

THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2017

14.30 - 18.30

Room: Altiero Spinelli (5E-2)

THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2017

14.30 - 15.00

IN CAMERA

1. COORDINATORS' MEETING



Meeting held in Camera

THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2017

15.00 - 18.30

PUBLIC MEETING

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The draft agenda was emailed to Members on 29 November 2017 and is in the [file for the meeting](#).

Upon request of a number of members, the Chair proposes to postpone Item 8 to January 2018.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair draws attention to the following points:

Languages available

FR, DE, IT, NL, EN, ES, CS, ET, HU, PL, BG, and RO.

Webstreaming

The CONT meeting is webstreamed on the [Europarl web-site](#).

Please be aware that each time a speaker activates the microphone to make an intervention, the camera will be automatically directed to the speaker.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- 11-12 October 2017
- 19 October 2017

If no objections are received before the end of the meeting, the minutes will be deemed approved.

5. 2016 DISCHARGE : EU GENERAL BUDGET - COMMISSION

CONT/8/10601



Exchange of views with the Secretary-General of the European Commission, *Alexander Italianer*, in the presence of the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, *Pietro Russo*

Rapporteur: [Joachim Zeller](#) (EPP)

Administrators: Christian Ehlers and Philippe Godts

Shadow Rapporteurs: Inés Ayala Sender (S&D), Martina Dlabajova (ALDE), Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL), Indrek Tarand (Greens/EFA), Marco Valli (EFDD), Jean-François Jalkh (ENF)

The Secretariat-General of the European Commission is one of the central services of the European Commission, facilitating its smooth and effective functioning and providing strategic direction.

It is the President's department, at the service of the President, the College and the other Commission departments. It manages the collegial decision-making process and ensures the alignment of EU policies with the political priorities of the Commission. In agreement with the President, the Secretariat-General provides support to the Vice-Presidents in the performance of their role.

The Secretariat-General continued to play a strong coordinating role in 2016 in relation to the delivery of the Commission's political priorities in the Commission Work Programme for 2016, the response to the migration and refugee crisis, the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy and the European semester, the Energy Union, the Digital single market and the creation of the European Solidarity Corps. The Secretariat-General also led the work on a number of important corporate and institutional development as to the expert groups or the transparency register.

The documents of particular relevance for the exchange of views as regards the 2016 Commission discharge are:

- The ECA's 2016 Annual Report, Chapters 1, 2 and 3.
- The Commission's follow-up report COM (2017) 379 final with the detailed replies- Ares (2017) 4964748.
- The Annual Activity Reports of the Secretariat-General.

These documents are available on the [CONT website](#).

In accordance with the timetable for the discharge procedure, the written questions for this meeting were sent to the Commission on 28 November 2017 and e-mailed to Members on the same day. The answers from the Commission will be received on 5 December 2017 and will be emailed to Members on the same day.

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Consideration of draft report	CONT	19 February 2018
Deadline for amendments	CONT	1 March 2018
Adoption in CONT	CONT	19 March 2018
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	April 2018

6. ANNUAL REPORT 2016 ON THE PROTECTION OF THE EU'S FINANCIAL INTERESTS - FIGHT AGAINST FRAUD

CONT/8/11242



Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur: [Gilles Pargneaux](#) (S&D)

Administrator: Michal Czaplicki

Shadow Rapporteurs: Marian-Jean Marinescu (EPP), Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR), Dennis de Jong (GUE/NGL), Benedek Javor (Greens/EFA), Marco Valli (EFDD), Jean-François Jalkh (ENF)

As in previous years, the Committee on Budgetary Control decided to draw up a report on the Protection of the Union's financial interests. In the framework of the preparation of the draft report, OLAF has presented its annual report on 22 June 2017. On 28 September Commissioner Oettinger presented the annual report of the Commission. In his presentation he put stress on the anti-fraud measures at EU level and by the Member States, with a focus on the PIF directive, the EPPO, the Omnibus, NAFS and CAFS.

In his report the rapporteur:

- notes with satisfaction that the total number of fraudulent and non-fraudulent irregularities reported in 2016 (19 080 cases) was 15% lower than in 2015 (22 349 cases) and their value had decreased by 8% (from EUR 3.21 billion in 2015 to EUR 2.97 billion in 2016);
- notes the slight decrease of 3.5% in the number of irregularities reported as fraudulent, which continued the downward trend seen since 2014;
- welcomes the adoption of the PIF Directive, whose scope includes VAT and welcomes the decision of 20 Member States to proceed with the establishment of a European Public Prosecutor's Office;
- welcomes the adoption of short-term measures to tackle losses on VAT mentioned in the Commission's Action plan;
- notes with concern that tobacco smuggling to the EU has intensified in recent years;
- deplores the fact that non-fraudulent irregularities in direct expenditure increased by 16% compared to the previous year, in contrast to all other budget sectors;

- deplores the fact that the Commission no longer feels the need to publish the anti-corruption report, which has impaired the assessment of the scale of corruption;
- reiterates the call on the Commission to submit as a matter of urgency a horizontal legislative proposal on the protection of whistleblowers in order to effectively prevent and combat fraud affecting the financial interests of the European Union;

The Commission's Annual Report 2016 on the Protection of the EU's Financial Interests - Fight against fraud is available on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable:

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for amendments	CONT	10 January 2018
Adoption in CONT	CONT	26-27 February 2018
Adoption in Plenary	Plenary	May I 2018 (BRU)

Short presentation of the recently published ECA Special Report:

7. ECA SPECIAL REPORT 18/2017 (2016 DISCHARGE): SINGLE EUROPEAN SKY: A CHANGED CULTURE BUT NOT A SINGLE SKY

CONT/8/11669



Presentation of the Special Report by the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, *George Pufan*

Rapporteur: [Marian-Jean Marinescu](#) (EPP)

Administrator: Michal Czaplicki

Shadow Rapporteurs: Inés Ayala Sender (S&D), Martina Dlabajová (ALDE), Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL)

Air transport is an important component of the EU internal market. In 2015, 920 million passengers and 15 million tonnes of freight have been flown in the EU using almost 10 million flights. Air traffic has been traditionally managed at national level which contributed to delays and higher costs. The Single European Sky (SES) initiative was launched in 2004 to remedy this situation. The SES has been coupled with a technological modernization programme, which is conducted by the SESAR JU.

The ECA assessed whether the EU's SES initiative has so far resulted in a more efficient European Air Traffic Management. The Court found that the quantitative results fell below expectations: delays have generally been above the targets set in performance plans and have been increasing since 2013. The oversight role attributed to National Supervisory Authorities (NSAs) is hampered by the fact that they are not always fully independent and in some cases do not have the necessary resources to fulfil their role. Additionally, after modification of its role, the SESAR project now pursues an open-ended, continuously evolving R&D vision which becomes more and more costly for the taxpayer.

The ECA recommends that the Commission should

- review the SES high level goals;
- analyse other policy options targeting defragmentation;
- ensure full independence and capacity of NSAs;
- streamline performance scheme;
- review EU's support structure to R&D in light of its objectives; and
- reinforce accountability of the SESAR JU.

The ECA Special report is available on the [CONT website](#).

As a follow-up, a succinct working document with the recommendations of the rapporteur will be sent to CONT Members. The rapporteur's conclusion will form part of the Commission's discharge report.

8. EVALUATION OF THE FUNDING PROGRAMS FOR THE OUTERMOST REGIONS, IN PARTICULAR GUYANA, AND THE NEW EUROPEAN STRATEGY IN FAVOUR OF THE OUTERMOST REGIONS

CONT/8/11684



Item to be postponed to January 2018

Exchange of views with Commission representative

Rapporteur: [Ingeborg Gräßle](#) (EPP)
Administrator: Olivier Sautière

The article 349 of the TFEU acknowledges the special characteristics of the outermost regions and affords them a special status. The nine outermost regions are the Azores, the Canary Islands, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Madeira, Martinique, Mayotte, Réunion and Saint Martin.

Between 2014 and 2020 the European Structural and Investment Funds and a dedicated scheme on agricultural measures (the POSEI Regulation) provided almost EUR 13.3 billion to the outermost regions, including two specific allocations in the fields of regional development and fisheries to compensate for the additional costs faced by these regions because of their particular situation. Furthermore, specific rules apply to the outermost regions in areas such as State aid, with regard to operating and investments aids, as well as in taxation and customs, to help boost their competitiveness. The main objectives targeted were to develop infrastructure, provide services for the population, create jobs, invest in education and skills and increase businesses' competitiveness as well as diversifying agricultural activities, preserving the environment and addressing climate change.

Despite this significant EU funding over the years, the outermost regions continue to face serious challenges and most of them still need investment in basic infrastructure (such as roads, water and waste management facilities) and their economy depends on a limited number of economic sectors with constraints related to their remoteness bringing additional costs to their companies while impeding their full participation in the single market.

Committee on Budgetary Control

On 24 October 2017, the Commission presented its new strategy '*a stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions*' in order to tackle persistent challenges, such as high unemployment rates, particularly among young people, greater vulnerability to the effects of climate change and a dependence on economic sectors which have not incorporated innovative processes. The renewed strategy will seek to shape policies that better reflect these regions' realities and interests (particularly when negotiating trade or fisheries agreements), will create a platform for dialogue

bringing together these regions and their Member States, the European institutions and private stakeholders in order to make the best use of European funds or promoting employment.

This exchange of views will focus on the outcomes achieved by the funding programs and the difficulties encountered by the outermost regions in their implementation, particularly in Guyana, and on the renewed European strategy in favour of these outermost regions.

Joint item with the Committee on budgets (BUDG)

9. FINANCIAL RULES APPLICABLE TO THE GENERAL BUDGET OF THE UNION

CJ13/8/09028



Report back to Committee on trilogues according to rule 69f

Co-Rapporteurs: [Richard Ashworth](#) (ECR) and [Inge Gräßle](#) (EPP)
Administrators: [Alix Delasnerie](#) (BUDG), [Jeremie Requis](#) (BUDG),
[Philippe Godts](#) (CONT)

BUDG and CONT co-rapporteurs will report on the main conclusions of the trilogue meetings held on 28 November, 29 November and 6 December 2017.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11. NEXT MEETINGS

- 11 January 2018, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
- 18 January 2018, 09.00 to 12.00 (Strasbourg)

WATCH LIVE

Watch the CONT committee meeting live on the [EP website](#) or on [Europarl TV](#)

PAPERLESS PROGRAMME (INTERNAL USERS ONLY)

Access CONT committee meeting documents on [eMeeting](#) or any CONT committee information on [eCommittee](#)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the CONT Secretariat or visit the website of the CONT committee

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CONT Workshop on “Investments in the EU: where are we? European Fund for Strategic Investments, European Structural Investment Funds and Financial Investments” - **23 January 2018 - 10h30-12h30 - PHS5B001**

ANNUAL MEETING BETWEEN CONT COMMITTEE AND ECA MEMBERS

Coordinators have decided to invite the **Court of Auditors** to the European Parliament’s premises in **Brussels to a CONT meeting - 1st February 2018 - 11:00 - 13:00 - Room Tbc**

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY WEEK - BUDG/ECON/EMPL

19 February 2018 - Discussion on **Post-2020 MFF** and **Own Resources - Hemicycle**

POLICY DEPARTMENT D PUBLICATIONS

Recent publications

BUDG

In-Depth Analysis - [The next MFF and its Duration](#)

In-Depth Analysis - [The next MFF, its Structure and the Own Resources](#)

In-Depth Analysis - [The next MFF and its Flexibility](#)

In-Depth Analysis - [The next MFF and the Unity of EU Budget](#)

Study - [Financial Instruments: defining the rationale for triggering their use](#)

CONT

Study -on “Transitional Allowances for former EU office holders - too few conditions” **Study Presentation on 28 November 2017** - *Publication not available online - Electronic version can be sent under request*

Forthcoming publications

CONT

Study on “10 years cooperation and verification Mechanism (Bulgaria and Romania) - Analyse of the Reports: evaluation and achievements” - **Study Presentation 29 January 2018 PM**

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