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COVER NOTE

From:	Mr Klaus-Heiner LEHNE, President of the European Court of Auditors
date of receipt:	28 November 2017
To:	Mr Märt KIVINE, President of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	Report on the annual accounts of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the financial year 2016 together with the Centre's reply

Delegations will find attached the European Court of Auditors' report on the annual accounts of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the financial year 2016.

This report is accompanied by the Centre's reply and will shortly be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Encl.: Report on the annual accounts of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the financial year 2016 together with the Centre's reply.¹

¹ In English only. The other languages of this report are available on the European Court of Auditors' website: <http://eca.europa.eu/>.



EUROPEAN
COURT
OF AUDITORS

Report on the annual accounts
of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
for the financial year 2016

together with the Centre's reply

INTRODUCTION

1. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (hereinafter “the Centre”, aka “Cedefop”), which is located in Thessaloniki, was established by Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75¹. Its core mandate is to serve the development of vocational training at Union level. In order to achieve this objective, it has the task of compiling and disseminating documentation on vocational training systems.

2. **Table 1** presents key figures for the Centre².

TABLE 1: KEY FIGURES FOR THE CENTRE

	2015	2016
Budget (million euro) ³	18,4	18,0
Total staff as at 31 December ⁴	123	122

Source: data provided by the Centre

INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF THE STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

3. The audit approach taken by the Court comprises analytical audit procedures, direct testing of transactions and an assessment of key controls of the Centre’s supervisory and control systems. This is supplemented by evidence provided by the work of other auditors and an analysis of management representations.

¹ OJ L 39, 13.2.1975, p. 1.

² More information on the Centre's competences and activities is available on its website: www.cedefop.europa.eu.

³ Budget figures are based on payment appropriations.

⁴ Staff includes officials, temporary and contract staff and seconded national experts.

OPINION

4. We have audited:

- (a) the accounts of the Centre which comprise the financial statements⁵ and the reports on the implementation of the budget⁶ for the financial year ended 31 December 2016, and
- (b) the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts,

as required by Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Reliability of the accounts***Opinion on the reliability of the accounts***

5. In our opinion, the accounts of the Centre for the year ended 31 December 2016 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Centre at 31 December 2016, the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with its Financial Regulation and with accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer. These are based on internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector.

Legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts**Revenue*****Opinion on the legality and regularity of revenue underlying the accounts***

6. In our opinion, revenue underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016 is legal and regular in all material respects.

⁵ The financial statements comprise the balance sheet, the statement of financial performance, the cashflow statement, the statement of changes in net assets and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

⁶ The reports on implementation of the budget comprise the reports which aggregate all budgetary operations and the explanatory notes.

Payments*Opinion on the legality and regularity of payments underlying the accounts*

7. In our opinion, payments underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2016 are legal and regular in all material respects.

Responsibilities of management and those charged with governance

8. In accordance with Articles 310 to 325 of the TFEU and the Centre's Financial Regulation, management is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the accounts on the basis of internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector and for the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them. This responsibility includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to the preparation and presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. Management is also responsible for ensuring that the activities, financial transactions and information reflected in the financial statements are in compliance with the authorities which govern them. The Centre's management bears the ultimate responsibility for the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts.

9. In preparing the accounts, management is responsible for assessing the Centre's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting.

10. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts and underlying transactions

11. Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the accounts of the Centre are free from material misstatement and the transactions underlying them are legal and regular and to provide, on the basis of our audit, the European Parliament and the Council or other respective discharge authorities with a statement of assurance as to the reliability of the accounts and the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit will always detect a material misstatement or non-compliance when it exists. These can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if,

individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these accounts.

12. An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the accounts and the legality and the regularity of the transactions underlying them. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including an assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the accounts and of material non-compliance of the underlying transactions with the requirements of the legal framework of the European Union, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the accounts and legality and regularity of underlying transactions, are considered in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the accounts.

13. For revenue, we verify the subsidy received from the Commission and assess the Centre's procedures for collecting fees and other income, if any.

14. For expenditure, we examine payment transactions when expenditure has been incurred, recorded and accepted. This examination covers all categories of payments other than advances at the point they are made. Advance payments are examined when the recipient of funds provides justification for their proper use and the Centre accepts the justification by clearing the advance payment, whether in the same year or later.

15. In preparing this report and Statement of Assurance, we considered the audit work of the independent external auditor performed on the Centre's accounts as stipulated in Article 208(4) of the EU Financial Regulation⁷.

FOLLOW-UP OF PREVIOUS YEARS' COMMENTS

16. An overview of the corrective action taken in response to the Court's comments from previous years is provided in the **Annex**.

⁷ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1).

This Report was adopted by Chamber IV, headed by Mr Baudilio TOMÉ MUGURUZA,
Member of the Court of Auditors, in Luxembourg at its meeting of 12 September 2017.

For the Court of Auditors

Klaus-Heiner LEHNE

President

Follow-up of previous years' comments

Year	Court's comments	Status of corrective action (Completed / Ongoing / Outstanding / N/A)
2015	The level of committed appropriations carried over was high for Title II (administrative expenditure) at 477 994 euro, i.e. 28 % (2013: 425 877 euro, i.e. 24 %). This was driven in large part by the high volume of network and other IT equipment required for the refurbishment of the repaired areas of the Centre's building which had not yet been delivered or invoiced by the end of 2015.	N/A
2015	The building provided to the Centre by the Greek State is constructed on an active fault line, which resulted in structural damage to the building. Repair work and structural strengthening has been undertaken by the Greek authorities and was completed in 2015. In addition, the Centre is presently addressing various safety issues related to the construction of the building. A particular safety issue concerns the building's glass façade and the skylights of the Centre's conference rooms, and is affecting the availability of the Centre's facilities.	Completed

THE CENTRE'S REPLY

The Centre has taken note of the Court's report.