

Financial Controller takes stock of progress made since January 99 (Brussels, 21 June 2000)

Caption: On 21 June 2000, the Commission considers the Annual Report drawn up by the Financial Controller. He describes the activities of DG AUDIT for the period from 1 January 1999 to 30 April 2000.

Source: RAPID. The Press and Communication Service of the European Commission. [ON-LINE]. [Brussels]: European Commission, [06.11.2006]. IP/00/648. Available on <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/00/648&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/financial_controller_takes_stock_of_progress_made_since_january_99_brussels_21_june_2000-en-162d2b35-b553-49c6-b966-8bb81b47d476.html

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Financial Controller takes stock of progress made since January 99

The Annual Report of the European Commission's Financial Controller highlights key achievements during the period 1 January 1999 to 30 April 2000, such as deepening co-operation with Member States in the area of the Structural Funds and the extension of co-operation with the candidate countries. The Financial Controller also raises a number of practical issues which will need to be addressed in 2000 to ensure the smooth running of the reform of financial management and control within the Commission.

The Financial Controller's Annual Report examined on June 21 by the Commission reviews progress made between 1 January 1999 and 30 April 2000. Some 80 000 commitment orders, and some 500,000 payment orders were submitted for approval to the Commission's Financial Controller. A sample of orders selected according to risk-assessment criteria were verified (about 10% of transactions accounting for almost 90% of the value of the budget made up the sample). The Financial Controller also worked to strengthen the Commission's audit, advice and guidance functions. Key achievements include:

- reduction of the time taken to process transactions submitted for ex ante control from an average of 4.4 days in 1998 to 3.5 in 1999
- deepening co-operation with Member States concerning the Structural Funds through the establishment of regular annual co-ordination meetings with national counterparts
- extension of co-operation with the candidate countries, including through administrative agreements, joint audits, seminars and training courses
- reduction in the level of ex ante control on the basis of risk assessment and parallel reinforcement of audit and methodological work
- testing, in a pilot exercise, the control and risk self-assessment methodology, widely used elsewhere in both the public and the private sectors.

The Financial Controller points out issues to be addressed in 2000 to ensure the smooth running of the reform process:

- Internal Audit and the authorising services will have to build up their audit capacity in particular where authorising services are establishing new audit units.
- DG AUDIT and the receiving services need to take appropriate action to ensure a smooth transfer of responsibilities under the reform;
- Information technology tools developed by DG AUDIT, particularly those also used as management tools by other services, should be used to the full so as to ensure that the efficiency benefits they bring can continue to be obtained; and
- the management of the process of transferring many DG AUDIT staff and posts to new work areas and of retaining and motivating sufficient staff to undertake centralised ex ante control so long as it continues will be a major challenge both for DG AUDIT and for the other services concerned during 2000.