



Press Release

Luxembourg, 30 October 2019

EU Auditors' 2020 work programme: checking if the EU is delivering results

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) today published its work programme for next year, listing its upcoming audit priorities. These will cover a broad range of issues, reflecting the EU's main challenges and key concerns: sustainable use of natural resources, growth and inclusion, migration, security and global development, the single market, and an accountable and efficient EU. The auditors will scrutinise these areas to establish whether the EU is delivering on its commitments.

The 2020 work programme provides more information on some 41 reports the ECA expects to publish in 2020, selected based on an assessment of the main risks in relation to EU spending and policy delivery. The auditors will also, for the first time, publish an annual report on the performance of EU policies. This is in addition to their annual reports on the EU budget, the European Development Funds, the Single Resolution Board, the EU agencies, the Joint Undertakings and the European Schools. They will give opinions on new or updated EU laws with financial implications.

"Although the EU's total annual budget of some €140 billion may seem large, it represents only around 1% of the gross national income of its Member States", said the President of the European Court of Auditors, Klaus-Heiner Lehne. "It is therefore all the more important that this budget is spent effectively, which is why our work increasingly focuses on assessing whether EU policies and programmes achieve their objectives and add value, rather than just following the established rules."

For the coming year, the EU auditors have placed sustainability at the heart of their work. This is why, in 2020, they will continue to assess whether the EU is properly addressing climate change, with reports on pesticides use and plastic waste, as well as on the marine environment, biodiversity in farming and pollinators, among other topics. They will also consider the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), covering all but 3 of these 17 goals next year.

The purpose of this press release is to give the main messages of the 2020 work programme by the European Court of Auditors. The full work programme is on www.eca.europa.eu.

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The ECA's audit priorities for 2020 will also include tasks in the areas of investment for cohesion, growth and inclusion. The auditors will look in particular at investments in road infrastructure connecting European regions, EU cultural funding and measures to fight child poverty. They will also examine the European Commission's assurance system in Cohesion for the 2014-2020 programme period. Furthermore, they will examine the EU's external action and security policy, notably with audits on Frontex's new mandate as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, the rule of law in Ukraine and cybersecurity in the EU.

The auditors will also examine key issues for the functioning of the single market and the sustainability of the monetary union, such as EU oversight of state aid to banks following the financial crisis, the exchange of tax information between Member States, and Europe's space assets.

In the priority area "Financing and administering the EU accountably and efficiently", the auditors will scrutinise the EU's response to China's Belt and Road Initiative, in particular the Connecting Europe and Asia strategy. They will also assess, among other things, the European Investment Advisory Hub and third-country contributions to the EU budget.

With such a comprehensive range of topics, the ECA will continue to provide EU citizens and policymakers with independent reports on key issues for the future of the EU, highlighting what works well and drawing attention to what does not.

Notes to Editors

The ECA's role as the EU's independent external auditor is to contribute to improving EU financial management and promote accountability and transparency. The ECA warns of risks, provides assurance and draws attention to both shortcomings and successes.

The ECA's audit reports and opinions are an essential element of the EU accountability chain. They are used to hold to account those responsible for implementing EU policies and programmes: the Commission, other EU institutions and bodies and administrations in Member States. They also help EU citizens to understand more clearly how the EU and its Member States are meeting current and future challenges.

The 2020 work programme is available on the ECA website eca.europa.eu in 23 EU languages.

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