



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 22 January 2015

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BUDGET 2
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NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament's
Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT), held in Brussels on 19 January
2015

At the CONT meeting on 19 January 2015, the ambitious work programme set out by the ECA President received a warm welcome from MEPs. Ms GRÄSSLE (Chair, EPP) asked for the audit to be wider in scope and Ms AYALA SENDER (S&D, ES) and Mr STAES (GREENS/ALE, BE) requested a say in programming the ECA's audits, which in their opinion should dovetail better with parliamentary activity.

Ms GRÄSSLE announced her intention to make full use of the new powers laid down by the Rules of Procedure and to invite specialised Committees to discuss the ECA's special reports.

The meeting was chaired by Ms GRÄSSLE (EPP, DE).

1. Annual Report 2013 on the Protection of the EU's Financial Interests - Fight against fraud

The vote was postponed.

2. Work programme 2015 of the European Court of Auditors

Mr Caldeira, President of the European Court of Auditors (ECA), indicated that in 2015 the ECA intended to adopt and publish 55 reports on the 2014 financial year and 35 special reports. It would also carry on with its internal reform, which would in particular enable it to enhance audit performance and to promptly reprogramme work.

Long-term objectives and policies, such as EU added value, growth, sustainability of public finances and climate change, would be addressed in the forthcoming audit period. Moreover, audit would also involve newer policy areas such as support to Ukraine, energy security and the Banking Union.

Mr Caldeira told Ms GRÄSSLE and Mr GEIER (S&D, DE) that the investment plan was being followed closely by the ECA, which was ready to provide its expertise whenever requested. He also mentioned the excessive deficit procedure and EU budget guarantees as audit areas.

Mr Caldeira agreed with Ms AYALA SENDER (S&D, ES) and Mr STAES (Greens/ALE, BE) that the timing for presenting reports was crucial in order to allow the EP to make the best use of them in its parliamentary activity and announced that a forecast of the activity scheduled over 2015 would be made available immediately. He also recalled that it was not for the ECA to concentrate on what was politically relevant.

While stressing that the ECA was the guardian of good spending, he underlined that it would take an approach more oriented towards performance. An ECA working group would be tasked with addressing the issue of the statement of assurance (DAS) later this month.

While members, and in particular the CONT chair, tended to broaden audit requests by including areas like Staff Regulations reform, CAP landscape review, cooperation between the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Mr Caldeira underlined the limited resources of the ECA. He insisted with Mr VAUGHAN (S&D, UK) on the importance of special reports for assessing results and EU added value. He also made it clear to Mr SOLTES (Greens/ALE, SL) that too many EU programmes lacked added value, since they would have been carried out irrespective of the EU funding.

Ms GRÄSSLE concluded that pursuant to the new Rules of Procedure, she would invite all the relevant Committees to discuss special reports, with a view to mainstreaming the ECA findings into the new policies.

3. Next meetings

- 21 January 2015, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
 - 22 January 2015, 9.00 – 12.30 (Brussels)
 - 26 January 2015, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
 - 27 January 2015, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
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