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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on Enlargement and Countries Negotiating Accession to the EU
N° prev. doc.:	15447/18 15448/18
Subject:	Special Report No 27/2018 by the European Court of Auditors: "The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money" - Draft Council conclusions

In accordance with the arrangements defined in the Council conclusions on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors* , the Permanent Representatives' Committee has instructed the Working Party on Enlargement and Countries Negotiating Accession to the EU to examine the above report by the Court of Auditors**.

In view of the Working Party meeting on Friday 25 January, delegations will find annexed Draft Council conclusions prepared by the Presidency on the subject in the heading.

* See doc. 7515/00 + COR 1

** See doc. 15448/18

Draft Council conclusions on Special Report No 27/2018 by the Court of Auditors:

"The Facility for Refugees in Turkey: helpful support, but improvements needed to deliver more value for money"

1. The Facility for Refugees in Turkey was set up as an answer to an unprecedented refugee crisis faced by the EU. Turkey currently hosts close to 4 million refugees and the EU and its Member States have committed to assisting Turkey in dealing with this challenge. The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, managing a total of 6 billion EUR in two tranches, provides for a joint coordination mechanism and is meant to ensure that the needs of refugees and host communities in Turkey are addressed accordingly.
2. The Council thanks the Court of Auditors for its Special Report and takes good note of the conclusions and recommendations therein. The Council notes that the objective of the audit, which covered the period from the establishment of the Facility until 31 March 2018, was to assess whether the Facility effectively supported the refugees in Turkey.
3. The focus was on the management of the first tranche of the Facility and on the results achieved so far under the humanitarian strand. Using a sample of projects, the auditors monitored two main dimensions: whether the set-up and functioning of the Facility as a whole contributed to a relevant, swift and well-coordinated support and whether the humanitarian projects funded by the Facility achieved their expected results.
4. The Council underlines the relevance of the findings of this audit, notably in view of the implementation of the second tranche of the Facility.
5. The Council broadly welcomes the overall conclusion of the Court that the Facility provided a swift response to the refugee crisis in a challenging context and that the humanitarian projects have provided helpful support to refugees to address their basic needs. Nevertheless, it also notes that the Facility could have been more effective, and that it could achieve more value for money.
6. The Council notes positively that the audited projects generally delivered their intended output. However, it notes with regret the Court's conclusion that half of the audited projects had not yet achieved their expected outcomes, that there is room to improve the efficiency of the humanitarian projects, that the Facility did not fully achieve its objective of coordinating the available funding effectively and that the efficiency of cash-assistance projects could be increased.

7. In this regard, the Council takes good note of the Court's six specific recommendations to the Commission, aiming at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the second tranche of the Facility, to:
- better address refugees' needs for municipal infrastructure and socio-economic support;
 - improve the streamlining and complementarity of assistance;
 - implement a strategy for the transition from humanitarian to development assistance;
 - improve the efficiency of cash-assistance projects;
 - together with the Turkish authorities, address the need to improve the operating environment for NGOs, and
 - scale up monitoring and reporting of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey.
8. The Council thanks the Commission for its replies attached to Special Report No 27/2018 and takes positive note that the Commission has accepted all six recommendations, and has already started to address them. The Council shares the Commission's observation that over the last two years, the Facility has become the flagship EU initiative and a model for the implementation of coordinated EU assistance in the context of the developing EU migration policy, allowing for the swift mobilisation of EUR 3 billion in EU and Member State assistance to refugees in Turkey, using existing EU instruments in a coordinated way.
9. The Council invites the Commission to regularly inform the Council on the issues raised by the Court of Auditors' Special Report and to ensure that they are addressed systematically, including through meetings under the Association Agreement, as appropriate.
10. Finally, in line with the Council conclusions on Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association process of 26 June 2018, the Council recalls the importance of continued implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and recalls its commitment that the EU will continue its financial support and technical assistance to strengthen cooperation in this field, including through the funding of the second tranche of the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey.
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