

EN
E-000297/2019
Answer given by Mr Oettinger
on behalf of the European Commission
(15.4.2019)

1. The Commission fully supports the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in their mission to verify whether EU funds are spent in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations and achieve value for money. The Commission welcomes the ECA's Special Report, which found that the institutions manage their spending on office accommodation efficiently and identified some weaknesses linked to the building strategies, delays in projects and monitoring and reporting of the buildings portfolio. Hence, the Special Report and resulting recommendations are treated with the highest importance.

2. In general, the Commission includes the information about the follow-up to ECA recommendations in the Annual Management and Performance Report each year. The ECA also monitors the implementation and reports on it in its Annual Reports. The Commission considers the ECA to be playing an essential role in assessing the sound financial management of expenditure of the EU. Their conclusions and recommendations are of great value to the Commission, who considers the ECA to be a key contributor to the sound achievement of our objectives. The Commission has accepted either in whole or in part four of the ECA's five recommendations. With respect to the recommendation that there should be greater budgetary transparency of the financing mechanisms for construction project, the Commission maintains that it already ensures budgetary transparency and will continue to assess any margin for improvements.

3. The appropriations for the salaries of officials and the appropriations for building expenditure are entered separately in the budget, and cannot be transferred without presenting a request for approval to the budgetary authority.