



EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

PRESS RELEASE

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Special Report on the effectiveness of the Commission's projects in the area of Justice and Home Affairs for the western Balkans¹

In this special report, the European Court of Auditors analyses the effectiveness of the European Commission's projects in the area of justice and home affairs for the western Balkans. The Court concludes that, against the background of a difficult political and organisational environment, the Commission's management of justice and home affairs projects has been largely effective. However, the Court identifies some shortcomings, particularly in terms of the sustainability of results.

The audit covered both investment and institution-building projects in the four justice and home affairs sub-areas: asylum and migration, integrated border management, judiciary and police. The Court found that the results of institution-building projects were only partially satisfactory and unlikely to be sustainable. This was due to continued political weakness and lack of commitment (ownership) by the beneficiaries, as most reform initiatives did not come from within the region but from the Commission or other external stakeholders.

The common strategic objective of the audited projects was to reinforce the rule of law in the western Balkans. The Court concluded that unlike the previous accession programmes, the Commission has rightly prioritised the justice and home affairs sector and attempted to tackle these important structural reforms earlier in the enlargement process.

Although not all investment projects achieved fully satisfactory results, and the sustainability is at risk, the investment assistance financed by the Commission has made a relevant and useful contribution to the national infrastructure and institutions.

On the basis of its observations, the Court makes recommendations which could help the Commission to provide more efficient and effective assistance and enhance sustainability.

¹ The purpose of this press release is to give a summary of the Special Report adopted by the Court of Auditors which is available on the Court's Internet site (www.eca.europa.eu) and will be published shortly in a printed format.

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