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**Press Release**  
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## **EuropeAid's evaluation and results-oriented monitoring systems do not provide adequate information on EU development expenditure results, say EU auditors**

Two of the key elements of the accountability framework operated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation (EuropeAid) are its evaluation and results-oriented monitoring (ROM) systems. In its special report published today, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) is critical of the reliability of these systems.

**Karel Pinxten, the ECA Member responsible for this report, said:** *"The demand for accountability for EU expenditure in all fields has never been higher. It is not good enough to report achievements in vague global terms. The Commission needs to have the building blocks necessary for a comprehensive reporting system which provides meaningful information for its own management and for its external stakeholders. One of these components is a strong evaluation system which feeds into an overall reporting process. At the present time, EuropeAid's system is inadequate."*

*"The evaluations of projects and programmes which are organised by Commission delegations and carried out in partner countries are unsatisfactorily managed: overall supervision is inadequate, the amount of resources used is unclear and access to the results of these evaluations is lacking," according to Mr Pinxten.*

Most programme evaluations are carried out before the impacts and sustainability of measures can be ascertained. There is, generally, no requirement for ex-post evaluations and, as a result, these are rarely carried out. Indeed, whereas ROM contractors previously carried out ex-post exercises in a certain percentage of cases, this practice has recently been discontinued. There is therefore a serious lack of third-party assessment of impacts and sustainability.

The auditors found thematic and country evaluations (strategic evaluations) to be better managed and more results-focused than programme evaluations. However, the absence of well-defined objectives and indicators frequently hampers the work of the evaluators and limits the usefulness of their work. In addition, the planned strategic evaluation programme for the 2007-2013 period was not executed in full.

The systems in place do not ensure that maximum use is made of the findings of the evaluations. Weaknesses were found in the follow-up not only of programme evaluations but also of strategic evaluations and ROM findings.

The detailed recommendations in the report are intended to pave the way for the necessary improvements. Given the considerable sums involved, with annual development expenditure in the region of 8 billion euro, it is imperative that robust evaluation systems are implemented without delay.

*The purpose of this press release is to give the main messages of the special report adopted by the European Court of Auditors. The full report is on [www.eca.europa.eu](http://www.eca.europa.eu)*

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## Notes to editors

ECA special reports are published throughout the year, presenting the findings of selected audits of specific EU budgetary areas or management topics. This Special Report (18/2014) is entitled “**EuropeAid’s evaluation and results-oriented monitoring systems**” and examines whether these systems are reliable.

The EU auditors assessed whether EuropeAid’s evaluation and results-oriented monitoring (ROM) systems:

- are appropriately organised and resourced;
- ensure the provision of relevant and robust findings;
- ensure that maximum use is made of the findings.

The findings of the auditors are mainly negative and point to weaknesses particularly with regard to programme evaluations. While the evaluation and ROM functions are well organised, more attention should be paid to the efficient use of resources. The systems do not provide enough information on the results achieved and fail to ensure maximum use of the findings.

The conclusions of the report give rise to the following recommendations:

**EuropeAid should maintain adequate management information and perform needs assessments on a regular basis in order to ensure an informed allocation of financial and staff resources between programme evaluations and ROM.**

**In order to ensure that evaluations carried out reflect the priorities of the organisation, EuropeAid should:**

- define clear selection criteria to prioritise programme evaluations and document how they were applied in establishing the evaluation plans, taking into account the complementarity with ROM;
- significantly strengthen its system to monitor and report on the implementation of evaluation plans, including an analysis of the reasons for delays and the description of measures adopted to address them;
- strengthen the overall supervision of programme evaluation activities by EuropeAid.

**In order to ensure the quality of programme evaluations and ROMs, EuropeAid should:**

- insist that operational units and delegations apply the quality control requirements, including for programme evaluations the use of a reference group and documentation of quality controls performed;
- check on a regular basis the application of these controls;

**In order to enhance the evaluation system’s capability to provide adequate information on results achieved, EuropeAid should:**

- apply more rigorously the regulatory provisions requiring the use of SMART objectives and verifiable indicators;
- modify the monitoring system so that it continues to provide data on programmes until at least three years after their completion;
- increase significantly the proportion of ex-post programme evaluations.

**In order to ensure the maximum use of evaluation and ROM findings, EuropeAid should:**

- extend the follow-up period for strategic evaluations;
- develop a central database for programme evaluations to store evaluation reports, action plans and their follow-up, with search functionalities which permit analysis.