



Council of the
European Union

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From: Financial Counsellors Working Party
To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
Subject: European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 19/2015: "More attention to results needed to improve the delivery of technical assistance to Greece"
- Draft Council conclusions

1. On 24 February 2016, the Permanent Representatives Committee assigned the examination of the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 19/2015: "More attention to results needed to improve the delivery of technical assistance to Greece" to the Working Party of Financial Counsellors.
2. The Working Party of Financial Counsellors examined the report at its meetings on 2 March and 11 March. The Working Party examined the draft conclusions at its meeting on 8 April and agreed on the attached text by silence procedure on 18 April.
3. The Permanent Representatives Committee is therefore invited to approve these draft Council conclusions and to submit them to Council for adoption.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 19/2015: "More attention to results needed to improve the delivery of technical assistance to Greece"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. WELCOMES the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 19/2015: "More attention to results needed to improve the delivery of technical assistance to Greece", NOTES the Court's findings and WELCOMES the recommendations regarding the technical assistance for Greece coordinated through the Task Force For Greece (TFGR);
2. WELCOMES the Commission's detailed reply to the Special Report;
3. RECOGNISES that the Commission created the TFGR in the context of the economic crisis in order to identify and coordinate the technical assistance needed by Greece in the context of the EU/IMF economic adjustment programme;
4. APPRECIATES the TFGR's assistance in identifying Greece's needs, in coordinating the delivery of technical assistance, in helping Greece with the definition of the technical assistance needed, in providing support to accelerate the take-up of EU funds, and in preparing the terms of reference for the provision of technical assistance;
5. Nevertheless RECOGNISES that in line with the findings of the Special Report, though fulfilling its mandate overall, there were shortcomings in certain aspects of the TFGR's work that could be improved upon;
6. HIGHLIGHTS that the delivery of extensive and cross-cutting technical assistance, such as the technical assistance coordinated through the TFGR, should be based on a strategy defining the responsibilities of the parties and should include clearly defined objectives and UNDERLINES the importance of close cooperation between the Commission, the beneficiary Member State and all the parties providing technical assistance;
7. UNDERLINES that systematic monitoring and the evaluation of the implementation of technical assistance and its results are essential for assessing its delivery. The monitoring and evaluation should ideally take place against the objectives of the technical assistance;

8. STRESSES the importance of national ownership, transparency and efficient implementation and INSISTS that the coordination and delivery of technical assistance should always take place upon the request of, and in close cooperation with, the beneficiary Member State. Amongst others, the beneficiary Member State should be asked to formally endorse the strategy for providing technical assistance. In addition, feedback could be sought systematically from the beneficiary Member State;

9. Furthermore APPRECIATES the European Court of Auditors' suggestions that technical assistance actions should be prioritised and that to achieve sustainable results, technical assistance should focus on the capacity-building of national administrations;

10. In light of the recommendation to operate through the most appropriate and effective implementation mode, INVITES the Commission to review its practical implementation methods with the aim of improving its efficiency in the delivery of support;

11. NOTES that the creation of the Structural Reform Support Service and the Commission's proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Structural Reform Support Programme could present the right framework for taking forward many of the recommendations put forward in the Special Report;

12. WELCOMES the Commission's acceptance of all of the European Court of Auditors' recommendations and INVITES the Commission to take these recommendations forward.