



COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION



## **Council conclusions on Special Report 12/2008 by the Court of Auditors concerning the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-accession (ISPA), 2000-2006 together with the Commission's replies**

*2938th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting  
Luxembourg, 27 April 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

1. "The Council thanks the Court of Auditors for its Special Report No 12/2008. It has carefully examined this important document, and has taken note that the objective of the Court was to assess the effectiveness of the ISPA Programme, by focusing on three main issues: a) whether there was a coherent strategy and an adequate preparation, b) whether projects were implemented according to planning, and c) whether projects contributed to the compliance, by the beneficiary countries, with the EU environmental *acquis* and to the improvement of the Trans European Network (TEN-T).
2. The Council notes with satisfaction the Court's assessment that a coherent strategic framework was in place and that, as a result, ISPA projects generally contributed to increase the compliance with the EU environmental standards and to improve the links to the TEN-T. The Council would like to commend the Commission for these positive findings.

# **P R E S S**

3. The Council also notes that the Court has indicated some shortcomings which occurred, in particular the fact that, while the basis was a coherent strategy, the preparation of the projects was not always adequate. Furthermore, the Court underlined the fact that, very often, projects were not implemented according to the planning: there were significant delays and considerable changes in the financing plans.
  4. The Council takes good note of the Commission replies to the Court's Report, in particular of the explanations given by the Commission in response to the specific remarks of the Court on the shortcomings which were observed. The Council welcomes the general statement that the Commission agrees with the Court's recommendations. It notes in particular that the Commission intends to continue to monitor ex-ISPA projects, paying particular attention to cost overruns and delays in implementation.
  5. The Council recalls the great importance it attaches to the efficiency and effectiveness of the pre-accession aid. In this context, the Council takes note with particular interest of the recommendations made by the Court in order to avoid shortcomings in the future. It encourages the Commission to follow the recommendations of the Court and to take stock of the experience gained, not only with a view to the monitoring of the remaining ex-ISPA projects, but also to the implementation of the new pre-accession instrument IPA."
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