and the lending capacity of the EIB;

23. Considers that national public financial institutions have the capacity to ensure the throughput of EIB preferential financing costs to SMEs; suggests, therefore, that the EIB should continue implementing financial instruments for SMEs through national public institutions where they meet its lending requirements; welcomes the activities of the Long Term Investors Club aimed at enhancing cooperation between the EIB and key national public institutions;

31. Encourages the EIB to continue its efforts together with the Commission to develop innovative financial instruments, with the objectives of leveraging limited EU budgetary resources in the most efficient way, mobilising private funding sources and promoting risk-sharing instruments for financing key investments for the EU, taking into account, inter alia, such areas as agriculture, climate action, energy and resource efficiency, renewables, sustainable modes of transport, innovation, trans-European networks, education and research, and thus facilitating the transition to knowledge-driven growth and sustainable development for a Union grounded in sustainable competitiveness.

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**EP Resolution of 5/02/2013 on improving access to finance for SMEs, based on 2012/2134(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0036; A7-0001/2013)**

Leading committee: ECON (EMPL, IMCO, REGI, JURI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

33. Takes the view that the Commission should explore ways to improve the European quasi-equity market, in particular mezzanine finance; recommends that the Commission investigate how to strengthen the EIF Mezzanine facility for Growth and that it look into new mezzanine products such as a guarantee for mezzanine loans; recommends also that data and analysis regarding financial instruments be provided in order to reduce barriers for financial intermediaries who may wish to explore the lending market for mezzanine capital in the EU;

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**EP Resolution of 15/01/2013 on optimising the role of territorial development in cohesion policy, based on 2011/2312(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0002; A7-0421/2012)**

Leading committee: REGI (EMPL for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

42. Welcomes the Commission’s proposals for greater use, and extension of the scope, of financial instruments through the creation of simpler and clearer rules to ensure increased effectiveness across all the five funds covered by the CPR;
43. Highlights the potential of financial instruments, including micro-credits, to open up alternative sources of finance for a wide range of actors to complement traditional financing methods; stresses that in the future funding framework financial instruments should have the ability to lever private funding and offer flexibility to Member States and regions to tailor target sectors and implementation methods to their specific needs;  

44. Stresses that financial instruments, as mechanisms allowing cooperation between enterprises, public sector organisations and educational institutions, should also be encouraged as a means of developing an integrated approach to funding.

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Leading committee: BUDG (CONT, ITRE and REGI for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament emphasises that the experience gained thus far with IFIs is satisfactory in overall terms, even if their multiplier effect varies substantially depending on the area of intervention. It reiterates that the increased use of IFIs should not turn into a strategy to reduce the size of the Union budget but should serve to optimise its use and welcome the fact that the Commission acknowledges that the intention behind an increased use of innovative financial instruments is not to replace grant funding with financial instruments.

Designing new financial instruments: ... In a context where project promoters are facing a credit squeeze and are finding it more difficult to borrow money on the capital markets, Members are convinced that the continued development of IFIs at national and Union level could become a contributing factor if the Union is to ensure a coordinated return to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Parliament formulates a series of recommendations in respect of innovative financial instruments:

- IFIs must address one or more specific policy objectives of the Union, in particular those outlined by the EU 2020 Strategy, operate in a non-discriminatory fashion, have a clear end date, respect the principles of sound financial management and be complementary to traditional instruments such as grants;
- ex ante assessments are necessary for identifying situations of market failure or sub-optimal investment conditions, investment needs, potential private sector involvement, possibilities for economies of scale and questions of critical mass, and in verifying that the instrument does not distort competition within the internal market and does not violate the rules on State aid. The Commission is urged to propose objective criteria in this regard;
- given that the increase in the number of IFIs is posing many challenges in the areas of regulation, governance and the monitoring of their effectiveness, the legal framework should be as simple, clear and transparent as possible, so as not to increase the administrative burden on intermediaries and recipients and make IFIs attractive to public and private investors;
- the capacity for flexibility and adaptability to local circumstances, should be as high as possible; Members propose, therefore, that it should be possible for the budgetary authority to adjust the annual amount allocated to each instrument if this is likely to facilitate the achievement of the purposes for which it was created;
- the innovative nature of IFIs requires the establishment of a framework for the coordination of public financial institutions that will be delegated the
power of budgetary implementation of the IFIs, and which would involve representatives of the Commission, the Council and Parliament.

Lastly, the Commission is called on to submit, as quickly as possible, proposals to facilitate the release of savings, an underused resource at present, to support medium- and long-term projects which generate sustainable growth in the Union.

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2012 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2011/2201(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0153; A7-0098/2012)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)
Summary

Extracts from the Summary

Financial Engineering Instruments (FEIs): Parliament recalls that the Commission promotes an increased use of FEIs for the next multiannual financial framework despite the fact that the Commission itself considers FEIs to be of high risk. It understands that FEIs complement rather than replace existing grant funding and have the potential benefit of being able to be used more than once. It deplores the absence of formal reporting requirements. . Members regret the lack of transparency which characterises the implementation of these instruments and the uncertainty as regards the legal basis. Members invite the Commission to consider it a priority action to closely monitor the use of FEIs inter alia by:
- evaluating objectively and critically the experiences with FEIs in the Cohesion policy for the programming period 2007-2013 so far;
- providing a risk assessment considering different FEIs separately as well as taking into account the risk structure of the beneficiary of the FEIs;
- completing the process of gathering information from Member States on issues not yet fully covered, such as the exact number and size of specific funds and relevant indicators on the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of FEIs;
- reporting annually to Parliament, in the context of the discharge procedure, on the use of FEIs in Member States.

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Leading committee: CONT (DEVE, ECON, ENVI for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

12. Broadly supports the cooperation between the EIB and the European Commission in developing innovative financial instruments to promote the objectives of the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy as well as action to kick-start the crisis-hit economy and climate action needs; recognizes the previous positive experience of the use of these tools – including grant and loan blending and risk-sharing mechanisms;

14. Is concerned about the EIB internal controls and audit systems and encourages the EC and the EIB to finalise a comprehensive financial and administrative framework agreement by November 2012, also in view of the expected expansion of innovative financial instruments managed by the EIB group; expects the EIB to report back to the Parliament on progress made by December 2012;
104. Proposes that the Commission, in conjunction with the EIB (in view of the quality of the latter’s human resources and its experience in financing major infrastructure), engage in a process of strategic analysis of investment funding, without ruling out any possible scenario, including subsidies, the release of sums subscribed to the EIB’s capital by the Member States, EU subscriptions to the EIB’s capital, loans, innovative instruments, financial engineering tailored to long-term projects which are not immediately profitable, the development of guarantee systems, the creation of an investment section within the EU budget, financial consortia of European, national and local authorities, public-private partnerships, etc.;

105. Recalls, moreover, that the Europe 2020 strategy will only be credible if it is backed up by adequate financial resources, and therefore supports a more prominent role for the EIB in enhancing the catalytic role and leverage function of structural funds and the further development and optimum use of innovative financing instruments, involving notably the EIB and the EIF and other international financial institutions on the basis of reciprocity (e.g. blending grants and loans, venture capital instruments, new forms of risk-sharing and guarantees).

Leading committee: REGI (BUDG, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE, TRAN for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

29. Stresses that synergies between structural funds and other sectoral policy instruments, and between these instruments and national, regional and local resources, are vital and create valuable links allowing mutual reinforcement, sustainable implementation of programmes and achievement of territorial cohesion; acknowledges that, through the earmarking provisions for 2007-2013, cohesion policy is better geared to create synergies with research and innovation policies; underlines that Structural Funds could be used to enhance research infrastructure, ensuring the level of excellence necessary for access to research funds; also highlights the benefits of synergies between ERDF, ESF and EAFRD; notes that experience clearly proves that successful performance of ESF-financed programmes is essential in order to maximise the effectiveness of ERDF funding for economic actions; recalls in this context the potential of cross-financing which is not yet fully exploited; with a view to the next Strategic Report, invites the Commission to introduce a reference to mutual interaction between Structural Funds as well as their interaction with other EU financial instruments;

36. Underlines the role of SMEs as innovative players in the economy and stresses the need to develop this sector inter alia through the implementation of the Small Business Act, facilitate SMEs’ access to financing and operating capital and encourage SMEs to become involved in innovative projects with a view to strengthening their competitiveness and potential for greater employment; stresses that many social and economic benefits are to be gained from cooperation at the local and regional levels between the public authorities, SMEs, business networks, research institutes and clusters, as well as from the effective use of all existing resources, including the financial engineering instruments (Jeremie) as elements of capital reinforcement for SMEs; nevertheless underlines that, regarding loan financing, legal certainty needs to be improved in such a way that financial intermediaries and promotional banks can set up conditions for innovative financial instruments that will remain valid for the whole programming period.

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

25. Takes the view that the time has come for strategic long-term investment in Europe to be substantially increased, with a particular focus on key areas of European infrastructure and cohesion; asks, in this connection, that:
   - the Bank's activities be more transparent to Parliament,
   - the EIB be clearly accountable to Parliament,
   - financial instruments be used in a targeted manner;

26. Encourages the EIB to develop its post-2013 Operational Strategy in line with the Europe 2020 strategy;

27. Believes that the Europe 2020 Strategy takes an interesting and positive approach to financial instruments; in order to reinforce their efficiency, asks the EIB and the Commission to bear in mind the following objectives: simplifying procedures and maximising multiplier factors and the EIB Group's catalytic effect in order to attract public- and private-sector investors;

28. Invites the EIB to continue to give joint initiatives with the Commission a major role in the context of its collaboration with the Commission, particularly as regards cohesion policy; recognises the role that these initiatives have as catalysts for further development, inter alia with regard to the preparation of the next programming period post-2013;

29. Encourages the EIB to state a ranking of priorities in its investment projects, using methodologies like cost-benefit analysis to achieve the highest possible multiplication effect on GDP;

30. Supports high-quality investment stakeholders such as the EIB, particularly in view of its expertise in the use of innovative instruments such as the Structured Finance Facility, the Risk Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) and the European Clean Transport Facility (ECTF);

31. Encourages the extension of the blending of EU grants with EIB loans as a means of increasing the leverage of available resources, provided that the new financial instruments are smart, integrated and flexible;

32. Considers that the extensive experience in creating and using financial instruments during the present programming period should permit both the Commission and the EIB to go beyond the current scope and use of these instruments and to innovate by extending the range of products offered;

37. Believes that there is a clear need for additional support by the EIB in the following areas: SMEs, midcaps and infrastructure and other key growth- and employment-enhancing projects as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy;

38. Urges the EIB to invest in freight transport in the European railway sector as well as in other Trans-European Networks of freight transport with a focus on the Mediterranean, Black Sea and Baltic Sea ports, in order to link them definitively to European markets;

39. Urges the EIB to provide more support for the building of the TEN-T network, with the aim of generating a leverage effect for more investment, from both
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<th>Line</th>
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<td>the public and the private sector; considers that, here too, ‘project bonds’ can act as a complementary investment instrument alongside the budget in the TEN-T fund; urges that future investment be concentrated on cross-border sections of the TEN-T network in order to optimise the European added value generated;</td>
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<td>40. Urges the EIB to invest in the Nabucco gas pipeline and other important TEN-E projects that will allow future EU energy demand to be met, diversifying Europe’s pool of supplier countries, improving the EU’s policy mix and helping to meet the Union’s environmental commitments;</td>
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Leading committee: CONT (ECON, REGI for opinion)

[The European Parliament,]

32. Stresses the added value of undertaking actions in cooperation with the Commission, and of the Bank’s approach of providing additional support and leverage to Structural Fund interventions;

33. Calls for enhancing the combined use of EU grants with the EIB financial instruments, in particular in cohesion regions where the raising of own funds encounters particular difficulties, in order to support cohesion and to hinder further decline in the countries hardest hit by the crisis;

34. Requests that in future the EIB report detail major loans supplementing ERDF grants to regions implementing technologically advanced programmes or programmes related to renewable or clean energy supplies;

40. Calls on the EIB to harmonise its lending to SMEs with Structural Fund allocations in convergence regions and to ensure balanced support between different types of SME;

41. Urges the EIB better to monitor and to make more transparent the nature and final destination of its global loans in support of SMEs; suggests setting up a scoreboard on the multiplication effects of EIB lending operations;

42. Calls on the EIB to develop a more detailed and methodologically harmonised analysis in its annual reports of the implementation of the financial instruments complementing Structural Fund operations; in this context the Bank could explain to Parliament the functioning of the Risk-Sharing Financing Facility which it has established with the Commission; takes the view that of particular relevance is the interplay between this facility, financing under the seventh Framework Programme for Research and the Structural Funds;

43. Notes that according to the EIB’s Annual Report the evaluation phase of the JEREMIE (Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises) initiative was completed in 2008; regrets that the report does not include this evaluation;

44. Requests the EIB to add details in its next annual report about the first achievements of two policies from 2009: the JASMINE (Joint Action to Support Microfinance Institutions in Europe) initiative and the implementation of the Mezzanine Facility for Growth;
45. Asks the EIB to make every effort to simplify the complicated and bureaucratic regulations found in certain projects, wherever they occur, in order to make the financing on projects more rapid and efficient, with special regard to the global crisis.

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Rule</th>
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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>O-000010/2011</td>
<td>QQ COM</td>
<td>115 Bendt Bendtsen, Othmar Karas, on behalf of the PPE Group, Edit Herczog, on behalf of the S&amp;D Group, Jürgen Creutzmann, on behalf of the ALDE Group, Reinhard Bütikofer, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group, Derk Jan Eppink, on behalf of the ECR Group</td>
<td>Practical aspects regarding the revision of EU instruments to support SME finance in the next programming period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-9368/2010</td>
<td>QQ COM</td>
<td>117 Kay Swinburne (ECR)</td>
<td>The European Investment Bank's use of financing instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-011110/2010</td>
<td>QQ COM</td>
<td>117 Ole Christensen (S&amp;D)</td>
<td>Management of European Regional Development Fund funding</td>
</tr>
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Special report 20/2016 of 06 September 2016

Strengthening administrative capacity in Montenegro: progress but better results needed in many key areas

Neighbourhood policies and Enlargement  |  Foreign Affairs

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<td>Report No / Date / Title</td>
<td>Special report 20/2016 of 6 September 2016</td>
<td>Strengthening administrative capacity in Montenegro: progress but better results needed in many key areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Did EU pre-accession assistance during 2007-2013 contribute effectively to strengthening administrative capacity in Montenegro?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1. Did the audited projects address the need to strengthen administrative capacity appropriately?</td>
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<td>1.2. Did the audited projects achieve results in terms of strengthening administrative capacity?</td>
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<td>1.3. Did the Commission use non-financial assistance effectively to improve administrative capacity?</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
<td>1. The audited projects addressed administrative capacity needs and in most cases were well coordinated with other Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) projects and donor interventions: projects addressed capacity-building needs; coordination between projects and with other interventions was mostly good;</td>
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<td>1.2. Inappropriate use of outputs reduced the effectiveness of some of the audited projects: projects generally delivered outputs but they were not always used by the beneficiaries or followed up by the Montenegrin authorities; there was insufficient information to show progress over time in strengthening administrative capacity;</td>
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<td>1.3. The Commission used its non-financial means to support the reform process well, but major issues remain unresolved: Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) mechanisms for political dialogue operate well; there was lack of clarity regarding the use of tools to encourage reform provided by the accession negotiation process; the potential for using decentralised management to strengthen administrative capacity has not yet been fully exploited.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
<td>1. Better coordinate actions strengthening capacity:</td>
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<td>The Commission should ensure that capacity-building actions funded at both national and regional levels address priority needs, take full account of other completed, ongoing and planned support and are appropriately communicated to potential participants. Under IPA II, the Commission should closely monitor the relevance of capacity-building actions and improve coordination between national and regional actions;</td>
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<td>2. Improve commitment to use outputs and follow-up results:</td>
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<td>When programming EU pre-accession assistance under IPA II, the Commission should require the national authorities to actively commit to using the outputs of IPA projects and following up results so that they are sustainable. During implementation of projects funded by IPA II the Commission should monitor</td>
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closely the action being taken by the national authorities to meet commitments made in this respect to allow time to apply corrective measures before projects are closed. The Commission should take account of whether commitments have been met when deciding in which areas to invest future pre-accession assistance;

3. Develop better tools for measuring progress towards improved administrative capacity:
   The Commission should:
   a) build on the pilot presentation of data in the 2015 Progress Report for the 2016 report, and on the baseline measurement review of Public Administration Reform (PAR) carried out in 2015;
   b) examine whether these initiatives could be extended to other relevant areas such as transport and environment;

4. Make full use of tools to support progress on reform:
   The Commission should encourage results on reform by:
   a) making full use of all of the tools at its disposal as part of the accession negotiating process to support progress on reform;
   b) being transparent about how the 'overall balance clause' is referred to or used;

5. Use decentralised management to spread good administrative practice:
   Once examples of good practice have been established in the operating structures set up for decentralised management, the Commission should encourage the national authorities to emulate these practices in other parts of the administration, for example to encourage the delegation of decision-making to the appropriate level and to strengthen internal control systems.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

CONT Working Document of 7/12/2016 on ECA Special Report 20/2016 (2015 Discharge): Strengthening capacity in Montenegro: progress but better results needed in many key areas (PE594.002v02-00)
Rapporteur: Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Welcomes the Court's report, endorses its recommendations and encourages the Commission to take these recommendations into account when working on strengthening the administrative capacity in Montenegro;
2. Welcomes that the EU pre-accession assistance has helped to strengthen administrative capacity; notes however that the progress in several key areas has been only very slow;
3. Regrets that although projects generally delivered the expected outputs, the results were not always sustainable, for which the political will of national authorities and external factors are partly responsible; calls on the Commission to build on the achievements of successful projects, which are sustainable, have a quantifiable added value and were implemented and used in accordance with the regulations; calls on the Commission to improve strategic planning and to secure sustainability and viability of the projects by setting it as a clear requirement;
4. Regrets the low commitment of the national authorities that negatively influences the progress of administrative capacity strengthening; calls on the national authorities to follow-up on the project outputs delivered in order to increase the effectiveness; stresses that strong political will is needed to effectively address the de-politicisation and taming of the state administration;
5. Welcomes that the projects were coordinated well with other Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) projects or donor interventions in most cases; nevertheless stresses that there were also cases of weaker coordination leading up to overlapping of some of the efforts; invites the Commission to better align its activities aimed at Montenegro with other projects involving multiple beneficiaries;
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Regrets that there was insufficient information that could show progress over time in strengthening administrative capacity in the Commission’s reports; notes that the reports did not always assess the same parts of the public administration and the criteria for assessing the administrative capacity were not always clear, which made the comparison over time more difficult;</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Welcomes however the new reporting methodology for an annual assessment in the 2015 progress reports that shown better harmonisation of assessment scales and better comparability; invites the Commission to build upon this reporting system also in the future;</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Notes that the Commission has used the non-financial means of support to the reform process in a form of a political dialogue well, however stresses that major issues remain unresolved;</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Regrets that despite certain results achieved in the past year in terms of implementing anti-corruption legislation, the progress in the fight against corruption remains slow; stresses that the entire rule of law system needs to deliver more results with a special focus on strengthening the fight against corruption and organised crime; calls on the Commission to encourage the national authorities to strengthen the capacity in the area of financial investigation and whistle-blower protection;</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Welcomes that The Anti-Corruption Agency started its work in 2016; notes however that corruption remains prevalent in many areas and continues to be a serious problem;</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Notes from ECA that the decentralisation of the project management can deliver valuable capacity building in the operating structures due to detailed ex ante checks; further notes that spreading good practice on project management accumulated in the IPA structures to the rest of the public administration operating in the same area can provide a potentially effective results; calls on the Commission to exploit these option in order to boost the effectiveness of the capacity building in Montenegro; calls on the Commission to encourage the national authorities to consider using good practice for capacity building;</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Notes that Montenegro is considered to be the most advanced country in the region in its accession process; stresses that the EU has played an irreplaceable role in the country; however notes with regret that Montenegro has been recently torn by political instability and polarization, and by an increasingly tense battle for influence between Russia and NATO, whose forces the country will join in 2017; invites the Commission to continue the political dialogue with the national authorities in order to help reaching compromises between government and opposition.</td>
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**Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees**


**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

2. Urges more parliamentary scrutiny over the accession process; welcomes the adoption of the 2015 action plan for strengthening parliamentary oversight, but emphasises the need to reinforce the capacities of the Montenegrin parliament and to improve its access to accession-related information; welcomes the newly adopted Code of Ethics, and calls for further measures to improve public trust in the Montenegrin parliament;

5. Notes some progress in the government’s 2011-2016 public administration reform, and calls for the timely adoption of a strategy covering the period 2016-2020; encourages further depoliticisation of the public administration; considers it essential to adhere to the principles of merit, depoliticisation, accountability and transparency in public administration and to ensure the citizens’ right to good administration free of corruption; welcomes the amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman; is concerned that the capacity of the Ombudsman’s Office to effectively handle complaints remains limited; stresses the need for a greater number of specialised independent state agencies;

6. Welcomes the good progress on strengthening the legislative framework to enhance the independence, accountability and professionalism of the judiciary, and looks forward to the full implementation of the relevant rules in practice; notes with satisfaction that the backlog of certain types of cases has further
decreased; calls for ensuring the independence of the judiciary and welcomes its increased efficiency; remains concerned about undue influence on judicial independence, especially with regard to the appointment of judges; stresses the need to reinforce the capacity of the Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils, to further improve the efficiency of the Constitutional Court, to strengthen the enforcement of civil and administrative decisions and to implement fully the new recruitment and professional appraisal and promotion systems;

7. Calls for the improvement of legislative and administrative capacity in the field of asylum and migration, and urges the Commission to provide support to this end; commends the government of Montenegro for the steps it has taken to help stateless people on its territory resolve their status; encourages Montenegro to continue its efforts in this field, especially with regard to children, including by further facilitating birth registration and subsequent or re-registration in civil registers;

12. Notes that, despite positive legislative changes, corruption remains a serious concern, particularly in public procurement, health care, education, spatial planning, privatisation and construction; reiterates the need to eliminate corruption at all levels, since it undermines democratic principles and negatively affects social and economic development; calls on the government to make combating corruption one of its priorities by allocating sufficient human and budgetary resources to it; welcomes the establishment of the Special Prosecutor’s Office, whose tasks include combating corruption offences, and urges that it be made fully operational as soon as possible; welcomes the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Agency launched on 1 January 2016; calls for its independence and capacity to conduct administrative investigations to be ensured; recalls the importance of protecting whistle-blowers; calls on the authorities to facilitate and widen access to information about ownership of companies, real estate, and details about public expenditure, in particular in the case of public procurement and privatisation processes;

13. Calls on the government to further strengthen the legislative and institutional framework in the fight against corruption and to ensure the effective protection of whistle-blowers; calls for more active participation and effective cooperation from the government, all sectors of public life and civil society in the prevention of corruption; reiterates the need to reinforce anti-corruption track records in investigations, prosecutions and convictions at all levels, to strengthen the institutional and operational capacity of prosecutors, judges and police, and to systematically use financial investigations and the power to seize and confiscate assets; calls for criminalising illicit enrichment;

14. Notes the bringing of criminal charges by the Montenegrin State Prosecutor’s Office in certain Montenegrin municipalities against several officials in relation to high-level corruption; welcomes this as a positive sign in establishing a track record in rooting out high-level corruption, and encourages Montenegro to continue with this practice; reiterates the need to further increase the track record of investigating and bringing to justice high-level corruption cases; commends the good performance of the Podgorica High Court in delivering convictions for corruption-related offences;

19. Welcomes efforts to improve consultation mechanisms with civil society organisations (CSOs) and to achieve more transparency in policy- and law-making, including by involving them in the process of rule of law reforms and in monitoring the electoral process and the implementation of reforms; appreciates the motivation and efforts of the CSO sector, which has proved to be vocal and effective in many fields; stresses the need to further improve CSOs’ access to accession-related information and to further improve cooperation between local self-governments and CSOs; invites the competent authorities to further develop a sustainable system of public funding for CSOs and to create conditions that are conducive to voluntary work and social entrepreneurship;

33. Commends Montenegro’s proactive participation and constructive role in regional and international cooperation, including in regional reconciliation and in contributing to crisis management operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); highlights Montenegro’s constructive role in the framework of the ‘Berlin Process’ and the Western Balkan Six initiative; congratulates Montenegro on fully aligning itself with the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and encourages the government to continue the current 100 % alignment; welcomes the adoption of the law on the implementation
of international restrictive measures, including in the context of Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and events in Eastern Ukraine; encourages other countries in the region to work together with the EU on foreign policy alignment and to follow Montenegro’s example; calls on the Montenegrin authorities to swiftly implement the ‘soft measures’ agreed at the 2015 Western Balkans Summit in Vienna (e.g. simplifying-aligning border-crossing procedures, railway reforms, information systems) before the next Western Balkans Summit in 2016 in France.

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Leading committee: REGI (AFET, ENVI, PECH for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

2. Welcomes the efforts undertaken by all interested stakeholders in setting up an institutional architecture for the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) within the existing institutional framework; encourages all national, regional and local stakeholders to take full ownership of the implementation of the projects covered by this macro-regional strategy; stresses the importance of strengthening the institutional capacity and efficiency of public administrations and public services and securing, in each participating country, sufficient resources and competent administrative personnel expressly dedicated to implementing the EUSAIR;

3. Stresses the need for a place-based approach as regards the cooperation activities and highlights the added value of the multi-level governance model which needs to address the lack of administrative capacity and can be used to pool resources in the macro-region; insists, in this regard, that there is a need to include the local and regional authorities in the political managing bodies and in the operational, technical and implementing bodies of the strategy while maintaining the Commission’s role in the coordination process; stresses that community-led local development (CLLD) can mobilise and involve local actors in the decision-making process and help strengthen the ownership of projects at citizens’ level.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Charles Tannock on behalf of AFET Committee
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

10. Welcomes the Commission’s stronger focus on public administration reform in the accession process; welcomes the fact that progress is on track in this regard, but notes that further steps can be taken to improve the quality of legislation and local administration; shares concerns over the politicisation of public administration; calls for progress in enhancing the transparency, efficiency and accountability of central and local government administration and for their coordination to be improved, along with coordination among local self-governments, notably in the areas of investment, project planning and implementation; considers it essential to address shortcomings in the fields of recruitment, dismissal and evaluation criteria, the non-implementation of performance appraisals, and weak administrative, oversight and inspection capacities;
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Welcomes the new judicial reform strategy for 2014-2018, noting with satisfaction that the relevant action plan has generally been implemented on time and that the new Supreme State Prosecutor has been elected; welcomes new legal measures to enhance transparency in the election of state prosecutors; notes that the progress registered in the judicial reform area facilitated the opening of four additional chapters in the Intergovernmental Conference of December 2014; encourages further efforts to monitor and further decrease the backlog of cases and the length of court proceedings, and to improve the efficiency of the constitutional court;</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Is concerned that, despite the substantial financial resources channelled from international donors to the authorities, only limited progress has been made in combating corruption, which remains a threat to the proper functioning and stability of democratic institutions, the rule of law and economic development; calls for a more proactive role for the National Commission for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Fight Against Corruption and Organised Crime, as the key anti-corruption coordination unit; underlines the urgent need for more active participation and effective cooperation of the government, all sectors of public life and civil society in preventing corruption, and in strengthening the legislative framework and protecting whistle-blowers;</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Urges the authorities to enhance the capacity of prosecutors, judges, the police and other law enforcement agencies, and to develop a solid track record of investigations, prosecutions and convictions at all levels, including high-level corruption cases; welcomes the adoption of anticorruption laws, particularly on lobbying, general administrative procedure, public procurement and amendments to the laws on the prevention of conflicts of interest; calls for their effective implementation to allow for more cooperation between law enforcement agencies and to enhance the system of checks for conflicts of interest and asset declaration; calls on the Commission to closely monitor the implementation of those laws; considers it important to strengthen institutions to enable them to take a more proactive approach against corruption, and to fully involve the new parliamentary committee for overseeing the work of the Agency for Anti-Corruption, which should receive sufficient resources; stresses that shortcomings with regard to the independence and accountability of the judicial system remain a matter of serious concern and hamper the fight against corruption;</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Welcomes the signing of the Agreement on Strategic and Operational Cooperation between Montenegro and Europol, the progress made in the negotiations on the conclusion of the agreement with Eurojust, and Montenegrin institutions’ achievement of observer status in the relevant European judicial networks; encourages close operational cooperation with relevant European judicial bodies, including on the issue of trafficking in human beings;</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Encourages Montenegro to continue progressing in the field of environment protection and climate change by strengthening administrative capacity, developing sustainable energy policies and promoting an eco-friendly economic model that stimulates investments, in order to ensure alignment with the environmental and climate acquis; recalls the need to draft a national energy strategy which takes into account the many different renewable energy sources, and the need to respect the natural heritage and the areas under protection and international recognition; calls urgently for consultations on transboundary projects.</td>
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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Charles Tannock on behalf of AFET Committee
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

9. Stresses the importance of public administration reform for applying the acquis; considers it essential to strengthen the coordination and monitoring

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mechanism for the implementation of the public administration strategy and to take further measures to create a transparent, professional, effective and merit-based public administration; calls on the authorities to take care, in the recruitment and dismissal of public officials, not to appear to be further politicising the civil service; calls also for the independence and capacities of the Ombudsman’s office to be strengthened;

10. Welcomes the constitutional amendments aimed at strengthening the independence of the judiciary by reducing political influence on the appointment of prosecutors and judicial officials at all levels through more transparent and merit-based procedures, and specifically by electing the Supreme State Prosecutor; takes note, however, of the Ombudsman’s initiative for assessing the constitutionality of these amendments and of the provisions of the law on the Constitutional Court concerning the election of Constitutional Court Judges; calls on the competent authorities to establish a solid track record of disciplinary proceedings and to ensure timely justice, together with the unification of jurisprudence; calls for further legislative and other measures to be taken and implemented in order to diminish the politicisation of the judiciary in practice, including through objective evaluation of judicial performance, clear demonstration of judicial accountability in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission, and the guaranteeing of merit-based promotions; underlines also the need to ensure the independence of misdemeanour courts from the executive branch;

17. Stresses the need to enforce reforms in the fight against corruption and organised crime, and to develop a solid track record of investigations, prosecutions and convictions at all levels; calls for increased cooperation and coordination between law enforcement agencies and the judiciary in combating organised crime and corruption at all levels, and for the performance of the judiciary in high-level cases to be improved; expresses serious concern about the annulment of first-instance verdicts in organised crime cases; insists that impunity for criminals convicted of corruption or organised crime offences is not acceptable; calls on the authorities to ensure that the public authorities and institutions implement all relevant measures and that they are held accountable if they fail to do so;

20. Notes with satisfaction that IPA assistance works well in Montenegro; encourages both the government and the Commission to simplify the administration procedure for IPA funding, with the aim of making it more accessible to smaller and non-centralised civil organisations, trade unions and other beneficiaries;

34. Encourages Montenegro to undertake further efforts in the areas of environment and climate change by strengthening administrative capacity to implement relevant EU policies and legislation in order to ensure alignment with the environment and climate change acquis.

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Leading committee: AFET (INTA, BUDG, EMPL, REGI for opinion)

Summary


Extract from the Summary

**General objective:** the objective of the IPA II should be to support the beneficiaries ... in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required by the beneficiaries ... to comply with Union values and to progressively align to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to Union membership. Through such support, IPA II should contribute to stability, security and prosperity in the beneficiary
Specific objectives: a new series of specific objectives have been added:

- strengthening of democracy and institutions, including an independent and efficient judiciary;
- promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, enhanced respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including LGBT, non-discrimination and respect for cultural diversity;
- regional co-operation and good neighbourly relations;
- promotion of reconciliation, peace building, and confidence building measures;
- border management and implementation of migration policy, including the management of migration flows;
- improvement of social dialogue and strengthening of the capacities of social partners;
- strengthening of education and research;
- preservation and restoration of cultural heritage.

Where appropriate, particular attention should be paid to good governance, the rule of law and the fight against corruption and organised crime in each of the planned actions.

Incentive measures and performance indicators: progress in these areas should be assessed through performance indicators defined in the draft Regulation. It is also specified that assistance should be managed with a strong focus on results and with incentives for those who demonstrate their commitment to reform through efficient implementation of pre-accession assistance and progress towards meeting the membership criteria. A part of the financial allocation should be earmarked for beneficiary countries demonstrating particular progress.

Reporting and review

Article 10 of the Final Act

Delegation of power

The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 11 to amend Annex II to this Regulation. In particular, following the publication of the mid-term review report, and based upon the recommendations contained therein, the Commission shall adopt a delegated act amending Annex II to this Regulation by 31 March 2018.

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EP Resolution of 22/10/2013 on budgetary management of European Union pre-accession funds in the areas of judicial systems and the fight against corruption in the candidate and potential candidate countries, based on 2011/2033(INI) (P7_TA(2013)0434; A7-0318/2013)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary
Parliament considered that potential candidate and candidate countries should continue their efforts to improve their judicial systems and fight against corruption, even when they have become EU Member States. It recalled that the fight against corruption and organised crime is one of the most important priorities for any candidate or potential candidate country wishing to fulfil its European perspective.

Judicial reform and the fight against corruption: Parliament made a series of observations on the projects funded by EU pre-accession assistance in each of the candidate countries and potential candidate countries. It emphasises the Commission’s new approach to address justice reforms and home affairs issues early in the accession process. Members note, however, that on average only 2.87 % of the total EU pre-accession assistance envelope for the period 2007-2013 is devoted to justice and only 0.52 % to the fight against corruption. Parliament also notes that the level of co-financing by domestic authorities differs widely from one country to another… Parliament is of the opinion that co-financed projects, especially in the areas of the judiciary and the fight against corruption, bring a higher degree of ownership from the beneficiaries. It calls therefore on the Commission to increase, under IPA II, the number of projects co-financed by domestic authorities.

Parliament regretted that the level of pre-accession assistance invested in judiciary reform and the fight against corruption does not reflect the priority set by the Commission in this respect. It urged the Commission and the beneficiary countries to allocate a more substantial and adequate level of funding to these two sectors bearing in mind the importance of these issues, the severity of the problems faced in the field. It also regretted that the Commission does not have a tool to provide an execution rate in an automated manner for the EU pre-accession projects and called on the Commission to centralise data on a monthly basis on the execution rate of the projects for which EU pre-accession assistance is allocated.

Members stressed that the effectiveness of pre-accession projects implemented in the areas of the judiciary and the fight against corruption depends primarily on the authorities’ political will. They deplored the fact that in most candidate and potential candidate countries there is a lack of strong political support for putting in place effective reforms.

Implementation of projects: Parliament noted that pre-accession projects have a time span of between one and 3.5 years. Acknowledging that such deadlines are challenging, Members recommended that the Commission take adequate measures within the framework of IPA II programming and projects which would lead to a longer timescale (five to seven years). They also deplored the chronic delays incurred in the implementation and efficiency of certain project… At the same time, Members are concerned about the complexity of pre-accession assistance rules and called on the Commission to find the right balance between flexibility serving project efficiency and the need to avoid irregularities under IPA II. They also suggested:

- preparatory ("pilot") activities in cases of broad projects prior to their full deployment;
- a more comprehensive sectoral approach in the areas of judiciary reform and the fight against corruption
- cooperation and coordination with other donors and international financial institutions.

Performance and sustainability: Parliament recalled that following its audit of pre-accession projects for the period 2001-2005, the European Court of Auditors stated that project sustainability could be improved if: (i) beneficiary involvement was increased; (ii) no projects were launched without a maintenance plan; (iii) the Commission monitored distribution more closely and evaluated the use of EU-funded equipment and infrastructure; and (iv) the delivery of technical assistance was adequately complemented by active encouragement for institutional change. It also underlined the fact that despite improvements, certain projects continue to lack focus.

Members insisted on the need for designing qualitative indicators capable of measuring the long-term impact of the projects. They called on the Commission to continue to issue guidance on the utilisation of performance indicators to be used for programming under IPA II.
ROM: Members acknowledged that the Commission assesses the impact and sustainability of pre-accession programmes through results-oriented monitoring (ROM) reports, but pointed out that the number of ROM reports is uneven across countries, ranging from 31 for Albania to none for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. They urged the Commission to develop a comprehensive monitoring action plan including evaluation tools other than ROM reports, such as sector performance assessment frameworks with SMART indicators, in order to make comprehensive monitoring of project outcomes possible over time.

Transparency: Members called for a database listing all of the projects funded under pre-accession assistance programmes whereby all beneficiaries of EU funding are published on the same website, independently of the administrator of the funds. They noted the Commission’s commitment to address these issues by 2015 through the publication of information on IPA assistance in line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (which established common standards for the electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on resources provided through development cooperation).

Recommendations specific to Montenegro:

[The European Parliament]

61. Welcomes the improvement of regional cooperation in the areas of the police and judicial cooperation, strengthening the legal framework required to ensure the independence of the judiciary and enhancing the efficiency of the judiciary in Montenegro; is concerned about weak donor coordination and the low sustainability ratings of projects;

62. Notes that corruption is a serious concern in Montenegro; recognises the efforts undertaken by Montenegro in the fight against corruption and welcomes, in particular, the strengthening of the Directorate for Anti-Corruption Initiative brought about by the EU funding.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Charles Tannock on behalf of AFET Committee
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

5. Notes with satisfaction that assistance provided by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) works well in Montenegro; encourages both the Montenegrin Government and the Commission to simplify the administration procedure for IPA funding, with the aim of making it more accessible to smaller and non-centralised civil organisations, trade unions and other beneficiaries;

10. Calls for further measures to create a professional, effective, merit-based and impartial public administration which, in practice, should represent a service for citizens; stresses that this should be done in a financially sustainable manner and with adequate verification mechanisms; welcomes the comprehensive reform of the public sector aimed at rationalisation and modernisation, and calls for its implementation;

14. Regrets the fact that corruption remains common; encourages the Government to implement anti-corruption measures and measures in relation to the
conflict of interest, including the new Law on Political Party Financing, in a consistent manner; considers it essential to build up a track record in terms of investigations and convictions, in particular in high-level corruption cases, to further strengthen preventive tools and awareness-raising campaigns and to protect citizens’ reporting on corruption cases; stresses the need to reinforce inter-agency cooperation, enhance related administrative capacities of the supervisory institutions and implement the respective recommendations of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) in order to increase the transparency in the funding of political parties and election campaigns; calls for concrete results to be achieved in the investigation of high-level corruption cases, including a re-assessment of controversial privatisation cases;

29. Calls on the Government to enhance the institutional and administrative capacities of state institutions dealing with key areas of the acquis, and to strengthen interinstitutional cooperation and coordination, especially with a view to speeding up the preparations for decentralised management of the IPA components in preparation for the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund; calls for further improvement in the efforts to establish a professional, effective, merit-based and impartial public administration;

30. Encourages the authorities to take further measures to align national legislation with, and implement, the environment and climate acquis and to strengthen relevant administrative capacities and interinstitutional cooperation.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Charles Tannock on behalf of AFET Committee
Summary

3. Notes with satisfaction that Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) works well in Montenegro; encourages both the Montenegrin Government and the Commission to simplify the administrative procedure for IPA funding, with the aim of making it more accessible to smaller and non-governmental organisations, trade unions and other beneficiaries;

8. Welcomes the legislative action taken to improve the working of the national parliament; recommends, however, that further efforts should be made to make the law-making process more transparent, that public participation in developing new legislation should be enhanced by even closer consultation with civil society, that the parliament’s administrative capacities should be strengthened with a view to improving parliamentary performance both in producing legislation and in the political oversight and democratic scrutiny of the executive, that the instrument of consultative and control hearings should be used more frequently and efficiently, and that parliamentary questions and requests addressed to the government should be followed up systematically; more specifically, recommends that the functions and powers of the relevant committee be increased so that the parliament has adequate and effective oversight of the European integration process;

12. Considers the new public administration reform strategy for 2011-2016 to be a positive step aimed at introducing European standards on recruitment and promotion and measures to increase the efficiency of the State administration; urges the Montenegrin Government to address the existing key poorly performing aspects of the administrative system in decision-making and the organisation of government work, including the system of delegation and deconcentration of power, in order to create a de-politicised and professional civil service acting effectively and impartially; calls on the authorities to give priority to good governance, to contribute to the gradual evolvement of a legal-administrative culture and to tackle overloaded and overstretched
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Notes the progress in the reform of the judiciary, including in reducing the backlog of cases in the courts, in adopting measures to reinforce the independence, accountability, impartiality and efficiency of judges and prosecutors, one of the key priorities, and in the more systematic application by the Judicial and Prosecution Council of the disciplinary proceedings against suspected judges and prosecutors; invites the Montenegrin Parliament to adopt constitutional provisions which would reinforce the legal independence and accountability of the judiciary, enhance judicial independence and the professional autonomy of the Judicial and Prosecution Council; underlines the need to more efficiently monitor corruption and conflict-of-interest rules; calls for the streamlining of the court system to enhance judicial efficiency, given that Montenegro continues to be one of the countries with the highest number per capita of basic courts, magistrates, prosecutors and administrative staff in Europe;</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Encourages the government to implement in a consistent manner anti-corruption legislation as well as laws on the financing of political parties and election campaigns; invites the competent law enforcement agencies to comprehensively pursue anti-corruption efforts and more corruption cases leading to convictions, including high-level corruption cases; calls on the Montenegrin authorities to introduce more precise mechanisms for the sound implementation and monitoring of anti-corruption initiatives and projects as well as to enhance inter-agency cooperation and information exchange, particularly between the police and prosecutors; encourages the Montenegrin Parliament to strengthen its oversight of the anti-corruption authorities; calls on the authorities to shed more light on allegations of corruption, especially concerning cases of privatisation; invites the Commission to assess the impact and results achieved through the allocation of EU funds in the reform of the judiciary and the fight against corruption;</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Underlines the need to intensify the fight against organised crime, in particular with regard to the strengthening of the administrative and investigative capacities of police and prosecution authorities in order to improve the efficiency of these bodies; considers it important to step up efforts on the efficient processing of criminal intelligence and to further extend international and regional cooperation in combating organised crime, above all money laundering and smuggling;</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Invites the Montenegrin government to substantially enhance institutional and administrative capacities, as well as accession-related cooperation and coordination between the relevant State institutions; calls on the authorities, in this respect, to reinforce the administrative capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and strengthen the capacities of ministries dealing with key areas of the acquis; calls on the authorities to tackle the fragmentation of the administrative system and overlapping competences as well as to develop policy-making capacities in line ministries with the aim of improving the quality of legislation and ultimately strengthening the rule of law;</td>
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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Charles Tannock on behalf of AFET Committee

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

5. Notes with satisfaction that IPA assistance works well in Montenegro; encourages both the Montenegrin Government and the Commission to simplify the administration procedure for IPA funding, with the aim of making it more accessible to smaller and non-centralised civil organisations, trade unions and other beneficiaries.
13. Calls on the Commission to include in its next progress report an assessment of the impact and results achieved, through the allocation of EU funds, in the reform of the judiciary and the fight against corruption;

15. Welcomes the improvements in the work of parliament but recommends further efforts to ensure the high quality of adopted legislation and its conformity with the acquis; calls for greater internal allocation of budgetary and human resources as well as more EU assistance to the Montenegrin Parliament, such as twinning with Members States’ parliaments or with the European Parliament, to increase the capacities of the Members of Parliament and the parliamentary secretariat in enabling oversight and scrutiny of government as stated in the Commission’s Opinion;

16. Calls for further reforms of public administration, which still remains under-resourced and overtly politicised, and in particular for a review of the law on civil servants and state employees in order to establish a comprehensive and merit-based employment system, including transparent rules for hiring and laying down procedures for career advancement; underlines, equally, the need to strengthen human resources at the local level of administration and to provide sufficient financing for its functioning, in order to ensure its efficiency and transparency, particularly important in view of the ongoing decentralisation process; draws attention to the need to respect legally binding decisions of the Human Resources Management Authority; underlines the need to improve the legal and institutional framework, so as to strengthen accountability and respect for the rule of law within public administration, in particular in areas such as tax administration, public procurement, urban planning and licensing in local administration and customs; welcomes the opening of the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) in Danilovgrad;

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Gabriele Albertini on behalf of AFET Committee

Summary

Extracts from the Summary

Parliament reaffirms that a firm commitment to full and rigorous compliance with all the criteria established at the Copenhagen European Council of June 1993 by candidate countries as well as by the EU is imperative, including for the EU’s integration capacity;

Turning to the candidate countries the resolution stresses that the rule of law is a key principle of democratic, economic and social development and one of the main conditions for EU accession. It notes that some countries continue to face major challenges, particularly in the fight against corruption and organised crime. Furthermore, Members note that that freedom of expression is one of the fundamental principles of democracy and observe with concern that in some countries it is not yet fully respected. It is a priority for the Western Balkans and Turkey to ensure the freedom of media from political interference and to guarantee the independence of the regulatory bodies.
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E-3030/2010 WQ COM William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD) on EU funding to Montenegro
Special report 22/2016 of 20 September 2016
EU nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia: some progress made since 2011, but critical challenges ahead

Energy

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<td>Special report 22/2016 of 20 September 2016  EU nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia: some progress made since 2011, but critical challenges ahead</td>
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<td>Summary</td>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
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<td>1. Has progress been made in the implementation of the EU’s nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes for Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia since 2011?</td>
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<td>1.1. Have programmes made progress in terms of dismantling the plants, obtaining the necessary licences and putting in place spent fuel and waste management infrastructure?</td>
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<td>1.2. Have programmes made progress in terms of establishing a reliable assessment of costs and securing the necessary funds to complete decommissioning?</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
<td>1.1. Some decommissioning progress made since 2011, but critical challenges ahead: progress was made in non-controlled areas, but decommissioning of reactor buildings is yet to begin and radioactive waste management infrastructure is only partially complete; nearly all the key decommissioning infrastructure projects have experienced delays;</td>
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<td>1.2. Estimated cost of decommissioning will be at least 5.7 billion euro and double this if the cost of final disposal is included: total estimated decommissioning cost has increased by 40% to 5.7 billion euro since 2010; the Member States, and in particular Lithuania, face financial challenges; the Commission’s assessment of financing and decommissioning plans was inadequate; the EU budget finances the vast majority of costs in all three Member States; the total estimated cost would double if the cost of final disposal of high-level waste is included; liabilities for future costs are not properly accounted for in the three Member States.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
<td>1. Ensure progress in decommissioning:</td>
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<td>The three Member States concerned should:</td>
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<td>a) further improve their project management practices in order to have the necessary waste and spent fuel management infrastructure in place when planned;</td>
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b) take steps to build up their own technical capacity, so as to achieve a better balance between in-house and external expertise;
c) find better ways to exchange best practices and technical knowledge, both among themselves and with the wider nuclear decommissioning community in the EU and beyond. The Commission should facilitate this in a cost-effective way.
Target implementation date: By end 2017.

2. Solutions for the final disposal of spent nuclear fuel:
a) The Commission should, together with all relevant EU Member States, explore options for the disposal of spent fuel and high-level waste, including any regional and other EU-based solutions, duly considering safety, security and the cost-effectiveness of the alternatives. The Commission should include a review of this matter in its first report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the radioactive waste directive.
Target implementation date: to start immediately; publication of report by mid 2017 at the latest.
b) The three Member States should, in parallel, progress with their plans for final disposal, in order to establish more complete cost estimates and financing plans for the disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste, as required by the radioactive waste directive.
Target implementation date: by mid 2017.

3. Respecting the polluter pays principle by increasing national financing for 2014-2020 and beyond:
The three Member States should recognise their own role in ensuring that the polluter pays principle is respected, and be prepared to use national funds to cover decommissioning costs, as well as the cost of final disposal, both in the current financing period and thereafter.
Target implementation date: starting with an increase in national co-financing from the 2017 annual work programmes.

4. Increase in national co-financing in the 2014-2020 financing period:
The Commission should seek increases in national co-financing during the 2014-2020 financing period. It should define clearly, for example in a Commission decision, the ‘well-founded exceptional’ conditions under which projects can be fully financed by the EU under the nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes.
Target implementation date: by the end of December 2017.

5. Discontinue dedicated funding programmes for nuclear decommissioning in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia after 2020:
Dedicated funding programmes for nuclear decommissioning in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia should be discontinued after 2020. If a clear need for the use of EU funds beyond 2020 is established, in one or more of these three Member States, any future EU funding proposed by the Commission and agreed by the legislator should include the right incentives to pursue decommissioning, including by being time limited and by being based on appropriate levels of Member State co-financing. One way to do this would be to consider widening access to the European Structural and Investment Funds to allow nuclear decommissioning activities to be covered, fulfilling these conditions.
Target implementation date: by the end of 2018, if necessary.

6. EU funding only for cost of decommissioning:
The Commission should allow EU financing under the nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes to be used to finance only the costs of staff working fully on decommissioning activities.
Target implementation date: from the 2017 annual work programmes and beyond.

7. Improving Commission oversight:
The Commission should complete its assessment of the ex ante conditionalities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target implementation date: by the end of October 2016.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8. Accounting treatment:</strong> The Commission should work together with all relevant Member States so that all future costs associated with nuclear decommissioning and the final disposal of spent fuel are accounted for properly, in a transparent manner, consistent with relevant accounting standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target implementation date: by the end of December 2017.</td>
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**CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur**  
**CONT Working Document of 22/11/2016** on ECA Special Report 22/2016 (Discharge 2015): EU nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia: some progress made since 2011 but critical challenges ahead (PE594.156v01-00)  
Rapporteur: Marian-Jean Marinescu (EPP)  
[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]  
1. Welcomes the Court’s dedicated work on the decommissioning of nuclear power plants as demonstrated in the current and 2011 special report;  
2. Supports the recommendations of the Court, of which the Commission fully accepted the majority;  
3. Recalls that since 2012 the Committee on Budgetary Control took a particular interest in the question of nuclear decommissioning, and therefore organised fact-finding missions to the three nuclear power plants in 2012, 2013 and 2014;  
4. Underlines that nuclear safety is of prime importance, not only for the Member States concerned but for the population in the whole European Union;  
5. Emphasises that, in Lithuania, the removal and safe interim storage of nuclear rods from Unit 2 must be a priority;  
6. Recalls that, in Lithuania, one of the main reasons for delays was that technical and commercial disputes between national authorities and external contractors remained unsolved for years; to avoid such a problem interfering with the decommissioning process dedicated project management teams should be designated; asks the Commission if such project management teams are in place in all three Member States concerned;  
7. Reminds the Commission that the Slovakian Supreme Audit Office had scheduled an audit in JAVYS2 for 2015; asks to be informed about the findings of this audit; in this context, calls on the competent Bulgarian and Lithuanian authorities to audit also the decommissioning processes in Ignalina and Kosloduy;  
8. Is worried about delays in works on facilities for the storage of low and intermediate-level radioactive waste; calls on the Commission to update Parliament’s competent committee on progress made before the 2015 Commission discharge vote in parliament;  
9. Calls on the Commission to inform its competent committee about the efforts to close the financing gap, in particular in Lithuania;  
10. Recalls that the Court estimated the decommissioning costs in the three Member States, including high-level waste and spent nuclear fuel disposal at EUR 11 388 million; considers that the costs of decommissioning should not include the costs for high-level waste and spent fuel disposal, which falls in the responsibility of Member States and should be covered by national funds;  
11. Calls on the Commission to present, together with the three Member States concerned, a report regarding the actual status of the management of the spent fuel and radioactive waste generated by the decommissioning of the three nuclear power plants;  
12. Calls on the Commission to work together with the Member States in identifying geological depositories for high-level nuclear waste, if the waste cannot be recycled;  
13. Insists that dedicated funding programmes for nuclear decommissioning in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia should be discontinued after 2020;  
14. Calls on the Commission to ensure that all future costs associated with nuclear decommissioning and the final disposal of spent fuel are accounted for properly and calculated in accordance with international standards and European Union legislation;  
15. Calls on the Commission to evaluate action plans in the three countries with the view to suggesting common tenders for similar projects, especially for consultancy and the design of waste storage facilities;  
16. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the decommissioning process in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia, including the cost-effective use of EU financial
assistance, during the financial period 2007-2013;
17. Calls on the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to audit the functioning of the Decommissioning Support Funds between 2007 and 2013;
18. Is shocked by the Court’s findings that Commission’s assessment of the respective financing plans and detailed decommissioning plans for the 2014-2020 financing period, i.e. of the second and third ex-ante conditionalities respectively, was inadequate; asks who shouldered the financial responsibility for this failure in the Commission; in this context, wants to be informed about the completed action plan which remedied the discovered weaknesses.

Leading committee: ITRE (JURI for opinion)  
Summary of the Final Act  
Extract from the Summary  
The revised Directive introduces objectives as regards nuclear safety at EU level, further strengthens the independence and role of the national regulatory authorities, increases transparency on issues of nuclear safety and enhances the exchanging of experiences. It introduces EU-wide nuclear safety objectives that aim to limit the consequences of a potential nuclear accident as well as address the safety of the entire lifecycle of nuclear installations (siting, design, construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning of nuclear plants), including on-site emergency preparedness and response. In particular, this objective calls for significant safety enhancements in the design of new reactors for which the state of the art knowledge and technology should be used, taking into account the latest international safety requirements. | **| **| **| **|
Leading committee: ITRE  
Summary of the Final Act  
Extract from the Summary  
CONTENT: in order to obtain an overall picture of the development of investment in energy infrastructure in the Union, the Regulation requires Member States to notify the Commission of data and information on:  
- investment projects in the sectors of oil, natural gas, electricity — including electricity from renewable sources, electricity from coal and lignite, and cogeneration of electricity and useful heat;  
- investment projects related to bio-fuel production and the capture, transport and storage of carbon dioxide produced by those sectors. | | | | |
Member States should also notify to the Commission data and information on investment projects in electricity interconnections and gas interconnections with third countries. The Regulation also applies to investment projects (listed in the Annex) on which construction or decommissioning work has started or on which a final investment decision has been taken.

Reporting and review

Article 10 of the Final Act

Monitoring and reporting

1. On the basis of data and information forwarded and, if appropriate, of any other data sources including data purchased by the Commission, and taking into account relevant analyses such as the multi-annual network development plans for gas and for electricity, the Commission shall forward to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee and shall publish every two years a cross-sector analysis of the structural evolution and perspectives of the Union’s energy system. That analysis shall aim in particular at:

(a) identifying potential future gaps between the demand and supply of energy that are of significance for the Union’s energy policy, including for the functioning of the internal energy market, with an emphasis on potential future deficiencies and flaws in the production and transmission infrastructure;

(b) identifying investment obstacles and promoting best practices to address them; and

(c) increasing transparency for market participants and potential market entrants.

On the basis of this data and information, the Commission may also provide any specific analysis deemed necessary or appropriate.

Article 11 of the Final Act

Review

By 31 December 2016, the Commission shall review the implementation of this Regulation, and present a report on the results of that review to the European Parliament and to the Council. In the review, the Commission shall, inter alia, examine:

(a) the possible extension of the scope of this Regulation to include:

(i) the extraction of gas, oil and coal;

(ii) terminals for compressed natural gas;

(iii) additional types of electricity storage; and

(b) the question as to whether or not thresholds for renewable energy installations should be lowered.

In examining those options, the Commission shall take into account the need to ensure a balance between the increased administrative burden and the benefits of acquiring the additional information.
Summary

Final Act: Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1314/2013

Article 3 of the Final Act

Objectives

3. The Euratom Programme direct actions shall have the following specific objectives:
   (a) improving nuclear safety including: nuclear reactor and fuel safety, waste management, including final geological disposal as well as partitioning and transmutation; decommissioning, and emergency preparedness;

Reporting and review

Article 22 of the Final Act

Evaluation

1. Evaluations shall be carried out in a sufficiently timely manner to feed into the decision-making process.

   By 31 May 2017, and taking into account the ex-post evaluation of the Seventh Euratom Framework Programme established by Decision 2006/970/Euratom and of the Euratom Framework Programme (2012-2013) established by Decision 2012/93/Euratom to be completed by the end of 2015, the Commission shall carry out, with the assistance of independent experts selected on the basis of a transparent process, an interim evaluation of the Euratom Programme on the achievements, at the level of results and progress towards impacts, of the objectives and continued relevance of all the measures, the efficiency and use of resources, the scope for further simplification, and European added value. The evaluation shall also take into account the contribution of the measures to the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, results on the long-term impact of the predecessor measures and the degree of synergy and interaction with other Union funding programmes, including the Structural Funds.
   
   By 31 December 2022, the Commission shall carry out, with the assistance of independent experts selected on the basis of a transparent process, an ex-post evaluation of the Euratom Programme. Such evaluation shall cover the rationale, implementation and achievements, as well as the longer-term impacts and sustainability of the measures, to feed into a decision on a possible renewal, modification or suspension of a subsequent measure.

2. Without prejudice to paragraph 1, direct and indirect actions of the Euratom Programme shall be subject to separate evaluations.

3. The evaluations referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall assess the progress towards the objectives set out in Article 3, taking into account the relevant
performance indicators defined in Annex II.

4. Where appropriate and available, Member States shall provide the Commission with data and information necessary for the monitoring and evaluation of the measures concerned.

5. The Commission shall communicate the conclusions of the evaluations referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, accompanied by its observations, to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee.

*******

EP Resolution of 19/11/2013 on the proposal for a Council regulation on Union support for the nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia, based on 2011/0363(NLE) (P7_TA(2013)0471; A7-0119/2013)
Leading committee: ITRE (BUDG, JURI for opinion)

Final Act: Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1368/2013
Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

Objectives: the general objective of the Kozloduy and Bohunice programmes is to assist the Member States concerned to reach the decommissioning end state in Units 1-4 of Kozloduy and Units 1 and 2 at Bohunice V1, in accordance with the respective decommissioning plans, whilst ensuring that the highest safety standards are applied. In order to achieve these objectives, precise indicators have been defined for the Kozloduy and Bohunice programmes to apply and verify. The Kozloduy and Bohunice programmes may also include measures to maintain a high level of safety at the units under decommissioning, including support with respect to the nuclear power plants’ personnel.

Ex ante conditionalities: Bulgaria and Slovakia should provide the Commission with the necessary information on the fulfilment of the ex ante conditionalities at the latest by the time of the budgetary commitment in 2014. The Commission should assess the information furnished by ensuring that the critical problems of management and technique have been addressed or that measures have been taken to resolve them. If the Commission is of reasoned opinion that an infringement under non-compliance with the conditionalities set out or if the conditionalities are not fulfilled satisfactorily, the Commission may take a decision on suspension of all or part of the Union financial assistance.

Annual work programmes and forms of implementation: at the beginning of each year from 2014-2020, the Commission shall adopt a joint annual work programme for the Kozloduy and Bohunice programmes specifying, in respect of each programme, the objectives, expected results, related performance indicators and timeline for the use of funds under each annual financial commitments. At the end of each year from 2014-2020, the Commission should establish a progress report on the implementation of the work carried out in the previous years. That progress report would be a basis for the adoption of the next joint annual work programme.

Measures for the protection of the financial interests of the Union are also provided for.

Reporting and review
### Article 9 of the Final Act

**Mid-term evaluation**

1. By 31 December 2017, a mid-term evaluation report shall be established by the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States, on the achievement of the objectives of all the measures related to the Kozloduy and Bohunice programmes, at the level of results and impacts, the efficiency of the use of resources and its Union added value, with a view to adopting a decision amending or suspending those measures. The evaluation shall also address the scope for modification of the specific objectives and detailed implementation procedures described in Article 2(2) and Article 7 respectively.

2. The mid-term evaluation shall take account of progress against performance indicators as referred to in Article 2(2).

3. The Commission shall communicate the conclusions of the evaluation referred to in paragraph 1 to the European Parliament and to the Council.

### Article 10 of the Final Act

**Final evaluation**

1. The Commission shall conduct, in close cooperation with the Member States, an ex-post evaluation on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Kozloduy and Bohunice programmes, as well as the effectiveness of financed measures in terms of impacts, use of resources and added value for the Union.

2. The final evaluation shall take account of progress against performance indicators as referred to in Article 2(2).

3. The Commission shall communicate the conclusions of the evaluation referred to in paragraph 1 to the European Parliament and to the Council.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of its Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2012/2167(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0122; A7-0116/2013)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

262. Is concerned about the delay in dismantling the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant (INPP) in Lithuania, due to conflicts between the authorities and the contractors; welcomes and supports the fact that the Commission and the international donor community decided to suspend financial support for the project, in line with the recommendations of Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control, until the conflict has been solved;

263. Is deeply concerned by the current deficiency in viable knowledge on the amounts necessary to complete the whole decommissioning process;
acknowledges that considerable amounts are still needed in this process and deplores the fact that Member States have failed to set up the necessary mechanisms to ensure this additional funding; reiterates and stresses that the final responsibility for the safe closure of nuclear power plants lies with the Member State in which the power plant is situated; notes that failure to comply with this obligation puts Union citizens at risk;

264. Notes that the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) commissioned expert reports from Swedish experts (SKB), among others, which confirmed that GNS fuel elements containers are safe; notes with concern that this documentation for the fuel element containers, which has long been available, was not forwarded to the Lithuanian Approval Authority; notes that as long as the fuel elements are not stored in the containers, the Ignalina power station must be administered as if it were in operation, which means that the 2 000 or so employees must continue to be financed by the Union; calls on the Commission to accept no excuses from the Lithuanian Government which would cause the authorisation and the project to be further delayed; asks that the Commission set down a rigid timetable and threaten to impose sanctions if it is not adhered to;

265. Calls on Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia to establish decommissioning plans, including detailed financial envelopes, explaining how the closure of the nuclear power plants will be financed.

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Leading committee: ITRE (EMPL, ENVI, JURI for opinion)
Summary


Extract from the Summary

Objective: Parliament wants to specify that the Directive also relates to the protection of the natural environment and that it ensures the provision of necessary public information and participation in relation to spent fuel and radioactive waste management. The directive defines the minimum standards for the Member States, but they must be free to impose stricter standards in relation to the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste.

Scope: The directive applies to all stages of spent fuel management when the spent fuel results from the operation of civilian nuclear reactors or is managed within civilian activities on EU territory, including the spent fuel originating from military defence programmes if and when such spent fuel is permanently transferred to and managed in the context of exclusively civilian activities.

Financial resources: In Parliament’s view, the proposal should guarantee that sufficient financial resources are available when needed to cover all necessary expenses related to decommissioning and the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste, thereby fully respecting the responsibility of radioactive waste producers according to the ‘polluter-pays’ principle and avoiding any recourse to State aid.

The amendments adopted by Members lay down more restrictive obligations on Member States, in accordance with their national procedures: i) an assessment of the costs related to the waste management; ii) reserves to be established to cover future decommissioning or waste management activities and the necessary assets to cover these reserves; iii) appropriate monitoring of the adequacy of the reserves and the management of the assets; iv) the costs of
disposal shall be transparently set out and published by the Member States and reassessed each year; v) a national body capable of providing an expert judgment on the management of funds and decommissioning costs; vi) regular communications from Member States to the Commission.

Reporting and review

Article 14 of the Final Act

Reporting

1. Member States shall submit a report to the Commission on the implementation of this Directive for the first time by 23 August 2015, and every 3 years thereafter, taking advantage of the review and reporting under the Joint Convention.

2. On the basis of the Member States’ reports, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council the following:
   (a) a report on progress made with the implementation of this Directive; and
   (b) an inventory of radioactive waste and spent fuel present in the Community’s territory and the future prospects.

3. Member States shall periodically, and at least every 10 years, arrange for self-assessments of their national framework, competent regulatory authority, national programme and its implementation, and invite international peer review of their national framework, competent regulatory authority and/or national programme with the aim of ensuring that high safety standards are achieved in the safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste. The outcomes of any peer review shall be reported to the Commission and the other Member States, and may be made available to the public where there is no conflict with security and proprietary information.

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Leading committee: CON(T) (ITRE for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Lithuania, Slovakia and Bulgaria have fulfilled their accession treaty commitments to close the respective units in the three nuclear power plants (NPP) in a timely manner: (a) Ignalina NPP Unit 1 was shut down on 31 December 2004 and Unit 2 on 31 December 2009; (b) Bohunice V1 NPP Unit 1 was shut down on 31 December 2006 and Unit 2 on 31 December 2008; (c) Kozloduy NPP Units 1 and 2 were shut down on 31 December 2002 and Units 3 and 4 on 31 December 2006.

Financial assistance: the EU recognised that the early shut-down and subsequent decommissioning of these units in the three NPPs represented a significant financial and economical burden which could not be fully covered by the Member States concerned, and therefore the Treaties of Accession, as well as subsequent Council Regulations for the implementation of these Treaties, provided for financial assistance to the respective Member States. Community
assistance shall support these three Member States in coping with the financial and economical burden caused by early fixed closure dates, and to cover the cost of many important decommissioning activities, invest in energy projects with the aim of reducing energy dependency and help to mitigate the social impact of the decommissioning of the power plants. ... Whilst differences among the NPPs exist, especially as regards fuel storage, in principle the programmes share the same technology. However, that there are considerable differences in the allocated amounts ... The resolution notes that in all three cases the costs for decommissioning of the power plants have exceeded the planned EU assistance, and are also likely to exceed the initial estimates. A high share of the funds was used for energy projects and not for the main aim of the financial assistance, namely NPP decommissioning, and the decommissioning itself is still in its initial stage.

Finalise plans: stressing the importance of the issue of safety, Parliament notes with concern that the detailed decommissioning plans of the three decommissioning programmes in question have not yet been finalised. It urges the relevant national bodies to finalise the plans. The Commission is asked to provide a detailed long-term financial planning of the decommissioning projects and describe the scope of the EU financing required to accomplish these plans. It is also asked to study ways of altering the EU’s methods of financing decommissioning operations in view of the strategies employed in the Member States, and simplifying the rules on management of the funds in such a way that they do not affect the safety and security of the decommissioning operations.

Ensure follow-up and clarify future financing: noting the completed audits and evaluations, Members consider that, taking into account the large amounts of money involved, the novelty regarding the utilisation of funds, the unknown factors which emerged throughout the process, and the numerous subsequent alterations, adaptations and allocation of additional amounts, the number and scope of the audits performed appear to be insufficient. Parliament regrets the lack of annual reports from the Commission to the European Parliament on the use of financial resources earmarked for the decommissioning of nuclear power plants, and it calls on the Commission to report annually to the Parliament on the improvements in use of the funds and on the likelihood that the accumulated funds for the decommissioning of these specific units in the three NPPs will be absorbed over the next three years.

The ECA audit which is still continuing should clarify certain issues such as whether the funds were used for the purposes for which they were intended, whether there are activities where OLAF is involved, and whether proper coordination among the three existing programmes occurred. As regards future activities to be financed from EU allocated amounts within the 2007-2013 period, Members feel further issues need clarifying, including whether there is still a need for further amounts to be allocated for energy projects or whether it is necessary to focus on the decommissioning projects.

Enhance the coordination of programmes: the resolution stresses that enhanced coordination between the three programmes is needed. It calls on the Commission to set up a Coordination Team, which should be in charge of supervising the elaboration of a final plan with a clear timetable and supervising the use of money allocated so far. The Commission is also called upon to explore possible ways of harmonising approaches to the funding of decommissioning in the EU in order to ensure timely accumulation of the necessary financial resources without compromising the safety and security of the decommissioning process.

Ignalina NPP: the resolution notes with concern that key waste infrastructure management projects (spent fuel storage and waste repository project) have experienced serious delays that incurred additional costs with respect to original estimates. It calls on the Commission to report on the results of the reassessment of the project timeline. Furthermore, a large part of the funds was allocated to energy projects, considerable financing is still required for decommissioning and national funds are not sufficient to cover this. Parliament calls for appropriate measures to be taken in this respect, particularly by the Member State.

Bohunice NPP: some decommissioning projects, such as the reconstruction of the area’s physical protection system, the historical waste treatment project and construction of the interim storage of RAW at the Bohunice site, have experienced significant delays in their implementation, and Parliament urges the Commission and the Slovakian side to take steps to prevent the delays and to avoid jeopardising the scheduled progress of decommissioning work.
**Kozloduy NPP:** Members note with concern a rather high share of energy projects in the distribution of allocated public funds, and they call on the Commission to monitor the implementation of the remaining energy projects. They also call for an increase in the proportion of ‘Decommissioning and Waste’ projects in the remaining period of the Kozloduy programme.

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**EP Resolution of 20/05/2010** on the proposal for a Council regulation on Community financial assistance with respect to the decommissioning of Units 1 to 4 of the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant in Bulgaria - ‘Kozloduy Programme’, based on 2009/0172(NLE) (P7_TA(2010)0188; A7-0142/2010)

**Leading committee:** ITRE (BUDG, ENVI for opinion)

**Summary**

Final Act: Council Regulation (Euratom) No 647/2010

**Extract from the Summary**

**Financial margin remaining to finance the decommissioning of the Bulgarian Power Plant:** Members consider that the proposal is compatible with the ceiling for subheading 1a of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2007-2013 but that the margin remaining in subheading 1a for 2011-2013 is very limited. They stress that the funding of new activities must not jeopardise existing programmes and initiatives under subheading 1a. Parliament reiterates its call, therefore, for the presentation of a multiannual strategy for the Kozloduy decommissioning programme, as well as for other political priorities under subheading 1a, in the context of the mid-term review of the current MFF, accompanied by concrete proposals to adjust and revise it before the end of the first semester of 2010 by using all mechanisms available under the Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (IIA of 17 May 2006), particularly those in points 21 to 23.

The main amendments are as follows:

**Purpose:** the text now states that the Community contribution to the Kozloduy Programme shall be granted for the primary purpose of providing financial support for measures connected with the decommissioning of Units 1 to 4 of the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant. It shall also be directed at measures for environmental upgrading in line with the acquis and for modernising production capacity to replace the production capacity of the four reactors at the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant and other measures which stem from the decision to close and decommission those units and which contribute to the necessary restructuring, upgrading of the environment and modernisation and strengthening of the energy production, transmission and distribution sectors in Bulgaria as well as to enhancing security and a higher standard of supply, energy efficiency and use of renewable energy in Bulgaria, while encouraging energy-saving measures and promoting renewable energies. Financial support can also be provided in order to mitigate the socio-economic transition in the affected communities, for example through developing new sustainable jobs and industries.

**Review:** the amount of the appropriations allocated to the Kozloduy Programme shall be reviewed in the course of the period from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2013 to take account of the progress made with the implementation of the programme, and to take account of the long-term impacts on, and consequences for, the environment, economy and security of supply as a result of the early closure of Units 1 to 4 of the Kozloduy Nuclear Power Plant, and to ensure that the programming and allocation of the resources are based on actual payment needs and absorption capacity.
Audit: Members clarify that the funding of audits and any other assessments falls outside the scope of the budget for decommissioning assistance. They state that the audits shall also cover the stage reached in the issuing of permits for decommissioning.

Rights of access: Members specify that the European Parliament as well as the Court of Auditors shall enjoy the same rights, especially of access, as the Commission.

Ex-post evaluation: the Commission shall carry out a mid-term evaluation and an ex-post evaluation, and report on them both to the European Parliament. The ex-post evaluation shall contain a complete and precise budget of the costs for decommissioning a nuclear power plant so as to plan for future decommissioning expenditure. It shall also analyse the economic, social and environmental costs, focusing on the impact of residual free-radiation and consequences for security of supply.

Compliance assessment: a new clause states that the Commission shall perform a compliance assessment, in line with the internationally accepted standards of, at least, the EBRD accounting, audit, internal control and procurement procedures, before the signing of the contribution agreement.

Study on the disposal of all radioactive substances in Bulgaria: in the recitals, Members call for a study to be carried out by the Bulgarian Government relating to the safe final disposal of all radioactive substances involved in the decommissioning. As more progress is needed in Bulgaria with regard to the final disposal of irradiated fuel elements and highly radioactive waste, and as the final disposal of all radioactive substances resulting from the closure of Kozloduy nuclear plant is a highly important process which needs to be carefully planned, Members consider that the Union should assist the Bulgarian Government in the process of identifying the final disposal solutions.

Reporting and review

Article 3 of the Final Act

... 3. The amount of the appropriations allocated to the Kozloduy Programme may be reviewed in the course of the period from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2013 to take account of the progress made with the implementation of the Programme and to ensure that the programming and allocation of the resources are based on actual payment needs and absorption capacity.

Article 7 of the Final Act

The Commission shall ensure the implementation of this Regulation and shall report at regular intervals to the European Parliament and the Council. It shall carry out a review, as provided for in Article 3(3).

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Subject matter and scope: this Regulation establishes a common framework for the notification to the Commission of data and information on investment projects in energy infrastructure in the oil, natural gas, electricity, including electricity from renewable sources, and bio-fuel sectors, and on investment projects related to the capture and storage of carbon dioxide produced by these sectors. It applies to investment projects of the types listed in the Annex on which construction or decommissioning work has started or on which a final investment decision has been taken. Member States may furthermore submit any estimated data or preliminary information on investment projects of the types listed in the Annex on which construction work is scheduled to start within five years and to those which are scheduled to be decommissioned within three years, but for which a final investment decision has not been taken.

With regard to any proposed decommissioning of capacities, the notification shall indicate: (a) the character and the capacity of the infrastructure concerned; and (b) the probable year of decommissioning.

Reporting and review

Article 10 of the Final Act

Monitoring and reporting

1. On the basis of data and information forwarded and, if appropriate, of any other data sources including data purchased by the Commission, and taking into account relevant analyses such as the multi-annual network development plans for gas and for electricity, the Commission shall forward to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee and shall publish every two years a cross-sector analysis of the structural evolution and perspectives of the energy system of the Union. This analysis shall aim in particular at:
   (a) identifying potential future gaps between energy demand and supply that are of significance from an energy policy perspective of the Union;
   (b) identifying investment obstacles and promoting best practices to address them; and
   (c) increasing transparency for market participants and potential market entrants.

On the basis of this data and information, the Commission may also provide any specific analysis deemed necessary or appropriate.

Article 11 of the Final Act

Review
'By 23 July 2015, the Commission shall review the implementation of this Regulation, and present a report on the results of this review to the European Parliament and to the Council.' In the review, the Commission shall, inter alia, examine the possible extension of the scope to include the extraction of gas, oil and coal.

Oral / Written Questions

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<td>E-008205-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Carolina Punset (ALDE), Javier Nart (ALDE) Inclusion of the cost of dismantling nuclear plants and managing their waste in nuclear energy prices</td>
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<td>E-006206-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Benedek Jávor (Verts/ALE) State of play of EU Pilot on spent nuclear fuel of the Paks NPP in Hungary</td>
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<td>E-005571-16 WQ COM Rule 130 Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE), Benedek Jávor (Verts/ALE) Possible meeting of Commissioner Oettinger with Victor Orban regarding the Paks II Nuclear Power Plant</td>
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<td>E-004958-16 WQ COM Rule 130 José Inácio Faria (ALDE) Implementation of corrective actions related to stress tests at the Almaraz nuclear power plant and cross-border cooperation in the event of a nuclear emergency</td>
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nuclear safety

European electricity market

their reprocessing in Russia: the issue of compliance with European law

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**Special report 23/2016 of 23 September 2016**

**Maritime transport in the EU: in troubled waters — much ineffective and unsustainable investment**

Transport | Regional Development | Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) | European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) | Cohesion Fund (CF) | Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

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<td>Special report 23/2016 of 23 September 2016</td>
<td><strong>Maritime transport in the EU: in troubled waters — much ineffective and unsustainable investment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Questions asked:</strong></td>
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<td>1. Did the Member States and the Commission put in place coherent strategies for developing port services for maritime freight transport, develop robust capacity planning and identify the EU and national public funding required for port infrastructures?</td>
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<td>2. Were EU-funded port infrastructure projects (selected between 2000 and 2013) completed within budget and on time, and implemented effectively to improve port services for maritime freight and the transport of goods to the port’s hinterland?</td>
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<td>3. Has the Commission taken the necessary action as regards state aid and customs procedures to enable seaports to compete on a level playing field?</td>
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<td><strong>Observations:</strong></td>
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<td>1. EU and national port strategies: the absence of timely and coordinated implementation of well-planned extra port capacity was a key weakness - all five Member States visited had developed national port development strategies, but robust implementation plans and coordination were an issue; EU strategy on ports were developed over time, but robust information on capacity planning is still lacking;</td>
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<td>2. EU-funded port infrastructures: the Court observed unused or underused infrastructures, delays and cost overruns, and unsustainable investments because of funding of similar infrastructures in neighbouring ports - EU-funded investments resulted in many unused or underused infrastructures; there were delays and cost overruns in a number of projects; there was poor value for money of the EU funding; there was funding of similar infrastructures, which increased the risk of unsustainable investments; the coordination between the Commission and the EIB on the funding of port infrastructure was ineffective;</td>
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<td>3. Creating a level playing field between ports: there is a need to better ensure that common rules such as state aid and customs controls are applied consistently – there is a need to better enforce state aid rules for ports at Member State and Commission level; a more proactive Commission role on state aid to ports is necessary; Commission’s monitoring of Member States’ customs control practices does not cover key information; maritime transport mode is at a disadvantage against road transport (the internal market is still not fully realised in the maritime sector).</td>
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<td><strong>Recommendations:</strong></td>
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<td>1. The Commission should:</td>
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<td>a) put in place a monitoring of core port capacity, taking account of the Member States’ plans for implementing their long-term strategies;</td>
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<td>Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;</td>
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<td>b) revise the current number of 104 ‘core ports’ which are necessary to maintain an adequate level of accessibility for the EU as a whole;</td>
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2. The Commission should:
   a) work with the Member States to reduce administrative burden and delays in project selection and implementation by promoting the principle of a national ‘one-stop-shop’ for the issuing, or refusal, of all permits and authorisations for port infrastructure-related investments. Moreover, a ‘tacit agreement’ principle (e.g. of 2 years) should be implemented as soon as possible;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;
   b) strictly apply the ESIF Common Provisions Regulation and the CEF Regulation on financial corrections due to underperforming investments for the 2014-2020 period; Target implementation date: immediately;
   c) assess the possibility of excluding EU funding for port infrastructure for container transhipment and storage (e.g. construction of quays, docks and storage capacities) during the 2014-2020 period. In addition, superstructures which are not within the public remit should be excluded from EU funding, as these should be considered a commercial environment;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2018;

3. The Commission and the Member States should:
   a) prioritise EU co-financing from both CEF and ESIF spending to core ports to improve their connections to their hinterlands;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016;
   b) fund port infrastructures other than connections to hinterlands only on the condition that there is a clearly established need, where EU added value is demonstrated and where there is a sufficiently large private investment component secured in the overall investment envelope;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016;

4. The Commission should:
   a) ensure that all necessary loan information on proposed EIB loans is shared between the EIB and the Commission to facilitate robust assessments;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;
   b) internally clarify, and consistently implement, the procedure for determining whether critical remarks should lead to a negative opinion on a proposed EIB loan;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2016;

5. The Commission should:
   a) issue state aid guidelines for seaports;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;
   b) ensure consistency in the treatment of user-specific port superstructures;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;
   c) increase the number of desk-based state aid investigations on ports and its follow-up of earlier state aid decisions to ensure that the conditions present at the outset remain;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;

6. Member States should systematically notify the Commission of all public financial support to ports in accordance with EU state aid rules;
Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;

7. The Commission should:
   a) ask Member States to periodically provide specific information on the type and number of specific customs procedures at individual core ports in order to assess whether ports are being treated equally;
   Target implementation date: by the end of 2017;
   b) improve the competitive position of maritime transport compared to other transport modes by further simplifying maritime transport and customs formalities, in particular by moving towards an EU maritime 'single window';
   Target implementation date: by end of 2017.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur

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<td>Rapporteur: Claudia Schmidt (Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats))</td>
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[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Welcomes the Court's report and endorses its recommendations;
2. Welcomes the fact that the maritime transport has been growing in the EU in the last decade despite the considerable differences of utilisation between MS ports;
3. Underlines that MS ports' investment policy is established in accordance with political decisions taken at national level which can diverge from the EU strategy, also defined by those same MS; is of the opinion that it is the Commission's primary role to ensure the coherence of those decisions;
4. Acknowledges that port infrastructure investments are long-term investments; regrets that in most cases the return on investment is however low and slow;
5. Regrets that national port development strategies were mostly developed but that robust implementation plans as well as coordination remain an issue;
6. Is strongly concerned that the Court found a lack of reporting on aggregated capacity data as well as unreliable reporting on available capacity;
7. Regrets that MS do not provide data on the capacity of core ports, which hinders the Commission's capacity monitoring; stresses the importance of an improvement of the situation so the Commission can put forward an EU-wide port development plan;
8. Considers that the coordination between EIB and Commission services' can be improved with better cooperation and more transparent procedures.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

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Summary

Stage reached in procedure (February 2017) - procedure completed, awaiting publication in Official Journal

Extract from the Summary

Subject matter and scope: this Regulation establishes a framework for the provision of port services and common rules on financial transparency and on port service and port infrastructure charges.

This Regulation should give Member States the possibility to decide whether or not to apply this Regulation to maritime ports of the comprehensive network.
located in the outermost regions. Parliament noted that the Regulation should:

- in no way prejudice the rules in Member States governing the system of property ownership applicable to maritime ports, and should allow for different port structures in Member States;
- not impose a specific model for the management of maritime ports and does not affect in any way the competence of Member States to provide, in conformity with Union law, non-economic services of general interest.

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Leading committee: REGI (AFET, ENVI, PECH for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

56. Underlines the importance of connecting maritime transport routes and ports with other parts of Europe and the relevance of interconnections with TEN-T corridors; calls on the participating countries to focus their efforts on implementing projects that are covered by the current TEN-T network and other interventions for its proposed extension to South-Eastern Europe/the Eastern Adriatic coast, and which are able to close the network gap existing in the Adriatic-Ionian area; invites the countries involved therefore to identify priority infrastructure projects of regional and European added value ...

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EP Resolution of 25/10/2016 on improving the connection and accessibility of the transport infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe, based on 2015/2347(INI) (P8_TA-PROV(2016)0408; A8-0282/2016)

Leading committee: TRAN (REGI for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Transversal aspects: Members considered that the use of EU funding must reflect the real investment needs for completing the TEN-T core network by 2030 in the region. Moreover, the EU should not only create new infrastructure but also invest in the modernisation and completion of existing transport infrastructures.

The implementation of the core network should also stimulate the development of the comprehensive network, in particular for connections that have cross-border relevance.

... The resolution also stressed the need to:

- coordinate project planning by and among Member States, taking into account as far as possible national master transport plans and coordination with candidate countries, while conducting realistic assessments of transport needs, in line with the EU White Paper on transport and including cost-benefit analysis and stakeholder consultation;
- improve coordination among European and national authorities, especially with regard to the realisation of the core part of the TEN-T network while
taking account of the specific challenges in the Member States;

- make better use of existing policies and instruments for regional cooperation, such as European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), Interreg and especially European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), to enhance cross-border transport between regions and remove bottlenecks;
- develop transport hubs to be a key element for interlinking long-distance, regional and urban transport, thus promoting efficiency, intermodality and regional business development;
- ensure synergies and mutual complementarity of funding under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI), the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and instruments of the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) when implementing transport infrastructure projects in the central and eastern EU;
- use the means of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) in a timely manner to advance commercially viable market-based projects;
- use the ESI Funds to increase the administrative capacity of the intermediate bodies and beneficiaries;
- pay attentions to east-west and north-south transport corridors within the European TEN-T network;
- ensure the integration of the Western Balkans accession countries into the TEN-T network and the cooperation on transport links with Ukraine, Moldova and other neighbouring countries.

Maritime ports and airports: Parliament underlined the potential for further developing attractive shipping to ports in the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas in the context of the 'Motorways of the Sea' concept. It pointed out that sustainable port development in the Baltic, Adriatic and Black Seas must not be impeded by other undersea infrastructure. Northern Adriatic ports must strengthen their cooperation through regional coordination for the common promotion of traffic flows for maritime trade in the North Adriatic and to fully integrate the Italian ports with those of Slovenia (Koper) and Croatia (Rijeka). The Commission is called upon to include the port of Rijeka in the Baltic-Adriatic corridor in order to enable the full transport connection of northern Adriatic sea ports towards Central Europe and the Baltic Sea.

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[The European Parliament,]

9. Emphasises that the completion of the Trans-European Transport Network remains one of the preconditions for a more sustainable, efficient, seamless multimodal transport system and a more balanced distribution of freight and passengers among transport modes; stresses that the selection of projects eligible for EU funding must focus on the nine core network corridors, the completion of missing links, in particular cross-border sections, the elimination of bottlenecks, the upgrading of existing infrastructure, innovative transport solutions, interoperability, and the development of multimodal terminals and urban nodes; it should also put greater emphasis on European added value, on the development of infrastructure for the connectivity of the peripheral, island, mountainous and outermost regions, and on support for projects connecting the Trans-European Transport Network with infrastructure networks of neighbouring and candidate countries;

10. Considers that EU funding must reflect the real investment needs for completing the TEN-T core network by 2030, and that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) instrument and other means of financing should stimulate investment in transport infrastructure following the criteria set out in the TEN-T guidelines
and CEF, giving priority to sustainable means of transport such as rail, inland waterways and short sea shipping; emphasises that co-funded projects should reflect the need for infrastructure that benefits the Union in terms of competitiveness and economic, social and territorial cohesion, that minimises the impact on the environment, that is resilient to the possible impact of climate change and that guarantees the health and safety of users;

11. Calls for a drastic increase in the funds allocated to the Connecting Europe Facility and for more European competences in the preparation, implementation and financing of transnational transport planning and infrastructure financing;

66. Calls, with regard to maritime transport, for:
   - measures to facilitate the formalities for ships operating between EU ports with a view to establishing a real European Maritime Transport Space without Barriers ('Blue Belt'),
   - better coordination between the maritime and customs authorities at all levels in order to streamline information flows and limit unnecessary administrative burdens and customs formalities,
   - measures to develop the potential of motorways of the sea as part of the Trans-European Transport Network,
   - additional measures to maintain and further develop attractive, safe and sustainable quality shipping and to ensure open maritime markets and access to cargoes without restrictions,
   - measures to support and coordinate the adaptation of port gateways and logistic systems for larger ships and promote better port connections, in particular with rail and inland waterways; facilitation of port investments through the mobilisation of various sources of EU funding so as to increase the capacity of EU ports, upgrade the existing infrastructure, develop multimodal terminals and promote the creation of smart ports using intelligent transport systems, and of smart port cities; measures to improve seaport infrastructure, in particular in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, in order to shift freight from road to sea in those areas,
   - an assurance that the maritime ports of the core network will be connected with the railway and road and, where possible, inland waterway transport infrastructure of the Trans-European Transport Network by 2030, except where physical constraints prevent such connection,
   - more clarity and coherence on the application of state aid rules to ports in order to create a pragmatic, predictable and stable environment which enables long-term port investment strategies, reduces administrative burdens and minimises procedural time frames,
   - advancing with the Commission proposal for a regulation establishing a framework on market access to port services and financial transparency of ports, in order to modernise and improve the quality and efficiency of port services, strengthen competition and create framework conditions to attract investment in ports,
   - setting a global binding target in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to reach the objective of the White Paper for an at least 40 % reduction in CO2 emissions from maritime bunker fuels by 2050, to be supported by an EU intermediate target for 2030; enhancement of the negotiations within the IMO on the development of a global market-based mechanism addressing international maritime emissions, such as an emissions pricing mechanism; in the event that an international agreement on a global monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) system for greenhouse gas emissions or on global measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from maritime transport is reached, the Commission to review Regulation (EU) 2015/757 and, if appropriate, to propose amendments to this regulation in order to ensure alignment with the international agreement,
   - consideration of the extension of the sulphur limits for marine fuel applicable to SOx Emission Control Areas (SECA), and of the relevant IMO rules, to the entire European maritime area,
   - promotion of emission abatement technologies and energy efficiency measures through financial incentives and targeted support measures, with particular focus on the use of alternative fuels, as well as promotion of slow-steaming measures, which are reported to have great potential for reducing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions,
   - actions supporting the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure in sea and inland ports, including the provision of LNG bunkering facilities and shore-side electricity,
– a legislative proposal to modernise passenger ship safety legislation; better implementation and, if appropriate, review of the Third Maritime Safety Package to strengthen the prevention of accidents at sea and the management of their consequences,

– a legislative proposal seeking to clarify the liability and compensation regime in view of the growing phenomenon of containers being lost at sea, based on a system enabling identification of the owners of such containers.

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Leading committees: TRAN, ITRE (BUDG, JURI, REGI for opinion)


**Summary** of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: this Regulation establishes the **Connecting Europe Facility** ("CEF"), which determines the conditions, methods and procedures for providing Union financial assistance to trans-European networks. The aim is to support projects of common interest in the sectors of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures and to exploit potential synergies between those sectors. The aim of the creation of the CEF is to **accelerate** investment in the field of trans-European networks and to **leverage funding** from both the public and the private sectors, while increasing legal certainty and respecting the principle of technological neutrality.

**Transport sector**: the CEF shall support projects of common interest, as identified in Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, that pursue the following objectives:

- removing bottlenecks, enhancing rail interoperability, bridging missing links and, in particular, improving cross-border sections;
- ensuring sustainable and efficient transport systems in the long run, with a view to preparing for expected future transport flows, as well as enabling all modes of transport to be decarbonised through transition to innovative low-carbon and energy-efficient transport technologies, while optimising safety;
- optimising the integration and interconnection of transport modes and enhancing the interoperability of transport services, while ensuring the accessibility of transport infrastructures.

Horizontal priorities concern particularly innovative management and services in the following sectors: (i) Single European Sky – SESAR system; (ii) telematic applications systems for road, rail, inland waterways and vessels (ITS, ERTMS, RIS and VTMIS); (iii) motorways of the sea.

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Leading committee: TRAN (REGI, PECH for opinion) **Summary**

Extract from the Summary
The adopted resolution is **Parliament’s roadmap for the further advancement of blue growth**. It seeks to revitalise the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP).

**General framework:** Parliament welcomes the Commission’s communication on Blue Growth which gives a clear indication of the potential of the maritime economy to create smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and **generates employment opportunities**. In addition, the coastal and maritime policy should be included in the general framework of the 2014-2020 programming period, also with a view to achieving the objectives set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. Members reiterate its support for the IMP and stresses that the promotion of this policy remains the primary means for enhancing blue growth. They consider that the Blue Growth Strategy, as part of the Integrated Maritime Policy, will encourage the development of synergies and coordinated policies, thus generating **European added value**.

Parliament considers that, in order to boost the competitiveness of the Union’s maritime economic sectors in the global market, local, regional, national and European authorities must create the necessary conditions for sustainable growth, namely by establishing: maritime spatial planning systems, upgrading infrastructure, creating access to professional skills, securing funding (such as new rules for venture capital). It stresses the importance of sharing information and best practices between the different levels of public authorities through the creation of a **specific EU platform**.

On **funding**, the resolution calls on the Member States to channel available financial instruments and European funding towards blue economy projects. It stresses the importance of taking into account the specific needs of the bailed-out Member States that are facing increased difficulty in undertaking high-cost projects, as well as those of the outermost and island regions, which present structural constraints due to their remoteness and natural characteristics.

**Maritime Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Management:** Parliament welcomes the Commission’s legislative proposal for Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) as measures necessary for managing the increasing number of maritime and coastal activities and protecting the marine environment. It also notes that **MSP is expected to bring business costs down and improve the investment climate**, while **ICM will facilitate the coordination of activities** in the coastal zone and will bring about an overall improvement in the governance of this zone. A tailored approach is needed, so as to leave the Member States scope, when implementing EU maritime and coastal planning guidelines, for taking account of local specificities and needs in liaison with local authorities. The resolution states that the **land-sea interface needs to be strengthened** in the context of spatial planning in order to safeguard continuity of human activities and of the supply chain and ensure that coastal areas are properly connected with their hinterland. This could help avoid the phenomenon of coasts being treated as borders.

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Leading committee: REGI (TRAN for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

24. Underlines the strategic importance of maritime transport along the Atlantic seaboard and the links between the outermost regions and mainland areas; calls on the Commission to propose measures to simplify the administrative formalities in ports, without losing the ability to control and verify the correctness of operations and cargoes;

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Leading committee: TRAN (ITRE, REGI, ENVI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

6. Stresses that the aim should be to complete the European internal transport market by further opening-up transport networks and markets, taking into account economic, employment, environmental, social and territorial aspects, and calls on the Commission to ensure that proposals on the opening-up of services in all transport markets do not lead to social dumping, poorer-quality services, monopolies or oligopolies; stresses that guidelines on state aid for seaports are still urgently needed;

30. Calls, with regard to shipping, for:

- a proposal to be put forward by 2013 on the 'Blue Belt', to facilitate the formalities for ships operating between EU ports and to develop the potential of motorways of the sea by establishing a genuine single market for intra-EU maritime transport in accordance with existing environmental and nature conservation legislation,
- initiatives to ensure that the reduction of sulphur emissions from ships does not result in a backward modal shift,
- the introduction of a European policy for short and medium sea shipping, in order to use the spare capacity available on inland waterways and to achieve the EU objectives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector,
- continuing support for the NAIADES programme, in accordance with existing environmental and nature conservation legislation, with a follow-up programme to ensure the continuation of the current NAIADES programme as from 2014,
- a proposal on a 20% increase in the number of multi-modal connections (platforms) for inland waterways, inland ports and rail transport by 2020, as compared with 2010 figures, and corresponding financial support, as well as the extension beyond 2013 of the Marco Polo programme, in order to make efficient use of the potential of shipping,
- under the next multiannual financial framework for the period 2014-2020, the allocation of at least 15% of TEN-T funding to projects that improve sustainable and multimodal connections between seaports, inland ports and multimodal platforms, with an emphasis on waterborne transport projects,
- in view of the international nature of maritime transport, the harmonisation of training in the shipping sector in accordance with an international standard by 2012, and, in particular, the rapid adoption of the Commission’s proposal amending Directive 2008/106/EC on the minimum level of training of seafarers in order to incorporate into EU law the 2010 amendments to the Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, the submission of a proposal on the mutual recognition of framework conditions on training for port workers before the end of 2013, and the drafting of a strategy for recruiting junior staff to maritime professions.

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Leading committee: TRAN (REGI, PECH for opinion)

Summary
37. Reiterates the position and requests expressed in its resolution on strategic goals and recommendations for the EU’s maritime transport policy until 2018;

38. Asks the Commission, in view of the upcoming White Paper on the Future of Transport, to take into account the critical role of maritime freight transport in trade today, to promote the development of secondary and less congested ports and to adequately address the question of maritime transport security measures in the EU and abroad by investing in enhancing multilayered risk management systems for targeting and inspecting dangerous cargo.

39. Stresses the importance of a maritime space without barriers and calls on the Commission and Member States to:
   - evaluate and preserve small ports,
   - expand the short sea shipping network in order to minimise the land transport distances,
   - support research and innovation on cargo modes, cargo handling and logistic solutions with the aim of finding solutions that reduce time in transport and in handling costs,
   - support port infrastructure development;

40. Asks the Commission to integrate the European Maritime Policy and the inland waterways policies, in order to maximise the potential of the waterway transport and to create efficient and diversified ways of transport;

48. Underlines the need to speed up the modernisation and expansion of port infrastructure capacities in anticipation of the expected rise in the volume of goods transported by sea; points out that this will require huge investments, which will have to comply with transparent and fair financing rules in order to ensure fair competition among European ports; calls on the Commission to ensure that the regulatory framework is coherent in this regard;

49. Calls on the Commission to consider its communication on the EU’s maritime transport policy until 2018 and this resolution as the basis for the forthcoming review of the Transport White Paper;

50. Calls for a policy that promotes connections between ports and inland areas (dry ports and logistics platforms) in regions suffering from congestion, this policy to be incorporated into the TEN-T review;

54. Calls on the Commission to take into account during the current TEN-T review the recommendations for the EU’s maritime transport policy until 2018, notably those concerning efficient integration of the ‘motorways of the sea’ and inland waterway transport, as well as the network of ports of European
interest as integrating nodes;

55. Calls on the Commission to draft a comparable strategy for European inland waterway transport and to coordinate it with the present strategy, in order to promote the development of an optimised transport chain linking maritime freight transport and goods transport on inland waterways;

56. Calls on the Commission to submit without delay its promised roadmap, providing essential details to supplement its communication.

Oral / Written Questions

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### Special report 25/2016 of 25 October 2016

**The Land Parcel Identification System: a useful tool to determine the eligibility of agricultural land – but its management could be further improved**

Agriculture and Rural Development | Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

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### Summary

#### Questions asked:

1. Is the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) well managed?

#### Observations:

1. Despite good achievements in the implementation of the Land Parcel Identification Systems, room for improvement remains: ortho-imagery was mostly up-to-date; photo-interpretation was not always reliable or conclusive; pro-rata was not always applied reliably; semi-automated detection tools were being tested, but were not yet operational; information on whether the land is actually at the farmer's disposal was included in some LPISs; there was insufficient information for fully assessing the cost-effectiveness of implementing the LPIS;

2. The Land Parcel Identification System was being upgraded to meet the requirements of the CAP reform: the adaptation of LPISs by Member States for greening was progressing but was not yet complete; simplification is ongoing but remains a challenge;

3. The Commission’s LPIS monitoring improved but did not focus enough on LPIS performance: the Commission’s LPIS-related guidance improved compared to the previous CAP period; action plans and financial corrections addressed LPIS shortcomings; the reliability of the LPIS quality assessment results was undermined by the weaknesses in its methodology and application; the quality assessment (QA) results were not sufficiently used to improve the quality of the data in LPIS.

#### Recommendations:

1. Improving processes to increase LPIS data reliability:
   - Based on a quantified cost-benefit analysis and an assessment of risks, the Member States should, in the current CAP period, strengthen their efforts to increase LPIS data reliability based on timely and thoroughly conducted updates of the system. Given the complexity of pro-rata assessment, the Member States using this option should, in the current CAP period, make further efforts to develop a pro-rata catalogue with clear description and assessment criteria and to use complementary technical tools in order to increase the objectivity of ortho-imagery analysis and ensure reproducibility. Member States should also consider the possibility of recording data on ownership and lease rights in their LPIS whenever feasible and cost-effective;

2. Measuring the cost-effectiveness of implementing the LPIS:
With the support of the Commission, the Member States should, in the current CAP period, develop and set up a framework for assessing the cost of running and updating of their LPISs. This should enable the Member States to measure the performance of their LPISs and the cost-effectiveness of system improvements;

3. Registering permanent environmental features more reliably:
   Member States should ensure that, using their LPISs, they reliably identify and register, and then effectively monitor, ecological focus areas, permanent grassland and new categories of land. They should also assess the cost versus benefits of including in their LPISs all landscape elements protected under cross-compliance or agri-environmental schemes in order to further enhance the monitoring and protection of such elements beneficial for the environment and for biodiversity;

4. Streamlining some LPIS-related rules in the current legal framework:
   The Commission should re-examine the current legal framework in order to simplify and streamline the LPIS-related rules for the next CAP period, e.g. by re-considering the need for the 2 % stability threshold and the 100-tree rule;

5. Improving the representativeness of the Quality Assessment (QA) samples:
   The Commission should, before the start of the QA exercise 2017, carry out a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the representativeness of QA samples could be improved so that a better coverage of the population of parcels in the LPIS can be achieved;

6. Better monitoring of QA results:
   Starting in 2016, the Commission should improve the monitoring of QA results by analysing any inconsistencies in QA reporting, following them up, providing feedback to the Member States, and ensuring that remedial action plans are prepared and executed when needed. The Commission should also carry out a detailed annual trend analysis for each Member State and reference parcel type so that potential problems can be identified in good time.

CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur:

Rapporteur: Claudia Schmidt (EPP)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. Based on a quantified cost-benefit analysis and an assessment of risks, the Member States, in the current CAP period, strengthen their efforts to increase LPIS data reliability based on timely and thoroughly conducted updates of the system. Given the complexity of pro-rata assessment, the Member States using this option should, in the current CAP period, make further efforts to develop a pro-rata catalogue with clear description and assessment criteria and to use complementary technical tools in order to increase the objectivity of ortho-imagery analysis and ensure reproducibility. Member States should also consider the possibility of recording data on ownership and lease rights in their LPIS whenever feasible and cost-effective.

2. With the support of the Commission, the Member States, in the current CAP period, develop and set up a framework for assessing the cost of running and updating of their LPISs. This should enable the Member States to measure the performance of their LPISs and the cost-effectiveness of system improvements.

3. Member States ensure that, using their LPISs, they reliably identify and register, and then effectively monitor, ecological focus areas, permanent grassland and new categories of land. They should also assess the cost versus benefits of including in their LPISs all landscape elements protected under cross-compliance or agri-environmental schemes in order to further enhance the monitoring and protection of such elements beneficial for the environment and
for biodiversity.

4. The Commission re-examines the current legal framework in order to simplify and streamline the LPIS-related rules for the next CAP period, e.g. by reconsidering the need for the 2% stability threshold and the 100-tree rule.

5. The Commission, before the start of the quality assessment exercise 2017, carries out a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the representativeness of quality assessment samples could be improved so that a better coverage of the population of parcels in the LPIS can be achieved.

6. Starting in 2016, the Commission improves the monitoring of quality assessment results by analysing any inconsistencies in quality assessment reporting, following them up, providing feedback to the Member States, and ensuring that remedial action plans are prepared and executed when needed. The Commission should also carry out a detailed annual trend analysis for each Member State and reference parcel type so that potential problems can be identified in good time.

Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees

**EP Resolution of 28/04/2016** with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2015/2154(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0147; A8-0140/2016)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**

Articles 42, 287, 290, 291, 302, 304, 306, 330, 543, 544, 545

The Parliament expressed its regret that weaknesses in excluding ineligible land from the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) still persist. It stressed that the problem of efficient allocation consists also in a limited reliability and the LPIS database which is not always up to date. The Parliament noted with satisfaction that the weaknesses in the LPIS had been addressed in all the audited Member States but deplored the fact that some important weaknesses still persist in some Member States. It asked the Commission to use the reinforced instruments it has under the new CAP legislation where there are significant and persistent deficiencies in national systems and stressed that it is crucially important to have a reliable and up-to-date LPIS, which should reduce errors, and that Members States should address this problem. Members stressed that while in 2014 the certification bodies gave a positive assessment on all EAGF-IACS control statistics reported by the Member States, the Commission had to correct upwards the error rates communicated by 17 out of 69 paying agencies. They noted the Court’s view that IACS makes a significant contribution in preventing and reducing the levels of error in the schemes to which it applies. The Parliament welcomed the Commission’s proposed simplification of IACS via preventative preliminary checks which will allow national administrations to identify problems with farmers’ applications, make corrections and should result in a lower rate of penalties. It further noted the Court’s main recommendations for the Commission to require Member State action plans to include remedial action to deal with the most frequent causes of error, to revise its own strategy for rural development conformity audits, and to ensure the correct application of assurance procedure on legality and regularity of transactions which will be mandatory from 2015.

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**EP Resolution of 29/04/2015** with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2014/2075(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0118; A8-0101/2015)
Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**

Articles 87, 88, 89, 113, 114

The Parliament shared the view expressed by the Commission and the Court of Auditors that as a whole the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS)
plays a key role in preventing and reducing errors in claims from farmers and pointed out that its proper functioning should have ensured that agricultural direct payments are free from material error. It deplored that persistent weaknesses in excluding ineligible land from the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) and in the administrative treatment claims from farmers contribute significantly to the material level of error remaining in EAGF payments. It noted the horizontal dimension of the deficiencies detected in the LPIS. It further noted that since 2007, the Court of Auditors examined IACS in 38 paying agencies in all 28 Member States and deeply regrets that only seven of the control systems were assessed as effective, 22 were found to be partially effective and nine control systems were considered as ineffective. The Parliament urged the Director-General of DG AGRI to consider the real added value of delaying year after year reservations justified by deficiencies in the LPIS while those deficiencies have clear horizontal dimension. It asked the Commission and the Member States to take the necessary measures to ensure that the IACS is used to its full potential, and in particular to ensure that the eligibility and size of agricultural parcels are correctly assessed and recorded by the Member States, and that immediate remedial action is taken by the Member States where the IACS is found to be affected by systemic errors.

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EP Resolution of 3/04/2014 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2013/2195(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0287; A7-0242/2014)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Articles 29, 30, 31, 42, 44, 56, 144, 148, 153, 154, 155, 157, 191, 192

The Parliament noted that the Commission reports errors in the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) in France and Portugal since 2006 and that before 2010 no own initiative action plan had been initiated in these countries. It criticised the fact that “action plans” instigated by the Commission have only started in 2010 for Portugal and in 2013 for France. It is concerned that the Court of Auditors found systemic deficiencies in the LPIS audited in Italy and Spain in 2008, 2009 and 2010 and that since 2007 deficiencies were found in the LPIS of 12 Member States. The Parliament noted the reply by the Commission and the Spanish authorities that an error correction system is being applied. It regretted that overdeclarations in the cross-checks of declared parcels on the basis of the LPIS in certain Member States have not been discovered since the LPIS database is only partially reliable. The Parliament urged the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to address the problems with regard to permanent pasture and to ensure that it is correctly recorded in the LPIS. It asked the Commission and the Member States to take immediate remedial action when administrative and control systems, and/or IACS databases, are found to be deficient or out of date. It further Calls, in order to remedy shortcomings in LPIS systems, for action plans to be implemented promptly. The Parliament took the view that recurrent land parcel identification shortcomings must be met by progressively increasing payment reductions and administrative sanctions well beyond existing net and flat-rate corrections and called for a Commission proposal along these lines. The Parliament asked to be informed on the total amount of the Union's subsidies, grants and other financial instruments that were spent in setting up and improving the LPIS system since the decision was taken, if possible divided by Member-State.

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Leading committee: AGRI (DEVE, BUDG, CONT, REGI for opinion)

Summary of the Final Act

Extracts from the Summary

**Financing, management and control systems**, which includes the paying agencies and the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS). In order to be accredited, paying agencies departments or bodies should have an administrative organisation and a system of internal control providing **sufficient guarantees** that payments are legal and regular, and properly accounted for. Member States should be allowed to maintain the number of paying agencies which have been accredited before the entry into force of this Regulation. **Before the end of 2016**, the Commission shall present a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the operation of the system of paying agencies in the Union accompanied, where appropriate, by legislative proposals.

**Identification system for agricultural parcels**: the Regulation stipulates that the identification system for agricultural parcels shall be established on the basis of maps, land registry documents or other cartographic references. Use shall be made of computerised geographical information system techniques, including aerial or spatial orthoimagery, with a homogenous standard that **guarantees a level of accuracy that is at least equivalent to that of cartography at a scale of 1:10 000 and, as from 2016, at a scale of 1:5 000**, while taking into account the outline and condition of the parcel. This shall be fixed in accordance with existing Union standards.

Member States shall ensure that the identification system for agricultural parcels contains a reference layer to **accommodate ecological focus areas**.

**Suspension of payments and penalties**: the Regulation provides the possibility of reducing or suspending payments where there are significant and persistent deficiencies in national control systems should be reinforced in order to provide the Commission with the possibility of suspending payments rapidly when serious deficiencies are detected. That possibility should also be extended to include negligence in the system for recovery of irregular payments.

The Regulation also clarifies the measures concerning the application of the administrative penalties in cases of non-compliance in relation to eligibility criteria, commitments or other obligations resulting from the application of sectoral agricultural legislation. The administrative penalties shall be proportionate and graduated according to the severity, extent, duration and reoccurrence of the non-compliance found.

**Reporting and review**

**Article 109 of the Final Act**

**Annual financial report**

By end September of each year following the budget year, the Commission shall draw up a financial report on the administration of the Funds during the previous financial year, which it shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council.

**Article 110 of the Final Act**

**Monitoring and evaluation of the CAP**
1. A common monitoring and evaluation framework shall be established with a view to measuring the performance of the CAP...

5. The Commission shall present an initial report on the implementation of this Article, including first results on the performance of the CAP, to the European Parliament and the Council by 31 December 2018. A second report including an assessment of the performance of the CAP shall be presented by 31 December 2021.

*****

**EP Resolution of 17/04/2013** with observations forming an integral part of its Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based 2012/2167(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0122; A7-0116/2013)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

127. Notes that the most frequent accuracy error relates to area over-declarations, most of which amount individually to less than 5 % and deplores that the larger error rates relate to cases where eligibility of permanent pasture was incorrectly assessed and recorded by Member States’ authorities in the Land and Parcel Identification System (LPIS);

128. Endorses the recommendation of the Court of Auditors that the correct assessment of eligibility of permanent pasture should be ensured(33) ;

129. Notes with disappointment that the Court of Auditors found that the effectiveness of the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) is adversely affected by inaccurate data in the various databases and also by an incorrect administrative treatment of claims by the paying agencies in certain Member States; reminds the Commission that the introduction of IACS led to a decrease in errors and calls on the Commission to remedy the situation without any delays using suspensions and interruptions of funding when necessary;

130. Is concerned that the Commission, in its annual activity report, maintained its reservations concerning the IACS systems in Bulgaria and Portugal due to serious deficiencies; emphasises the fact that, given the importance of IACS for the management and control of agricultural expenditure, serious deficiencies in its set-up and operation exposes the Commission to reputational risk, even if the financial impact does not exceed the materiality threshold;

131. Regrets that some systematic failures in the management and controls systems observed and reported already in previous years have not been remedied: incorrect classification of land use, overstatement of eligible land in LPIS or incorrect application of the obvious error concept;

132. Deplores the fact that deficiencies were found by the Court of Auditors in on-the-spot measurements; insists that on-the-spot inspections should be of the quality necessary to identify the eligible area in a reliable manner(34) .

133. Regrets that the quality of the work performed by the certifying bodies audited by the Court of Auditors under the new voluntary procedure for the reinforcement of assurance is insufficient;

134. Calls on the Commission to take all necessary actions so that paying agencies remedy weaknesses detected in their administration and control system;
insists that the design and quality of the work to be performed by certifying bodies must be improved in order to provide reliable assessment of legality and regularity of operations in the paying agencies; asks the Commission to investigate if it is possible to cooperate with private individuals to verify cross compliance standards and reduce administrative burden.

*******

EP Resolution of 10/05/2012 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2011/2201(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0153; A7-0098/2012)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

125. Welcomes the fact that direct payments covered by the Integrated Administrative and Control System (IACS) – which in 2010 accounted for 77% of total expenditure under the CAP – were free from material error (Annual Report, point 3.55 and Commission’s reply to this point);

127. Recalls that IACS must ensure that correct and traceable payments are made to farmers; notes, however, that the effectiveness of IACS is adversely affected by inaccurate data in the databases, incomplete cross checks or incorrect or incomplete follow up of anomalies (Court of Auditors Annual Report, point 3.29); calls on the Commission to ensure that all databases are up to date and all anomalies are properly followed up.

*******

EP Resolution of 10/05/2011 with observations forming an integral part of the Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2009, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2010/2142(DEC) (P7_TA(2011)0194; A7-0134/2011)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

87. Notes the improvements of the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) in Greece following Parliament’s continuous attention;

88. Recalls, however, that the Court of Auditors in recent years has found the effectiveness of the IACS adversely affected by inaccurate data in the databases, incomplete cross checks or incorrect or incomplete follow-up of anomalies;

89. Notes that for its 2009 audit of eight paying agencies, the Court of Auditors found the systems to be effective in ensuring the regularity of payments in only one agency, partially effective in four agencies, and ineffective in the remaining three agencies;

90. Notes the Court of Auditors’ conclusion that the supervisory and control systems for Agriculture and natural resources were, at best, partially effective in ensuring the regularity of payments;
91. Further notes that the Court of Auditors concludes that the IACS needs significant improvements in three out of eight paying agencies audited;

93. Deplores the fact that the Member States' practice of defining used farmland independently results in substantial misallocation of area payments; expects the Commission's evaluation report to consider this practice and illustrate it with examples;

94. Invites the Commission:
- to improve the reliability and completeness of the data recorded in the Land Parcel Identification System,
- to take proactive measures to ensure that all the IACS databases provide a reliable and full audit trail for all modifications made, paying particular attention to those countries known to have a poor record,
- to clarify and further enforce the rules so that Union direct aid is not paid to claimants who have neither used the land for farming nor maintained it in Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions,
- to review and improve the guidelines as regards the work to be performed by certification bodies, in particular the work related to the validation of the Member States' control and inspection statistics, and to provide Parliament with the number and an assessment of the soundness of the existing paying agencies,
- to further reduce bureaucracy, to simplify procedures and to avoid adverse effects on farmers arising from the plethora of rules, which in some cases conflict;
- to keep Parliament regularly updated about the progress of the work;

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Special report 26/2016 of 27 October 2016
Making cross-compliance more effective and achieving simplification remains challenging
Agriculture and Rural Development | Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) | Environment

| Questions asked: 1. Is the cross-compliance management and control system effective and can it be further simplified? |
| Observations: 1. The information available did not allow the Commission to assess adequately the effectiveness of cross-compliance: the performance indicators used by the Commission gave a partial view of the effectiveness of cross-compliance; the Commission’s assessment of the effectiveness of cross-compliance did not take into account the level of non-compliance by farmers; the Commission did not analyse the reasons for cross-compliance infringements and the means of addressing them; 2. The cross-compliance management and control system can be further simplified: the control procedures remained complex; the Small Farmers Scheme reduced the administrative burden, but this could affect the achievement of cross-compliance objectives in some Member States; greening introduced an additional layer of checks for mandatory environmentally friendly practices; the specific costs associated with the implementation of cross-compliance are not sufficiently quantified; the basis for the calculation of cross-compliance penalties for farmers across the EU is not sufficiently harmonised. |
| Recommendations: 1. The Commission should examine as part of the impact assessment for the CAP post 2020 how to further develop its set of indicators to assess the performance of cross-compliance and how to take into account farmers’ levels of compliance with the cross-compliance rules in its indicators; 2. The Commission should from now on improve the sharing of the information on cross-compliance related infringements between concerned services in order to help them to identify the reasons for breaches and to take appropriate measures to address them; 3. For the CAP post-2020, the Commission should propose adapting the rules regarding cross-compliance on-the-spot checks. This would allow a more effective targeting of key control points; 4. The Commission should analyse as part of the impact assessment for the CAP post-2020 the experience of having two systems operating with similar environmental objectives (GAEc standards and greening) with a view to promoting further synergy between them. This analysis should take into consideration criteria such as the environmental impact of the standards and the historical level of compliance by farmers; 5. After the report on the performance of the CAP due by the end of 2018, the Commission should develop a methodology to measure the costs of cross-compliance; |
| CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur | CONT Working Document of 18/01/2017 on European Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 26/2016 (2015 Discharge): Making cross-compliance more effective and achieving simplification remains challenging (PE597.542v01-00) Rapporteur: Karin Kadenbach (S&D)

[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

1. The Commission examines as part of the impact assessment for the CAP post 2020 how to further develop its set of indicators to assess the performance of cross-compliance. Also it examines how to take into account farmers’ levels of compliance with the cross-compliance rules in its indicators, with the purpose to strengthen the application and enforcement of environmental standards in agriculture to ensure the consistency of the CAP;

2. In order to ensure that the problems encountered are not repeated, the Commission will take different requirements according to local territorial needs into consideration. Furthermore, payment levels should be linked more closely to the demands placed on farmers that would make it possible to address specific environmental problems and will also compensate farmers for the restrictions that have been put on them at the same time;

3. The Commission from now on improves the sharing of the information on cross-compliance related infringements between concerned services in order to help them to identify the reasons for breaches and to take appropriate measures to address them;

4. For the CAP post-2020, the Commission envisages to ameliorate the rules regarding cross-compliance on-the-spot checks and will call on the Member States to carry out their existing administrative checks in an efficient way by using all relevant information available. This would allow a more effective targeting of key control points;

5. The Commission analyses as part of the impact assessment for the CAP post-2020 the experience of having two systems operating with similar environmental objectives (GAEC standards and greening) with a view to promoting further synergy between them. This analysis should take into consideration criteria such as the environmental impact of the standards and the historical level of compliance by farmers;

6. After the report on the performance of the CAP due by the end of 2018, the Commission develops a methodology to measure the costs of cross-compliance;

7. For the CAP post-2020, the Commission encourages a more harmonised application of penalties at EU level by further clarifying the concepts of severity, extent, permanence, reoccurrence and intentionality. To achieve this objective a minimum conditions should be introduced at EU level;

8. As a lesson to be learned from the 2007-2013 period, for the period 2014–2020 and after, the indicators should assess the actual results of the implementation of cross-compliance.

Leading committee: CONT (AGRI for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

6. Supports the Commission’s initiative of simplifying the CAP with immediate examination of measures which can be implemented quickly, as this would benefit farmers, paying agencies, EU institutions and taxpayers; urges also that at the mid-term review, proposals for amendments to the basic legislative act be brought forward for consideration for the reform for the next funding period;
7. Fears that the most likely error rate determined by the Court of Auditors will increase in the common agricultural policy direct payments area during the period 2014-2020, owing in particular to the fact that the next framework for cross-compliance does not yet correspond to a reduction in the level of needless complexity of this policy for the managing authorities or for the beneficiaries;

20. Reiterates its demand to the Commission to draft proposals with a view to sanctioning false or incorrect reporting by paying agencies, including the three following dimensions, namely inspection statistics, statements by the paying agencies, and the work carried out by the certification bodies; asks that the Commission be empowered to withdraw the accreditation of the paying agencies in cases of grave misrepresentations;

21. Expects the Commission to urgently make full use of the process of simplification of the CAP, especially with regard to the burdensome and complex regulations governing cross-compliance and greening which ultimately impacts upon farmers across Europe;

22. Supports the Commission's initiative of simplifying the CAP through the immediate consideration of measures which can be implemented quickly, as this would benefit farmers, paying agencies, EU institutions and taxpayers; urges also that proposals for amendments to the basic legislative act be brought forward; calls on the Commission to come forward with concrete proposals for simplifying the CAP, taking into consideration the feedback from stakeholders in the agricultural sector;

25. Reminds the Commission that the risk of unintentional errors owing to complex regulation is in the end borne by the beneficiary; calls for a reasonable, proportional and effective policy on sanctions to support this approach, such as avoiding double sanctioning for the same error under both the payment scheme and cross-compliance.

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2014/2075(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0118; A8-0101/2015) Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

74. Points out that the audit by the Court of Auditors covered cross-compliance requirements and that cases where cross-compliance obligations were not met were treated as error where it was established that the infringement existed in the year in which the farmer applied for aid; points out that the Court of Auditors includes deficiencies in the area of the cross-compliance in their calculation of the error rate while noting that, in the view of the Commission, cross-compliance does not concern the eligibility to payments but only triggers administrative penalties;

75. Notes that the Commission states in its reply to the Court of Auditors that for the 2014-2020 programming period, the legal framework has been simplified and requests that the Commission report by the end of 2015 on how these simplification measures worked out in practice and which additional measures could be taken with regard to any remaining complex rules and eligibility conditions;

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Leading committee: AGRI (DEVE, BUDG, CONT, REGI for opinion)

Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

The current rules were reviewed with a view to simplification, strengthening the climate change dimension within GAEC and ensuring consistency with the provisions of greening and of relevant environmental measures offered under rural development.

... Farm advisory system, which is a set of advice services which Member States must set up so as to help farmers understand, in particular, their cross-compliance and greening obligations. That farm advisory system shall be operated by designated public bodies and/or selected private bodies.

... Cross-compliance: a system created by the 2003 CAP reform which makes aid and support to farmers subject to compliance with requirements of public interest, notably standards related to environment, animal welfare and the use of plant protection products.

Reporting and review

Article 109 of the Final Act

Annual financial report

By end September of each year following the budget year, the Commission shall draw up a financial report on the administration of the Funds during the previous financial year, which it shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council.

Article 110 of the Final Act

Monitoring and evaluation of the CAP

1. A common monitoring and evaluation framework shall be established with a view to measuring the performance of the CAP...

... 5. The Commission shall present an initial report on the implementation of this Article, including first results on the performance of the CAP, to the European Parliament and the Council by 31 December 2018. A second report including an assessment of the performance of the CAP shall be presented by 31 December 2021.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 with observations forming an integral part of its Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2012/2167(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0122; A7-0116/2013) Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE and FEMM for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

118. Notes that even though 0,2 % of this error rate has been generated by a change in the Court of Auditors’ methodology concerning the cross compliance infringements the error rate for the entire agriculture policy area increased between 2010 and 2011 in real terms by 1,5 %: from 2,3 % in 2010 to 3,8 % in 2011(27);

119. Takes note of the Court of Auditors’ approach which for the first time included cross compliance infringements in the calculation of the error rate as ‘cross-compliance obligations are substantive legal requirements that must be met by all recipients of direct aid and are the basic and in many cases the only conditions to be respected in order to justify the payments of full amount of direct payments’(28); asks the Court of Auditors in this context to further explain and justify its changes of methodology; calls on the Commission and the Court of Auditors to agree on a consistent methodology with a view to rendering the yearly budget implementation figures more comparable;

134. Calls on the Commission to take all necessary actions so that paying agencies remedy weaknesses detected in their administration and control system; insists that the design and quality of the work to be performed by certifying bodies must be improved in order to provide reliable assessment of legality and regularity of operations in the paying agencies; asks the Commission to investigate if it is possible to cooperate with private individuals to verify cross compliance standards and reduce administrative burden;

139. Notes that the Court of Auditors identifies significant problems concerning the implementation of cross-compliance requirements for the identification and registration of animals(37); calls on the Member States to improve the quality of checks throughout the year without imposing an additional administrative load on the beneficiaries;

140. Regrets that weaknesses were identified by the Court of Auditors in the supervisory and control systems of the Member States for rural development and that the three elements audited were affected by deficiencies: i.e. the administrative and controls systems to ensure correct payment, the control systems based on physical on-the-spot checks and systems to ensure implementation and control of cross compliance;

141. Calls on the Commission to take account of findings identified by the Court of Auditors when establishing the audit strategy of DG AGRI’s clearance of accounts;

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Summary
57. Recalls that over half of the EU’s territory is managed by farmers, that farmland delivers important ecosystem services and has considerable socio-economic value, and that funding for the CAP represents a significant part of the EU budget; stresses that the CAP is not confined to the aim of food provision and rural development, but is a crucial tool for biodiversity, conservation, mitigation of climate change, and maintenance of ecosystem services; notes that the CAP already includes measures aimed at environmental protection, such as decoupling, cross-compliance and agri-environment measures; considers it regrettable, however, that these measures have so far failed to halt the overall decline in biodiversity in the EU and that farmland biodiversity is in continued decline; calls, therefore, for a reorientation of the CAP towards the provision of compensation to farmers for the delivery of public goods, since the market is currently failing to integrate the economic value of the important public goods agriculture can deliver;

63. Calls for all CAP payments, including those made from 2014, to be underpinned by robust cross-compliance rules which help to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem services, covering the Birds and Habitats Directives (without watering down the current standards applicable from 2007 to 2013), pesticides and biocides legislation and the Water Framework Directive; calls for simple and transparent rules for those affected;


Leading committee: AGRI (DEVE, ENVI, ITRE, REGI for opinion)

Summary

44. Points out that the Cross-Compliance (CC) system makes the granting of direct payments subject to compliance with statutory requirements and the maintenance of farmland in good agricultural and environmental condition, and remains one of the most appropriate means of optimising the provision of baseline ecosystem services by farmers and meeting new environmental challenges by securing the provision of basic public goods; notes, however, that the implementation of CC has encountered a range of problems relating to administration and acceptance by farmers;

45. Considers that direct payments are not justified without conditions and therefore that a CC system that is, as a result of the greening of the CAP, simplified and efficient in practice and at administrative level in terms of controls should apply equally to all recipients of direct payments; emphasises that cross-compliance must be risk-based and proportional and must be respected and sufficiently enforced by the competent national and European authorities;

46. Considers that better resource protection and management should also be a basic element in farming within CC as a result of which greater environmental benefits can be attained; calls for CC controls to become streamlined, effective and efficient and for a targeted approach to the scope of CC; calls for the exchanging and mainstreaming of best practice systems between paying agencies and monitoring bodies, such as the interoperability of databases and best use of appropriate technology, in order to reduce as much as possible the bureaucratic burden to farmers and administration; considers that CC should be restricted to standards related to farming, which lend themselves to systematic, straightforward monitoring and are based on an obligation to achieve results, and that the rules should be harmonised; emphasises the importance of tolerance levels and the application of proportionality within any new penalty system;
47. Considers that monitoring of CC should be more linked to performance criteria and to encouraging farmers to achieve results; believes furthermore that farmers themselves should be more involved in this monitoring, given their knowhow and practical experience, and considers that this would have the effect of setting an example and motivating less efficient farmers in particular;

48. Rejects the introduction of burdensome and unclear requirements derived from the Water Framework Directive into the cross-compliance system until the state of play of implementation of the Directive in all Member States has been clarified;

49. Recognises the considerable efforts already made in the livestock sector, currently in difficulty, to upgrade buildings and equipment to hygiene and health standards; without prejudice to the basic principles of food safety and traceability, calls for a critical review of certain hygiene, animal health and animal marking standards with a view to ending the disproportionate burdens imposed on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); calls in particular upon the Commission to review EU hygiene standards, particularly local or direct marketing and the shelf life of products, in order to make them proportionate to the risks and avoid placing a disproportionate burden on small production channels such as direct producer-consumer relations and short food supply chains;

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Leading committee: ENVI (PECH, PETI for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

44. Calls on the Commission to pay greater attention to ensuring compliance with all European regulations and directives dealing in particular with maintaining biodiversity;

45. Finds that the EU has, in the Union’s agricultural policy, laid down regulations under cross compliance which conserve biodiversity, but regrets that they are often not implemented and monitored throughout the EU;

50. Considers that the CAP should reward farmers who provide additional ecosystem services which help conserve biodiversity via an EU-funded top-up direct area payment; reiterates its request for ‘bonus’ cross-compliance that awards farmers bonus points for actions fostering biodiversity and implemented in addition to the obligations arising from good agro-environmental cross-compliance;

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Leading committee: AGRI (BUDG for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]
34. Points out that the cross-compliance system makes the granting of direct aid subject to compliance with statutory requirements and the maintenance of farmland in good agricultural and environmental condition, and remains one of the appropriate means of optimising the provision of eco-system services by farmers and meeting new environmental challenges by securing the provision of basic public goods; notes, however, that the introduction of cross-compliance has raised a whole range of problems relating to administrative issues and acceptance by farmers, who had the impression that they were losing a degree of freedom in their work; calls therefore for the administrative burden on farmers to be reduced through a simplified implementation system for cross-compliance requirements;

55. Insists that a common agricultural policy is more relevant than ever before to ensure that the cross-border dimension of food supply, climate change, high common standards of environmental protection, product safety and quality and animal welfare is guaranteed in a properly functioning Single Market;

56. Believes that the new CAP, through a simplified support system, must be easy to administer, transparent, and reduce red tape and administrative burdens on farmers, particularly for smaller producers, in order to allow farmers to concentrate on their main task of providing high-quality agricultural products; believes that this could be achieved inter alia by moving towards the use of delivery tools that set the goals and empower farmers to choose their own farming systems to meet these objectives, such as outcome agreements, simple contracts and multiannual payments;

70. Calls for an absolute requirement that only active agricultural production be rewarded, whereby minimum activity requirements would be included in the cross-compliance rules as a precondition for payments, and for proportionality to be the key principle applied when enforcing the rules;

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Leading committee: AGRI (no committee for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

10. Recognises the value of the principle of cross-compliance as one of the key concepts of CAP direct payments, but that strong simplification is recommended, without reducing their effectiveness;

11. Stresses the need for the CAP to be simpler, more transparent and more equitable;

20. Considers that cross-compliance requirements should be laid down and should also take farm size into account so as to reduce the burden on small farms, where the risk is lower;

21. Insists that, when Member States apply penalties to farmers for failure to comply with regulations, these penalties must be applied in a transparent, simple and proportionate manner which takes account of the realities on the ground;

22. Considers that the statutory requirements for cross-compliance (CC) control should be easily understandable for farmers and control authorities;

23. Believes that the fundamental objective of checks is to encourage farmers to comply more fully with the law and that yearly CC controls for statutory
management requirements (SMR) could be reduced or replaced by random checks, if there have only been a few infringements in recent years;

24. Emphasises that the requirement for follow-up checks in relation to small infringements (triviality limit) should be reduced to random samples;

25. Considers that the use of statutory management requirements which cannot be simply controlled and are not measurable should be abolished;

26. Considers that Member States, or regional and local authorities, as appropriate, should be allowed to reduce the inspection quota to a specific lower limit if they have a risk analysis framework that complies with Community law requirements, along with evidence of high compliance;

27. Calls for the introduction of a risk analysis framework compliant with Community law in each Member State, with a view to reducing the inspection quota to a specific lower limit;

28. Considers that more help and advice through efficient information and advisory tools, such as a telephone helpline or the use of the Internet, would help prevent infringements and give Member States the means to steadily reduce their inspection quota;

29. Considers that the controls carried out – or due to be carried out – at farms by the various parties whose job or statutory duty it is to conduct them should be coordinated with a view to reducing the number of farm inspection visits;

30. Considers that a communication plan on cross-compliance should be drawn up in order to provide as much information as possible, for both farmers and consumers, about cross-compliance requirements and the benefits arising from the public goods and services delivered by farmers whose activities comply with those requirements;

31. Considers that the number of CC requirements should be reduced and their scope updated;

32. Calls for the authorisation of a practicable and transparent system of indicators with the aim of simplifying the assessment instruments for CC checks calls for abolition of the current system and of the possibility of two or more penalties being imposed for a single error; calls on the Commission to analyse the disproportion between infringements of animal identification regulations, accounting for some 70% of all infringements, and other requirements and to make appropriate changes;

33. Considers that a single legislative text should be drawn up on cross-compliance considers that the positive externalities generated by farms, in terms of public goods and services, should be fairly remunerated;

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Leading committee: AGRI (ITRE for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]
32. Notes that the current cross-compliance system, which was designed to ensure that agricultural producers meet very high standards in terms of animal welfare, animal health and environmental protection, has been problematic for farmers and has, in its current form, perhaps not been the best means of achieving the desired outcomes; calls, in the context of the next reform of the CAP, for greater emphasis on more sustainable and more efficient production models, bearing in mind that these require public funding to enable farmers to cover the extra costs arising from the supply of ‘public goods’ of benefit to the whole of society (such as the preservation of rural areas, biodiversity conservation, carbon capture and food security);

| E-00420/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 James Nicholson (ECR) on Measuring the success of Commission proposals for 'greening' Pillar I of the CAP |
| P-004394/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 José Bové (Verts/ALE) on CAP reform, greening: crop rotation vs 'diversification' — economic impacts |
| E-004113/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE) on Cross-compliance and 'greening' - control of crop rotation in the Member States |
| E-003250/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 Jens Rohde (ALDE) on Implementation of the cross-compliance principle |
| E-001237/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 George Lyon (ALDE) on Organic farming - automatic fulfilment of greening criteria in the first Pillar of the CAP (double funding) |
| E-001236/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 George Lyon (ALDE) on Organic farming - automatic fulfilment of greening criteria under the first pillar of the CAP and WTO green box compatibility |
| E-000659/2012 | WQ COM Rule 117 Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D) on CAP proposals and small farmers |
| E-012210/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE) on Livestock contamination caused by the excessive use of plant protection products along the Axios estuary in a Natura 2000 area |
| E-011826/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Bastiaan Belder (EFD) on CAP - 30% of payments linked to greening? |
| E-011520/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Diane Dodds (NI) on Cross-compliance requirements |
| E-010448/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 John Stuart Agnew (EFD) on Cross-compliance and a reformed CAP |
| E-010120/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Spyros Danellis (S&D) on Definition of 'active farmer' in the Commission's legislative proposals for the new CAP |
| E-010086/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Georgios Papastamkos (PPE) on Agricultural practices beneficial to the climate and the environment |
| E-009123/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE) on Stockbreeding |
| E-009122/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE) on Ensuring a fair standard of living for the farming population |
| P-006330/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE) on The 'greening of the Common Agricultural Policy' |
| E-003891/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Jens Rohde (ALDE) on CAP |
| E-003864/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE) on Trimming chickens' beaks and docking pigs' tails |
| E-001999/2011 | WQ COM Rule 117 Jens Rohde (ALDE) on Agriculture |
| E-011285/2010 | WQ COM Rule 117 Jens Rohde (ALDE) on Agriculture |
| E-010580/2010 | WQ COM Rule 117 Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE) on Crop rotation in the context of cross-compliance in Greece |
| E-8760/2010 | WQ COM Rule 117 John Stuart Agnew (EFD) on Sheep tagging - compliance |
| E-5733/2010 | WQ COM Rule 117 Pascale Gruny (PPE) on Biofuels |
| E-4858/2010 | WQ COM Rule 117 Anne E. Jensen (ALDE) on Cross-compliance rules |
| E-3279/2010 | WQ COM Michail Tremopoulos (Verts/ALE) on Problems of overgrazing on the island of Ikaria, Greece |
| H-0476/2010 | QKT COM Rule 116 Karin Kadenbach (S&D) on Common Agricultural Policy and cross-compliance |
| H-0475/2010 | QKT COM Rule 116 Struan Stevenson (ECR) on Structural failings of the current Common Fisheries Policy |
| E-5972/2009 | WQ COM Werner Langen (PPE) and Christa Klaß (PPE) on Hunting paths and farming subsidies |
| E-4231/2009 | WQ Council John Bufton (EFD) on Possibility of postponement of implementation of sheep EID in Wales and UK |
| P-4230/2009 | WQ COM John Bufton (EFD) on Possibility of postponement of implementation of sheep EID in Wales and UK |
Special report 27/2016 of 18 October 2016
Governance at the European Commission — best practice?
EU Institutions and Other Bodies | Budgetary control

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<td>1. Are governance arrangements at the Commission in line with recognised best practice and the Institution’s needs?</td>
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<td>1.1. Did the Commission make relevant changes to governance structures and create the IAS (Internal Audit Service) and the APC (Audit Progress Committee)?</td>
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<td>1.2. Did the Commission align its internal controls and financial reporting with international standards?</td>
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<td>Observations:</td>
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<td>1. Changes to governance structures and the creation of the Internal Audit Service and the Audit Progress Committee: the Commission distinguishes between its own political responsibility and the responsibility of its directors-general for management; the Commission abolished the financial controller and set up an internal audit function; the Internal Audit Service initially had a stronger orientation on high level institution-wide governance issues and now gives greater attention to the Commission’s internal control framework; the Commission set up an Audit Progress Committee as one of the first steps in the reform process; the overview by the Audit Progress Committee is in practice limited to the work of the Internal Audit Service;</td>
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<td>2. Aligning internal controls and financial reporting with international standards: the Commission chose the COSO framework as the basis for its internal control standards, but completing transition to the updated COSO framework is challenging; the producing of annual accounts in line with international standards improved financial reporting;</td>
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<td>3. Providing non-financial information to internal and external stakeholders: the Commission provides non-financial information alongside the accounts, but less than many other organisations do; since 2013 the Commission has reported a material level of error in its spending; it is best practice to base the estimates of amounts at risk on a consistent methodology; reports introduced through the Prodi reform still form the basis for Commission internal reporting.</td>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
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<td>1. Explain where it does not comply with best practice:</td>
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<td>The Commission should, as required of European public interest entities, when it decides not to follow best practice, explain its reasons for not doing so. Target implementation date: April 2017;</td>
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<td>2. Comply with best practice</td>
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The Commission should:

a) invite the IAS to carry out more audit work on high level governance issues;

b) complete the process of aligning its internal control framework with the COSO 2013 principles;

c) further bring forward the publication of the annual accounts;

d) bring together information already presented in a variety of existing reports to form a single accountability report or suite of reports, containing the accounts but also incorporating: (i) a governance statement; (ii) a President’s report; (iii) a discussion of operational and strategic risks; (iv) a report on non-financial performance; (v) information on activities during the year and the achievement of policy objectives; (vi) a report on the role and conclusions of the Audit Committee; and (vii) a mid- and long-term fiscal sustainability statement, together with, where appropriate, links to information contained in other reports;

e) present this single accountability report or suite of reports for audit of the accounts and checks by the auditor that other information presented within it is consistent with accounting information;

f) publish as part of the annual accounts or accompanying information an estimate of the level of error based on a consistent methodology;

g) update and publish its governance arrangements on a regular basis and explain its choice of structures and processes in relation to the framework it chooses;

h) turn the APC into an audit committee with a majority of independent, external members and expand its mandate to cover risk management, financial reporting and the work and results of ex post verification units and audit directorates.

Target implementation date: April 2018.


[Recommendations by the rapporteur,]

[The European Parliament recommends that:]

1. The Commission, as required of European public interest entities, when it decides not to follow best practice explains its reasons for not doing so, strongly focussing on results while well capturing the lessons from experience;

2. The Commission:
   a) invites the IAS to carry out more audit work on high level governance issues;
   b) completes the process of aligning its internal control framework with the COSO 2013 principles;
   c) further brings forward the publication of the annual accounts;
   d) brings together information already presented in a variety of existing reports so as to form a single accountability report or suite of reports under the authority of its President, containing the accounts but also incorporating the following elements: - a governance statement; - a discussion of operational and strategic risks; - a report on non-financial performance; - information on activities during the year and the achievement of policy objectives; - a report on the role and conclusions of the Audit Committee; and - a mid- and long-term fiscal sustainability statement, together with, where appropriate, links to information contained in other reports;
   e) presents this single accountability report or suite of reports for audit of the accounts. The latter report(s) must be analytical, compact, easily understandable and accessible to auditors, employees and EU citizens, while strictly following the International Accounting Standards and the use of best practice;
f) publishes as part of the annual accounts or accompanying information an estimate of the level of error based on a sound methodology, and engages stakeholders, including the European Parliament, at every step while choosing the statistical method for error estimation; the methodology should be clear and consistent;
g) updates and publishes its governance arrangements on a regular basis and explains its choice of structures and processes in relation to the framework it chooses;
h) turns the APC into an audit committee with a majority of independent external members, and expands its mandate to cover risk management, financial reporting and the work and results of ex post verification units and audit directorates.

The European Parliament insists that:
a) high-level governance of international organisations must follow a business model and should be transparent, accountable, responsible and, most importantly, efficient;
b) high-level governance must adapt to a fast-changing world, and must evolve and detect potential challenges before they become problems;
c) horizontal and vertical relationships between the Commission’s different structures need to be clear and traceable; continuing the process of cutting red tape is a must; stronger coordination between the different structures is also recommended;
d) we need more visibility of the results in the Member States from the annual governance; sound data made public and presented effectively can support important decisions;
e) solid ex ante, ex post and mid-term evaluation should ensure the value of every euro spent; to facilitate engagement the document should provide information on the relevant costs and benefits of all expenditure;
f) strategic use of public procurement should be promoted: every year Member States spend around 14% of their budget on purchase of services, works and supplies; public procurement should and must be used as an important tool for achieving the Europe 2020 objectives.

**Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees**

EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2014, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2015/2154(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0147; A8-0140/2016)

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

49. Deplores the fact that for 21 years in a row, payments have been materially affected by error due to the partial effectiveness of the supervisory and control systems;

56. Is of the opinion that for more than three quarters of 2014 expenditure, Commission DGs base their estimates of the amount at risk on data provided by national authorities; notes that the Commission states in its synthesis report that the reliability of Member States control reports remains a challenge;

62. Calls on the Commission to apply strictly Article 32(5) of the new Financial Regulation if the level of error is persistently high, and consequently to identify the weaknesses in the control systems, analyse the costs and benefits of possible corrective measures and take or propose appropriate action in terms of simplification, improvement of control systems and redesign of programmes or delivery systems before the mid-term review of the 2014-2020 programming period;

114. Welcomes the Commission’s decision to increase transparency by improving its system of expert groups, particularly as regards the procedure for selecting
experts, through the development of a new conflict-of-interest policy for experts appointed in a personal capacity, implying the possibility for Parliament to exercise direct control over such appointments; takes note of the requirement for experts to be registered in the transparency register where relevant; urges the Commission, however, to take into account the recommendations both of the European Ombudsman concerning the composition of the expert groups and of the study 'Composition of the Commission's expert groups and the status of the register of expert groups' when drafting amendments to the current horizontal rules governing expert groups, in order to create a more systematic and transparent approach; requests that the Commission engage in a dialogue with Parliament before the rules are formally adopted, especially in relation to the upcoming report of the Committee on Budgetary Control and the Committee on Legal Affairs on this matter; encourages the European agencies to consider reforms in a similar sense;

Competition for growth and jobs

169. Supports the Commission's endeavour to develop further risk management in the research area; welcomes in this context that for ex-post audits the selection of participants to be audited is already largely risk-driven: the Commission expects that 83% of the audits undertaken over the 2012-2016 period will be selected according to risk criteria;

175. Deplores the fact that the area of expenditure 'competitiveness for growth and employment' saw the steepest rise in error rates in the Union between 2013 and 2014;

193. Notes that the audit activities in this area were intensified and coordination by the Common Audit Service improved, while it is provided as a shared management service for all the DGs, executive agencies and joint undertakings involved in research and innovation spending;

195. Concludes that the Commission should:
(a) adopt a set of measures to reduce the relatively high error rate in this area, improve data and information management to analyse also very advanced R&amp;D projects and test their impact against the potential of Horizon 2020;
(b) present a report evaluating the current experience with a new practice to utilise special agencies in this segment(16) from the budgetary point of view as well as to introduce on a regular basis reporting on compliance with the relevant Europe 2020 Strategy indicators;

196. Calls on the DG RTD to improve information management, especially in line with a performance culture to include all stakeholders, especially new ones, and to improve information management with beneficiaries in Member States; recommends more inclusion of independent auditors focusing not only on errors, but also on the performance cycle, including an appropriate evaluation of risks; additionally, regulatory rules should undergo an impact assessment;

197. Calls on DG RTD to publish, in its respective annual activity reports, its contribution to the CSR in a comprehensive and detailed way, as these recommendations should demonstrate how the DG facilitates Member States' progress towards the EU 2020 Strategy objectives;

Economic, social and territorial cohesion

219. Calls on the Commission to create an effective tool to contribute to the improvement of the reliability of controlling and auditing activities provided by the national authorities; recalls the importance of extending transparency on data regarding the public procurement in order to improve accessibility and controls, by publishing details of contractors and their subcontractors;

275. Concludes that the Commission should:
(a) have identified evidence on the impact of ERDF, ESF and CF interventions of the 2007-2013 period for fulfilment of the Europe 2020 Strategy targets;
(b) ensure the new Union priorities are much more closely interlinked with the cohesion policy;
(c) continue in its already started simplification process, including the promotion of SCO;
(d) further support synergies within the cohesion policy itself as well as between the cohesion policy and other Union budgetary interventions;

277. Urges the Commission to continue to rigorously address the weaknesses of "first level checks" in Member States, as some of the most important errors are generated at this level;

278. Calls on the Commission to report on Member States' uptake of the SCO in the report following up Parliament's 2014 Commission discharge decision;

279. Agrees with the Court that the Commission should extend to all Member States its assessment of the reliability of the financial corrections reported by the certifying authorities and its impact on the Commission's calculation of the 'residual error rate'; calls on the Commission to report on the results when following up Parliament's discharge decision;

280. Shares the Court's view that the Commission should further strengthen the control system for audit authorities and report on the results when following up Parliament's discharge decision;

281. Calls on DG REGIO and DG EMPL to publish, in their respective annual activity reports, their contributions to the preparation of the Commission's CSRs and on how they support Member States for implementing them, as these recommendations should demonstrate how the DGs facilitate Member States' progress towards achieving the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives;

Natural resources

330. Requests that:
(a) the Commission consider reporting, in the annual activity report of DG AGRI, on the trend in the distribution of agricultural income support;
(b) the Member States make further efforts to include reliable and up-to-date information in their LPIS database in order to avoid payments for ineligible land;
(c) the Commission draft proposals with a view to sanctioning false or incorrect reporting by paying agencies including the three following dimensions, namely inspection statistics, statements by the paying agencies and the work of certification bodies;
(d) the Commission take appropriate measures to require that Member States' action plans in rural development include remedial actions addressing frequently-found cases of error;
(e) the Commission revise the strategy for its rural development conformity audits so as to establish whether systems weaknesses found in one specific region, for Member States with regional programmes, are also present in the other regions, especially for investment measures;
(f) the Commission ensure that the new assurance procedure on legality and regularity of transactions, which will become mandatory as of the financial year 2015, is correctly applied by the certification bodies and produces reliable information about the level of error;
(g) the Member States assess the need to support knowledge-transfer and advisory activities which are readily available on the market at a reasonable price and when this need is justified that Member States ensure that the costs of the supported activities do not exceed the costs of similar activities offered by the market;
(h) the Commission ensure complementarity between Union funds in order to mitigate the risk of double-funding and duplication of administration in knowledge-transfer and advisory measures;
(i) the Commission encourage Member States to establish a single financial instrument which is able to provide both loans and guarantees, thus increasing its activity and critical mass;

(j) the Commission set appropriate standards and targets for leverage and revolving effects in order to increase the effectiveness of the financial instruments for the programming period 2014-20;

(k) the Consumer, Health and Food Executive Agency reduce, to the extent possible, the carry-overs of committed appropriations, which amounted to EUR 0.9 million (50 %) in 2014; points to the fact that in 2013 the Court made similar comments and that information on corrective measures remains unavailable;

Global Europe

336. Notes with surprise that the delegations with the highest amount at risk as measured by key performance indicators 5 (timely implementation) and 6 (objective reached) differ from those listed as the worst performers; considers that it raises questions on the quality and seriousness of reporting of some delegations;

338. Welcomes the fact that the Commission has put in place a monitoring system of the ongoing projects and that the EAMR reports provide a snapshot at the end of the year of projects which are either facing some delays in their implementation or where risks exist that they will not reach one or more of their initially set objectives;

342. Recalls that Parliament requested that the Commission present the measures taken to improve the performance of Union delegations as regards financial planning and resource allocations, financial administration and auditing and to provide the conclusions it has drawn from the EAMR with the EAMRs to Parliament;

343. Notes that action plans for 22 delegations that met benchmarks for less than 60 % of their KPIs in 2014 were transmitted officially to the European Parliament on 5 November 2015; notes, moreover, that conclusions drawn by DG DEVCO from the EAMR were presented in the Annual Activity Report of DG DEVCO for the year 2014;

351. Takes the view that heads of Union delegations should be clearly reminded of their duties during their recruitment and pre-posting in terms of management, their responsibility in the management assurance related to their delegation portfolios of operations (key management processes, control management, adequate understanding and assessment of the KPI), providing qualitative and exhaustive reporting in the context of the establishment of the annual activity report and urged not only to concentrate on the political component of their duties;

363. Recalls that in his declaration of assurance(25), the director general of Europe Aid stated that the control procedures in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions whilst issuing a global reservation concerning the error rate being above 2 %, which demonstrates that the control procedures failed to prevent, detect, and correct material error;

366. Notes that due to the character of support, even improved risk management and strengthened control systems contribute substantially to a performance focus;

368. Concludes that the Commission should:
   (a) follow the Court’s recommendation to set up and implement internal control procedures to ensure that re-financing payments are based on actual
expenditure, and to strengthen the ex-ante controls for grant contracts, including the use of risk-based planning and systematic follow-up visits;

(b) reflect the current and sharply changing set of priorities to provide efficient Union financial support to follow not only the territorial aspects (Ukraine, Turkey, Western Balkan, Eastern Partnership countries among others), but simultaneously also the thematic ones;

369. Requests that the Commission set up and implement internal control procedures to ensure that pre-financing is cleared on the basis of actual incurred expenditure not including legal commitments;

370. Fully endorses the instruction given by the Commission in its synthesis report(26) urging DG DEVCO "to look for ways to increase the extent to which it takes the result of its controls into account to provide a more risk differentiated assurance and to subsequently direct more of its control resources towards areas covered by specific reservations taking into consideration the relative cost -effectiveness of the various controls";

371. Asks the Commission to:
   (a) provide the Parliament every year with a global assessment of the EAMR; and
   (b) indicate in the annual activity reports of DG DEVCO and DG NEAR the measures it has taken to redress the situation in the delegations with implementation problems, to shorten the delays in budget support and to simplify the programmes;

Administration

388. Encourages the Union institutions and agencies to better raise awareness of the conflict-of-interest policy among their officials, alongside ongoing awareness-raising activities and the inclusion of integrity and transparency as an obligatory item to be discussed during recruitment procedures and performance reviews; considers that a distinction should be made between elected representatives and public officials in the legislation on conflicts of interest; believes that there should also be such regulations in the Member States for public officials and civil servants involved in the administration and monitoring of Union subsidies; calls on the Commission to submit a draft legal basis on this matter;

399. Believes that all data on the implementation of the budget within the EU should be transparent and accountable through publication, including the spending of Member States related to shared management;

401. Calls on the Commission to expand the recording of meeting data with lobbyists to everyone involved in the Union’s policy-making process by requesting from their DGs regular reports on the meetings taking place within their respective services and by putting this information in an easily accessible manner on the Commission’s website;

402. Believes that the Commission should be obliged to record and disclose all input received from lobbyists/interest representatives on draft policies and laws as a `legislative footprint`; suggests that this legislative footprint should contain detailed information about lobbyists whose views had a substantial impact on the Commission’s proposals;

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EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2014: performance, financial management and control, based on 2015/2205(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0159; A8-0080/2016)
Leading committee: CONT (EMPL, LIBE for opinion)
Summary

Extract from the Summary

Common approach and Commission’s roadmap: while recalling that in July 2012, Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted a common approach on decentralised agencies, Members acknowledged the Commission’s progress report on the implementation of the Common Approach as well as the efforts made jointly by the Commission and the decentralised agencies, which resulted in demonstrable progress. This will ensure more balanced governance, improved efficiency and accountability and greater coherence.

Budget and financial management: Parliament recalled the need to apply the principle of annuality and that that an elevated level of carry-overs of committed appropriations remains the most frequent issue of the budgetary and financial management affecting agencies. It noted with satisfaction that the final accounts of all decentralised agencies present fairly, in all material respects, their financial position as at 31 December 2014 ...

Conflicts of interest and transparency: Parliament acknowledged that over 80% of all decentralised agencies have an anti-fraud strategy in place. It noted that the agencies have introduced a number of concrete measures and tools to address adequately the risks of actual and perceived conflicts of interest and to consider a strategy on how to get closer to Union citizens. ... To underline the need to enhance integrity and improve the ethical framework, Parliament recommended better implementation of codes of conduct and ethical principles, so as to reinforce a common and effective culture of integrity for all Union institutions and agencies. In addition, it called for those Union institutions and agencies which have introduced codes of conduct, including the European Parliament, to step up their implementation measures, such as checks on declarations of financial interests.

Parliament made a series of general recommendations on improving the performance of the agencies in order to make their operations more effective, as well as more visible, particularly on-line. Overall, it called on the agencies to further strengthen their efforts and to improve their communication policies to expand their visibility through different social media tools.

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EP Resolution of 29/04/2015 with observations forming an integral part of the decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2014/2075(DEC) (P8_TA(2015)0118; A8-0101/2015)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

Agriculture and rural development

110. Recommends that the Commission actively monitors the application of remedial actions with regard to the deficiencies in the control system applicable to Union aid for the recognition of producer groups for fruits and vegetables in Poland, and in the operational programmes for producer organisations in Austria, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom;

111. Urges the Commission to demonstrate the Union added value of the agricultural market measures bearing in mind the risk of potential losses affecting the
budget of the Union and asks the Commission to consider their suppression if this risk is too high; asks the Commission to report in the 2013 Commission discharge follow-up report on the actions taken by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in light of the audit mission for poultry export refunds in France;

112. Asks to the Commission to draft proposals with a view to sanctioning false or incorrect reporting by paying agencies including the three following dimensions, namely inspection statistics, statements by the paying agencies, and the work carried out by the certification bodies; asks that the Commission be empowered to withdraw the accreditation of the paying agencies in cases of grave misrepresentations;

113. Urges the Director-General of DG AGRI to consider the real added value of delaying year after year reservations justified by deficiencies in the LPIS while those deficiencies have clear horizontal dimension;

116. Urges the Commission to take steps to further reduce the backlog of open audit files in the clearance of the accounts procedure so as to enable all audits carried out prior to 2012 to be closed by the end of 2015;

123. Asks the Commission about the follow-up given the cases of suspected intentional infringement reported by the Court of Auditors to OLAF, in particular, as regards the rural development measure “adding value to agricultural and forestry products” and to fully review the design of this measure in the light of the critical remarks issued by the Court of Auditors as to its efficiency and effectiveness in the follow-up report to the 2013 Commission discharge;

124. Urges the Commission to closely monitor the implementation of the rural development programmes and in its conformity audits to take account of the applicable rules including those adopted at national level where relevant, in order to reduce the risk of repeating weaknesses and errors encountered during the 2007-2013 programming period;

Regional policy, transport and energy

142. Calls on the Commission to provide further guidance and technical assistance to the Member States; requests that the Commission and Member States pay particular attention to simplifying procedures, including those for beneficiaries, which can have benefits for both auditing and decreasing error rates, while in parallel increasing the effectiveness of the management and control systems;

145. Strongly supports the interruption and suspensions of payments used by the Commission as an effective and preventive tool to protect the Union’s financial interests;

147. Welcomes the reinforced control and audit procedures provided for in the regulatory framework for the 2014-2020 programming period, and in particular regarding the management verifications and controls before the certification of annual programme accounts and the submission of management declarations by the managing authorities to the Commission; notes that the Commission’s corrective capacity was further improved by removing the possibility for Member States to re-use funds, resulting in net financial corrections; welcomes the establishment of a Competence Centre on administrative capacity building in connection with European Structural and Investment Funds; supports the enhanced result-orientation and thematic concentration of cohesion policy that should ensure a shift from funds absorption criteria towards quality of spending and high added value of the co-financed operations;

164. Calls on the Commission, in line with the Court of Auditors’ recommendation, to carry out an assessment of the ‘first level checks’ performed during the 2007-2013 programming period in accordance with Article 32(5) of the Financial Regulation; calls on the Commission to add an assessment of the reliability of the information transmitted by the certifying bodies in the Member States to the annual activity report of DG REGIO; welcomes the assessments carried
since 2010 through targeted audits on high risk programmes in the frame of its audit enquiry 'Bridging the assurance gap';

166. Calls on the Commission to request that audit authorities certify the accuracy of the data on financial corrections reported by certifying authorities for each OP; considers that this detailed information should be published in the annex to the DG REGIO's annual activity report;

167. Calls on the Commission to consistently disclose in its annual activity report the reasons for not making reservations (or making reservations with a lower financial impact) in those cases where this is due to exceptions to applicable Commission guidance or approved audit strategies;

171. Recognises the Commission's efforts to move to a performance culture; asks the Commission (DG REGIO), therefore, to include in its Management Plan and Annual Activity Report an assessment of its work in relation to increasing the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the cohesion policy; invites the Commission, in addition to the budget execution approach, to check the performance against objectives and better use the evaluations, as well as to support Member States and their Managing Authorities in maximising the quality of their evaluation reports; underlines in this context the need in future to consider and assess project results, investment returns and real added value for the economy, employment and regional development;

Employment and social affairs

183. Encourages DG EMPL to pursue its aim with regard to ESF to move further from the need to correct errors to a situation where errors are avoided and supports DG EMPL's efforts to help the Member States with the highest ESF error rates to improve their systems by using the best practices available; notes in this regard that the administrative capacity and organisation of DG EMPL should correspond to its work and responsibilities towards the Member States;

External relations

229. Notes that a majority of Union delegations did not reach the benchmarks set up by the Commission for the key performance indicators (KPIs) included in the 119 External Assistance Monitoring Reports concerning financial planning and resource allocation, financial administration and auditing;

233. Asks the Commission to:
- present to Parliament the measures taken in order to improve the performance of Union delegations as regards financial planning and resource allocation, financial administration and auditing in particular as regards the worst performing delegations;
- better document every year the conclusions it has drawn from the EAMR and from the KPIs and provide these conclusions together with the EAMRs to Parliament;
- include a balance sheet with the accounting data of the delegation into the EAMR;
- improve the quality and the exhaustiveness of the data provided in the EAMR and the relevance of the reports as well, in particular as regards the delegations overseen by DG ENLARGE; and
- make external assistance contingent on efforts being made to combat corruption;

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Leading committee: CONT (EMPL, LIJE for opinion)
**Summary**

Extract from the Summary

**Human resources management:** Parliament noted that the Commission adopted in July 2013 a Communication to establish a programming of human and financial resources for decentralised agencies for the 2014-2020 period, with a view to ensuring compatibility of resources with the constraints set in this regard by the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020.

...  

**Common approach and Commission roadmap:** Parliament recalled that in July 2012, Parliament, the Council and the Commission adopted a Common Approach on decentralised agencies, a political agreement concerning the future management and reform of the agencies. It welcomed the Commission’s ‘Roadmap on the follow-up to the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies’ containing a detailed plan of how to perform the follow-up to the Common Approach, its agenda for 2013 and beyond, as well as the efforts made jointly by the Commission and the decentralised agencies (in terms of internal audits and controls and the fight against fraud). The completion rate of the agency-relevant roadmap actions was 96%.

...  

**Other recommendations:** Parliament made a series of recommendations on technical issues regarding:

- management of budgetary resources, stressing the principle of annuality and regretting the high level of commitments carried over by most of the agencies;
- cooperation among agencies and shared services and synergies, expressing doubts about the geographical locations of agencies, many of which were located far away from the other European institutions, which damages their efficiency. Members welcomed increasing synergies and shared services;
- performance, welcoming positive developments that stressed effectiveness and results achieved;
- management of human resources, pointing to the recurring problems on recruitment procedures, where improvements must be made;
- conflicts of interests and transparency, welcoming the “Guidelines on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest in EU decentralised agencies” but regretting the lack of guidelines for seconded national experts, and external and interim staff;
- the lack of visibility and democratic accountability of the agencies, as they were seen to be vulnerable in respect of external influences from specialist lobbyists, in particular from those representing big business. Members also referred to the issues of multilingualism, noting that few applied multilingual policies apart from the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union;
- internal controls, with certain agencies not applying the rules fully.

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**EP Resolution of 3/04/2014** with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2012, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2013/2195(DEC) (P7_TA(2014)0287; A7-0242/2014)  

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENV, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)  

**Summary**  

[The European Parliament,]  

**Commission’s Reservations, reasons for binding commitments in the field of agriculture**  

28. Notes that the Internal Audit Service of the Commission (IAS) found that the audit strategy of DG AGRI was not sufficiently formalised, namely that there
were gaps in the definition of the audit universe, the setting up of quantitative and measurable objectives (e.g. audit coverage), and the related capacity analysis; is worried about the IAS’s finding that audit plans were not sufficiently supported by risk assessments and that there was a significant audit backlog (13% of engagements of 2007-2010 still open), despite DG AGRI’s efforts to reduce it;

45. Calls on DG AGRI to develop and formalise its control strategy, re-engineer its risk assessments according to the targets established, and ensure proper monitoring through better quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators whose disclosure in the Annual Activity Report should be improved;

47. Calls on the Commission, in the activity reports of the directorates-general, to report the extent to which Member States’ control statistics or audit reports have been examined, verified and validated and the depth in which this has been done;

48. Calls on the Commission, in its annual activity reports, to indicate how its own risk analyses have influenced the use of its own audit capacities, which countries were concerned and whether the shortcomings were remedied; calls for more direct audits of random samples taken from national granting authorities and final beneficiaries; notes that this could be made possible by redeploying staff and/or by reducing the number of audits in Member States with low error rates;

56. Asks for the following:
   - the DGs concerned should build up a new and reinforced audit strategy to counter weaknesses found in in some Member States as referred to in paragraphs 47, 48 and 49;
   - Intensification of quality checks on Member-States audit and control reports as referred to in paragraphs 47 and 48;
   - increase in the random sampling based audits by the Commission in the spot and the more systematic use of net financial corrections as referred to in paragraph 13;
   - detailed rules in the CPR delegated act to provide for definition of serious deficiencies and assessment of key requirements for management and control systems as referred to in paragraph 216;
   - application of progressively increasing payment reductions and administrative sanctions where eligibility criteria have not been respected by the final beneficiary receiving direct payments or rural development support and recurrent LPIS shortcomings;
   - suspension mechanism to be used as an ex ante instrument for protection of the Union budget as referred to in paragraph 42;
   - the use of interruptions, suspensions, financial corrections, and recoveries will be detailed in the next annual report on the protection of the Union budget, and specifically for structural and cohesion funds in the reports for 2016 onwards as referred to in paragraph 52;
   - Annual Activity Reports (AARs) from the DGs should include information on reservations regarding risk to the Union budget and such reservations should only be lifted when the weaknesses have been addressed through Member State action and correction of irregular expenditure, and AARs also to error rate and residual risk estimates particularly when Member States have carried out corrective actions;
   - a new horizontal report should be prepared on how new preventive and corrective tools are implemented under the 2014-2020 MFF, and assessing any risk from the gap between the final legislation compared to the Commission proposals;
   - contradictory and conciliation procedures should be streamlined so that the whole conformity procedure will be shortened to two years in all standard cases as referred to in paragraph 40;
   - for France and Portugal, comprehensive action plans should be established in the field of agriculture in among other the updating of their LPIS systems as requested in paragraph 44;
   - the introduction of a template and recommendations for national management declarations;
   - limit the option of replacing projects affected by error with new projects before 15 February n+ 1;
   - making better use of RAL and limiting the period covered by pre-financing;
the Commission should reach binding bilateral agreements with Member States which have attracted particular attention, along the lines of the European Semester;

Rural development, environment, fisheries and health

172. Shares the concerns voiced by the Court of Auditors concerning the weaknesses detected in the conformity audit work as regards quality control, audit documentation and the manner of evaluating evidence and forming conclusions;

176. Notes that DG AGRI’s annual activity report contains a reservation for the total EAFRD expenditure for 2012 and that this reservation is due to concerns about the quality of controls in some Member States as well as the error rate reported by the Court of Auditors;

177. Regrets however that DG AGRI’s reservation for EAFRD suffers from two deficiencies: DG AGRI was unable to provide its own quantified estimate of the residual error rate or to make an assessment for each paying agency on whether or not to apply a higher error rate on the basis on information from its own audits;

180. Calls on the Commission to ensure in the area of rural development that uniform standards and procedures are being equally applied and observed both by its approving and auditing bodies; stresses that the application of different standards between approving and auditing bodies has consequently led to confusion at the level of national paying agencies and project applicants in the past, resulting in delays and restrictions in project applications; stresses that any changes in the application and approval procedure for an EAFRD contribution may only be binding for the future and thus shall not apply to any previously approved projects;

External relations

260. Notes with satisfaction that the supervisory and control system of DG ELARG has been declared by the Court of Auditors to be effective although the method used for the calculation of the residual error rate has still to be ameliorated;

261. Regrets that shortcomings persist in EuropeAid’s ex ante checks and in the supervisory and control system and that, according to the findings of the Court of Auditors, the Commission’s 2011 reorganisation continues adversely to affect the activity of its Internal Audit Capacity; regrets that the supervisory and control systems of EuropeAid are only partially effective, which means that they fail to detect and correct material errors;

262. Endorses the recommendations of the Court of Auditors that the Commission should ensure timely clearance of expenditure, promote better document management by implementing partners and beneficiaries, improve the management of contract awarding procedures by setting out clear selection criteria and documenting the evaluation process better, enhance the quality of expenditure checks carried out by external auditors and apply a consistent and robust methodology for the external relations directorates-general to calculate the residual error rate;

Research and other internal policies

274. Notes that the Court of Auditors describes the supervisory and control systems for the Framework Programmes of Research which it has audited as partially effective, while it rates the audited supervisory and control system for the Lifelong Learning Programme as effective;
276. Welcomes the fact that the annual activity reports of the directorates-general which the Court of Auditors has analysed contain an appropriate assessment of financial management in terms of the regularity of the underlying transactions: notes that the information submitted largely confirms the observations and conclusions of the Court of Auditors;

**TFEU Article 318 evaluation report**

316. Welcomes the fact that the Commission plans to improve performance reporting in the annual activity reports of its directorates-general, to make a closer link between the annual management plans and annual activity reports on the one hand and the Article 318 evaluation report on the other hand and to adopt the evaluation report in parallel with the synthesis report;

318. Recalls that in order to ensure the sound financial management of Union funds, the Commission administers the Central Exclusion Database—a database of entities excluded from Union funding for reasons such as insolvency, final court judgments for fraud, corruption, decisions of a contracting authority for grave professional misconduct and conflict of interest; regrets that the Central Exclusion Database administered by the Commission is not accessible to the public or to the Members of Parliament; recalls that a similar database of debarred firms administered by the World Banks is public; calls on the Commission to make the Central Exclusion Database public.

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**EP Resolution of 17/04/2013** with observations forming an integral part of its Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2011, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based 2012/2167(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0122; A7-0116/2013)

**Leading committee:** CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

**Error rate in shared management**

1. Calls on the Commission ... to:

...  
(f) harmonise the practice of its services concerning the interruption/suspension of payments when significant deficiencies are detected at the level of the supervisory and control systems of Member States;

...  
(k) harmonise the criteria used by its services for making reservations in its annual activity report and the different methodologies used to quantify public procurement errors in the two policy areas of agriculture and cohesion policy;

(l) speed up the audit and financial correction procedures followed by its own services and in particular, consider merging the different stages of the 'contradictory' procedure leading to a financial correction;

(m) evaluate the progress made in the financial management under the policy groups of the budget of the Union with a view to arriving at a positive statement of assurance and to report about this evaluation by March 2014 in the context of the annual activity reports drafted by the Directors-General and the Synthesis report on the Commission’s management achievements for 2013;
(n) DG AGRI should align its practices for the interruption of payments with the best practices of other directorates-general or services as well as put forward proposals for enhanced application and use of suspensions in the policy area of agriculture and rural development;

(o) Taking into account the legal framework, DG AGRI should systematically interrupt and suspend payments when the prime level controls reveal that they are materially affected by error; the payments should be resumed only if sufficient appropriate evidence gathered on the spot proves that the weaknesses have been remedied;

(p) The Commission should report by the end of June 2013 on the progress made by the working group set up by DG AGRI to assess the root causes of Rural Development errors and develop corrective action for the current and future programming periods; that report should be sent to the Member States, national parliaments and Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development so that they can analyse the causes of errors, deliver non-binding opinions and submit proposals for countering those errors;

(u) DG REGIO should fully align its payment practices with the best practices of other directorates-general or services, and continue making direct and full use of the legal instruments provided for by the regulations, especially the interruption of payments or whenever necessary by the suspension of operational programmes;

Evaluation report (Article 318 TFEU) and enhanced use of performance audits

(ae) In their annual activity reports, the services should measure their performance in summarising the results achieved when contributing to the main policies pursued by the Commission; this ‘departmental’ performance will be complemented by a global evaluation of the performance of the Commission in the evaluation report provided for by Article 318 TFEU;

(af) The Commission should modify the structure of the abovementioned evaluation report, distinguishing the internal policies from the external ones and focussing, within the section relating to internal policies, on the Europe 2020 strategy as being the economic and social policy of the Union; the Commission should place the emphasis on the progress made in the achievement of the flagship initiatives;

Horizontal issues: Reliability of Commission management representations

58. Takes note of the guidance given by the Secretary-General of the Commission and the Director-General of DG Budget to the Directors-General and heads of services of the Commission on how to calculate the residual error rate, which led to an improvement in some annual activity reports as pointed out by the Court of Auditors;

59. Regrets, nevertheless, that the Court of Auditors found weaknesses in those instructions and their implementation, in particular as regards the residual error rate; urges the Commission, as a result of this, to adapt its guidance as an immediate priority;

60. Recognises the progress made by the Commission in determining the extent to which transactions remain affected by error, but notes with disappointment that the Court of Auditors concluded that the residual error rate is not yet a reliable indicator;

61. Encourages the Commission to make progress in disclosing more precise and reliable data concerning recoveries and financial corrections and to present information reconciling as far as possible the year in which payment is made, the year in which the related error is detected and the year in which recoveries or financial corrections are disclosed in the notes to the accounts(19);
88. Calls on the Commission to report on and evaluate the anti-fraud strategies established within each directorate general following the adoption of the Commission’s new Anti-Fraud Strategy (COM(2011)0376) and the Internal Action Plan (SEC(2011)0787) for its implementation in June 2011;

**Rural development**

141. Calls on the Commission to take account of findings identified by the Court of Auditors when establishing the audit strategy of DG AGRI’s clearance of accounts;

142. Is particularly worried about DG AGRI management representation as the Annual Activity report does not provide for an explanation of why the residual error rate for rural development had ‘increased significantly compared to the previous year’ (38);

143. Notes that according to the Court of Auditors the DG AGRI residual error rate is much lower than the Court of Auditors’ finding because it is ‘based on figures reported by the Member States for 2010, and as identified in the Courts audit, Member States do no detect or report all ineligible expenditure due to weaknesses in their checks of paying agencies’ (39);

**Employment and social affairs**

217. Welcomes the development by DG EMPL and REGIO of smart IT tools for the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud such as ARACHNE Risk Scoring Tool; points out that a pilot exercise was carried out in Belgium, Portugal and Hungary which led to the further development of the initial risk scoring tool with modules capable of enriching the data with external publicly available information; understands that the ARACHNE tool will be ready in Spring 2013 while by the end of 2013, all Member States will be able to use the tool on a voluntary basis;

**External relations, aid and enlargement**

234. Supports all the Court of Auditors’ recommendations in respect of the chapter on ‘External relations, aid and enlargement’, in particular the recommendations concerning the Directorate-General of the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and the necessary improvements it needs to make to the management of the budget for the common foreign and security policy;

242. Is concerned that EuropeAid’s and DG ECHO’s supervisory and control systems were again found to be only partially effective; points, in particular, to the need to improve those systems in delegations; calls on the Commission to set aside sufficient resources for delegation staff to perform monitoring and supervision activities in a timely and satisfactory manner; welcomes the introduction of the new version of the six-monthly External Assistance Management Report in July 2011, which aims to strengthen the accountability links between delegations and EuropeAid headquarters;

243. Reiterates its concerns about the high frequency of encoding errors in the external aid management information system (CRIS), which may compromise the reliability of the data used for the preparation of the annual accounts; calls on the Commission to continue investing in the improvement of data quality and the development of CRIS functionalities, in particular linking audit findings to the recovery of funds.

**Research and other internal policies**

...
261. Regrets that the large number of Commission services involved in that policy area renders decision-making and the lines of responsibilities opaque; calls on the Commission to review the distribution of Commissioners' portfolios in order to better reflect competences distribution of the committees of Parliament and, as it is, widespread practice in Member States;

270. Deplores the fact that the Court of Auditors found the supervisory and control systems under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) - ICT Policy Support programme (ICT-PS) to be ineffective; calls on the Commission to bring these supervisory and control systems up to speed without delay;

Commission's management reporting on the achievements of the year

310. Welcomes the improvements noted by the Court of Auditors in the Commission's self-assessment of performance in its annual activity reports, in particular as regards reporting on policy achievements in the first part of those reports;

311. Regrets, nevertheless, that the limited number of general objectives and impact indicators that the Directions General are requested to define remain affected by weaknesses limiting their usefulness;

313. Is worried that the directorates-general of the Commission did not set nor report on objectives for operational activities relating to economy including the cost of inputs or efficiency and the relation between inputs, outputs and results.

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Leading committee: CONT (no committee for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament considers that the most effective means for the Commission to demonstrate that it is genuinely committed to ensuring transparency and sound financial management is to do all it can to support measures seeking to enhance the quality of financial management, with a view to obtaining a positive statement of assurance (DAS) from the European Court of Auditors. It calls, accordingly, for the effective implementation of the Commission action plan towards an integrated internal control framework. Parliament notes that the Commission itself stated that the Action Plan was fully completed at the beginning of 2009, although 3 of the 16 original actions could not be implemented.

... What is to be done?: Parliament considers that it is up to the Commission to identify the weaknesses in the control systems, analyse the costs and benefits of possible corrective measures and take or propose appropriate action in terms of simplification, improvement of control systems and redesign of programmes or delivery systems. Member States are asked to strengthen their supervisory and control systems and, more particularly, to ensure the reliability of their indicators and statistics.

... The Commission is urged to:
- harmonise all control procedures within its departments;
- be more rigorous when certifying the national management and audit authorities and to put in place the right incentives and an effective system of sanctions.

It urges that all the actions taken in order to reduce the error rates should be complemented by a new culture of performance. The Commission services should thus define in their management plan a number of targets and indicators meeting the requirements of the Court of Auditors in terms of relevance, comparability and reliability so as to measure 'departmental' performance. This would be complemented by a global evaluation of the performance of the Commission in the evaluation report provided for by Article 318 TFEU. The performance indicators should be fully integrated in all proposals for new policies and programmes. Likewise, Parliament calls for the establishment of a performance-based public budgeting model in which each budget line is accompanied by objectives and outputs to be measured by performance indicators.

Lastly, Parliament calls on all the parties involved in the decision-making process concerning the post-2013 legislation and programmes to bear in mind the need to respect the categorical imperative of simplification by reducing the number of programmes and defining proportionate and cost-effective controls and simplified eligibility rules and cost methods.

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Leading committee CONT (AFET, AGRI for opinion)
Summary

Expenditure: Parliament ... deplores that most irregularities in EU spending are committed at national level. It emphasises that greater transparency allowing for proper scrutiny is key in order to detect fraud and recalls that, in previous years, Parliament has urged the Commission to take action to ensure one-stop transparency as regards the beneficiaries of EU funds. It, once more, reiterates its call on the Commission to design measures to increase the transparency of legal arrangements and a system which lists all beneficiaries of EU funds on the same website.

Agriculture: Parliament points out that the number of irregularities reported as fraudulent in agriculture in 2011 does not reflect the actual situation and that the Commission expressed its concern that the fraud figures reported might not be entirely reliable. It calls for further cooperation and best-practice-sharing in the Member States in order to respond to and report cases of fraud to the Commission.

External relations, aid and enlargement: Parliament notes with concern that the Court of Auditors pointed to errors in final payments that had not been detected by Commission controls, and concluded that the controls applied by the Commission are not fully effective. It therefore calls on the Commission improve its monitoring mechanisms in order to ensure the efficient and appropriate expenditure of funds.

OLAF: Parliament reiterates that it is necessary to continue to strengthen the independence, effectiveness and efficiency of OLAF, including the independence and functioning of the OLAF Supervisory Committee.

...
The Commission's initiatives in the area of anti-fraud activity: Parliament welcomes the fact that, in response to its request, the Commission is currently developing a methodology to measure the costs of corruption in public procurement concerning EU funds. In particular, it calls in this respect on the Commission to report on and evaluate the anti-fraud strategies established within each Directorate-General.

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EP Resolution of 17/04/2013 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union agencies for the financial year 2011: performance, financial management and control, based on 2012/2214(DEC) (P7_TA(2013)0134; A7-0118/2013)
Leading committee: CONT (EMPL, ENVI, LIBE for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament calls for a simplification of the financial rules applicable to the Agencies which would allow the agencies' administrative staff costs to be reduced. It noted with regret the:
- carryovers which are not supported by commitments or which appear excessively high,
- lack of transparency or rigour in recruitments,
- procurement and contract management, and
- potential conflicts of interest, including at management board level.

... Budget and financial management: Parliament reiterates that the principle of annuality is one of the three basic accounting principles (unity, annuality and balance) indispensable to ensure an efficient implementation of the Union budget. However, it notes that decentralised agencies do not always fully comply with this principle.

It returns to the persistent problem of carryovers and considers that better internal planning and general revenue forecasting would help alleviate this problem.

... Members also highlight the inconsistencies in the audit and control procedures, which are often very unevenly distributed and may create difficulties for them. Better coordination of the various audits is necessary, therefore.

... Conflicts of interest and transparency: ... Members ... call on the Agencies to prepare and implement comprehensive independence policies and procedures by, among other things, establishing a breach of trust mechanism and clear sanctions to be deployed in the event of a conflict of interest (or changing those already in place), on the basis of lessons learned and the recommendations of the Special Report. Agencies should deal with this matter before the end of 2013.

Parliament welcomes the European Ombudsman's decision to conduct an own initiative inquiry into cases of 'revolving door-type' conflicts of interest in several cases recently reported at the Commission. It welcomes the Commission's foreseen action on conflicts of interest and, in particular, its intention to come up with guidelines for a coherent policy on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest for members of the management boards and directors, experts in scientific committees, and members of boards of appeal. It also awaits the Commission's defining of transparent and objectively verifiable criteria for the impartiality and independence of those responsible for appointing staff. Members stress, however, that the proliferation of codes of conduct and ethical guidelines cannot themselves rule out conflicts of interest. Above all, there is a need for a general culture of honesty, integrity and transparency by making available on the Agencies' websites the list of their management boards' members, management staff and external and in-house experts, together with their respective declarations of interests and curriculum vitae, as well as information on their financial interests.

Other matters: Parliament welcomes the Roadmap on the follow-up to the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies ("the Roadmap"), adopted by the
Commission in December 2012, and invites all involved parties to take on board the ideas expressed thereon, in particular in the context of the ongoing negotiations on the multiannual financial framework (MFF). Members consider, however, that although this Roadmap is a good starting point, a more proactive and forward looking approach is required to improve the Agencies’ governance, in particular by defining more clearly the roles of the management board and the executive director; independence; transparency and accountability.

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2012 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2011/2201(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0153; A7-0098/2012)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, INTA, EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

... Parliament invites the Commission to consider it a priority action to improve and strengthen the accountability chain, inter alia by:

- providing the Committee on Budgetary Control full insight into the Member States annual summaries;
- delivering a political declaration in which it accepts its final and overall responsibility for the implementation of the budget, including the part of the budget which is implemented under shared management;
- establishing the AARs in accordance with the principle of objectivity, avoiding optimistic estimations;
- providing mandatory, complete and relevant guidance to the Directorates-General, in particular regarding the way residual error rates and residual risks.

... Transparency: Parliament reiterates the vital role transparency plays in ensuring accountability for the use of public funds and recalls that it is one of the main instruments in achieving legal and regular expenditure. It also reiterates its call for all grant payments from Union funds to be recorded in a user-friendly online database paying due regard to data protection law. It believes that the payment of Union funds should be explicitly conditional on the acceptance by the beneficiaries that the basic details be a matter of public record. Members note that in the policy area Cohesion full transparency of beneficiaries of ERDF and Cohesion Fund is not ensured. Improvements in this regard are therefore expected in the context of the next financial framework.

... Performance: Getting results from the Union budget: Members welcome the new Chapter in the Annual Report including the Court of Auditors' observations on the Commission's self-assessment of performance in its AARs. They take the view that those important findings illustrate that Parliament cannot fully rely on the Commission's reporting on performance. They invite the Court of Auditors to consider whether it would be possible to include the new insight on performance on the different policy groups in the related chapters of the Annual Report. The Commission is invited to improve its reporting on performance. Members reiterate the call for the Commission to review the briefing and training given to staff regarding 'Title II: Rights and Obligations of officials' of the Staff Regulations so as to ensure that all staff are fully conversant with its terms.

... Agriculture and natural resources – qualified conclusion: Members recall that IACS must ensure that correct and traceable payments are made to farmers which doesn't seem to be the case. They encourage the Commission to further reduce the duration of the conformity clearance procedure while ensuring that Member States’ right of defence is preserved. They reiterate the belief that agricultural funds unduly paid have to be recovered from the final beneficiaries as much as possible to avoid the taxpayer being hit twice. These systems should be examined.
EP Resolution of 10/05/2012 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Union Agencies for the financial year 2010: performance, financial management and control of European Union Agencies, based on 2011/2232(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0164; A7-0103/2012)

Leading committee: CONT (EMPL, LIBE for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament also notes the large volume of carryovers and cancellations of operational appropriations by several Agencies in the financial year 2010. It points out that the high level of carryovers and cancellations is generally indicative of the inability of an Agency to manage a large increase in its budget. It demands that the absorptive capacity and the time needed to carry out additional tasks should play a larger role in budgetary decisions. It also urges the Agencies to improve their management of commitments as well as their internal planning and general revenue forecasting in order to optimise their carry over and cancellation rates as well as their spending.

Weaknesses in procurement procedures: Parliament calls on all the Agencies to strengthen their procurement procedures and to provide accurate information on negotiated procedures which should be used under strictly defined conditions.

Multiannual Programme and Annual Work Programme: Parliament urges the Agencies to draw up multiannual strategic programmes and guidelines, tailored to the specificities of their activities, to clarify their objectives and means of reaching them. As far as their Annual Work Programmes are concerned, Agencies provide consistency in their planning, adequate procedures and guidelines, and sufficient documentation supporting the AWP in order to provide information on all activities to be carried out and on the resources planned per activity. In this regard, close cooperation with the relevant EP committees is also expected.

Annual Activity Report (AAR): Parliament calls on the Agencies to standardise the structure of their AARs in accordance with the format used by the Commission’s Directorates-General (DGs) and, accordingly, to provide detailed and complete information on their activities. This report should reflect the Annual Work Programme of the Agencies and include charts, outlining in a concise way, the amount of time spent by each staff member on a project (e.g. Gannt diagrams).

Parliament also urges the Agencies to:

- present a bi-annual overall evaluation of their activities and performance on their website;
- provide the discharge authority with a report on the measures taken based upon the observations and recommendations made by the discharge authority in its previous discharge reports;
- continue to present a comparison of the operations that were carried out from one year to the next.

Challenges on internal control system: Parliament encourages the Agencies to further improve their internal control systems to underpin their Director’s annual declaration of assurance. It also notes that the Agencies are not obliged to make the Internal Audit Service (IAS) reports available to Parliament’s Budgetary Control Committee per se and considers this a flaw in the legislation. It therefore calls for the legislation in this regard to be amended. It also calls on the Agencies’ Management Boards to duly take into account the recommendations made by the IAS, with a view to rapidly remedying the identified failings.
Extract from the Summary

Generally, Members are disappointed that the Commission is unable to assess the actual scale of irregularities and fraud and that consequently it is not possible to evaluate the overall scale of irregularities and fraud in individual Member States or to identify and discipline those Member States with the highest level of irregularities and fraud, as called for by the European Parliament back in 2009.

Members call for the responsibility for the development of the measurement tools of fraud and corruption related to the EU funds to be taken by the Commission in close cooperation with the European Parliament, the European Court of Auditors and other EU auditing and control bodies.

OLAF: Parliament reiterates that it is necessary to continue to strengthen the independence, effectiveness and efficiency of OLAF. It calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure the effective and timely implementation of recommendations made once cases have been investigated by OLAF. Furthermore, Member States should be obliged to report, on an annual basis, on the follow up of cases sent to their judicial authorities by OLAF, including on penal and financial sanctions imposed in such cases.

Public Procurement, increased transparency and the fight against corruption: Parliament calls on the Commission, the relevant Union agencies and Member States to take measures and provide resources to ensure that EU funds are not subject to corruption, to adopt dissuasive sanctions where corruption and fraud are found, and to step up the confiscation of criminal assets involved in fraud, tax evasion and money laundering-related crimes.

Members reiterate their call on the Commission and Member States to: (i) design, implement and periodically evaluate uniform systems of procurement to prevent fraud and corruption, (ii) define and implement clear conditions for participation in public procurement and criteria on which public procurement decisions are made, and (iii) adopt and implement systems to review public procurement decisions at national level.

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2011 with observations forming an integral part of the Decisions on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2009, Section III – Commission and executive agencies, based on 2010/2142(DEC) (P7_TA(2011)0194; A7-0134/2011)

Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Extract from the Summary

Parliament ... calls for:

- the strengthening of the Commission’s Internal Audit Service (IAS);
- the introduction of a single audit model whereby audits are carried out, recorded and reported to a common standard (single audit);
- transparency measures with the creation of a single and comprehensive online system (a central database) which can be accessed easily by any
individual and would therefore allow the public to have easy access to full and complete information about the expenditure of the Union by budget line and by beneficiary;

- the review of the evaluation systems which evaluate the effectiveness of expenditure programmes to assess whether they are adding value, delivering value for money, and achieving the objectives for which they were established.

Parliament also focuses on the following issues:

- **national management declarations** which are to be understood as an instrument facilitating greater national accountability for Union spending by giving both national parliaments and national audit institutions an opportunity to participate in ensuring legality, regularity and performance of Union spending. These declarations (requested by the Parliament since 2005) should be issued and signed by each national finance minister.

- **completion of the Commission’s governance structure**: the Commission is invited to complete its governance structure by adding the signature of the responsible Commissioner to the Director-General’s Annual Activity Report and by having the Synthesis Report - which also shall include a "scoreboard" on the quality of controls per Member State and policy area - signed by the President of the European Commission;

- **systematic activation of interruption and suspension of payments as well as lifting of the measure**: Parliament invites the Commission to introduce a systematic activation of interruptions and suspensions of payments as soon as evidence suggests a significant deficiency in the functioning of the Member States’ management and control systems;

- **improvement of corrective mechanisms**: the resolution insists that the Commission improve the corrective mechanisms ensuring that the financial consequences of incorrectly made payments are borne by the beneficiaries and not the taxpayers;

- **establishment of a performance evaluator**: the Commission is invited to appoint a "performance evaluator" with responsibility for the preparation of the evaluation report. The report shall be drawn up so that the relation between the key performance indicators, their legal/political basis, the amount of expenditure and the results achieved is clear and transparent, that the methodology to be used for the production of this report should be audited by the IAS which should also assess the work done, and that the key performance indicators used by all departments in the Commission shall be publicly available. It should be presented in Plenary;

- **introduction of a new spending logic**: lastly, Parliament calls for the introduction of a new spending logic aimed at improving the quality of spending and ensuring that funds provided by Union taxpayers are spent both correctly and wisely.

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Leading committee: CONT (no other committee for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Members review all the common challenges faced by the agencies. Their main recommendations may be summarised as follows:

I. Common challenges on financial management:

- **Carryover and cancellation of operational appropriations**: given the large volume of carryovers and cancellations of operational appropriations, Parliament calls on the agencies concerned to step up their efforts to improve financial and budgetary planning and programming. It calls, in particular, for greater predictability of expenditure and a solution that respects the annuality principle. **It points out that the high level of carryovers and...**
cancellations is often indicative of the inability of an agency to manage a large increase in its budget. ...

- **Weaknesses in procurement procedures**: once again, Parliament notes that several agencies had deficiencies in procurement procedures. It invites the agencies to apply a series of technical measures to improve contracts and procurement procedures. All of the agencies are called upon to publish on their websites a list of all the contracts awarded over the last three years at least.

- **Grant management**: Parliament considers it important that the agencies improve their grant management by: carrying out on-the-spot controls on the grant beneficiaries, promoting standard unit costs per categories instead of grants based on reimbursements of eligible costs.

**II. Common challenges on human resources**: a large number of weaknesses were observed in recruitment procedures. As these weaknesses risk limiting the agencies’ capacity to counter possible allegations of arbitrary decisions on staff recruitment, Parliament calls for the procedures to be improved as follows:

- ...
- **Interim staff**: the agencies are called upon to ensure that sensitive tasks are not assigned to interim staff, which presents a risk.
- **Conflicts of interest**: Parliament reminds the agencies of the importance of fully guaranteeing the independence of their staff and experts. It points out that an agency's reputation could be affected in cases where it is challenged on the ground of conflicts of interest and invite the Commission to provide Parliament with a detailed overview of the criteria applied in order to ensure the independence of recruited staff, in particular with respect to possible conflicts of interest. A comprehensive analysis of the agencies’ approach to the management of situations where there are potential conflicts of interest is also called for.

**III. Common challenges on the internal control system**: Parliament encourages the agencies to further improve their internal control system by means of:

- **Summaries of the internal audit reports**: it urges the Directors of each agency to fully fulfil their obligation to include in their reports to the discharge authority details of the general content of the reports of the Internal Audit Service (IAS) Reports and calls for the introduction of a harmonised structure for addressing these summaries, following FRONTEX's example.
- **Role of the IAS**: Parliament calls on all the agencies to take into account the recommendations made by the IAS, with a view to rapidly remedies the identified failings. It also stresses the IAS's important role in carrying out audits on the agencies' performance.

**IV. Statement of Assurance and Annual Activity Report**: in this regard, Parliament calls for:

- the publication of the agencies' Directors’ statements of assurance on their respective websites;  
- the standardisation of the structure of the agencies' Annual Activity Reports in accordance with the format used by the Commission’s Directorates-General (DGs) by including the activities accomplished, the management challenges, the internal audit findings and the human resources improvements concerning the financial year in question.

It also encourages the Court of Auditors to include a global evaluation of each Annual Activity Report in its specific Annual Reports on the agencies.

**V. Agencies’ governance**: as regards governance, Parliament suggests the following:

- **The agencies' management boards**: given the large size of certain agencies' Governing Boards and the high turnover of their members, Parliament calls on the Interinstitutional Working Group on Agencies to propose that consideration be given to the possibility of merging Governing Boards for agencies working in related fields;
- ...
- **Disciplinary procedures**: once again, Parliament calls on the agencies to consider setting up an inter-agency disciplinary board.

**VI. Performance**: Parliament considers Eurojust’s initiative to include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in its 2010 plans as a best practice for the other agencies. It calls on the agencies to effectively link KPIs to their objectives, budget and annual work programme. Further recommendations are proposed as regards: i) the establishment of a multianual work programme; ii) a comparison between the achievements of each agency from one year to the next in order to better evaluate their results. Parliament invites the agencies to enhance their customer focus and feedback procedures and to make full use of the results of their evaluations in this regard. It considers it very important that agencies further develop their performance monitoring system and ensure that the results of their performance are monitored using KPIs.

Leading committee: CONT

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament regrets that, in general, the Commission's 2009 Annual Report does not provide information on the estimated level of irregularities and fraud in individual Member States, as it concentrates on the level of reporting, and it is therefore not possible to have an overview of the actual level of irregularities and fraud in the Member States and to identify and discipline those with the highest level of irregularities and fraud.

Members also regret that the Commission’s report fails to consider fraud in detail and deals with irregularities very broadly. They call for a distinction to be made between fraud and errors or irregularities. They call on the Commission to exercise its responsibility in ensuring compliance by Member States in their reporting obligations with a view to providing reliable and comparable data on irregularities and fraud.

Moreover, Parliament deplores the fact that large amounts of EU funds are still wrongly spent. It is also concerned about the level of outstanding irregularities not recovered or declared unrecoverable in Italy at the end of the fiscal year of 2009. The Commission is called to take appropriate action with a view to ensuring prompt recovery of those funds. It calls on the Commission to hold Member States more accountable for the amount of irregularities that have yet to be recovered.

Public procurement, increased transparency and the fight against corruption: Members call on the Commission, the relevant Union agencies and the Member States to take measures and provide resources to ensure that EU funds are not subject to corruption, to adopt dissuasive sanctions where corruption and fraud are found, and to step up the confiscation of criminal assets involved in fraud, tax evasion and money-laundering-related crimes. They call on the Commission and the Member States to design, implement and periodically evaluate uniform systems of procurement to prevent fraud and corruption. They urge the Council to complete the conclusion of the Cooperation Agreements with Liechtenstein in the shortest possible time and to give the Commission a mandate to negotiate antifraud agreements with Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland.

Lastly, Parliament urges the Commission to take action to ensure one-stop transparency of the beneficiaries of EU funds.


Leading committee: CONT (REGI for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

Parliament regrets that, in general, the Commission's 2008 Annual Report does not provide information on the estimated level of irregularities and fraud in individual Member States, as it concentrates on the level of reporting, and it is therefore not possible to have an overview of the actual level of irregularities and fraud in the Member States and to identify and discipline those with the highest level of irregularities and fraud.

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Public procurement, increased transparency and the fight against corruption: Members call on the Commission, the relevant Union agencies and the Member States to take measures and provide resources to ensure that EU funds are not subject to corruption, to adopt dissuasive sanctions where corruption and fraud are found, and to step up the confiscation of criminal assets involved in fraud, tax evasion and money-laundering-related crimes. They call on the Commission and the Member States to design, implement and periodically evaluate uniform systems of procurement to prevent fraud and corruption. They urge the Council to complete the conclusion of the Cooperation Agreements with Liechtenstein in the shortest possible time and to give the Commission a mandate to negotiate antifraud agreements with Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland.

Lastly, Parliament urges the Commission to take action to ensure one-stop transparency of the beneficiaries of EU funds.
 Extract from the Summary

Direct expenditure: the resolution points out that external aid is a sector which is increasingly affected by irregularities and fraud, and it requests the Commission to pay attention to the problem of double financing of projects.

An integrated internal control framework: Members welcome the fact that the Commission’s communication on tolerable risk provided a basis for a debate on this issue, and share the view that different tolerable error thresholds may be set for each sector. It considers that the annual summaries submitted to the Commission by Member States should have a firmer legal basis than that currently in place under the Financial Regulation.

Increased transparency and the fight against fraud, corruption and financial crime: Parliament notes that the public procurement sector is the one most open to risks of mismanagement, and fraud. It calls on the Commission and Member States to improve current rules on public procurement. It asks the Commission to intervene to ensure that all Member States furnish reliable, uniform information on beneficiaries of EU funds which must be included in the Early Warning System and the Central Exclusion Database.

OLAF’s work: Parliament takes the view that OLAF should draw more extensively on the work carried out by the Commission’s internal audit services when initiating investigations, rather than relying mainly on information provided by officials or Member States. It is also important to monitor whether and how the Commission’s internal audit service takes account of OLAF’s recommendations, and Members call on OLAF to provide relevant statistics in its future annual reports. They go on to state that OLAF’s work can be made still more effective by ensuring detailed planning of investigations, through the adoption of an ad hoc procedural regulation as a binding guide, promoting the use of SMART objectives and RACER indicators for the investigations themselves, improving cooperation between OLAF and national judicial authorities from the start of the investigative process and rapidly applying a ‘core tasks’ policy, as well as follow-up procedures during the initial stage of investigations by OLAF, under which small-scale fraud would be handled by other bodies while recurring small-scale fraud which results in large sums from irregularities due to structural problems may be of interest for OLAF investigations.

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Leading committee: CONT

Summary

I. Common challenges on financial management

Carryover and cancellation of operational appropriations: generally, Parliament notes that the Court of Auditors flagged up a large volume of carryovers and cancellations of operational appropriations by several agencies in the financial year 2008. This situation often points to weaknesses in agencies’ resource planning systems. Accordingly the agencies concerned should introduce:

- an effective system for scheduling and monitoring the contractual deadlines laid down;
- a risk assessment process for their activities so that, subsequently, they can be closely monitored;
- a system of differentiated appropriations in future budgets for grants so that, in subsequent financial years, cancellations are avoided;

...

Weaknesses in procurement procedures: Parliament deplores the fact that there were deficiencies in procurement procedures (no prior estimate of the market...
value was made before the procedure was launched, severe weaknesses in the monitoring of contracts). It stresses that this situation points to major failings in cooperation between the relevant departments of the agencies concerned.

... Internal audit: Parliament states that it will not accept agencies recruiting interim staff to perform what are deemed to be sensitive financial duties. It calls on the agencies’ management boards to implement the recommendations made by the Commission’s Internal Audit Service, with a view to rapidly taking the action required in order to remedy the failings that have been identified.

II. Agencies’ governance

... Disciplinary procedures: Members recall their proposal to set up an inter-agency disciplinary board. They call on the agency responsible for coordinating the network of agencies to establish a network of staff at the grade required to be a member of the disciplinary board.

Agency management boards: Parliament ... demands that the EU agencies’ management boards achieve maximum convergence between the planning of tasks and of resources (both financial and human) through the introduction of activity-based budgeting and management (ABB/ABM). Members call on the interinstitutional working group on agencies to consider whether the Commission should have a blocking minority when votes are taken by management boards, with a view to ensuring that the right technical decisions are taken for the agencies.

Agency directors’ role and Commission’s role: the interinstitutional working group on agencies is asked to look into the qualities and skills a director requires in order to run an agency effectively and secure access to expert advice on the Community’s budget regulations from the moment the agency is set up. The Commission is requested to step up its efforts to provide all necessary administrative assistance to the relatively small agencies.

III. Performance: Members stress that the agencies must draw up multiannual work programmes. SMART objectives and RACER indicators should be laid down in the annual work programmes, for performance assessment purposes. Agencies must also consider making a Gantt diagram part of the programming for each of their operational activities, with a view to indicating in concise form the amount of time spent by each staff member on a project and encouraging an approach geared towards achieving results.

Parliament also considers that an integrated management control system should be based on the following:

- the financial applications that provide information on the level of use of commitment and payment appropriations;
- the career cycle management application which confirms consistency among descriptions of posts, individual performances and the deployment of corrective measures;
- the system to record working time;
- the steering system for publications, which links each product to an action in the work programme.

It stresses the importance of including an assessment of agencies’ performance in the discharge process. In this connection, it calls on the agencies to set out, in the tables they annex to the Court of Auditors’ next reports, a comparison of operations carried out during the year for which discharge is to be granted and in the previous financial year, so as to enable the discharge authority to assess more effectively their performance from one year to the next.

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Leading committee: CONT (AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, CULT, LIBE, FEMM for opinion)

Summary

Extract from the Summary

In regard to the Commission's internal control system: with regard to internal control, Parliament made the following observations:

- **the Action Plan for an Integrated Internal Control Framework**: notwithstanding the progressive improvement in the DAS since 2003, Parliament remains concerned by the Court’s assessment that it is not yet possible to determine whether the Action Plan has had a measurable impact on the supervisory and control systems. Further efforts are required on this matter;
- **balance between operational expenditure and the cost of the EU funds' control system**: Parliament calls on the Commission to carry out in 2010 a more complete and exhaustive evaluation of the resources given over to control systems in certain areas in order to assess what future improvements can be achieved and at what cost, as recommended by the Court of Auditors for achieving progress on the question of tolerable risk of error;
- **tolerable risk of error**: Parliament considers that it is urgent to clarify the definition of “tolerable risk of error”. Overall, the Commission should evaluate the relationship between the resources available for each particular policy, and the part of those resources dedicated to the control systems broken down by area of expenditure. It must also identify areas of high political sensitivity (with high “reputational risk”) where a quality approach to rates of error (rather than an economic one) should be adopted;

...Political responsibility and administrative responsibility at the Commission:

- **transparency and ethics**: insisting on the importance of annual activity reports for the directorates-general of the Commission, Parliament also stresses more generally the need to ensure the transparency of working methods and also of beneficiaries of EU funding. It suggests, in particular, that the public must have access to information on all members of expert groups and working groups managing expenditures and that a public register of NGO-type bodies that receive EU funding be established. It also emphasises the need to revise the present Code of Conduct of the Members of the Commission in order to remedy shortcomings ... It expects the Commission to begin the process of consulting Parliament on revision of the present Code of Conduct of the Members of the Commission by August 2010. The Code should incorporate the necessary ethical rules and the principal guidelines to be observed by Commissioners in the conduct of their office. MEPs insist, in particular, on the need for all staff are well trained and properly briefed about their obligations and rights under the Staff Regulations;
- **governance and administrative reform**: Parliament proposes that the Commission splits the hierarchical power between people with accounting responsibility and those responsible for transferring funds in application of the normal security rules for internal control in treasury management;
- **OLAF**: Parliament welcomes the undertakings by the new Commission to unblock discussions in the Council about the reform of OLAF and reiterates its view that OLAF should remain within the Commission whilst retaining its independence.
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Special report 28/2016 of 8 December 2016
Dealing with serious cross-border threats to health in the EU: important steps taken but more needs to be done
Public Health and Food Safety

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<td>Short summary of questions asked, observations, findings and recommendations</td>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
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| | 1. Is the EU framework for protecting citizens from serious cross-border threats to health adequately implemented?  
1.1. Were the innovations introduced by European Parliament and Council Decision No 1082/2013/EU effectively implemented?  
1.2. Are the existing systems for early warning and response and epidemiological surveillance adequately managed and implemented?  
1.3. Are the EU health programmes making effective contributions to protecting citizens from threats to health?  
1.4. Is the Commission’s internal coordination in terms of health security funding and public health crisis management adequate? |
| Observations: | 1. The decision on serious cross-border threats to health introduced certain innovations for EU health security, but their implementation and development were hampered by delays and strategic and operational challenges remain: there are insufficient clear-cut results from the preparedness planning consultation and coordination; the measurement of performance in preparedness coordination is weak; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)’s role in relation to generic preparedness is insufficiently formalised; Member States’ responsiveness to speed up the joint procurement of pandemic influenza vaccine is insufficient and there is no EU mechanism to address urgent needs for medical countermeasures within the framework of the decision on serious cross-border threats to health; there are strategic and operational challenges for the formalised Health Security Committee; ‘coordination of response’ rules are difficult to apply in practice;  
2. The important role of existing systems and procedures for early warning and response and epidemiological surveillance is widely recognised but there are certain upgrades to be made: despite extensive use and wide appreciation of the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS), further enhancements are needed, including for the interfaces with other alert systems; the updated EU level approach to early warning and response for serious chemical and environmental threats is not yet tested; the EU system for epidemiological surveillance generally works well, but some further work is required to optimise data comparability and quality;  
3. The performance of the health programme as regards protecting citizens from health threats showed weaknesses: there are no sustainable results for health threat actions under the second EU health programme; there are weaknesses in measuring the indicator for the health threats objective under the third EU health programme (2014-2020) and a relatively low level of spending in 2014-2016;  
4. There are gaps in the Commission’s internal coordination in terms of health security activities and public health crisis management: coordination between Commission services for health security funding from different EU programmes does not fully ensure synergies; more progress is needed in operationalising |
cooperation between Commission crisis management structures; weaknesses were found in the Commission’s management of its Health Emergencies Operations Facility.

Recommendations:
1. In order to speed up the development and implementation of the innovations introduced by the decision on serious cross-border threats to health, and tackle the remaining operational and strategic challenges for the Health Security Committee (HSC):
   (a) the Commission should propose to the HSC that it develop a strategic HSC roadmap for the implementation and development of the decision. While the decision does not require the setting of targets and indicators, this roadmap should reflect joint priorities, in particular on the coordination of preparedness planning, to facilitate a common understanding of how to achieve more clear-cut results towards 2020. Work in this area should take account of the international initiatives in this domain which in particular call for peer review or external assessment mechanisms to be applied. If possible, this work should also take account of preparedness guidance already developed at EU level;
   (b) the Commission should ensure that lessons learned from the first reporting cycle on preparedness planning are applied for the next round of reporting in 2017 and improve its performance reporting for the implementation of the decision towards 2020. It should ensure that reported progress is accurate and based on methodologies agreed with the Member States where relevant;
   (c) the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, should identify how to best make use of the HSC working groups and ensure that their work is well structured around technical issues and serves as an input to the HSC. Working groups already established need to apply their terms of reference from 2017 and deliver results, based on annual work plans and clearly identified objectives. This also applies to the HSC preparedness working group and its work to develop an EU mechanism to address urgent needs for medical countermeasures;
   (d) the Commission and the Member States need to ensure that the work on the joint procurement of pandemic influenza vaccine accelerates and delivers results as soon as possible;
2. In order to further upgrade the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) and develop more integrated solutions for related risk management procedures, the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), should:
   (a) examine and propose in 2017 options for modernising and enhancing the EWRS. This should include integrated or complementary options for EU-level situational awareness and incident management for serious cross-border threats to health;
   (b) obtain regular feedback from users on integrated solutions for risk management and the operation and development of the EWRS;
3. In order to address the main weaknesses identified in the performance of the health programme for actions addressing health threats, the Commission should:
   (a) examine and propose options in 2017 for ensuring a greater sustainability of results for health threat-related actions funded under the health programme towards 2020. These should include stronger needs and policy relevance identifications when programming actions, but also a more collaborative analysis between DG Health and Food Safety and Chafea of the policy relevance of ongoing and recently completed actions with a view to identifying options to promote the uptake of good-quality results (also see Recommendation 4);
   (b) define and agree, in consultation with the Member States, a clear methodology for collecting performance information needed to report progress towards 2020 under the specific indicator for health threats in the third health programme (also see Recommendation 1);
   (c) clearly identify in 2017, for the remaining years of the health programme until 2020, which priorities under the objective to protect citizens from serious cross-border threats to health provide opportunities for funding policy-relevant actions towards 2020 (see Recommendation 3(a)).
4. In order to bridge the gaps in the Commission’s internal coordination in terms of activities relevant to health security and public health crisis management, and to improve the design of its Health Emergencies Operations Facility:
(a) the Commission should define from 2017 a more structured, detailed approach for coordination between DG Health and Food Safety and other Commission services which perform activities relevant to health security, including a mapping of past, ongoing and planned activities. This should allow for the identification of potential synergies and enhance cooperation on common issues such as the limited uptake of outputs for EU co-funded actions and enabling stakeholders to better target policymakers;

(b) the Commission should take immediate action to operationalise the memorandum of understanding for crisis management structures between DG Health and Food Safety, DG Migration and Home Affairs and DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations; this includes organising joint lessons learned activities and mutual training on policy areas and systems, as well as putting in place standard operating procedures;

(c) the Commission should without delay review its Health Emergencies Operational Facility and ensure that: it is updated in line with lessons learned from the Ebola crisis and major EU-level exercises; a continuous monitored training plan is in place for all relevant staff potentially involved in its operations; and, if possible, exchange views with ECDC and DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, in particular on the design of their respective crisis management manuals or structures.

| CONT Committee Working Document; Rapporteur | CONT Working Document of 16/01/2017 on ECA Special Report No 28/2016 (2015 Discharge): Dealing with serious cross-border threats to health in the EU: important steps taken but more needs to be done (PES95.735v01-00) Rapporteur: Brian Hayes (EPP) |
| [Recommendations by the rapporteur,] | 1. Welcomes the European Court of Auditors (ECA) report, endorses its recommendations, and encourages the Commission to take these recommendations into account when implementing further steps to deal with serious cross border threats to health in the EU; 2. Reiterates the ECA’s recommendation that lessons learned from the first reporting cycle need to be adequately applied ahead of the next report. In order to ensure that future reporting is adequate, the process needs to be consistent across all Member States; 3. Recognises the progress made since the 2008-2013 health strategy but stresses the need for better and more strategic monitoring; 5. Supports the ECA’s recommendation that the Health Security Committee (HSC) develops a strategic plan to address the operational and strategic challenges it faces; 6. Notes that the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has no formal process to respond effectively to requests for assistance; 7. Stresses that the various Commission services which have functions related to health and DG Health & Food Safety develop a structured approach to improve co-operation; 8. Regrets that Member States have not acted collectively to speed up the joint procurement of the pandemic influenza vaccine and recognises that influenza is an issue that affects health services in individual Member States on an annual basis. A co-ordinated approach across Member States will benefit the Health of EU citizens and reduce costs; 9. Calls on the Commission, Member States and the ECDC to work together to further develop the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS). It’s important that such a system, which has been used extensively is upgraded to reflect changes in technology to ensure optimum use. |

| Related EP Reports / Resolutions of other committees | EP Resolution of 28/04/2016 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2014, based on 2015/2177(DEC) (P8_TA(2016)0168; A8-0103/2016) Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion) Summary |
| [The European Parliament,] |
15. Welcomes the development and launch of the Surveillance Atlas of Infectious Diseases ('Atlas') on the Centre’s web portal; notes that by the end of 2014, the Centre was publishing Union level data together with some international data for four diseases via the Atlas and encourages the Centre to continue with this project; regrets at the same time that the Centre’s communication activities were largely restricted to publications on the Centre’s web portal and that the Centre had not been identified by EU media as a key information provider; calls on the Centre to take steps to improve media presence;

16. Acknowledges that all reports edited and published by the Centre were made available as downloadable documents on the Centre’s web portal, as well as the fact that it is increasingly publishing data, graphs, maps and infographics as downloadable assets; notes that in 2014, a new section ‘Data and Tools’ was added to the Centre’s web portal in order to provide a centralised entry point to interactive data, maps and other similar resources; regrets that information is not made available on the web portal in all Union languages;

19. Acknowledges that general management in the second half of 2014 was dominated by business continuity issues, such as the need to make balanced choices and re-align planning to address high-priority threats, while at the same time ensuring continuity of key services and projects; welcomes that, by and large, the quality of the Centre’s outputs remained at a high level despite those issues;

20. Takes note that, during the course of the Ebola emergency, well over 100 staff of the Centre worked on supporting the Union-level response to Ebola, and welcomes the Centre’s flexibility, service orientation and commitment to scientific excellence that were demonstrated on this occasion;

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EP Resolution of 13/04/2016 on the Zika virus outbreak, based on 2016/2584(RSP) (P8_TA(2016)0122; B8-0449/2016)
Resolution on topical subject tabled by Giovanni LaVia, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Matthias Groote, José Inácio Faria, Kateřina Konečná, Martin Häusling, Piernicola Pedicini on behalf of ENVI committee

Summary

Articles 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 27

The Parliament stressed the importance of setting up communication plans on the most appropriate scale in order to raise awareness among the population and promote the appropriate behaviour in order to avoid mosquito bites. It welcomed the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC’s) ongoing monitoring of the situation and called on the ECDC to regularly update their risk assessments and epidemiological updates. The Parliament believes that the ECDC should establish an expert committee in tropical communicable diseases in order to efficiently coordinate and monitor all the measures which need to be put in place in the EU.

The Members called on the Commission to propose specific measures for European regions where the Zika virus has already spread to support persons already infected and to avoid a broader transmission in those regions and in the rest of the European continent. They further called on the Commission to assist Member States and third countries fighting this epidemic in the regions where the outbreak is more severe and to develop a Management Protocol targeted at citizens who might be at risk of carrying the Zika virus infection owing to their epidemiologic context, with the aim of effectively breaking the chain of sexual and blood transmission by early detection. The Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to significantly enhance monitoring of invasive mosquito species and increase control of mosquitoes by eliminating breeding sites (such as pools) and planning for insecticide spraying in case of outbreaks, and to improve disinfection rates of cargo, cargo carriers and cabin and passenger compartments of planes from infected countries.
The Parliament pointed out the need for a coordinated approach at EU and international level in the fight against this outbreak and welcomed the launch of the European Medical Corps and considers it to be relevant in helping mobilise medical and public health teams and equipment to fight the Zika virus if necessary. It called also on the Commission to urgently put forward a horizontal EU strategy on global health aimed at achieving the new sustainable development framework and its goals.

The Parliament welcomed the Commission's decision to mobilise EUR 10 million for research into the Zika virus and highlighted the further funding possibilities available under Horizon 2020 and FP7 for research on vaccine development. It called on the Member States and the Commission to coordinate research among the laboratories performing research on the Zika virus, and to promote the establishment of such laboratories in the Member States where they do not yet exist. It further called for the EU and the Member States to propose strategies to help connect vaccine makers, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, and other national and state public health agencies and health providers to promote an exchange of data and analytics.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by ECR, Greens/EFA, S&D, ALDE, EPP

Summary

EU action: Parliament called on the Commission to draw up needs assessments and country-specific plans to determine and coordinate the demand for, and deployment of, qualified health personnel, mobile laboratories, laboratory equipment, protective clothing and treatment centres with isolation wards. It also asked the Commission to:

- maintain, through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), close contacts with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the WHO and Member States via the Committee on Health Security;
- put in place control systems to ensure that the entire budget allocated to stopping the Ebola outbreak is actually used to fight the epidemic in the countries affected by the virus and not for other purposes;
- support the African Union with regard to the need for a holistic action plan, as the situation was continuing to deteriorate rapidly and was affecting the economy as well as public order in the countries concerned, as the Ebola crisis had become complex, with political, security, economic and social implications that would continue to affect the region well beyond the current medical emergency.

Member States were asked to:

- coordinate and strengthen medical research and the production of efficient medicines and vaccines against Ebola, and to advance the necessary clinical trials for existing candidate treatments;
- coordinate flights and establish dedicated air bridges to move health personnel and equipment to the affected countries and the region, and to provide medical evacuation if necessary;
- carry out scrupulous infection control and, in cooperation with the ECDC, provide fuller information to the public on the risks;

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Leading committee: ENVI (BUDG, ITRE for opinion)
Summary


Extract from the Summary

General objectives: it is specified that the general objectives of the Programme shall be to complement, support to the policies of the Member States to improve the health of Union citizens and reduce health inequalities by: encouraging innovation in health, increasing the sustainability of health systems and protecting Union citizens from serious cross-border health threats, as well as add value to the policies of the Member States.

Programme actions: actions have been redefined. These must now be aimed at:
- health promotion and disease prevention and fostering supportive environments for healthy lifestyles (exchange of good practice)…;
- protecting Union citizens from serious cross-border health threats … ;
- supporting public health capacity-building and contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable health systems … ;
- facilitating access to better and safer healthcare for Union citizens.

Reporting and review

Article 13 of the Final Act

Monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of results

1. The Commission shall, in close cooperation with the Member States, monitor the implementation of the actions under the Programme in the light of its objectives and indicators, including available information on the amount of climate-related expenditure. It shall report thereon to the committee referred to in Article 17(1), and shall keep the European Parliament and the Council informed.

2. At the request of the Commission, Member States shall submit available information on the implementation and impact of the Programme. Such requests for information shall be proportionate and shall avoid imposing any unnecessary increase in the administrative burden on Member States.

3. Half way through the duration of the Programme, but not later than 30 June 2017, the Commission shall draw up and present to the European Parliament and to the Council a mid-term evaluation report on the achievement of the objectives of the Programme, the state-of-play regarding the implementation of the thematic priorities set out in Annex I, and the efficiency of the use of resources and the Union added value of the Programme, in view of a decision on the renewal, modification or suspension of its thematic priorities. The mid-term evaluation report shall, additionally, address the scope for simplification, the internal and external coherence of the Programme, the continued relevance of all objectives, as well as the contribution of the actions to the achievement of the objectives set out in Article 168 TFEU. It shall take into account evaluation results on the long-term impact of the previous programme.
In the mid-term evaluation report, the Commission shall, in particular, indicate the following:

(a) if it is not possible to implement and achieve one or more of the thematic priorities listed in Annex I in line with the objectives of the Programme and within the remaining duration of the Programme;
(b) whether the evaluation identified one or more specific, significant thematic priorities which are not listed in Annex I, but which have become necessary to achieve the general and specific objectives of the Programme;
(c) the reasons for the conclusions referred to in points (a) and (b).

The long-term impact and the sustainability of effects of the Programme shall be evaluated with a view to feeding into a decision on the possible renewal, modification or suspension of a subsequent programme.

4. The Commission shall make the results of actions undertaken pursuant to this Regulation publicly available and shall ensure that they are widely disseminated in order to contribute to improving health in the Union.

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Leading committee: ENVI (AFET, DEVE, BUDG, REGI for opinion)


Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: the Decision establishes the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, which promotes solidarity and supports the coordination of Member States’ actions in the field of civil protection with a view to improving the effectiveness of systems for preventing, preparing for and responding to natural and man-made disasters. It lays down the general rules for the Union Mechanism as well as the rules for the provision of financial assistance. The Decision is intended to bring better predictability and quality of assistance, and increased cost-efficiency by means of scale and complementarity. The protection to be ensured by the Union Mechanism will cover primarily people, but also the environment and property, including cultural heritage, against all kinds of natural and man-made disasters, including the consequences of acts of terrorism, technological, radiological or environmental disasters, marine pollution, and acute health emergencies, occurring inside or outside the Union.

Specific objectives:

- to achieve a high level of protection against disasters by preventing or reducing their potential effects, by fostering a culture of prevention and by improving cooperation between the civil protection and other relevant services;
- to enhance preparedness at Member State and Union level to respond to disasters;
- to facilitate rapid and efficient response in the event of disasters or imminent disasters; and
- to increase public awareness and preparedness for disasters.
Union structure: the Mechanism is based on a Union structure consisting of an Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), a European Emergency Response Capacity (EERC) in the form of a voluntary pool of pre-committed capacities from the Member States, trained experts, a Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) managed by the Commission and contact points in the Member States. This provides a framework for collecting validated information on the situation, for dissemination to the Member States and for sharing lessons learnt from interventions.

Prevention actions: the Commission shall, inter alia:
- take action to improve the knowledge base on disaster risks and facilitate the sharing of knowledge, best practices and information,
- promote Member States’ risk assessment and mapping activity
- regularly update a cross-sectoral overview and map of natural and man-made disaster risks the Union may face
- support the development and implementation of Member States’ risk management activity.

Preparedness actions: the Decision sets out the general preparedness actions that must be taken both by the Commission and by Member States. Amongst the Commission’s tasks is the management of the ERCC and CECIS, and developing a network of trained experts from Member States, who can be available at short notice to assist the ERCC. Member States, for their part shall identify modules, other response capacities and experts within their civil protection or other emergency services, which could be made available for intervention upon request through the Union Mechanism.

Response action: the response mechanism includes an enhanced coordination system which encompasses:
- notification of disasters in the EU between Member States;
- disaster response: when a disaster occurs within the Union, or is imminent, the affected Member State may request assistance through the ERCC. The request shall be as specific as possible. In exceptional situations of increased risk a Member State may also request assistance in the form of temporary pre-positioning of response capacities;
- any Member State to which a request for assistance is addressed through the Union Mechanism shall promptly determine whether it is in a position to render the assistance required and inform the requesting Member State of its decision through the CECIS, indicating the scope, terms and, where applicable, costs of the assistance it could render. The ERCC shall keep the Member States informed;
- when a disaster occurs outside the Union, or is imminent, the affected country may request assistance through the ERCC. The assistance may also be requested through or by the United Nations and its agencies, or a relevant international organisation.

Emergency Response Coordination Centre: the ERCC must ensure 24/7 operational capacity, and serve the Member States and the Commission in pursuit of the objectives of the Union Mechanism. On the basis of identified risks, the Commission will define the types and the number of key response capacities required for the EERC (“capacity goals”) and will monitor progress towards these capacity goals identifying potentially significant response capacity gaps in the EERC. Response capacities that Member States make available for the EERC shall be available for response operations under the Union Mechanism following a request for assistance through the ERCC. The ultimate decision on their deployment shall be taken by the Member States which registered the response capacity concerned.

Risk assessment: the Union Mechanism includes a general framework for the sharing of information on risks and risk management capabilities. Member States must: (i) develop risk assessments and risk management capability at national or appropriate sub-national level and make available to the Commission a summary of the relevant elements; (ii) participate, on a voluntary basis, in peer reviews on the assessment of risk management capability.
Article 34 of the Final Act

Evaluation

1. Actions receiving financial assistance shall be monitored regularly in order to follow their implementation.

2. The Commission shall evaluate the application of this Decision and submit to the European Parliament and to the Council:
   (a) an interim evaluation report on the results obtained and the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of this Decision by no later than 30 June 2017;
   (b) a communication on the continued implementation of this Decision by no later than 31 December 2018; and
   (c) an ex-post evaluation report by no later than 31 December 2021.

The interim evaluation report and the communication as referred to in points (a) and (b) respectively shall be accompanied, if appropriate, by proposals for amendments to this Decision.

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Leading committee: ENVI

Final Act: European Parliament and Council Decision No 1082/2013/EU

Summary of the Final Act

Extract from the Summary

CONTENT: the decision lays down rules on epidemiological surveillance, monitoring, early warning of, and combating serious cross-border threats to health, including preparedness and response planning related to those activities, in order to coordinate and complement national policies. The decision applies to serious cross-border threats to health such as threats of biological origin ... or threats of chemical origin, or unknown or environmental ...

Preparedness and response planning: the decision confers a legal base on the Health Security Committee (HSC) which currently exists informally and whose role in strengthened. The decision stipulates that the Member States and the Commission should consult each other within the HSC with a view to coordinating their efforts to develop, strengthen and maintain their capacities for the monitoring, early warning and assessment of, and response to, serious cross-border threats to health.

That consultation should be aimed at in particular sharing best practice and experience in preparedness and response planning and promoting the interoperability of national systems of preparedness planning.

Member States should, by 7 November 2014, and every three years thereafter, provide the Commission with an update on the latest situation with regard to their preparedness and response planning at national level.
Joint procurement of medical countermeasures: the decision allows the institutions of the Union and any Member States which so desire to engage in a joint procurement procedure with a view to the advance purchase of medical countermeasures (in particular, vaccines) for serious cross-border threats to health.

Epidemiological surveillance and ad hoc monitoring: the decision institutes a network for the epidemiological surveillance of the communicable diseases and of the related special health issues. The epidemiological surveillance network shall bring into permanent communication the Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and the competent authorities responsible at national level for epidemiological surveillance. The network shall be operated and coordinated by the ECDC. A list of diseases to be monitored is set out in the Annex to the decision.

Following an alert concerning a threat to health, the Member States should inform each other through the Early Warning Response System (EWRS) and, if the urgency of the situation so requires, through the HSC, about developments with regard to the threat concerned at national level.

Establishment of an early warning and response system: the EWRS, created on an informal basis in 1998, is strengthened and its scope extended to all cross-border threats to health to enable coordination and response at the EU level. The EWRS should enable the Commission and the competent authorities responsible at national level to be in permanent communication for the purposes of alerting, assessing public health risks and determining the measures that may be required to protect public health.

Recognition of emergency situations: the decision introduces the possibility for the Commission to recognise a situation of public health emergency to accelerate the availability of medicines to combat the health crisis. Before recognising a situation of public health emergency at Union level, the Commission should liaise with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in order to share the Commission’s analysis of the situation of the outbreak and to inform the WHO of its intention to issue such a decision. Where such a decision is adopted, the Commission should also inform the WHO thereof.

The occurrence of an event that is linked to serious cross-border threats to health and is likely to have Europe-wide consequences could require the Member States concerned to take particular control or contact-tracing measures in a coordinated manner to identify those persons already contaminated and those persons exposed to risk.

Reporting and review

Article 19 of the Final Act

Reports concerning this Decision

The Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council by 7 November 2015, and every three years thereafter a report on the implementation of this Decision. The report shall include, in particular, an assessment of the operation of the EWRS and of the epidemiological surveillance network, as well as information on how the mechanisms and structures established under this Decision complement other alert systems at Union level and under the Euratom Treaty to protect public health effectively, while avoiding structural duplications. The Commission may accompany the report with proposals to modify the relevant Union provisions.

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Leading committee: ENVI (AGRI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]

41. Calls on the Commission and Member States to seek greater cooperation and coordination on early detection, alert and coordinated response procedures regarding pathogenic antimicrobial resistant bacteria in humans, animals, fish and foodstuffs in order to continuously monitor the extent and growth of AMR; urges the Member States in this context, to set up national databanks, conforming to uniform standards, in which dealers, veterinary surgeons and farmers are required to document the administration and use of antibiotics;

42. Stresses that sound information on the use of antimicrobials in some Member States is still lacking; emphasises the importance of establishing an effective European network of national surveillance systems in the human health and veterinary sectors, based on uniform standards for all Member States, in order to compile clear, comparable, transparent and timely reference data on antimicrobial drug usage; believes this should be based on the existing monitoring networks operated by EFSA, the ECDC European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption Network (ESAC-net), the ECDC European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network (EARS-net), the ECDC Food- and Waterborne Disease Network (FWD-Net), and the EMA European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC);

58. Acknowledges the importance of adopted international initiatives by WHO, OIE, FAO and other relevant global organisations; stresses, however, the importance of global adherence to adopted international standards and guidelines; calls on the Commission, in its evaluation of the implementation of the current AMR Action Plan, to report on Member States' progress on key international AMR commitments;

59. Welcomes the establishment of the Transatlantic Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance (TATFAR) and the set of recommendations, adopted in September 2011, for future EU-US cooperation; stresses, in particular, the importance of specific actions for:
- comparable data collection and data sharing for human and veterinary antimicrobials;
- the development of common blueprints based on best practice for the management of healthcare-associated infections;
- enhanced cooperation between the US Food and Drug Administration and EMA on coordinated approaches facilitating antibacterial drug development and regulation, specifically with regard to the clinical trials stage.

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2012 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2010, based on 2011/2227(DEC) (P7_TA(2012)0170; A7-0123/2012)
Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

Summary

[The European Parliament,]
17. Considers the Centre as an important Union body to strengthen and develop European disease surveillance, to assess and communicate current and emerging threats to human health posed by infectious diseases and to pool Europe’s health knowledge;

18. Acknowledges that the Centre is now working with its partners to implement changes on the basis of lessons learned from the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, in order to further improve the performance of the Centre for the future; points nevertheless to the important contributions made by the Centre to the measures on fighting the H2N1 pandemic, by issuing preliminary guidelines on the ‘Use of specific pandemic influenza vaccines’ in 2009;

*******

Resolution on topical subject tabled by EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA, ECR, GUE/NGL, EFD

Summary

Extract from the Summary

... Parliament calls on the Commission and Council to implement the Communication on ‘Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries 2009-2013’ and its accompanying Action Plan by:

- scaling up the implementation of prevention strategies which effectively target regional or local epidemiologic trends and needs, and working towards universal access to prevention, testing, counselling, treatment, care and support;
- supporting an effective response to HIV/AIDS in priority regions, such as the worst affected EU Member States, the EU’s worst affected neighbouring countries and the Russian Federation and other CIS countries;
- developing means to reach and support the population groups which are most at risk and most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS across Europe.

Parliament calls on the Council to demonstrate political leadership in addressing the continued HIV epidemic in Europe, to develop country-specific HIV action plans and to support effective responses to HIV in neighbouring countries through policy dialogue, technical capacity-building and support for civil society engagement. The Commission and the Council are called upon to provide the resources needed to guarantee equitable access to HIV prevention, testing, treatment, care and support, to address stigma and other barriers to timely access to counselling, testing and early care, etc. Measures are needed to improve instruments and actions to address co-infections such as tuberculosis or hepatitides B and C, among others, through improved access to screening and effective access to treatment.

... Parliament calls on the Commission and Council to implement the changes needed to fulfil their obligations under the UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly Special Session) Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. It also calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to honour their obligations towards the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and to continue to support its work in developing countries.

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Resolution on topical subject tabled by Françoise Grossetête, Linda McAvan, Theodoros Skylakakis, Miroslav Ouzký, Bart Staes, Kartika Tamara Liotard, Oreste Rossi on behalf of ENVI committee

Summary
Members call on the Commission to propose without delay a legislative framework for action against antimicrobial resistance, by promoting 'responsible use' initiatives and supporting dissemination of, and information about, such initiatives.

**The prudent use of antimicrobial agents**: Members reconfirm that urgent action is necessary to avoid, or even reverse, further increases in resistant microorganisms by reducing unnecessary and inappropriate use of antimicrobial agents.

... **The monitoring and surveillance of antimicrobial resistance**: Members stress the need to gather reliable and comparable data on the susceptibility of pathogens to antimicrobial agents and the infections caused by them. They welcome therefore the work begun by the European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (EARSS) and European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC), and now continued by ECDC, on the gathering of high quality, comparable, EU-wide data on antimicrobial resistance, while recognising that there are still many difficulties with respect to data access and the quality of data in some countries. Parliament calls on the Commission, the ECDC and other relevant EU agencies to work together without delay to develop a harmonised and integrated monitoring system for antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial use in Europe, including an early warning response for new resistance mechanisms and strains.

**The need for research into, and the development of, new antimicrobial agents and alternatives**: recognising that the growing gap between the frequency of infections caused by resistant micro-organisms and the decline in research into, and development of, new antimicrobial agents is now threatening to take the public health sector back to the pre-antibiotic era, Parliament reiterates the need for more research on new antimicrobials and possible alternatives under the EU’s Research Framework Programmes, and encourages collaborative research at EU level which can lead to efficiency gains.

**International cooperation**: the Commission is asked to (i) strengthen its close operation with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and other relevant parties and organisations at international level in order to deal more effectively at a global level with antimicrobial resistance; and (ii) ensure that sufficient financial and human resources are available to implement the relevant strategies.

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EP Resolution of 10/05/2011 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2009, based on 2010/2179(DEC) (P7_TA(2011)0169; A7-0107/2011)

Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)

**Summary**

[The European Parliament,]

5. Considers, nevertheless, that the Centre is an important institution that can strengthen and develop European disease surveillance and assess and communicate current and emerging threats to human health posed by infectious diseases;

6. Points to the important contributions made by the Centre to the measures to fight the H1N1 pandemic in 2009, for example by issuing preliminary guidelines on the 'Use of specific pandemic influenza vaccines during the H1N1 2009 pandemic';
7. Takes the view that the Centre’s powers must be strengthened so that the Union has an independent capacity to assess the severity of the risk of infection should a pandemic occur and so that coordination between the Member States can be improved;

8. Notes that the Centre was able to develop a considerable number of products and services in 2009 on epidemiology, surveillance, prevention and control of communicable diseases as well as publishing a variety of scientific reports.

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Leading committee: ENVI

Summary

Extract from the Summary

On the basis of the WHO pandemic alert and subsequent recommendations, the Member States responded rapidly using what resources they had available to implement public health action plans. The move to the highest level of alert, indicating the presence of a pandemic, gave rise in some cases to public health decisions that were disproportionate.

The following recommendations are made:

Enhanced cooperation: Parliament calls for the prevention plans established in the EU and its Member States for future influenza pandemics to be revised in order to gain in effectiveness and coherence and to make them sufficiently autonomous and flexible to be adapted as swiftly as possible and on a case-by-case basis to the actual risk, based on up-to-date relevant information. It requests clarification, and if necessary review, of the roles, duties, remits, limits, relationships and responsibilities of the key actors and structures at EU level for the management of medical threats and that this information be made available to the public. The resolution emphasises the need to reinforce cooperation between Member States, and coordination of Member States with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Members express their approval for the introduction of a procedure enabling the Member States to make group purchases of anti-viral vaccines and medicinal products on a voluntary basis. They recall that according to current Union legislation on medicinal products, liability for the quality, safety and efficacy concerning the authorised indications of a medicinal product rests with the manufacturer. They call for full application of this rule by Member States in all contracts for the procurement of vaccines. The resolution urges the WHO to revise the definition of a pandemic, taking into consideration not only its geographical spread but also its severity.

More independence: Parliament takes the view that the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has to exercise its powers as an independent agency to assess and communicate the severity of infection risk and be given adequate means for all its tasks.

The resolution underscores the need for studies independent of the pharmaceutical companies on vaccines and antiviral medications, including with regard to the monitoring of vaccination coverage.

... The Commission, along with the support of the EMA, is invited to improve the accelerated authorisation procedures for the placing on the market of medicinal
products designed to respond to a health crisis, in such a way that proper clinical trials are carried out before a pandemic occurs.

**Increased transparency**: Parliament calls for an assessment of the influenza vaccination strategies recommended in the EU and applied in Member States, covering the efficacy of the vaccines, their risk-benefit balance and the different target groups recommended, with a view to safe and effective use.

... Lastly, the resolution insists on the need to communicate risks and benefits more clearly and transparently to the public. It underlines the necessity to arrive at a coherent message to the citizens as soon as a health hazard is evaluated (e.g. the nature of the virus, the nature of the risk, how best to prevent it and the risks and benefits of prevention and/or treatment). Parliament calls for a global European strategic approach for the so-called 'at-risk' groups on how to reach them and communicate with them in case of pandemics.

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Leading committee: LIBE (AFET, ENVI, ITRE for opinion)

**Summary**

Extract from the Summary

**Strengthen the common approach**: the EU is called upon to strengthen its common approach to CBRN prevention, detection and response through the creation of specific mechanisms (regulatory, legislative or non-legislative instruments) which make cooperation and the provision of means of assistance compulsory in the event of a CBRN disaster caused by an accident or terrorist attack. Members also call for the sharing and use of best knowledge and expertise from both the civil and military fields.

Members stress that it is essential to strengthen the scope for normative and regulatory intervention by the Commission and invite it to issue legislative proposals, as far as possible, in all areas covered by the Action Plan. They urge that the commitment of the Member States to CBRN control must go further than the simple sharing of best practices and information, and that technologies and infrastructures should also be pooled/shared, so as to avoid duplication and waste of resources in order to create valuable and cost-effective synergies at EU level. In their view, Member States need to agree on methods for the detection and prevention of CBRN disasters, the transferral of CBRN materials within the EU and response measures, including sharing of CBRN-related information and cross-border assistance.

**General recommendations**: Parliament calls on the Member States to agree on methods for the detection and prevention of CBRN disasters, the transferral of CBRN materials within the EU and response measures, including sharing of CBRN-related information and cross-border assistance.

Among the other recommendations that Members make are:

- to create and regularly update a database of the medical countermeasures that are available in the Member States to respond to CBRN incidents, to encourage the sharing of existing capacities;
- the development of EU quality and security standards, as well as an EU system and network of laboratories for the certification of CBRN security equipment and technologies;
- regular mapping of national capabilities and assets, as well as joint exercises among Member States with a view to enhanced preparedness;
- the urgent establishment of a European crisis-response mechanism, based in the Commission’s services, which should coordinate civilian and military
means so as to ensure that the EU has a rapid-response capability to deal with a CBRN disaster;

- the establishment of a European civil protection force based on the existing EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which will enable the Union to bring together the resources necessary for providing emergency assistance, including humanitarian aid, within 24 hours of a CBRN disaster inside or outside EU territory.

... Prevention: the resolution calls on the Commission to act as the main facilitator and monitor in connection with the establishment and regular updating of EU lists on CBRN agents, whereby the Commission should be the one to decide on a reasonable timeframe. It insists that the lists should also include possible preventive and response measures for each CBRN agent, in accordance with its level of dangerousness and potential for malicious use and vulnerability. ... Members consider that the EU CBRN Action Plan should unambiguously call for the development of EU guidelines on security training and standard requirements to be implemented in all 27 Member States. In addition, the Commission and the Member States should work on a proper legal framework to regulate and monitor transactions, thus upgrading the level of security and ensuring proper and rapid reporting of all suspicious transactions as well as the loss or theft of CBRN materials.

Detection: the Commission is called upon to build on the results of an assessment to draw up common EU guidelines on how to handle such accidents or intentional attacks, including finding the means to ensure that Member States allocate adequate human and material resources to such an effort.

... Preparedness and response: Members call on the Council to entrust the Commission with the role of ‘coordinator’ with regard to emergency planning, so that it can act as a monitor, thus ensuring that local and national emergency plans do exist. The Commission should take the role of a depository of such plans, putting it in the best position to identify potential gaps and to act accordingly more promptly than the relevant authorities. The Commission should be taking the lead in setting standards based on the needs of counter-measure capacities.

The resolution stresses the need to:

- create regional/EU-wide stockpiles of response resources, the scale of which should, as far as possible, reflect the current level of threat, whether in the form of medical or other types of relevant equipment, under the coordination of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, funded by the EU and in line with commonly agreed EU guidelines;
- revise the rules governing the European Solidarity Fund to make it more accessible in the event of natural disasters, and available in the event of industrial and man-made disasters;
- create EU/regional specialised response teams, including medical personnel, law-enforcement staff and military personnel;
- provide sufficient funding to develop improved equipment for the detection and identification of biological agents in the event of an attack or incident;
- launch training and public awareness programmes at European level.

The resolution regrets the lack of measures in the CBRN Action Plan to safeguard the security of radiological and nuclear facilities and materials and to improve response plans regarding the various types of radiological emergency and their consequences for the population and the environment.

It calls on the Commission and Council to consider developing response models that provide an ideal response in the event of CBRN incidents, and in which special attention is paid to training establishments, medical care institutions and geriatric care centres.

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Parliament calls on all Member States and the Commission to allocate at least 20% of all development spending to basic health and education, to increase their contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and to increase their funding for other programmes designed to strengthen health systems and community systems. It calls, too, on developing countries to prioritise health spending in general and combating HIV/AIDS in particular; and calls on the Commission to provide incentives to partner countries in order to encourage the prioritisation of health as a key sector in Country Strategy Papers.

The resolution makes several policy proposals and calls on the Commission, and where appropriate, Member States to:

- provide fair and flexible funding for research into new preventive technologies including vaccines and microbicides;
- work through a mix of financial instruments at global and country level, in addition to budget support, and through relevant organisations and mechanisms which have proved successful in addressing the human-rights dimension of HIV/AIDS, in particular civil-society organisations and community-based organisations;
- support the Council’s Conclusions on the Programme for Action of November 2009: to initiate a broad consultative process for the preparation of a European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action for 2012 and beyond; and to put their weight behind the establishment of EU Action Teams as a vehicle for joint action by the Commission and Member States in established priority areas.

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EP Resolution of 5/05/2010 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for the financial year 2008, based on 2009/2124(DEC) (P7_TA(2010)0103; A7-0104/2010)
Leading committee: CONT (ENVI for opinion)
Summary

[The European Parliament,]

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This rolling check-list presents a comprehensive overview of the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) special reports, concentrating on those relevant for the 2015 EU discharge procedure. The document seeks to link the topics discussed by the special reports to the relevant debates and positions within the European Parliament, including notably the working documents of the Budgetary Control Committee, to the work of the various specialised parliamentary committees, and to individual Members' questions. It is produced by the Policy Cycle Unit of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the Parliament's in-house research service and think-tank, as part of its on-going support for parliamentary committees and individual Members, helping them to scrutinise the executive in its implementation of EU law, policies and programmes.

The European Parliament is strongly committed to the concept of better law-making, and particularly to the effective use of ex-ante impact assessment and ex-post evaluation throughout the whole legislative cycle. It is in this spirit that the Parliament has a particular interest in following the transposition, implementation and enforcement of EU law, and, more generally, in monitoring the impact, operation, effectiveness and delivery of policy and programmes in practice.