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REPORT

on the nomination of Hans Lindblad as a Member of the Court of Auditors
(C9-0379/2023 – 2023/0813(NLE))

Committee on Budgetary Control

Rapporteur: Angelika Winzig

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PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DECISION

**on the nomination of Hans Lindblad as a Member of the Court of Auditors
(C9-0379/2023 – 2023/0813(NLE))**

(Consultation)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 286(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament (C9-0379/2023),
 - having regard to Rule 129 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0390/2023),
- A. whereas, by letter of 16 October 2023, the Council consulted Parliament on the nomination of Hans Lindblad as a Member of the Court of Auditors;
- B. whereas Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control then proceeded to evaluate Hans Lindblad's credentials, in particular in view of the requirements laid down in Article 286(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; whereas in carrying out that evaluation, the committee received a curriculum vitae from Hans Lindblad, as well as the replies to the written questionnaire that he had been sent;
- C. whereas the committee subsequently held a hearing with Hans Lindblad on 29 November 2023, at which he made an opening statement and then answered questions put by the members of the committee;
1. Delivers a favourable opinion on the Council's nomination of Hans Lindblad as a Member of the Court of Auditors;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this decision to the Council and, for information, the Court of Auditors, the other institutions of the European Union and the audit institutions of the Member States.

**ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The rapporteur declares under her exclusive responsibility that she did not receive input from any entity or person to be mentioned in this Annex pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure.

ANNEX 1: CURRICULUM VITAE OF HANS LINDBLAD

Curriculum vitae

Education

- 2010 Doctorate in Economics, Stockholm University
Title of dissertation: *Essays on Unemployment and Real Exchange Rates*
- 1996 Licentiate degree, Stockholm University
Title of thesis: *Persistence in Swedish Unemployment Rates*
- 1986 Degree of Bachelor of Science, Stockholm University
- 1981 Degree of Bachelor of Science in Military Studies, officer conscript, Näsbyark Naval Academy
- 1979 Baccalaureate, Natural Sciences, Saltsjöbadens Samskola [Saltsjöbaden co-educational school]

Positions and duties

- Chair, Produktivitetskommissionen [Productivity Commission] (Fi 2023:03)
Official commission of inquiry.
- 2022 - present Board member, Swedish Fund Selection Agency
To date, working for the board has involved setting up the new authority.
- 2022 - present Member of the board of directors of Nordiska Investeringsbanken [Nordic Investment Bank]
Standard management activities in a financial institution, taking into account the fact that Sweden accounts for just over one third of the bank's capital. The bank's focus is on financing various sustainable projects. The task of the board of directors is, among other things, to examine project applications, to bear responsibility for compliance and to ensure that the accounts are correct and that the bank's objectives are met.
- 2013 - ongoing Member of the board of trustees of SNS [Centre for Business and Policy Studies]
SNS is one of Sweden's most reputable think tanks. Being a member means, among other things, raising awareness about SNS. It is also to be regarded as an honorary position.
- 2023 - 2023 Member, Kommuninvest [Swedish local government funding agency] research committee
Advisor to Kommuninvest's scientific council.
- 2023 - 2023 Alternate member of the board of directors, Regelrådet [Swedish Better Regulation Council]
Regelrådet evaluates the government's impact assessments of various proposals.
- 2022 - 2023 Chief executive officer, Högskolan Väst [University West]
Standard management work, including follow-up to objectives, accounts and policy documents. Högskolan Väst specialises in work-integrated learning, which takes place in collaboration with both the public and the business sector.
- 2015 - 2023 Board member, Arbetsförmedlingen [Labour Office]
In the early years, the work was characterised by more standard management activities. Extensive work was carried out with a view to ensuring compliance, proper procurement and serviceable target and performance monitoring, etc. In recent years, the focus has shifted in favour of helping to make fundamental changes to the Office's structure, internal culture and organisation. Digitalisation and assessment of the impact of IT investments have been key elements in efforts to increase efficiency.
- 2022 Rapporteur: Finansiering av näringslivets gröna omställning [Financing the green transition of the business sector].

The mission was, among other things, to identify possible obstacles to the business sector's financing of its green transition and to suggest possible ways in which to avoid them. Among the subjects discussed in the report is the role of the pension system in that context.

2013 - 2022 Director-General of Riksgälden [Swedish National Debt Office] and Head of Riksgäldskontoret [Swedish National Debt Office].

The Director-General of Riksgälden is the head of Riksgäldskontoret (Riksgälden), which, at the time I left, employed around 230 people. Riksgälden's four main tasks are to act as the state's internal bank (around 200 million payments, amounting to approximately SEK 7 000 billion per annum), to issue guarantees and credits on the state's behalf, to manage the public debt, and to safeguard financial stability. The latter is achieved, inter alia, by defining requirements for banks' capital and debt, by bearing responsibility for managing banks in crisis in the event of a default and by administering the deposit guarantee. In addition, Riksgälden is responsible for securing financing for the management and disposal of spent nuclear fuel. The operations are IT-intensive, and the IT department consists of around 60 people. Riksgälden participates in several international forums, mainly linked to the design of payment systems and financial stability. Its broad mandate entails extensive contacts with other authorities and the business community.

During my time as Director-General, the authority underwent several strategic and operational changes, partly as a result of the government's expansion of Riksgälden's mandate in several different directions. The most significant of those changes was to make it the state authority responsible for crisis prevention and, if necessary, managing banks in crisis, and for administering the deposit guarantee. Riksgälden was also given special tasks during the COVID-19 pandemic with a view to reducing the burden on businesses and preventing job losses. In 2018, the government transferred responsibility for securing financing for the management and disposal of nuclear waste from SSM [Swedish Radiation Safety Authority] to Riksgälden. The changes made to the authority's activities meant updating and strengthening its vision, strategic objectives, analytical capacity and focus. Another important factor was Riksgälden's designation as an emergency authority. This introduced new requirements in terms of resilience, security, civil defence and preparedness. During my time there, the state's internal bank changed its IT system. The new activities, IT systems and responsibilities, as well as an initial financial deficit, were fully financed through savings, impact management and streamlining.

The changes that took place strengthened and renewed the body's leadership and operations in terms of results, skills exchange, recruitment, employeeship and culture. It was particularly important to introduce a positive and constructive culture based on collaboration, objective analysis, the basic values of central government and an approach characterised by the rigour of good and well-functioning case management and exercise of public authority. The work resulted, among other things, in staff survey assessments that the board of management referred to as 'unprecedented'.

Riksgälden has the entire state's finances on its balance sheet. This, together with the significant changes made to the authority's activities, was the subject of careful auditing. In my role as head of the authority, I enjoyed very close and professional cooperation and knowledge exchange with Riksrevisionen [Swedish National Audit Office] and the consultants who assisted in the auditing of Riksgälden. Not only is such auditing important in terms of the authority's basic mandate, but Riksgälden also benefited from the exchange of knowledge that took place between the auditors, the consultants and its staff.

2013 - 2017 CEO, Returpack Svenska AB

Returpack is responsible for recycling aluminium cans and PET bottles. During my time there, the company's turnover was approximately SEK 2 billion. Returpack is owned equally by the trade and by Sweden's breweries. In addition to normal CEO duties, my tasks were to help to strategically develop sustainability and management efforts, and to negotiate with the owners on various contentious issues and decisions as regards direction.

2013 - 2020 Chair of the board, Expert Group for Public Economics, ESO

The ESO is a committee under the Ministry of Finance and is tasked with independently analysing and discussing important societal issues. This is done mainly by the board deciding to finance the production of various reports, which in turn often serve as a qualified basis for decision-makers.

- 2014 - 2015 Member of the Entrepreneurship Committee
The Committee's initial task was to comprehensively review the conditions for entrepreneurship and employment. Barely one year later, the government changed the Committee's focus, restricted its mandate and dismissed all of its members.
- 2006 - 2013 State Secretary for the Budget attached to the Minister for Finance, Ministry of Finance
During my time as State Secretary for the Budget, the role consisted of actively pursuing the formulation and development of economic policy and being responsible for preparing and negotiating the state budget within the Government Offices. Key aspects of that work included the drafting of proposals on how to strengthen the 'work-first principle', including changes to various social security and pension schemes.
- The State Secretary for the Budget was among the group of party leaders responsible for finalising the budget. The work also included the ongoing adoption of positions and the preparation of any decisions that had or could have had budgetary implications. This meant that I took part in most of the preparatory work, including general preparation with the government and with most working groups within the Government Offices. The work included presenting the budget both internally and externally, and representing the Ministry of Finance and the government in various contexts.
- Furthermore, I served as coordinating state secretary within the Ministry of Finance. This meant, among other things, acting as chair of the Ministry's steering committee, being responsible for operational planning and – through and in cooperation with the departmental heads – steering the work within the Ministry.
- The State Secretary for the Budget activated and led the Ministry's crisis team, thus playing a central role in the management of various crises. This became particularly evident in the context of the 2008/2009 financial crisis – a crisis that was complex and multifaceted. For example, the work required the rapid formulation of a framework for managing banks in crisis, including proposals for new legislation on crisis management of the financial sector. Crisis management also involved the development of various 'crisis packages' for regions and sectors that were particularly severely affected. Support for other affected countries and the international response to the crisis were also key elements.
- In the context of the EU, the State Secretary for the Budget acted as 'budget minister' in the Council of Ministers in respect of the EU's annual budget. The work involved negotiating the EU's annual budget both within the Council of Ministers and in conciliation negotiations with the European Parliament and the European Commission (referred to as 'trilogues'). It also included drafting and consolidating Sweden's position, securing a mandate in the Swedish Parliament and communicating externally on those issues. See also 'International posts' below.
- In the first few months following the change of government in 2006, I was also State Secretary for Tax Affairs.
- 2003 - 2006 Deputy Head of the Moderate Party's parliamentary offices
Head of the approximately 15 administrators in the offices, all university graduates. During the period in question, there was a thorough overhaul of the Moderates' policy. The same applied to the staffing, competence and position of the parliamentary offices as a hub for change. The work also included both internal consolidation and external presentations.
- 1997 - 2003 Head of Division (two different divisions) and Deputy Director General, Riksbank [Swedish Central Bank].
The work as head of the *Price Analysis* and *Macro Analysis* divisions (approx. 6 and 20 staff respectively) meant producing the Riksbank's forecasts for the Swedish economy and developing working methods. As Deputy Director General of the Department of Monetary Policy (with a staff of around 50), I was responsible for coordinating the forecasting work and establishing guidelines for the monetary policy decisions and communications of Riksbank's board of management. The work also involved representing Riksbank in various external contexts and taking part in press conferences, for example.

- 1995 - 1997 Doctoral candidate and scholarship holder, Stockholm University
Postgraduate studies.
- 1989 - 1995 Desk Officer, Ministry of Finance
Administrator in the Economics Department with responsibility for producing various analyses and forecasts for the Swedish economy. My tasks included describing longer-term economic trends, producing mid-term assessments in accordance with the long-term studies and producing analyses and data for the 'Pensions Group', all on the basis of various models.
- 1986 - 1989 Research assistant/administrator, Konjunkturinstitutet [National Institute of Economic Research]
Administrator responsible for forecasting and methodological development in various parts of the Swedish economy.
- 1985 First Officer, HMS Dämman
- 1982 First Officer, HMS Norsten
- 1980 School host (part-time), Saltsjöbadens Samskola [Saltsjöbaden co-educational school]
- 1979 - 1980 Postman, Saltsjöbaden 1 post office

Other responsibilities

Member of Statistics Sweden's Consumer Price Index Board, partly as government plenipotentiary (1989-1992) and partly as Riksbank's representative (1997-1999).

Member of Riksbank's policy group.

Member of the Ministry of Finance's policy group.

International posts

- 2009 President of the ECOFIN BUDGET Council of Ministers during the Swedish Presidency.
The work included drafting the Council of Ministers' proposal for the EU's annual budget for 2010, which required extensive negotiations with the European Commission and the Member States. Subsequently, I led the Council's negotiations with the European Parliament. Furthermore, I was responsible for external communications on the outcome of both the Council's negotiations and the deliberations with the European Parliament. The tasks also included consolidating the positions and the negotiating mandate in the Swedish Parliament.
- 2006 - 2012 Swedish 'Minister' within the ECOFIN BUDGET Council of Ministers.
The work involved arguing, pursuing and negotiating Sweden's position on the EU's annual budget within the Council of Ministers, vis-à-vis the Commission and the European Parliament. The work also involved ongoing consolidation work in the Swedish Parliament, as well as external communications.
- 2013 - 2022 Riksgälden is represented in several international forums, mainly linked to financial stability. I participated, among others, in the resolution committees of the European Banking Authority (EBA) and of the Financial Stability Board (FSB).
- 2022 - present Member of the board of directors of Nordiska Investeringsbanken [Nordic Investment Bank] (see above).

Publications

- 2022 Finansiering av näringslivets gröna omställning [Financing the green transition of the business sector], report, Government Offices

- 2010 Essays on Unemployment and Real Exchange Rates, doctoral dissertation.
- 2006 A Simultaneous Model of the Swedish Krona, the US Dollar and the Euro, Sveriges Riksbank.
- 2003 The Equilibrium Rate of Unemployment and the Real Exchange Rate, Sveriges Riksbank.
- 2003 Penningpolitiken och EMU [Monetary policy and EMU], Sveriges Riksbank, editor.
- 2001 Wage Effects of Mobility, Unemployment Benefits and Benefit Financing, Sveriges Riksbank.
- 1997 Persistence in Swedish Unemployment Rates, licentiate degree thesis.
- 1988 Två undersökningar av hushållens konsumtion [Two surveys of household consumption], Konjunkturinstitutet [National Institute of Economic Research].
- 1987 Hushållens köpkraft, konsumtion och sparande [Households' purchasing power, consumption and savings], Konjunkturinstitutet [National Institute of Economic Research].

Other

In parallel with my studies, I spent several summers working as a youth education instructor within the Sjövärnsskåren [Swedish Auxiliary Naval Corps], telemarketing at IBM and as a postman. In addition, I have been a board member of the Stockholm Sjövärnsskåren and chair of a housing association in Stockholm. I have received a silver order of merit from the Sjövärnsskårens Riksförbund [National Association of the Auxiliary Naval Corps] and the medal of the Stockholm Sjövärnsskåren.

In 2019, I received the NOR medal (Nit och Redlighet i rikets tjänst [For Zealous and Devoted Service of the Realm]) for 30 years in the service of the state.

In 2023, I received His Majesty the King's medal in the 12th class of the Order of the Seraphim for 'Outstanding achievements in Swedish state administration'.

I spend my free time with family and friends, at my summer house in the Stockholm archipelago, engaging in recreational sailing, travelling and exploring the natural world.

I live with my partner and have two grown-up daughters from a previous marriage.

ANNEX 2: ANSWERS BY HANS LINDBLAD TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for Candidates for Membership of the Court of Auditors

Professional experience

1. **Please list your professional experience in public finance be it in budgetary planning, budget implementation or management or budget control or auditing.**

Answer: I have more than 30 years' experience as a state administration civil servant. For instance as:

- ***Director-General of Riksgälden [Swedish National Debt Office] and Head of Riksgäldskontoret [Swedish National Debt Office] for nine years.***

The Director-General of Riksgälden is the Head of Riksgäldskontoret (Riksgälden), which, at the time I left, employed around 230 people. Riksgälden's four main tasks are to act as the state's internal bank (around 200 million payments, amounting to approximately SEK 7 000 billion per annum), to issue guarantees and credits on the state's behalf, to manage the public debt, and to safeguard financial stability. The latter is achieved, inter alia, by acting as Sweden's resolution authority defining requirements for banks' capital and debt, bearing responsibility for managing banks in crisis in the event of a default and administering the deposit guarantee. In addition, Riksgälden is responsible for securing financing for the management and disposal of spent nuclear fuel. Riksgälden participates in several international forums, mainly linked to the design of payment systems and financial stability.

During my time as Director-General, the authority underwent several strategic and operational changes, partly as a result of the government's expansion of Riksgälden's mandate in several different directions. The most significant of those changes was to build up Sweden's resolution authority, which became part of Riksgälden, with a view to crisis prevention and, if necessary, managing banks in crisis and administering the deposit guarantee. Riksgälden was also given special tasks during the COVID-19 pandemic with a view to reducing the burden on businesses and preventing job losses. In 2018, the government transferred responsibility for securing financing for the management and disposal of nuclear waste from the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority to Riksgälden. The changes made to the authority's activities meant updating and strengthening its vision, strategic objectives, analytical capacity and focus. Another important factor was Riksgälden's designation as an emergency authority. This introduced new requirements in terms of resilience, security, civil defence and preparedness. During my time there, the state's internal bank changed its extensive IT system. The new activities, IT systems and responsibilities, as well as an initial financial deficit, were more than fully financed through impact management and streamlining.

The changes that took place strengthened and renewed the body's leadership and operations in terms of results, skills exchange, recruitment, employeeship and culture. It was particularly important to introduce a positive and constructive culture based on collaboration, objective analysis, the basic values of central government and an

approach characterised by the requirements for rigour that a sound and well-functioning administration, case management and the exercise of public authority need.

- ***State Secretary (State Secretary for the budget) for six years with responsibility for the state budget and, on Sweden's behalf, drafting and negotiating the EU budget.***

During my time as State Secretary for the Budget, the role consisted in being the Minister for Finance's closest aid, in actively pursuing the formulation and development of economic policy and in being responsible for preparing and negotiating the state budget within the Government Offices.

The State Secretary for the Budget was among the group of party leaders (multi-party government) responsible for finalising the budget. The work also included the ongoing adoption of positions and the preparation of any decisions that had or could have had budgetary implications. The work included presenting the budget both internally and externally, and representing the Ministry of Finance and the government in various contexts.

Furthermore, I served as coordinating state secretary within the Ministry of Finance. This meant, among other things, acting as chair of the Ministry's steering committee, being responsible for operational planning and – through and in cooperation with the departmental heads – steering the work within the Ministry.

The State Secretary for the Budget activated and led the Ministry's crisis team, thus playing a central role in the management of various crises. This became particularly evident in the context of the 2008/2009 financial crisis – a crisis that was complex and multifaceted. For example, the work required the rapid formulation of a framework for managing banks in crisis, including proposals for new legislation on crisis management of the financial sector. Crisis management also involved the development of various 'crisis packages' for regions and sectors that were particularly severely affected. Support for other affected countries and the international response to the crisis were also important elements.

In the context of the EU, the State Secretary for the Budget acted as minister in the Council of Ministers in respect of the EU's annual budget (ECOFIN BUDGET). The work involved negotiating the EU's annual budget both within the Council of Ministers and in conciliation negotiations with the European Parliament and the European Commission (referred to as 'trilogues'). It also included drafting and consolidating Sweden's position, securing a mandate in the Swedish Parliament and communicating externally on those issues.

- ***Head of division and deputy director-general at Sveriges Riksbank [Swedish Central Bank] for a total of six years.***

As Deputy Director-General of the Department of Monetary Policy, I was responsible for coordinating the forecasting work and establishing guidelines for the monetary

policy decisions and communications of Riksbank's board of management. The work also involved representing Riksbank in various external contexts.

- **Chair or chief executive officer:**

- *Expert Group for Public Economics (ESO) (eight years). The ESO is a committee under the Ministry of Finance and is tasked with independently analysing and discussing important societal issues. This is done mainly by the board deciding to finance the production of various reports, which in turn often serve as a qualified basis for decision-makers.*
- *Resolution Board (six years). I helped build up this new authority from scratch and was responsible for setting up operations and establishing processes and procedures.*
- *University West (one and a half years).*

- **Board member:**

- *Swedish Labour Office (eight years). While I was there, extensive work was carried out with a view to ensuring compliance, proper procurement and serviceable target and performance monitoring, etc. Over time, the focus shifted in favour of making fundamental changes to the authority's structure, internal culture and organisation. Digitalisation and assessment of the impact of IT investments were key elements in efforts to increase efficiency. My main contribution throughout the period was to keep the focus on achievement of objectives, results and internal governance and control.*
- *Swedish National Debt Office (nine years) (see above).*
- *Swedish Fund Selection Agency (ongoing). This is a new agency I am involved in; I am in charge of the process of building it up. Its role is to create a marketplace with procured funds that Swedish pension savers can choose between when we invest a proportion of our mandatory pension provisions.*
- *Nordic Investment Bank (ongoing).*

- **Chair of the Productivity Commission (official commission of inquiry) (ongoing).**

- **Rapporteur;** *responsible for an official commission of inquiry into the role of the state in financing the green transition (four months).*

My various professional roles have been characterised by efficiency, productivity, budget planning, implementation and monitoring of budgets and operations, and accountability. Furthermore, I have made major efforts to develop risk analyses, focus authorities' work on results and strengthen governance and control, as well as strengthen and embed a sound management culture. In all this work, I have highlighted and emphasised the important roles of internal auditors and safeguarded cooperation with external auditors, including the National Audit Office. My experience has taught me – and I am firmly of this opinion – that close and sound cooperation between the

operational side and the audit function is necessary, enlightening, instructive and important. Scrutiny of operations by internal and external professional stakeholders often provides insights and guidance as how work and methods, etc. can be improved upon.

2. What have been your most significant achievements in your professional career?

Answer:

(a) Developing and carrying out 'work-first principle' measures between 2006 and 2012. At the time, Sweden had extensive problems, with a high proportion of the working-age population not in work for various reasons. In brief, the 'work-first principle' meant carrying out a series of wide-ranging structural reforms, the key features of which were targeted income tax reductions for people who were working and the tightening up of various social insurance schemes, including unemployment insurance, for people who were not working. The aim was to stimulate employment, and that turned out well. According to independent researchers, the decisions taken helped reduce long-term unemployment by 1.5-2 percentage points.

(b) Crisis management in connection with the 2008/2009 financial crisis and the 2020/2021 pandemic.

During the financial crisis, I was a state secretary and, under my leadership, a new framework was developed for dealing with banks in crisis in real time as the crisis unfolded. The core objective of the framework and of our actions was to safeguard financial stability and public finances and to protect taxpayers. Furthermore, structural reforms were carried out in order to prevent the exclusion of labour and human capital. As a result, financial stability was secured, public finances remained strong, labour supply was maintained and unemployment rose only modestly.

During the pandemic, I was head of the National Debt Office. My job was to ensure in short order that the government could seamlessly make its payments, manage the national debt and provide various guarantees for businesses in crisis and, together with the Riksbank, secure financial stability. We also carried out the groundwork for making significant capital injections into businesses in crisis, though that was a measure we did not have to take. Crisis management required new ways of working and involved additional tasks, setting up parallel workplaces for some key groups, and making it possible for the vast majority of people to work from home. Flexibility, while maintaining and safeguarding governance and control, was a key feature of crisis management. It also fell to me, as the person in charge, to support and reassure my staff at what was a turbulent time.

(c) Increased productivity and enhanced performance at the National Debt Office. This was achieved through a targeted effort to develop a fit-for-purpose risk analysis, and improve and tighten up governance and control, with an increased focus on results, and by introducing a sound management culture. Major savings materialised as a result, while its government mandate was expanded, performance was boosted and governance and control were tightened up.

(d) Combating 12 instances of 'bribery and corruption', harassment and strengthened internal governance and control. This involved a major cultural change at the National Debt Office. The National Debt Office was first to focus attention on suspected bribery in connection with a number of externally delivered courses. I decided to press charges against 12 members of staff and to publicise the events. The National Debt Office staff were by no

means alone in having acted improperly, and the Office's transparent handling of the matter had repercussions throughout the Swedish public sector.

(e) The work referred to above brought order and clarity, job satisfaction and trust, and can be summed up in different ways, one being reflected in the last staff survey at the National Debt Office that concerned me and my time there. The board of management termed the outcome 'unprecedented'.

3. What has been your professional experience of international multicultural and multilingual organisations or institutions based outside your home country?

Answer:

- (a) I was Sweden's member of the ECOFIN BUDGET Council of Ministers for just over six years, including six months as President (in 2009). That included negotiations in trilogues with the European Parliament and the Commission, as well as presenting and defending the Council's proposals in the European Parliament;*
- (b) I was a member of the EBA and FSB resolution committees for nine years. The remit of those committees includes putting forward and negotiating proposals, as well as acting on and following up various regulations and requirements for financial institutions;*
- (c) I have been a member of the Board of Directors of the Nordic Investment Bank for two years. The board's main job is to ensure sound governance and control, regulate risk-taking and assess and decide on investments in appropriate projects.*

4. Have you been granted discharge for the management duties you carried out previously, if such a procedure applies?

Answer: Always

5. Which of your previous professional positions were a result of a political nomination?

Answer:

- (a) Deputy Head of the Moderate Party's parliamentary offices; three years (2003-2006).*
- (b) State Secretary attached to the Minister for Finance; just over six years (2006-2013).*

6. What are the three most important decisions to which you have been party in your professional life?

Answer:

- (a) Carrying out work-first principle' measures as set out in the answer to question 2 above.*
- (b) Formulating and deciding on appropriate economic policies and developing crisis management frameworks (see above), both during the 2008/2009 financial crisis and during the 2020/2021 pandemic. In addition, decisions on crisis handling from a practical perspective.*
- (c) Pressing charges in instances of suspected 'bribery and corruption' at the National Debt Office. See also the answer to question 2. This brought about a major cultural change under my leadership. (See above.) Many authorities were subsequently obliged to do likewise, ultimately resulting in many civil servants being convicted of bribery*

offences. In addition, strengthening governance, control and a results focus at the Labour Office and the National Debt Office.

Independence

- 7. The Treaty stipulates that the Members of the Court of Auditors must be ‘completely independent’ in the performance of their duties. How would you act on this obligation in the discharge of your prospective duties?**

Answer: Independence, integrity, objectivity, transparency and professionalism are the fundamental principles underpinning the Court’s credibility. If appointed, I will comply with the rules and principles laid down by law and the Court's guidelines, etc. I will give up other roles, practise zero tolerance in relations with external parties as regards influence, gifts, entertainment, etc. and will do that with great integrity. My approach to the role will be determined by the fundamental principles. I will neither seek nor take instructions from anyone. I will have no problem whatsoever in remaining entirely neutral, regardless of who or what is being scrutinised. In my personal conduct, I will strive to set an example. In my professional life, the ultimate client has always been the citizen. Now my attention will be focused on the best interests of EU citizens.

- 8. Do you or your close relatives (parents, brothers and sisters, legal partner and children) have any business or financial holdings or any other commitments, which might conflict with your prospective duties?**

Answer: NO

- 9. Are you prepared to disclose all your financial interests and other commitments to the President of the Court and to make them public?**

Answer: YES

- 10. Are you involved in any current legal proceedings? If so, please provide us with details.**

Answer: NO

- 11. Do you have any active or executive role in politics, if so at what level? Have you held any political position during the last 18 months? If so, please provide us with details.**

Answer: NO

- 12. Will you step down from any elected office or give up any active function with responsibilities in a political party if you are appointed as a Member of the Court?**

Answer: YES

- 13. How would you deal with a major irregularity or even fraud and/or corruption case involving persons in your Member State of origin?**

Answer: Report and take legal action in the prescribed and established manner, regardless of where it takes place or who it involves. I have relevant experience. See question 2 above.

Performance of duties

14. What should be the main features of a sound financial management culture in any public service? How could the ECA help to enforce it?

In terms of an overall basic approach to the answers to the following questions, it would be presumptuous of me to comment on different ways of working, and of working together, without having personal experience of them. My view in general is that I first want to form my own opinion on issues before drawing conclusions. That does not mean that I am naïve or unprepared, however; indeed, I often gather information beforehand myself.

Answer: A sound management culture is characterised by competence, orderliness, efficiency, openness, transparency and communication. It is also characterised by thorough and structured risk analysis and assessment, follow-up, a control environment with internal and external control systems, controls and monitoring, and accountability. This presupposes, inter alia, good leadership and a professional and independent approach. In a transparent and sound management culture, it is natural to focus at all times on the best interests of the citizen. It is a culture characterised inter alia by legality, objectivity, professionalism, prudence when it comes to other people's money, and a cautious approach to being entrusted with managing funds. That means, among other things, safeguarding efficiency and effectiveness.

15. Under the Treaty, the Court is required to assist Parliament in exercising its powers of control over the implementation of the budget. How would you further improve the cooperation between the Court and the European Parliament (in particular, its Committee on Budgetary Control) to enhance both the public oversight of the general spending and its value for money?

Answer:

I will strive for very well functioning cooperation based inter alia on a high level of transparency, professionalism, a high degree of mutual confidence and trust, and mutual respect for and understanding of our differing roles. Naturally, one thing to be hoped for is that the reports produced and work carried out have an impact, which, in turn, depends on how Parliament follows up the reports and recommendations. I would accordingly aim to ensure a high degree of relevance and quality in the Court's reports in order to facilitate Parliament's follow-up and the Commission's work. (See also below.)

16. What added value do you think performance auditing brings and how should the findings be incorporated in management procedures?

Answer: A properly conducted performance audit is important for ensuring that funds have been used effectively and, ultimately, for securing citizens' trust. In my experience, in addition, an auditee can in many instances learn a great deal from a properly conducted performance audit. On many occasions, performance audit findings have been instructive for me in my capacity as head of an authority or as a board member within authorities and firms. I have then been able to put that experience and knowledge into practice in, inter alia, the governance of authorities, with a view to making improvements.

17. How could cooperation between the Court of Auditors, the national audit institutions and the European Parliament (Committee on Budgetary Control) on auditing of the EU budget be improved?

Answer: In keeping with my overall basic approach as set out above, I believe that a well functioning, structured and transparent exchange of information, a high degree of understanding of each side's needs and collaborative arrangements that work well are key. It's a partnership! I want to protect that.

18. How would you further develop the reporting of the ECA to give the European Parliament all the necessary information on the accuracy of the data provided by the Member States to the European Commission?

Answer: In general, reporting must be based on continuous development and dialogue, with the Court ensuring that the European Parliament (and the Council) receives relevant information that is operations-based and instructive. A key aspect of this consists in constantly enhancing the usefulness of the Court's observations and recommendations, i.e. ensuring that they can be acted on and followed up. That is also in the interests of the ultimate client, the public.

Other questions

19. Will you withdraw your candidacy if Parliament's opinion on your appointment as Member of the Court is unfavourable?

Answer: YES For me, Parliament's trust, respect and confidence are fundamental. Since sound cooperation between the Court and Parliament that works well and is based on trust is crucial, I take the view that it would be hard for me to discharge my duties properly if my candidacy did not command confidence and support. In such circumstances, accordingly, I would withdraw my candidacy.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	29.11.2023
Result of final vote	+: 18 -: 0 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	Gilles Boyer, Caterina Chinnici, Ilana Cicurel, Carlos Coelho, Beatrice Covassi, Isabel García Muñoz, Monika Hohlmeier, Joachim Kuhs, Alin Mituța, Sándor Rónai, Angelika Winzig
Substitutes present for the final vote	Arnaud Danjean, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Niclas Herbst, Jozef Mihál, Mikuláš Peksa, Wolfram Pirchner, Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Marie Dauchy, Loucas Fourlas, Margarida Marques