



Council of the
European Union

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Special Report No 12/2015 from the European Court of Auditors entitled "The EU priority of promoting knowledge-based rural economy has been affected by poor management of knowledge-transfer and advisory measures"
- Council conclusions (17 June 2016)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on:

Special Report No 12/2015 from the European Court of Auditors entitled "The EU priority of promoting knowledge-based rural economy has been affected by poor management of knowledge-transfer and advisory measures",

adopted by the Council at its 3475th meeting held on 17 June 2016.

Council conclusions
on Special Report No 12/2015 from the European Court of Auditors entitled:
"The EU priority of promoting knowledge-based rural economy has been affected by poor
management of knowledge-transfer and advisory measures"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- (1) WELCOMES Special Report No 12/2015 from the European Court of Auditors entitled: "The EU priority of promoting knowledge-based rural economy has been affected by poor management of knowledge-transfer and advisory measures";
- (2) NOTES the Court's findings with regard to the provision of knowledge-transfer and advisory activities co-funded through the EU budget for Rural Development (EAFRD) and Member States' own budgets for the programming period 2007-2013;
- (3) REAFFIRMS the importance of vocational education and training, skills development, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer for rural development and WILL TAKE DUE ACCOUNT of the Court's recommendations, which are aimed at improving the situation for the current rural-development programming period 2014-2020, such as with regard to the following issues:
 - specification and selection of knowledge transfer and advisory services, which correspond to identified knowledge and skills needs of rural operators;
 - use of appropriate selection or award criteria in open, fair and transparent competitions, measured as a ratio price/quality, in order to choose the best service providers;

- assessment of the need to support activities, which are readably available on the market at a reasonable price;
 - establishment of feedback systems that use monitoring and evaluation information to improve upcoming calls for proposals or tendering procedures;
 - promotion of the exchange of good practices in evaluation through the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD);
 - coordination in the use of EU funds so as to reduce the risk of double financing and the possible duplication of management structures;
- (4) RECALLS the Council's conclusions (doc. 9134/15) based on the Court's Special Report No 22/2014 with regard to effective checks of cost reasonableness and UNDERLINES the aim for a qualitative improvement of controls while striking an appropriate balance between safeguarding the EU's financial interests with the administrative efforts and costs of Member States.
- (5) WELCOMES the Commission's intention to update the measure fiche on knowledge-transfer, to carry out information activities in this respect and to promote exchange of good practices on methodological approaches in the context of networking activities.

