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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	11 December 2017
To:	Delegations

No. prev. doc.:	13629/17
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Subject:	The European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 11/2017 on "The Bêkou EU trust fund for the Central African Republic: a hopeful beginning despite some shortcomings" - Council conclusions (11 December 2017)
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Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 11/2017 on 'The Bêkou EU trust fund for the Central African Republic: a hopeful beginning despite some shortcomings', as adopted by the Council at its 3587th meeting held on 11 December 2017.

**The European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 11/2017 on
'The Bêkou EU trust fund for the Central African Republic: a hopeful beginning
despite some shortcomings'**

Council conclusions

1. The Council welcomes the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No. 11/2017 on 'The Bêkou EU trust Fund: a hopeful beginning despite some shortcomings'. The Special Report is particularly valuable as EU trust funds are a new tool for development aid used for emergency, post-emergency or thematic actions and the Bêkou trust fund (BTF) is the first of its nature.
2. The Council and the Member States recall their position regarding the use of EU trust funds as set out in the 2017 European Consensus on Development.
3. The Council also recalls that the BTF was established as a response to an unprecedented crisis characterised by inter-communitarian violence, weakening of basic state functions, limited international aid and substantial humanitarian and development challenges in the Central African Republic. In light of the continued challenges in the Central African Republic, the Council stresses the need to continue the international mobilisation of resources to provide humanitarian and development aid and consolidate the recovery, stabilisation and sustainable development in the country.
4. The Court's Special Report on the BTF is particularly important, as it is the first audit of an EU Trust Fund. The report offers valuable observations and recommendations about the positive achievements and challenges of the BTF, some of which can help to strengthen the management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of other EU trust funds.

5. With regard to the first three years of BTF implementation, the Council takes good note of the overall positive assessment by the Court of Auditors and the progress achieved to date.
- The Council notes the Court's conclusion that the creation of the BTF was appropriate and the BTF was a rapid response to the need for a coordinated instrument to link relief, rehabilitation and development. The Council notes that the Court, amongst its main findings, concludes that the Commission was overall successful in setting up, managing and implementing the BTF but that improvements are still needed in order to reach its full potential.
6. In addition, the Council takes note of the two recommendations of the Court and calls on the Commission to:
- Develop further guidance on its choice of aid vehicle including a concise and structured assessment of the comparative advantages of trust funds relative to other aid vehicles in terms of responsiveness and adaptability to crisis situations and for each trust fund to carry out needs analyses of its added value prior to establishment of such trust funds.
 - Improve donor coordination, selection procedures and performance measurement and optimise the management of administrative costs within EU trust funds in general and more particularly within the BTF. Such improvement will be critical to deliver the full potential of the BTF.
7. The Council welcomes the fact that the Commission has responded comprehensively to the Court's recommendations and looks forward to effective implementation of the BTF and the other existing trust funds. The lessons learnt from the BTF should be shared, distributed and effectively integrated, whenever relevant, into the Commission's management of EU Trust Funds in order to optimise the use of this aid modality in EU development cooperation and external relations. In this regard, the Council welcomes that the Commission intends to gradually make further improvements and integrate lessons learnt from the BTF into the management and implementation of other EU trust funds.
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