



EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

**PRESS RELEASE**

**ECA/10/2**

Luxembourg, 2010/01/13

**Special Report:  
The European Commission's management of pre-  
accession assistance to Turkey**

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The European Court of Auditors has assessed how well the European Commission has managed pre-accession financial assistance to Turkey. Pre-accession assistance provides funding for the implementation of projects aimed at supporting Turkey in its efforts to meet the conditions required for accession to the European Union.

On the evidence of its audit, the Court concludes that there was insufficient direction and a lack of specific criteria to determine the priorities to which the EU assistance should be allocated. Specific and measurable objectives for that assistance were not set and the timescales to achieve those objectives were not realistic. The Commission did not have sufficient information to demonstrate the effectiveness of the pre-accession assistance as there was not a sound basis for monitoring performance, including value for money.

However, the projects audited did achieve their intended outputs and the Court considers that the results are likely to be sustainable. The Court found that commitment and ownership on the part of the Turkish beneficiaries, coupled with the delivery of planned outputs, existed. Both are suitable conditions for sustainability i.e. that the projects continue to deliver results and achieve impacts after the EU funding has stopped. EU financial assistance complements Turkey's own efforts to achieve the EU's Accession Partnership priorities.

In particular, the first pre-accession assistance period (2002-2006) suffered from many weaknesses common to previous pre-accession programmes: excessive delays, implementation problems, inadequate monitoring and evaluation. Since then, the Commission has introduced measures aimed at addressing many of the weaknesses, in particular for the new instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA 2007-2013).

Although this has already improved the project selection process, the full impact of these changes can only be assessed as the IPA projects are implemented in the coming years. Improvements are still required in establishing priorities for and assessing the effectiveness of the funding.

The Court makes several recommendations for further corrective measures. The most critical areas for improvement are the setting of strategic objectives for the financial assistance, the development of more realistic timescales for the objectives and the monitoring of actual project performance and results based on clear objectives and appropriate indicators.

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The Commission should improve the programming to determine the strategic objectives for which the EU financial assistance would add most value. It should ensure that the outcomes of individual projects are monitored in order that their contribution to achieving the strategic objectives can be demonstrated.

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this press release is to give a summary of the Special Report adopted by the Court of Auditors which is available on the Court's Internet site ([www.eca.europa.eu](http://www.eca.europa.eu)) and will be published shortly in a printed format.

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