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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1)/Council

Subject: European Court of Auditors' Special Report No. 19/2019 "INEA: benefits delivered but CEF shortcomings to be addressed"
- *Adoption of Council conclusions*

Following the tasking by the Permanent Representatives Committee¹, the Working Party on Transport - Intermodal Questions and Networks held a discussion on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report 19/2019² titled "INEA: benefits delivered but CEF shortcomings to be addressed", at its meeting of 15 January 2020.

Based on this discussion, the Presidency drew up draft Council conclusions³, which were examined by the Working Party at its meeting on 31 January 2020 and, taking into consideration the written and oral comments, subsequently agreed at its meeting on 14 February 2020 as revised⁴.

¹ 14172/19

² https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR19_19/SR_INEA_EN.pdf

³ 5091/20

⁴ 5091/20 REV 1

In accordance with the Council conclusions of 8 May 2000 on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors⁵, the Permanent Representatives Committee is therefore invited to suggest to the Council to adopt, under the "A" items of a forthcoming session, the Council conclusions as set out in the Annex.

⁵ 7515/00 + COR 1.

Council conclusions on European Court of Auditors' Special Report 19/2019 titled "INEA: benefits delivered but CEF shortcomings to be addressed"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. WELCOMES the European Court of Auditors' Special Report 19/2019 titled "INEA: benefits delivered but CEF shortcomings to be addressed".
2. NOTES the focus of the Special Report on the management of EU spending programmes by the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA).
3. RECALLS in this context the legislative proposal for establishing the Connecting Europe Facility for the period of 2021-2027, which addresses some of the court's recommendations and is currently under negotiation.
4. REITERATES the Council conclusions of December 2017 on the progress of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) implementation and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for transport, where the Council underlined inter alia the potentials for synergies between different programmes and among CEF sectors as well as the importance of a timely implementation of projects.
5. TAKES note of the conclusions and recommendations in the Special Report and WELCOMES the Court's overall very positive assessment of the performance of INEA.

In particular:

6. WELCOMES the Court's assessment that INEA is fulfilling its tasks as measured by performance indicators, that standardised procedures have led to a simplification of the implementation of delegated spending programmes and that procedures for selecting funded projects are well organised.

7. STRESSES the importance of the Court's recommendations to the Commission and INEA to improve the potential of synergies by removing obstacles, possibly stemming from the legal framework, objectives or project readiness levels, and to ensure harmonisation and transparency of project selection procedures.
 8. CALLS ON the Commission and INEA to take into account the Court's recommendations for improving the conditions for the timely implementation of CEF and the monitoring of project results, including concrete commitments to take action on the recommendations, and EMPHASISES in this context the importance of adequate long-term planning, especially concerning multi-annual CEF calls and projects.
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