

### MEETING

**MONDAY 19 JANUARY 2015**

15.00 – 18.30 public meeting

Altiero Spinelli 3E2

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eMeeting

### 1. AGENDA

The [draft agenda](#) (in EN) was emailed to Members on 12 January 2015 and is in the [file for this meeting](#).

### 2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman draws attention to the following points:

#### LANGUAGES AVAILABLE

FR, DE, IT, NL, EN, ES, CS, HU, PL, SL, BG, RO

**Meeting documents:** In light of the European Parliament's paperless project please bear in mind that only a very limited number of paper dossiers will be available in the meeting room.

### 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.

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF CONT MEETING:

The following minutes are published on the [CONT website](#):

- 8 December 2014, which was emailed to CONT Members on 7 January 2015 and
- 11 December 2014, which was emailed to CONT Members on 5 January 2015 and

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

**MONDAY 19 JANUARY 2015**

15.00 – 18.30 public meeting

**\*\*\* VOTING TIME \*\*\***

**P O S T P O N E D**

Rapporteur:  
[Georgi Pirinski](#) (S&D)

#### **4. ANNUAL REPORT 2013 ON THE PROTECTION OF THE EU'S FINANCIAL INTERESTS - FIGHT AGAINST FRAUD**

Administrator:  
Michal Czaplicki

Please note that following the request from the ALDE group the vote is now **postponed** for **Wednesday 21 January 2015 at 9.00 AM** in meeting room Altiero Spinelli (5G3).

**Adoption of draft report**  
**Vote in plenary: February I**

**\*\*\* END OF VOTING TIME \*\*\***



#### **5. WORK PROGRAMME 2015 OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS**

**Presentation by Vítor Manuel da Silva Caldeira,  
President of the European Court of Auditor**



President Vítor Manuel da Silva Caldeira will present the 2015 Work Programme of the Court to Auditors.

The document was e-mailed only to CONT Members in EN, FR and DE on 14 January 2015 and will be available as of Monday 19 January 2015 on the website of the [European Court of](#)

[Auditors](#) and on [CONT website](#).

Rapporteur for the opinion:  
[Julia Pitera](#) (EPP)

Administrator:  
 Philippe Godts

**Consideration of draft opinion**  
**Main committee: AGRI**

**CONT Timetable:**

**Deadline for amendments:** 27/01/2015

**Adoption in CONT:** 24/02/2015

**Adoption in AGRI:** 24/03/2015

## 6. THE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SECTOR SINCE THE 2007 REFORM



Producer organisations became the cornerstone of the European Union regime for the fruit and vegetables sector in the 1996 reform. The aim was to strengthen the position of producers in the face of a greater concentration of demand and to integrate environmental concerns in the production and marketing of fruit and vegetables. The 2007 reform

aimed at strengthening producer organisations further; a wider range of tools was made available to enable them to prevent and manage market crises.

The opinion drafted by Julia Pitera refers to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the provision concerning producers organisations, operational funds and operational programmes in the fruit and vegetables sector since the 2007 reform (in accordance with article 184(4) of Council regulation n° 1234/2007).

It is based primarily on information in the annual reports and evaluation reports transmitted by the Member States which are based on data for the period 2008-2010.

In the opinion, Julia Pitera regrets in particular that the organisation rate remains low in several Member States, is worried that operational programmes appear to be contributing little or nothing to certain key objectives of the reform, deplores weaknesses in the setting up of national strategies, regrets that the Commission avoided reporting on the weaknesses in the control systems regarding producer organisations and operational programmes and points out that the Russian embargo and the programme for emergency market measures for perishable fruit and vegetables adopted by the Commission in August and September 2014 crisis confirm that the improvement of instruments for prevention and management of crisis is absolutely needed.

Rapporteur:  
[Igor Šoltes](#) (Greens/EFA)

Administrator:  
Olivier Sautière

**Exchange of views and consideration of a working document in the presence of the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible, Karel Pinxten**

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**CONT Timetable:**  
**Consideration of draft report on 2013 Commission Discharge - Part II - ECA Special Reports:** 23/02/2015

**Deadline for amendments:** 03/03/2015

**Adoption in CONT:** 23/03/2015

**Plenary vote:** April II 2015

### 7. SPECIAL REPORT No 16/2014 (2013 DISCHARGE) "THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BLENDING REGIONAL INVESTMENT FACILITY GRANTS WITH FINANCIAL-INSTITUTION LOANS TO SUPPORT EU EXTERNAL POLICIES"



Blending mechanisms combine loans from financial institutions with grants that may take various forms like direct-investment grants, interest-rate subsidies, technical assistance and loan-guarantee schemes. Blending gives grant donors the possibility of leveraging their external cooperation funds by mobilising loans from financial institutions and allows them to

have an impact on the formulation of policies and/or on the way projects are set up and managed. Furthermore, blending loans and grants can promote cooperation between stakeholders in development aid especially through partnership with European financial institutions while enhancing transparency, economies of scale, and the visibility of aid as well as the reduction of transaction costs.

Since 2007, the Commission and the Member States have accelerated the use of blending and set up eight regional investment facilities. Over the 2007-13 period, the EU allocated 2.106 million euro to such facilities with a disbursement of 1.205 million euro by the Commission by the end of 2013. Development finance institutions identify projects and apply for grants, which are approved by executive bodies of the regional investment facilities comprising the Commission, Member States and other donors. 387 projects were approved by these executive bodies for which the grants amounted to 2.346 million euro, the latter being accompanied by loans totalling 22.152 million euro indicating a zero rate of default so far.

It should be noted that the Commission launched the EU Platform for Blending in External Cooperation in December 2012 to improve the quality and efficiency of regional investment facilities.

The Court assessed the effectiveness of blending the regional investment facility grants with loans from financial institutions to support EU external policies by focusing on the following two questions:

- Have the regional investment facilities been set up and managed well?
- Did the use of blending yield the intended benefits?

While the Court delivered a positive verdict on the set-up and general effectiveness of blending regional investment facility grants with financial institution loans, it nevertheless pointed out a number of key issues which needed to be swiftly addressed. Indeed, the Court's audit found that for nearly half of the projects examined during the audit there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the grants were justified in terms of added value and in addition for a number of cases there were indications that the investments could have been made without the EU contribution.

The Rapporteur welcomes the special report and encourages the Court to further deepen such audit activities in this emerging cooperation field in order to regularly provide policymakers with a regular comprehensive assessment of issues and risks at stake.

He stresses both that any new financial instruments and blending have to remain not only in line with EU development policies but also focus on EU priorities where value added and impact are highest. Increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and the introduction of common standards of governance of existing blending mechanisms and facilities are also key-issues for the Rapporteur considering namely that the harmonisation of key principles, valid for all regional facilities and financial instruments, will be of utmost importance for the new MFF. Finally, he calls for the highest level of transparency and accountability and access to sound budgetary information and financial data relating to projects funded by these investment facilities to allow Parliament's power of scrutiny and consent, and requests regular reporting to the Parliament on the use of these financial instruments and results.

The Rapporteur's working document is available on the [CONT website](#).

The Rapporteur's conclusions will form part of the Commission's discharge report for the financial year 2013. Amendments may be tabled in this context and the deadline will be the same as the Commission's discharge: 3 March 2015.



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### **NEXT MEETINGS (BRUSSELS)**

- **21 January 2015, 9.00– 12.30 and 15.00 –18.30,**
- **22 January 2015, 9.00– 12.30,**
- **26 January 2015, 15.00 – 18.30 and**
- **27 January 2015, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30**