



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 3 June 2013**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part I) / Council (EPSCO)

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Subject: European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 25/2012: "Are tools in place to monitor the effectiveness of European Social Fund spending on older workers?"  
- Draft Council conclusions

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1. On 7 March 2013, the General Secretariat of the Council received the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No. 25/2012 of the Court of Auditors entitled "Are tools in place to monitor the effectiveness of European Social Fund spending on older workers?", together with the Commission's replies.
2. On 20 March 2013, the Permanent Representatives Committee instructed the Working Party on Social Questions to examine the report in accordance with the rules laid down in the Council conclusions on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 7515/00 + COR1

3. The Working Party on Social Questions examined the report at its meeting on 15 April and on 27 May 2013. It reached an agreement on the text for draft Council conclusions, as set out in the Annex to this note.
  
4. The Permanent Representatives Committee invites the Council EPSCO to adopt the draft Council conclusions in the annex as an "A" item on the agenda at a forthcoming session.

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**DRAFT**  
**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**

**on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 25/2012 ["Are tools in place to monitor the effectiveness of European Social Fund spending on older workers?"]**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. WELCOMES the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 25/2012 and the Commission's detailed replies to it;
2. CONSIDERS it timely and useful that the report has been published before the beginning of the next programming period of the European Social Fund, thus helping to inform the process of negotiations for the next legislative framework;
3. UNDERSCORES the pertinence of the report's focus on older workers, given that it is an issue common to most EU Member States, and that a higher employment rate of older workers can prove to be of importance in achieving the Europe 2020 targets;
4. ACKNOWLEDGES that much progress has been made in the current programming period in terms of monitoring and control systems to improve data collection and to move towards performance measurement and LOOKS FORWARD TO further improvements in this field;
5. AGREES with the Court that emphasis on performance and on the efficient use of public resources is of utmost importance;
6. RECOGNISES the difficulty of setting targets and indicators for all target groups, such as older workers, at all levels in the Operational Programmes;

7. STRESSES the need to maintain flexibility in designing and managing the ESF on the basis of the needs and priorities of Member States, where appropriate at the regional and local level, whilst also ensuring transparency and proportionality;
  8. RECALLS that it has recently commenced negotiations with the European Parliament in the context of the ordinary legislative procedure with a view to the adoption of the next legislative framework 2014-2020, and UNDERLINES that, without prejudice to the final outcome of these discussions, due consideration should be given to the recommendations made in the Special Report of the European Court of Auditors.
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