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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

No. prev. doc.: 14548/2/19 REV 2

Subject: European Court of Auditors' Special Report No13/2019 entitled "The ethical frameworks of the audited EU institutions: scope for improvement"
- Council conclusions (19 December 2019)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 13/2019 entitled "The ethical frameworks of the audited EU institutions: scope for improvement", as adopted by the Council at its 3741st meeting held on 19 December 2019.

**Council conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 13/2019 entitled
"The ethical frameworks of the audited EU institutions: scope for improvement"**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. WELCOMES Special Report No 13/2019 of the European Court of Auditors entitled "The ethical frameworks of the audited EU institutions: scope for improvement";
2. ACKNOWLEDGES that the background analysis and methodology following the OECD "integrity management framework" and its recommendations¹ constitute valid guidance for establishing ethical frameworks in the EU institutions;
3. ACKNOWLEDGES the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Report and SHARES the Court of Auditors' assessment that, to a large extent, the audited EU institutions (European Council, Council, European Commission and European Parliament) have established adequate ethical frameworks with room for improvement in certain areas;
4. HIGHLIGHTS the importance of maintaining the highest possible professional standards in the EU institutions by putting in place ambitious and transparent ethical frameworks to serve the EU's interest, while ensuring the efficient and effective management of available resources;
5. SUPPORTS the further improvement of harmonised frameworks within and across the audited EU institutions based on closer inter-institutional cooperation and the exchange of best practices with a view to strengthening trust in the EU as a whole; these frameworks must accommodate the institutions' particular roles and needs;

¹ See in this respect the 1998 "Recommendation of the OECD Council on Improving Ethical Conduct in the Public Service Including Principles for Managing Ethics in the Public Service", OECD/LEGAL/0298, in OECD, Trust in Government. Ethics measures in OECD Countries, Paris, 2000. OECD Recommendation on Public Integrity, Paris, 2017.

6. CONSIDERS that the Special Report, despite its limited scope and focus on the establishment of appropriate ethical frameworks rather than on their implementation, provides a valuable reference for the development of relevant frameworks and strategies for the EU's Appointing Authorities across the Union, thereby prompting the EU institutions and bodies to contemplate actions towards shared ethical values, principles and norms;
7. UNDERLINES that the Members of the European Council and of the Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the Member States participating in the Council's preparatory bodies are subject to national rules establishing ethical frameworks, and that there is no ground for including them in the scope of a common ethical framework at EU level;
8. ACKNOWLEDGES
 - (i) the need for increased consistency across the respective EU institutions' frameworks, especially as regards staff awareness and effective accountability at all levels, thereby enhancing a culture of public integrity through a clear perception of the ethical frameworks;
 - (ii) the importance of setting up mechanisms for consistent and effective reporting of irregularities;
 - (iii) the need for close operational links between the services designated by the Appointing Authorities for tackling unethical behaviours and between the EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and national authorities, as appropriate;
9. EXPRESSES ITS INTENTION to follow up on the implementation of ethical frameworks in the EU institutions and CALLS UPON the Appointing Authorities of the respective institutions to consider setting up appropriate strategies, including targeted and tailored actions to raise staff awareness as well as continuous monitoring and self-corrective mechanisms;
10. INVITES all Appointing Authorities to reflect upon possible further measures that might be appropriate.