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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Accompanying the document

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**on the mid-term evaluation of the Programme for exchange, assistance and training for
the protection of the euro against counterfeiting ('Pericles 2020' Programme)**

{COM(2017) 741 final} - {SWD(2017) 443 final}

The Pericles 2020 Programme (hereinafter 'Pericles 2020' or the 'Programme') was established by Regulation (EU) No 331/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council on 11 March 2014 (hereinafter 'the Regulation') for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020. It is a European Union (EU) initiative intended to contribute to the protection of the euro. In particular, the Programme provides financial support to activities intended to strengthen the capacity to prevent and combat counterfeiting of the euro and related fraud in relevant authorities in EU Member States (MS) as well as in countries outside of the EU (hereinafter 'third countries').

In accordance with the Regulation, an independent mid-term evaluation (hereinafter 'the Evaluation') of the Programme shall be presented by the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council by 31 December 2017. The Evaluation was carried out by an external contractor and run from 04/08/2016 until 30/06/2017; it assessed the Programme's implementation to date and provided an outlook on the future activities of the Programme.

The Evaluation assessed the performance of the Programme to date in the context of the objectives detailed in Article 13 (4) of the Regulation taking into consideration all elements necessary to support a decision to either renew, modify or suspend the measures/types of actions financed under the Programme. In line with Article 13 (5) of the Regulation, the Evaluation also assessed the long-term impact and the sustainability of the effects of the Programme with a view to informing a decision on a possible renewal, modification or suspension of any subsequent programme. Results on the long-term impact of the predecessor Programme actions such as the overall added value, the prospects of the Programme's sustainability and recommendations from previous evaluations were taken into account during this Evaluation.

The Evaluation primarily focused on the Pericles 2020 actions for which a commitment was made between 1 January 2014 and 30 June 2016. In practice, the Evaluation involved the analysis of 27 actions, involving a total initial EU budgetary commitment of about € 2.3 million (i.e. about one third of total Pericles 2020 resources). For the purpose of extrapolating the assessment of long term effects, the analysis of the Programme's actions was supplemented with the review of the previous Pericles Programme.

Fact finding work involved the review of a variety of documentary sources, interviews with various institutions, and an online survey. The consultations with stakeholders were extensive and involved interviews with 56 entities as well as the surveying of 227 participants in Programme's actions. Considering the extensive consultations and owing to the very specific and specialised scope of the Programme, the Evaluation was exempted from carrying out an Open Public Consultation (OPC).

The Evaluation covered all the five evaluation criteria typically used in the assessment of EU programmes, namely: (i) relevance; (ii) effectiveness; (iii) efficiency; (iv) EU added value; (v) coherence. In addition the evaluation also considered a sixth criteria: (vi) sustainability. The key findings of the Evaluation can be grouped by the following evaluation criteria.

Relevance. All available evidence suggests that the general and specific objectives are relevant and are likely to remain so during the Programme's life. Stakeholders concur that the strengthening of institutional capacity in national authorities, which constitutes Pericles 2020's 'core business', is regarded as an essential element to safeguard the euro.

Effectiveness and Sustainability. Pericles 2020 actions were typically implemented as planned and achieved the intended outputs. Actions were usually implemented in a timely manner, with marginal changes in the work plans; only one action out of 27 incurred significant delays, due to justified reasons. The number of participants in events was largely in line with expectations. The Programme was successful in broadening its reach beyond the EU with two thirds of participants coming from non-euro countries, as well as beyond the 'traditional constituency' of law enforcement officers, with a significant increase in the participation of representatives of judiciary, but also monetary, authorities.

Efficiency. The analysis of Programme's documentation and the comparison with documentation on other EU programmes suggest that the funds deployed for the implementation of Pericles 2020 actions are used judiciously. Cost-effectiveness considerations play a major role in the selection of actions to be financed, with beneficial effects on unit costs.

Pericles 2020 is a small programme and overhead costs, although limited in absolute terms, shows a high incidence. However, the Programme is highly specific and its possible merging with other EU programmes to achieve economies of scale would in all likelihood lead to a decline in the effectiveness of euro protection actions, which in turn may well more than offset possible financial savings.

Coherence and EU Added Value. Feedback from stakeholders highlights that Pericles 2020 activities can be regarded as fully complementary and additional to national euro protection initiatives, without overlaps. Pericles 2020 activities also effectively complement other EU and international euro protection initiatives. Several Competent National Authorities (CNAs)¹ and third country authorities have been involved in other euro protection initiatives run by the European Central Bank (ECB), Europol, Interpol or other Commission-managed programmes (e.g. TAIEX in South Eastern Europe). They regard Pericles 2020 as fairly unique; effectively complementing other initiatives.

The Programme's added value lies essentially in its ability to support forms of international cooperation that are beyond the reach of national authorities. As an example, all EU stakeholders concur that initiatives such as the establishment of a dialogue (however initial and preliminary) with Chinese authorities or the setting up of anti-counterfeit units in Latin America would not have been feasible without the support provided by the Programme. In a similar vein, a discontinuation of the Programme would have serious detrimental effects, de

¹ [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015XC0812\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015XC0812(01)&from=EN)

facto making it impossible to perform the same type of transnational activities on a comparable scale.

Conclusions and Recommendations

All the findings converge towards an unambiguously positive overall assessment, reflected in the feedback received from stakeholders including the ECB and Europol. There is room for small improvements, but from the evaluation it is clear that Pericles 2020 performs well in respect of all the six evaluation criteria informing this Evaluation. The recommendations of earlier assessments were properly followed up on and this contributed to improve performance.

Relevance. Continued Emphasis on Chinese counterfeiters and the internet is recommended. The risks posed by Chinese counterfeiters and by the internet have already been the subject of significant work under Pericles 2020; the two themes continue to rank quite high in the list of the 'new threats' identified by stakeholders and there is a keen interest in further activities aiming at strengthening contacts with relevant government bodies (China) and improving investigative approaches (deep/dark net).

Efficiency-Fine Tune Administrative Procedures. In the area of administrative procedures, two themes of potential improvement were identified: the (in)adequacy of daily subsistence rates used for CNAs-implemented actions and the possibility of submitting applications and other relevant documentation online.

Effectiveness and Sustainability. The Evaluation flags up the need for encouraging greater CNAs participation. Currently 11 CNAs from the MS most significantly affected by euro counterfeiting applied to the Programme. However the potential exists to attract an increased number of applications from other CNAs Therefore consideration should be given to the establishment of contacts with high level decision makers to ensure that the opportunities offered by the Programme are well understood. In addition, the Evaluation underlines that the sustainability of achieved results will depend significantly on the continuation of the Programme as a standalone programme until its natural expiry and beyond 2020.

Revise Performance Indicators. The Evaluation underlines that the performance indicators currently in use are not fully aligned with the capacity building nature of Pericles 2020 activities. Therefore, consideration should be given to replacing or at least complementing the current indicators with qualitative ones that can more accurately capture the results of Pericles 2020 actions.

A detailed description on how the Commission will take into account the Evaluation's recommendations is included in the Staff Working Document.