



CONT_PV(2023)1106_1

MINUTES

Meeting of 6 November 2023, 15.00-18.30,

and 7 November 2023, 9.00-10.35 (joint meeting) and 10.35-12.45 and 15.00-18.45

BRUSSELS

The meeting opened at 15.02 on Monday, 6 November 2023, with Sándor Rónai (2nd Vice-Chair) presiding.

6 November 2023, 15.00 – 17.00

1. Adoption of agenda

The draft agenda was adopted with the following changes:

Item 9 was postponed to the meeting on 4 December 2023

2. Chair's announcements

3. Approval of minutes of meetings

- 12 October 2023
- 23 March 2023

PV – PE754.788v01-00

PV – PE745.551v01-00

The minutes were approved.

4. Exchange of views with the Budget committee of the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada)

CONT/9/13531

- Presentation of the scrutiny of the implementation of EU assistance to Ukraine
- Presentation of the website DREAM: Digital Restoration Ecosystem for Accountable

Management (<https://dream.gov.ua/>)

The following spoke: Sándor Rónai, Roksolana Pidlasa (Verkhovna Rada), Volodymyr Tsabal (Verkhovna Rada), Lesya Zaburanna (Verkhovna Rada), Andrii Maisner (Verkhovna Rada), Annika Eriksgaard (European Commission, DG ECFIN), Natalie Pauwels (European Commission, DG NEAR), Bettina Jakobsen (ECA Member), Carlos Coelho, Isabel García Muñoz, Joachim Kuhs, Pavlo Frolov (Verkhovna Rada), Viktor Nestulia (Head of DREAM Project Office), Ivan Krulko, (Verkhovna Rada)

The meeting adjourned at 16:54 and resumed at 17.00

6 November 2023, 17.00 – 18.30

- 5. Workshop on "Preventing EU funds from reaching sanctioned individuals or entities"**
CONT/9/13535

The following spoke: Sándor Rónai, Elina Ribakova (Bruegel), Paweł Wąsik (Eurojust), Carlos Coelho, Mikuláš Peksa, Georgios Pavlidis (Academic expert in International and European Economic Law), Maíra Martini (Transparency International), Pierre-Arnaud Lotton (European Commission, DG FISMA)

The meeting closed at 18.23

* * *

7 November 2023, 9.00 – 10.35

Joint meeting with Committee on Budgets (see separate minutes) - PE756.048 v01-00 – FdR: 1289852

* * *

The meeting opened at 10:42, with Isabel García Muñoz (1st Vice-Chair) presiding.

7 November 2023, 10.35 – 11.20

- 6. Partial renewal of Members of the Court of Auditors – BE nominee**
CONT/9/13336
2023/0812(NLE) 13436/2023 – C9-0355/2023
Rapporteur:
Tsvetelina Penkova (S&D)
Responsible:

CONT

- Hearing of Annemie Turtelboom, candidate nominated by Belgium
- Adoption of draft report

The following spoke: Isabel García Muñoz, Annemie Turtelboom (ECA candidate), Tsvetelina Penkova, Carlos Coelho, Gilles Boyer, Mikuláš Peksa

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 and resumed at 11.21

7 November 2023, 11.20 – 12.15

7. Partial renewal of Members of the Court of Auditors – FI nominee

CONT/9/13277

2023/0811(NLE) 12992/2023 – C9-0345/2023

Rapporteur:

Gilles Boyer (Renew)

Responsible:

CONT

- Hearing of Petri Sarvamaa, candidate nominated by Finland
- Adoption of draft report

The following spoke: Isabel García Muñoz, Petri Sarvamaa (ECA candidate), Gilles Boyer, Angelika Winzig, Tsvetelina Penkova, Mikuláš Peksa

The meeting adjourned at 12:12 and resumed at 12.18.

7 November 2023, 12.15 – 12.45

***** Electronic vote *****

8. Vote on the partial renewal of Members of the Court of Auditors - BE and FI nominees

- The BE nomination was adopted with 20 votes in favour, 2 against, and 2 abstentions.
- The FI nomination was adopted with 19 votes in favour, 2 against, and 3 abstentions.

9. Protection of the European Union's financial interests - combating fraud - annual report 2022

CONT/9/11739

2023/2045(INI)

Rapporteur:

Maria Grapini (S&D)

PR – PE753.468v01-00

AM – PE754.844v02-00

Responsible:

CONT

- Adoption of draft report

Decision: Postponed to the meeting of 4 December 2023

10. Combating corruption, replacing Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA and the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union and amending Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council

CONT/9/11969

***I 2023/0135(COD) COM(2023)0234 – C9-0162/2023

Rapporteur for the opinion:

Caterina Chinnici (PPE)

AM – PE754.837v01-00

Responsible:

LIBE* – Ramona Strugariu (Renew)

PR – PE753.573v01-00

AM – PE754.808v01-00

Opinions:

CONT*

- Adoption of draft opinion

The draft opinion was adopted with 23 votes in favour to 0 against, with 1 abstention.

*** *End of vote* ***

* * *

The meeting adjourned at 12.30 and resumed at 15.08.

7 November 2023, 15.00 – 16.30

11. 2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - Commission

CONT/9/12735

2023/2129(DEC) COM(2023)0391[01] – C9-0248/2023

Rapporteur:

Isabel García Muñoz (S&D)

Responsible:

CONT

Opinions:

AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM

- Hearing of Commissioners Paolo Gentiloni and Valdis Dombrovskis on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), in the presence of ECA reporting Member Jan Gregor

The following spoke: Isabel García Muñoz, Jan Gregor (ECA Member), Vladis Dombrovskis (Commissioner for Trade), Paolo Gentiloni (Commissioner for Economy), Carlos Coelho, Jan Olbrycht

The meeting adjourned at 16.41 and resumed at 16.46.

7 November 2023, 16.30 – 18.00

12. 2022 discharge: General budget of the EU - Commission

CONT/9/12735

2023/2129(DEC) COM(2023)0391[01] – C9-0248/2023

Rapporteur:

Isabel García Muñoz (S&D)

Responsible:

CONT

Opinions:

AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM

- Hearing with Commissioner Iliana Ivanova, responsible for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth in the presence of ECA reporting Member Mihails Kozlovs

The following spoke: Isabel García Muñoz, Mihails Kozlovs (ECA Member), Iliana Ivanova (Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth), Angelika Winzig, Andrey Novakov

The meeting adjourned at 17.53 and resumed at 18.01.

7 November 2023, 18.00 – 18.30

13. Transparency and accountability of non-governmental organisations funded from the EU budget

CONT/9/12604

2023/2122(INI)

Rapporteur:

Markus Pieper (PPE)

PR – PE751.681v01-00

Responsible:

CONT

Opinions:

AFET, LIBE

- Consideration of draft report

The following spoke: Isabel García Muñoz, Markus Pieper, Beatrice Covassi, Ilana Cicurel, Daniel Freund, Clare Daly, Victoria Gil-Casado (European Commission, DG BUDG)

14. Any other business

15. Next meetings

- 29-30 November 2023
- 4 December 2023

The meeting ended at 18.44.

Results of roll-call votes

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Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

6. Vote on the partial renewal of Members of the Court of Auditors – BE nominee

Date adopted	7.11.2023
Result of final vote	+ : 20 - : 2 0 : 2
Members present for the final vote	Gilles Boyer, Olivier Chastel, Ilana Cicurel, Carlos Coelho, Beatrice Covassi, Luke Ming Flanagan, Daniel Freund, Isabel García Muñoz, Joachim Kuhs, Alin Mituța, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Sándor Rónai, Eleni Stavrou, Angelika Winzig
Substitutes present for the final vote	Maria Grapini, Hannes Heide, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Mikuláš Peksa, Tsvetelina Penkova, Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Dominique Bilde, José Manuel Fernandes, Seán Kelly

7. Vote on the partial renewal of Members of the Court of Auditors – FI nominee

Date adopted	7.11.2023
Result of final vote	+ : 19 - : 2 0 : 3
Members present for the final vote	Gilles Boyer, Olivier Chastel, Ilana Cicurel, Carlos Coelho, Beatrice Covassi, Luke Ming Flanagan, Daniel Freund, Isabel García Muñoz, Joachim Kuhs, Alin Mituța, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Sándor Rónai, Eleni Stavrou, Angelika Winzig
Substitutes present for the final vote	Maria Grapini, Hannes Heide, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Mikuláš Peksa, Tsvetelina Penkova, Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Dominique Bilde, José Manuel Fernandes, Seán Kelly

10. Combating corruption, replacing Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA and the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union and amending Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council

23	+
ECR	Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner
ID	Joachim Kuhs
PPE	Carlos Coelho, José Manuel Fernandes, Seán Kelly, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Eleni Stavrou, Angelika Winzig
Renew	Gilles Boyer, Olivier Chastel, Ilana Cicurel, Alin Mituța
S&D	Beatrice Covassi, Isabel García Muñoz, Maria Grapini, Hannes Heide, Tsvetelina Penkova, Sándor Rónai
The Left	Luke Ming Flanagan
Verts/ALE	Daniel Freund, Mikuláš Peksa

0	-

1	0
ID	Dominique Bilde

**ПРИСЪСТВЕН ЛИСТ/LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/
ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE NIMEKIRI/KATAΣΤΑΣΗ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/
LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/POPIS NAZOČNIH/ELENCO DI PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRŠ/DALYVIŲ SĄRAŠAS/
JELENLÉTI ÍV/REĢISTRU TA' ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŠCI/LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/
LISTĂ DE PREZENȚĂ/PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/NÄRVAROLISTA**

Бюро/Mesa/Předsednictvo/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Predsjedništvo/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/ Biuras/Elnökség/Prezydium/Birou/Předsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Isabel García Muñoz, Sándor Rónai, Gilles Boyer
Членове/Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Βουλευτές/Members/Députés/Zastupnici/Deputati/Deputăți/ Nariai/Képviselők/Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Deputați/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Olivier Chastel, Ilana Cicurel, Carlos Coelho, Beatrice Covassi, Luke Ming Flanagan, Daniel Freund, Joachim Kuhs, Alin Mituța, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Petri Sarvamaa, Eleni Stavrou, Angelika Winzig
Заместници/Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Zamjenici/ Supplenti/Aizstājēji/Pavaduojantysnariai/Pötagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Supleanți/Náhradníci/ Namestniki/Varajäsenet/Suppleanter
Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Maria Grapini, Hannes Heide, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Andrey Novakov, Mikuláš Peksa, Tsvetelina Penkova, Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner

209 (7)
Dominique Bilde, Seán Kelly, José Manuel Fernandes
216 (3)
56 (8) (Точка от дневния ред/Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání (OJ)/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/ Päevakorra punkt/Σημείο της ημερήσιας διάταξης/Agenda item/Point OJ/Τοčka dnevnog reda/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkės punktas/Napirendi pont/Punt Agenda/Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Punct de pe ordinea de zi/Bod programu schôdze/Τοčka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Punkt på föredragningslistan)
Clare Daly
13

Наблюдатели/Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Promatrači/Osservatori/Novērotāji/Stebėtojai/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waarnemers/Obserwatorzy/Observadores/Observatori/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

По покана на председателя/Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Εσimehe kutsel/Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair/Sur l'invitation du président/ Na poziv predsjednika/Su invito del presidente/Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/ Fuq stedina tač-'Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/La invitația președintelui/ Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Съвет/Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nöukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Vijeće/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/Consiliu/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)	
Комисия/Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Komisija/Commissione/Bizottság/Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Comisie/Komisja/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)	
Annika Eriksgaard, Natalie Pauwels, Pierre-Arnaud Lotton, Commissioner Johannes Hahn, Commissioner Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis, Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni, Commissioner Iliana Ivanova, Victoria Gil-Casado	
Други институции и органи/Otras instituciones y organismos/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner og organer/Andere Organe und Einrichtungen/Muud institutsioonid ja organid/Λοιπά θεσμικά όργανα και οργανισμοί/Other institutions and bodies/Autres institutions et organes/Druge institucije i tijela/Altre istituzioni e altri organi/Citas iestādes un struktūras/Kitos institucijos ir įstaigos/Más intézmények és szervek/Istituzzjonijiet u korpi oħra/Andere instellingen en organen/Inne instytucje i organy/Outras instituições e outros órgãos/Alte instituții și organe/Iné inštitúcie a orgány/Muut toimielimet ja elimet/Andra institutioner och organ	
ECA	Bettina Jakobsen, Annemie Turtelboom, Petri Sarvamaa, Jan Gregor, Mihails Kozlov
Eurojust	Paweł Wąsik

Други учасници/Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Drugi sudionici/Altri partecipanti/Citi klātesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Partecipanti oħra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Alți participanți/Inii účastníci/Drugi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare
Volodymyr Tsabal Lesya Zaburanna, Andrii Maisner, Pavlo Frolov, Viktor Nestulia, Ivan Krulko, Elina Ribakova, Georgios Pavlidis, Maira Martini

Секретариат на политическите групи/Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppernes sekretariat/Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Secretariats of political groups/Secrétariat des groupes politiques/Tajništva klubova zastupnika/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariāts/Frakciju sekretoriai/Képviseletsoportok titkársága/Segretarjat gruppi politiçi/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secretariado dos grupos políticos/Secretariate grupuri politice/Sekretariát politických skupin/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristö/De politiska gruppernas sekretariat	
PPE	H. Cercel, I. Mateos Buendia
S&D	J. De Frutos Gonzalez, D. Popova,
Renew	S. Antoine-Jacquemard, B. Strøm
Verts/ALE	R. Godina, A. Podsadowska
ECR	
ID	E. Frolova
The Left	E. Reschini
NI	

Кабинет на председателя/Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidenti kantseli/Γραφείο του Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Ured predsednika/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinett tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Cabinet Președinte/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmannens kansli	
Кабинет на генералния секретар/Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο του Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du secrétaire général/Ured glavnog tajnika/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Ġenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Cabinet Secretar General/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekreterarens kansli	
Генерална дирекция/Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/Directorate-General/Direction générale/Glavna uprava/Direzione generale/Ģenerāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/Direttorat Generali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Direcții Generale/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG EPRS DG COMM DG PART DG PERS DG INLO DG TRAD DG LINC DG FINS DG ITEC DG SAFE	Monika Strasser, Niels Fischer

Правна служба/Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Öigusteenistus/Νομική Υπηρεσία/Legal Service/Service juridique/Pravna služba/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teisės tarnyba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/Wydział prawny/Serviço Jurídico/Serviciu Juridic/Právný servis/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättstjänsten
Mihkel Allik, Amandine Roos Marie Guérin
Секретариат на комисията/Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariat výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschusssekretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/Γραμματεία της επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétariat de la commission/Tajništvo odbora/Segreteria della commissione/Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteto sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Sekretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/Sekretariat komisji/Sekretariado da comissão/Sekretariat comisie/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottssekretariatet
Evelyn Waldherr, Kaare Barslev, Giulia Bastianello, Christelle Courtade, Marius Cobianu, Cristina Degueldre, Susana Delmas Costa, Evelyn Gisbrecht, Benoît Lefort, Ana Maria Nogueira, Paulus Johannes Stander, Jasna Toskova
Сътрудник/Asistente/Asistent/Assistent/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Palīgs/Padējējas/Asszisztens/Asyistent/Pomočnik/Avustaja/Assistenten
Anna Aresu, Kameliya Velcheva

- * (P) = Председател/Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair/Président/Predsjednik/Priekšsēdētājs/Pirmininkas/Elnök/Chairman/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Preşedinte/Predseda/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
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- (F) = Длъжностно лице/Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Dužnosnik/Funcionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficial/Ambtenaar/Urządник/Funcionário/Funcionar/Úradník/Uradnik/Virkamies/Tjänsteman



COORDINATORS' NOTE

26 October 2023

Meeting replaced by a written procedure

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Written contributions received from:

EPP: Petri SARVAMAA
 S&D: Victor NEGRESCU
 Renew: Olivier CHASTEL
 Greens: Viola VON CRAMON-TAUBADEL
 ID: Joachim KUHS
 ECR: Ryszard CZARNECKI
 The Left: Luke Ming FLANAGAN

Items for decision**1. Screening of ECA reports**

Report	Title	Date of publication	Pol. group	Secretariat's/Chair's proposal
SR 23/2023 <i>Annex I</i>	Restructuring and planting vineyards in the EU	25 September 2023	EPP	Refer to ENVI & AGRI for presentation
SR 20/2023 <i>Annex II</i>	Supporting persons with disabilities: practical impact of EU action is limited	12 October 2023	EPP	Refer to EMPL and REGI for presentation
SR 26/2023 <i>Annex III</i>	The Recovery and Resilience Facility's performance monitoring framework – Measuring implementation progress but not sufficient to capture performance	24 October	EPP	Presentation in CONT on 29-30 November 2023

Remarks in the written procedure:

S&D proposed that SR/26 is presented in a joint meeting with ECON and BUDG.

Decision:

Coordinators decided to approve the proposals by the Secretariat/the Chair.

2. EP discharge questionnaire follow up

In the context of the 2022 EP discharge, the questionnaire was sent to the administration in agreement with the rapporteur on 9 October, after having received the proposals from the CONT Coordinators and focusing on strategic and priority discharge issues related to 2022 and of direct budgetary relevance, in line with the working arrangements. Given the substantial number of questions submitted that did not relate to 2022 and/or did not have a direct budgetary link, the Chair, in agreement with the rapporteur, has proposed to consider inviting some Directors-General of the Parliament's Secretariat for a direct exchange of views at an upcoming CONT Committee meeting. The rapporteur of

the EP discharge 2022 would exceptionally be in charge of organising this exchange. This would also be in line with a similar practice in BUDG where Directors-General are regularly invited when relevant questions arise in the EP budget procedure. Such exchanges of views, if they are accepted, can be organised either:

1) **In the framework of the annual discharge procedure** (with the attached restrictions of focus on 2022 and about issues with a direct budgetary link), being included in the discharge calendar and organised as soon as possible, giving the Parliament's discharge rapporteur the lead for this item and entrusting him with the choice about which DGs to invite. This would be in line with how the exchanges of views with Directors General of the Commission are handled in the Commission discharge procedure.

2) Alternatively, such exchanges of view can be organised as an **independent broader scrutiny** of the Parliament's administration with regard to the implementation of the institution's budget, but without a strict link to the ongoing discharge exercise. In line with regular ad hoc CONT exchanges of views such meetings could be organised any time there is a need and as decided by Coordinators. CONT Coordinators would need to agree on which DGs to invite to the exchange of views. The focus would be to support good administration for an optimal use of the institution's budgetary resources.

When the meeting was converted into a written procedure (e-mail by the CONT secretariat of 25 October 2023), the Chair made an additional proposal merging the two above mentioned proposals in the following way:

„Such exchanges of views, if they are accepted, should be organised in the framework of the annual discharge procedure (...) under the responsibility of the rapporteur and with the endorsement of the Coordinators, as is the case for the annual discharge procedure in general. The Rapporteur would thus be entrusted with the choice about which DGs to invite, subject to confirmation by Coordinators.

This would be in line with how the exchanges of views with Directors General of the Commission are handled in the discharge procedure."

Remarks in the written procedure:

In the contributions sent in writing, the Greens and the S&D group expressed concern that the questions were filtered before being sent to the administration. [Note by the secretariat: this possibility is however explicitly provided by the practical arrangements for the EP 2022 discharge, as adopted by Coordinators on 18 July 2022: the Rapporteur can decide to "remove some questions in order to better focus on strategic and priority discharge issues."]

S&D underlined the importance 1) of respecting the practical arrangements, as decided by Coordinators and 2) of receiving answers from the EP administration to questions asked by Members. S&D further asked for this exchange of views to take place on 4 December on the basis of accepting the Chair's proposal.

The Greens and the Left expressed a preference for option 2, but this view remained in the minority.

Decision:

A large majority of Coordinators approved the merged proposal from the Chair.

3. Discharge calendar 2022

Remarks in the written procedure:

S&D asked for the hearing of the EP Directors General to take place on 4 December.

Decision:

Coordinators approved the updated discharge calendar.

4. Possible presentation of the project 'AI4AUDIT - Use of artificial

intelligence on audit of the EU Funds' from Universidade Nova de Lisboa at an upcoming CONT meeting

The AI4AUDIT project aims to improve and increase the efficiency, effectiveness and proportionality of European Funds related audit work, while reducing its workload and the burden on the beneficiaries. This will be achieved via developing new methodologies based on data science, including artificial intelligence to estimate/predict the occurrence and amount of errors and their impacts in operational programs supported by European funds.

Groups supported the presentation which is tentatively scheduled for presentation on 4 December 2023.

Decision:

Coordinators decided that the "AI4AUDIT" project should be presented at an upcoming meeting in CONT.

Items for information

5. Outcome of written procedures

Written procedure - deadline 9 October 2023. This procedure concerned a contribution to the Questionnaire for the COSAC 40th bi-annual report by the CONT Committee which was approved without remarks. The CONT contribution was submitted to the CCC Chair and transmitted to CONT Members on 13 October 2023.

6. *Petition No 0311/2023 by Piotr Nowacki (Polish), on behalf of Łódzka Sieć Lokalnych Grup Działania, on an alleged violation of EU law in the field of spending funds from the European Union budget*

Norbert Lins, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, has sent the following petition to CONT committee for information: Petition n° by 0311/2023 by Piotr Nowacki (Polish) on alleged violations of EU law in the field of spending funds from the EU budget.

7. State of play of appointments on CONT files

- [Work in progress document](#)
- [Overview of the points](#)

8. Documents received for information

9. Any other business

Date of next Coordinators' meeting

- 29-30 November 2023

NEWSLETTER

COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2023

15:00 - 18:30

TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2023

09:00 - 10:30 (joint meeting) and
10:30 - 10:35 (joint committee procedure - Rule 58) and
10:35 - 12:45 and
15:00 - 18:45
SPINELLI (3E-2)

Monday 6 November 2023, 15:00 - 17:00

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair draws attention to the following points:

Interpretation was requested in the following languages:

DE EN FR IT EL ES FI* PT HU PL RO HR UK**

*FI requested on 7 November 2023 from 10:30 to 12:45

**UK requested on 6 November 2023 from 15:00 to 17:00

Webstreaming

The meeting will be webstreamed and can be followed live via the [CONT webpage](#).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS

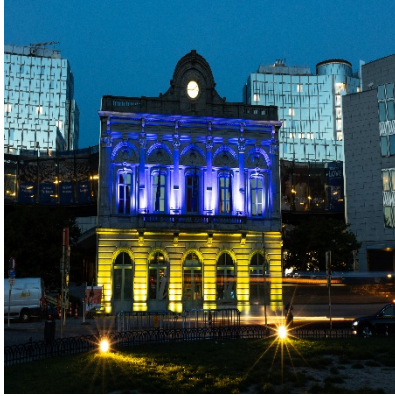
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • 23 March 2023 (joint with LIBE) | PV – PE745.551v01-00 |
| • 12 October 2023 | PV – PE754.788v01-00 |

Monday 6 November 2023, 15:00 – 17:00

4. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THE BUDGET COMMITTEE OF THE UKRAINIAN PARLIAMENT (VERKHOVNA RADA)

CONT/9/13531

Administrators: Kaare Barslev and Giulia Bastianello



On 25 May 2023, the CONT Committee held a first very successful exchange of views with the Budget Committee and the Committee on Anti-Corruption from the Verkhovna Rada. Following up on this first exchange, the CONT Committee and the Budget Committee of the Verkhovna Rada decided to organise another exchange of views. The Budget Committee of the Verkhovna Rada is among other things responsible for matters concerning budgetary control.

With a view of ensuring a closer cooperation between the European Parliament and the Ukrainian Parliament, and following up on Ukraine being granted the status as EU candidate country in June 2022, the discussion will be organised in two rounds. The first will focus mainly on the scrutiny of the implementation of the EU assistance to Ukraine.

The second will focus on the presentation of the website DREAM: Digital Restoration Ecosystem for Accountable Management (<https://dream.gov.ua/>).

Representatives from the European Commission, OLAF and the ECA have been invited to participate in the discussion.

A briefing has been provided to Members by the Policy department D ahead of the meeting.



5. WORKSHOP ON "PREVENTING EU FUNDS FROM REACHING SANCTIONED INDIVIDUALS OR ENTITIES"



CONT/9/13535

Administrators:

(CONT)

Christelle Courtade

Mirari Uriarte Iraola and
Eleanor Remo James

(Policy Department D)

Sanctions are an invaluable tool for safeguarding EU values, maintaining international peace and security, and consolidating and supporting democracy, the

rule of law and human rights.

In response to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the EU has adopted an unprecedented eleven successive packages of sanctions on Russian individuals and entities deemed a threat to the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. The measures include trade, energy, financial and transport sanctions, asset freezes and travel bans. A ban on providing funds to individuals and entities on the sanctions list and specific sanctions to protect EU funding, including a ban on the participation of Russian nationals and entities in EU public procurement contracts, seek to further limit access to EU funds for those concerned.

However, inconsistent sanctions enforcement and a rise in schemes to circumvent them have sparked concerns that EU funds are still finding their way into the hands of those on the sanctions list. With that in mind, how can the EU tighten up the loopholes in its sanctions regime and protect its budget in the process?

This workshop will look at the issue of sanctions enforcement and the EU budget from various perspectives, with a particular focus on the EU-Russia sanctions regime. Sanctions experts will cover:

- the continued circumvention of trade sanctions, including through non-EU countries;
- plans to harmonise national sanctions systems and criminalise sanctions circumvention;
- asset freezing and confiscation;
- tools for accessing beneficial ownership information and the challenge of tracing the final beneficiaries of EU funds.

For more information, please visit the [workshop event page](#).

Tuesday 7 November 2023, 09:00 – 10:30

Joint meeting with BUDG Committee

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RULE OF LAW CONDITIONALITY REGULATION

CJ13/9/08816



BUDG

Exchange of views with Commissioners Johannes Hahn (Budget) and Nicolas Schmit (Jobs and Social Rights) on the implementation of the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation and frozen funds in Hungary subject to the Common Provisions Regulation (2021-2027)

Rapporteurs:

CONT

[Petri Sarvamaa](#) (EPP)

[Eider Garzabial Rubial](#) (S&D)

Administrators: Benoît Lefort (CONT)
Claudia Rubach (BUDG)

Based on a Commission proposal for budget protection measures under the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation, the Council adopted an implementing decision on measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary on 15 December 2022.

The decision suspended 55% (corresponding to 6.3 billion EUR) of the budgetary commitments under three operational programmes in Cohesion Policy (2021-2027), and prohibited the Commission to enter into legal commitments with public interest trusts, or any entity maintained by such public interest trusts, for programmes implemented in direct and indirect management. Pursuant to Article 3 of this Council decision, Hungary has to inform the Commission by 16 March 2023, and every three months thereafter, on the implementation of the remedial measures to which it committed to address the findings of the Commission's notification sent on 27 April 2022.

Notwithstanding the blocked Cohesion funds under the Rule of law conditionality mechanism, the Commission adopted the Partnership Agreement with Hungary on 22 December 2022. Accordingly, almost 22 billion EUR would be available in Cohesion funding for Hungary in 2021-2027. However, the Commission found that Hungary does not fulfil the enabling condition on the Charter of Fundamental Rights due to persisting deficiencies concerning judicial independence. Since the fulfilment of the enabling condition is a pre-requisite for the disbursement of Cohesion funding, the Commission may only reimburse the related expenditure once Hungary has implemented the super-milestones on the judiciary under its Recovery and Resilience Plan.

On 18 July 2023, Hungary officially informed the Commission that it considers the horizontal enabling condition on the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the area of judicial independence is to be fulfilled. The Commission services have analysed the information transmitted by Hungary, required more clarifications to finalise the assessment of the fulfilment of this horizontal enabling condition and they sent questions to the Hungarian authorities on 26 September. Hungary replied to these questions on 19 October and the Commission is continuing its assessment. As long as the enabling condition is not fulfilled, the Commission cannot reimburse related expenditure included in the payment claims for expenses incurred during the implementation of the programmes.



The Committees on Budgets and on Budgetary control have invited Commissioners Johannes Hahn and Nicolas Schmit to a joint meeting to update and exchange views with Members about the implementation of the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation, and the horizontal enabling condition in the area of judicial independence. Members of both committees are particularly interested to hear about the steps taken by Hungary towards judicial independence as well as about other relevant developments with regard to the application of the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation.

Tuesday 7 November 2023, 10:30 - 10:35

Joint meeting with BUDG Committee (Rule 58)

7. FINANCIAL RULES APPLICABLE TO THE GENERAL BUDGET OF THE UNION (RECAST)
Reporting back to committee on the negotiations (Rule 74(3))

CJ13/9/10134



Rapporteurs:

CONT

BUDG

[Monika Hohlmeier](#) (EPP)

[Nils Ušakovs](#) (S&D)

Opinions:

ITRE:

REGI:

JURI:

[Cristian Silviu Busoi](#) (EPP)

[Daniel Buda](#) (EPP)

[Magdalena Adamowicz](#) (EPP)

Shadows rapporteurs: **Angelika Winzig** (EPP), **Victor Negrescu** (S&D), **Körner Moritz** (Renew), **Katalin Cseh** (Renew), **Daniel Freund** (Greens/EFA), **Alexandra Geese** (Greens/EFA), **Ryszard Czarnecki** (ECR), **Bogdan Rzonca** (ECR), **Joachim Kuhs** (ID), **Younous Omarjee** (The Left)

Administrators:

Marius Cobianu (CONT)

Rupert Wilkinson (BUDG)

On 25 September and 23 October 2023, the second and third inter-institutional trilogue meetings on the Commission's proposal for a recast of the regulation on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union took place.

Rule 74(3) of the Parliament's Rules of Procedure stipulates: "*After each trilogue, the Chair of the negotiating team and the rapporteur shall, on behalf of the negotiating team, report back to the next meeting of the committee responsible.*"

8. PARTIAL RENEWAL OF MEMBERS OF THE COURT OF AUDITORS - BE NOMINEE

CONT/9/13336



Hearing of Annemie Turtelboom, candidate nominated by Belgium

Rapporteur:
(S&D)

[Tsvetelina Penkova](#)

Administrator:

Kaare Barslev

Shadow Rapporteurs:

Carlos Coelho (EPP)

The Members of the European Court of Auditors are appointed for a term of six years. In accordance with Article 286(2) of the TFEU the Council, after consulting the European Parliament, shall adopt the list of Members drawn up in accordance with the proposals made by each Member State.

Appointments to the ECA are submitted to Parliament's plenary on the basis of a report from CONT. The report takes into account the requirement of Article 286(1) of the TFEU: "*The Members of the Court of Auditors shall be chosen from among persons who belong or have belonged in their respective States to external audit bodies or who are especially qualified for this office. Their independence must be beyond doubt.*".

In Parliament, the procedure is defined in Rule 129 of the Rules of Procedure (RoP). According to Rule 129 (1), "*candidates nominated as Members of the Court of Auditors shall be invited to make a statement before the committee responsible and to answer questions put by members. The committee shall vote on each nomination separately by secret ballot.*"

In preparation for the hearing, the candidate has been asked to answer a questionnaire prepared by CONT.

The hearing is structured as follows:

- Opening of the hearing by the Chair;
- The candidate will give an opening statement (maximum of 6 minutes);
- The CONT Rapporteur and shadow-rapporteurs will put questions to the candidate using the ping-pong system;
- Other members will question the candidate (catch-the-eye if time permits);
- Concluding remarks by the Chair.



After the hearing, the committee will hold an evaluation of the candidate, if required, and then proceed to vote on the appointment.

According to Rule 129 (1) RoP, the committee shall vote by secret ballot. Members shall indicate whether they give a favourable opinion, a negative opinion or abstain.

The format of reports on candidates for membership of the Court of Auditors is defined in Parliament's resolution of 4 February 2014, which implies that amendments cannot be tabled for this report.

The draft report will be finalised, according to the outcome of the evaluation and the vote in committee. The candidate's CV and the answers to the questionnaire are annexed to the report.

The report for plenary will state that Parliament delivers either a favourable or a negative opinion on the appointment of the candidate. The vote in Plenary is planned for November second session. The draft report is available on the CONT website.

Event	Body	Date
Vote	CONT	7 November 2023
Vote	Plenary	November II 2023

Tuesday 7 November 2023, 11:20 - 12:15

9. PARTIAL RENEWAL OF MEMBERS OF THE COURT OF AUDITORS - FI NOMINEE

CONT/9/13277



Hearing of *Petri Sarvamaa*, candidate nominated by Finland

Rapporteur:

Gilles Boyer (Renew)

Administrator:

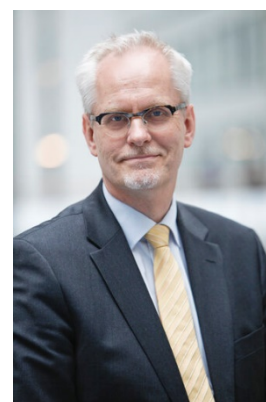
Kaare Barslev

Shadow Rapporteurs:

Angelika Winzig (EPP),

Tsvetelina Penkova (S&D)

For the procedure, please see agenda item no 8. Please note that since this is a new candidate, he has been given 8 minutes for his introductory remarks.



Event	Body	Date
Vote	CONT	7 November 2023
Vote	Plenary	November II 2023

Tuesday 7 November 2023, 12:15 – 12:45

***** Voting time *****

10. VOTE ON THE PARTIAL RENEWAL OF MEMBERS OF THE COURT OF AUDITORS - BE AND FI NOMINEES

CONT/9/13336, CONT/9/13277

Adoption of draft reports

11. PROTECTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S FINANCIAL INTERESTS - COMBATING FRAUD - ANNUAL REPORT 2022

CONT/9/11739



Adoption of draft report

Rapporteur:
Administrator:

[Maria Grapini](#) (S&D)
Diego Rasetti

Shadow Rapporteurs:
Katalin Cseh (Renew), **Daniel Freund** (Greens/EFA), **Ryszard Czarnecki** (ECR),
Luke Ming Flanagan (The Left)

Eleni Stavrou (EPP),

On 12 October, the European Commission presented to CONT the 2022 Annual Report on the protection of the EU's financial interests (known as the PIF Report), adopted this year much time in advance (on 27 July 2023) compared to previous editions. On the same day, the Rapporteur MEP Grapini presented for considerations the draft of the own-initiative report on the protection of the EU's financial interests in 2022.

The adoption of the draft INI in CONT report will allow for the adoption of the final resolution in the December Plenary, offering a topical contribution to the 2022 discharge procedure.

As in the last years, the presented text has a wide scope, and it encompasses as much as possible all the components of the Anti-Fraud Architecture. The draft builds on the observations in the PIF Report but it looks at many sources of information and data, such as the EPPO Annual Report, the OLAF Annual Activity Report, the Financial Regulation recast, the Third Rule of Law Report, the relevant Special Reports from the European Court of Auditors and others.

Following the exchange of views and considerations, 137 amendments were tabled.

The contributions from Shadows and other Members follow the discussions held in CONT and the additional information more recently made available, such as for instance the relevant parts of the ECA Annual Report 2022, on the protection of the Union's financial interests, the Eurobarometer's survey on corruption, the Media Pluralism Monitor 2022 and more.

The amendments underline the importance of cooperation and coordination amongst the Anti-Fraud Architecture components, and elaborate on the importance of comprehensive strategies to counter major threats such as corruption/conflict of interests and organised crime. More attention is devoted to money laundering, by which proceeds of crime, including those from fraud against the EU budget, are transferred in the legal economy, altering the normal functioning of the internal market. Some amendments devote attention towards the Recovery and Resilience Facility, taking into consideration the increased experience in the implementation of financed projects, in the completion of milestones and in the testing of the national control systems. Also EPPO and OLAF are the subject of some amendments, together with the still suboptimal level of adoption by the Member States of the National Anti Fraud Strategies. Some aspects of the implementation of the Conditionality Regulation have inspired further amendments.

The importance of digitalization and interoperability in countering malpractices, irregularities and mismanagement of resources has been confirmed by the tabled texts, which have given emphasis to the importance of the use of Arachne and EDES. The crucial role of investigative journalism, whistleblowers, transparency and adequate access to information and data has been underlined in other proposed contributions; finally, some of them aim at further enriching the section of the draft INI Report on the external dimension of the protection of the EU's financial interests, also with references to the situation in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

Overall, the amendments consistently support a call for more intense parliamentary scrutiny and a holistic approach in reporting, with the aim of providing a clearer, more complete and more concrete picture of the overall state of play of the protection of the Union's financial interests.

CONT Timetable

Event		Body	Date
Adoption of report in committee		CONT	7 November 2023
Adoption of report		Plenary	December 2023

12. COMBATING CORRUPTION, REPLACING COUNCIL FRAMEWORK DECISION 2003/568/JHA AND THE CONVENTION ON THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION INVOLVING OFFICIALS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES OR OFFICIALS OF MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND AMENDING DIRECTIVE (EU) 2017/1371 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

CONT/9/11969

[2023/0135\(COD\)](#)



Adoption of draft opinion

Rapporteur for the opinion:

[Caterina Chinnici \(EPP\)](#)

Administrator:
Nogueira

Ana Maria

Responsible Committee:

LIBE

Rapporteur:
[Strugariu](#) (Renew)

[Ramona](#)

Shadow Rapporteurs:

Isabel Garcia Munoz (S&D), **Gilles Boyer** (Renew), **Ryszard Czarnecki** (ECR), **Luke Ming Flanagan** (The Left)

On 3 May 2023, the Commission presented, together with a Joint Communication, a new [Directive on combating corruption](#).

The set of measures presented include new and strengthened rules criminalising corruption offences and harmonising penalties across the EU, as well as a proposal from the High Representative, supported by the Commission, to establish a dedicated Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) sanctions regime to target serious acts of corruption worldwide. These new measures place a strong focus on prevention and creating a culture of integrity, in which corruption is not tolerated and at the same time, strengthen enforcement tools.

The CONT Committee decided to give an Opinion under Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs responsible for the report. It was agreed that the opinion should cover the following shared areas of competence (CONT-LIBE) on the above mentioned proposal: Articles 2, 3, 7, 15 and 24.

The Opinion underlines three areas that need to be improved in order to strengthen the fight against

corruption at all levels:

- * Prevention,
- * Citizen's role, and
- * Coordinated cooperation.

On 7 November, CONT will vote a total of 56 amendments, from which six compromise amendments were proposed.

***** End of voting time *****

Tuesday 7 November 2023, 15:00 – 16:30

13. 2022 DISCHARGE: GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EU - COMMISSION

CONT/9/12735

[2023/2129\(DEC\)](#)



Discharge hearing with Commissioners Valdis Dombrovskis and Paolo Gentiloni, on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) in the presence of ECA Reporting Member Jan Gregor

Rapporteur: [Isabel García Muñoz](#) (S&D)

Administrators: Hans Stander, Benoît Lefort

Shadow rapporteurs: **Monika Hohlmeier** (EPP), **Olivier Chastel** (Renew), **Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel** (Greens/EFA), **Ryszard Czarnecki** (ECR), **Joachim Kuhs** (ID), **Luke Ming Flanagan** (The Left)

Opinions: AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM

The discharge for 2022 is the second year in which payments for the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) are included, as the Commission processed 13 payment requests to 11 Member States for a total of EUR 72.2 billion (EUR 46.9 billion in grants and EUR 25.3 billion in loans).

The Court of Auditors has audited all 13 payment requests, with all underlying 37 targets reported as achieved, and 244 milestones out of 274 milestones reported as achieved. The Court found issues with 15 milestones and targets, concerning 11 out of 13 payment requests (and clearing of related pre-financing). Based on these findings, the Court estimates that the minimum financial impact of these findings to be close to the materiality threshold, but not pervasive and therefore issued a qualified opinion without indicating an error rate.

By the end of 2022 the Council had approved all 27 Recovery and Resilience Plans, bringing the total committed amount of RRF funds to EUR 335.1 billion in grants and EUR 165.4 billion in loans. In the course of 2023, by the amendments of the RRP of several Member States, the total committed amounts increased further. By the deadline for requesting loan support, 31 August 2023, the Member States requested EUR 292 billion, meaning that 75% of the total available loan envelop might be paid out.

A total of 2557 measures (around one third reforms and two third investments), and a total of 6237 milestones and targets are included in the adopted RRP that need to be fulfilled by 2026. However, the number and nature of milestones and targets might still change pending the adoption of amendments to already approved RRP. These amendments are possible when there are 'objective circumstances', and to include a so-called REPowerEU chapter in the RRP, addressing the acceleration away from the dependency on Russian fossil fuels.

As regards transparency of final recipients of RRF funds, Member States started publishing their lists of 100 biggest recipients based on the agreement reached in December 2022. So far, 22 Member States have published this information. In the lists, several entities appear that are likely not the final recipients of these funds, but receive funds to disburse them further to other (public) organisations and one can observe organisations mentioned individually and as part of a consortium. This raises questions on how the Commission and Member States implement the related provisions in the RRF Regulation and the REPowerEU amendments to that regulation.

Written questions were submitted to the Commission on the implementation of the RRF in preparation for the hearing, for which answers were received and shared with CONT Members on 31 October 2023.

All the relevant documents can be found on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable

Event	Body	Date
Consideration of the draft report	CONT	1 February 2024
Deadline for amendments	CONT	8 February 2024
Adoption of draft report	CONT	7 March 2024
Adoption of report	Plenary	April II 2024

Tuesday 7 November 2023, 16:30 – 18:00

14. 2022 DISCHARGE: GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EU - COMMISSION

CONT/9/12735

[2023/2129\(DEC\)](#)



Discharge hearing with Commissioner Iliana Ivanova, responsible for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, in the presence of ECA Reporting Member Mihails Kozlovs

Rapporteur: [Isabel García Muñoz](#) (S&D)

Administrators: Hans Stander, Benoît Lefort

Shadow rapporteurs: **Monika Hohlmeier** (EPP), **Olivier Chastel** (Renew), **Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel** (Greens/EFA), **Ryszard Czarnecki** (ECR), **Joachim Kuhs** (ID), **Luke Ming Flanagan** (The Left)

Opinions: AFET, DEVE, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, LIBE, FEMM

In 2022 payments under the MFF heading 'Single market, Innovation and digital' amounted to EUR 25,2 billion, equivalent to 12,8 % of total budget expenditure for that year. The largest share (61,8 %) of this expenditure went to research (EUR 15,8 billion), followed by Transport, Energy and Digital (EUR 3.5 billion, 14,0 %), InvestEU (EUR 2,7 billion, 10,6 %) and Space (EUR 2,0 billion, 8,0 %).

The Court found an estimated error rate of 2,7 % in its sample of expenditure, a significant drop from 4,4 % in 2021. The Court could not provide a clear explanation for this decrease, though an increased use of simplified cost options might have contributed.

The efforts of the Commission to simplify payments to beneficiaries in this area of expenditure will accelerate in the coming years, when the share of lump sum based payments is projected to grow significantly. This is shown in the Court's annual report and was also stated by the Director-General for RTD in the hearing on 21 September. The Court has looked at the way the Commission has implemented these payments so far, based on an assessment of ten lump sum funded grants under the Horizon Europe programme. It made a number of recommendations, most notably underlining the need to better address the risk of irregularities and fraud.

The Members of the CONT Committee submitted 28 written questions to the Commission in preparation for the hearing, for which answers were received and shared with CONT Members on 27 October 2023.

All the relevant documents can be found on the [CONT website](#).

CONT Timetable

Event	Body	Date
Consideration of the draft report	CONT	1 February 2024
Deadline for amendments	CONT	8 February 2024
Adoption of draft report	CONT	7 March 2024
Adoption of report	Plenary	April II 2024

Tuesday 7 November 2023, 18:00 – 18:30

14. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS FUNDED FROM THE EU BUDGET

CONT/9/12604



Consideration of draft report

Rapporteur:
Administrators:
Maria Nogueira

Markus Pieper (EPP)
Christelle Courtade, Ana

Shadow rapporteurs:
Beatrice Covassi (S&D),
Ilana Cicurel (Renew), **Daniel Freund** (Greens/EFA),
Richard Czarnecki (ECR), **Joachim Kuhs** (ID), **Luke Ming Flanagan** (The Left)

The own-initiative report draws on the recommendations of a CONT [study](#) on “The transparency and accountability of EU funding for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in EU policy areas within EU territory”, that was presented in CONT on 12 October 2023.

NGOs are instrumental in linking civil society with the political decision-making in all EU policy areas. They also play an important role in the implementation of the EU budget, either when they receive EU funds as direct beneficiaries of EU grants awarded by the Commission or when they receive EU funds indirectly from beneficiaries and partners that have a legal relationship with the Commission, across all budget management modes. According to the data published in the Financial Transparency System (FTS) of the Commission, the contracted amount of grants awarded from the EU budget to NGOs, after excluding EU programmes in the field of education and research, amounted to at least 2.6 billion EUR in 2022, under direct management and across all EU programmes and funds. However, the total amount of grants awarded to NGOs is likely to be higher (approximately EUR 3.7 billion in 2022), due to the absence of an NGO definition and due to the lack of clear differentiation between NGOs and not-for-profit organisations (NFPOs) in the FTS.

Whereas transparency and accountability are basic principles enshrined in the financial rules governing the implementation of the EU budget and important factors of public trust, the analysis of the framework surrounding the implementation of the EU budget by NGOs reveals major shortcomings in terms of public transparency and accountability. Since only the funds directly awarded to NGOs are subject to monitoring and reporting by the Commission, the EU funds reallocated in the form of sub-granting, sub-contracting or shared within a consortium are difficult to track and are not published on public websites such as the FTS. As a result, control mechanisms aimed at ensuring that EU funds are used effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with the EU’s objectives, policies and financial rules are made difficult to implement, if not ineffective.

With a view to preventing and fighting against fraud and ensuring that EU funds are not used against EU values, public transparency and accountability requirements must be strengthened. It is of paramount importance to ensure that the contracted EU funds be tracked up to the final beneficiaries in a systematic and harmonised manner across information and transparency platforms at EU level and at the level of NGOs in the Member States. In particular, the EU Transparency Register should allow the traceability of funding sources, including EU funds, and provide greater transparency of registered organisations, thus contributing to avoid cases such as Qatargate. Furthermore, the funding of NGOs has to be made transparent from the source.

As recommended in previous years' budgetary discharge resolutions, the adoption of a NGO Regulation setting up minimum requirements for NGOs across the EU (definition, access to funding, disclosure of sources of financing, independence from political influence and non-European interference, etc.) would provide a more sound budgetary control framework, allowing the NGOs to deliver their positive achievements with the outmost transparency and accountability.

CONT Timetable

Event	Body	Date
Deadline for amendments	CONT	13 November 2023
Adoption of draft report	CONT	4 December 2023
Adoption of report	Plenary	January 2024

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16. NEXT MEETINGS

- 29-30 November 2023 (Brussels)
- 4 December 2023 (Brussels)

PAPERLESS PROGRAMME (INTERNAL USERS ONLY)

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

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Expertise: New Framework Call for Tenders

The current framework contract for expertise in the field of EU budget, serving both BUDG and CONT, will expire in April 2024.

In order to ensure business continuity for both the outgoing and new committees, the Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs has launched a new procedure, again covering both BUDG and CONT areas of interest.

Deadline for submissions is 20 November 2023. These new framework contracts should then start in July 2024 and run for 5 years, covering the entire 10th parliamentary term. In accordance with the Financial Regulation, the contract notice has been published electronically, and all relevant documents are available online:

<https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=14562>

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