


Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2012/2064(INI)	Procedure completed
Future role of the Court of Auditors. Procedure for the nomination of Members of the Court of Auditors: consultation of the European Parliament		
Subject 8.40.05 Court of Auditors		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CONT Budgetary Control	S&D AYALA SENDER Inés Shadow rapporteur PPE AUDY Jean-Pierre Verts/ALE STAES Bart ECR CZARNECKI Ryszard NI EHRENHAUSER Martin	14/05/2012
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	REGI Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG Budget	Commissioner ŠEMETA Algirdas	

Key events			
20/04/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/12/2013	Vote in committee		
09/01/2014	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0014/2014	Summary
04/02/2014	Results of vote in Parliament		
04/02/2014	Decision by Parliament	T7-0060/2014	Summary
04/02/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2012/2064(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure

Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CONT/7/09305

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report	PE510.617	25/09/2013	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE522.922	14/11/2013	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A7-0014/2014	09/01/2014	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T7-0060/2014	04/02/2014	EP	Summary

Future role of the Court of Auditors. Procedure for the nomination of Members of the Court of Auditors: consultation of the European Parliament

The Committee on Budgetary Control unanimously adopted the own-initiative report by Inés AYALA SENDER (S&D, ES) on the future role of the Court of Auditors. The procedure on the appointment of Court of Auditors Members: European Parliament consultation.

Members recalled that under Article 286 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Members of the Court of Auditors must be chosen from among persons who belong or have belonged in their respective Member State to external audit bodies or who are especially qualified to hold the office in question, and whose independence is beyond doubt.

Moreover, they stated that some appointments have given rise to differences of opinion between Parliament and the Council, the persistence of which risks harming the good working relations of the Court with the aforementioned institutions. They recalled in particular that the Councils decision to appoint Members to the Court of Auditors in cases where Parliament has held hearings and expressed unfavourable opinions is incomprehensible and shows a lack of respect for Parliament.

It is for this reason that Members proposed a new procedure on the appointment of Court of Auditors Members based on the European Parliament consultation according to strictly defined criteria.

Members recalled their vision for the ECA:

- the Court should remain committed to independence, integrity, impartiality and professionalism, while building strong working relationships with its partners, particularly the European Parliament;
- the Court should be able to present to the discharge authority a midterm review and a summary report in addition to the annual DAS on the final performance of a programming period;
- the Court should devote more resources to the examination of whether economy, effectiveness and efficiency have been achieved in the use of the public funds entrusted to the Commission: the results of the findings obtained in Special Reports should imply corresponding adjustments in EU programmes;
- the Court, without prejudice to its independence, should form its opinion on the basis of the materiality threshold rather than the tolerable error rate alone, since this appears to be more in line with international audit standards;
- despite increased advisory collaboration with Parliament and the Council, the Court should, independently of political or national influence, itself decide on its annual work programme;
- the Court should take into consideration the issues of major interest to EU citizens;
- closer cooperation between national audit institutions and the European Court of Auditors in connection with the auditing of shared-management arrangements;
- the Court should synchronise its multiannual work programme with the MFF and include a midterm review, as well as a comprehensive review of the Commission's closure of accounts, regarding the respective MFF;
- economies of scale and scope could be achieved by a thorough analysis of the resource needs of the Court's Members (Members called on the Court to regularly communicate statistics on the presence of Members at its seat in Luxembourg to Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee);
- an independent public external control report on the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

The procedure on the appointment of Court of Auditors Members: Members stressed the need for a Treaty change putting the Council and Parliament on an equal footing when appointing Members of the Court of Auditors, in order to ensure the democratic legitimacy, transparency and complete independence of the Members of the Court of Auditors. The Council should, in the spirit of good cooperation among the European Institutions, respect decisions taken by Parliament subsequent to its hearing. Members called for the European Parliament, under the next review of the EU Treaty, to be made responsible for the selection of ECA Members on a proposal from the Council.

Members took the view that the present geographic representation rule relating to high-level management, according to which there may be one Member per Member State, has by far outlived its initial usefulness and credibility, and that it could be replaced by a light management

structure. Therefore, they proposed that the Court should have the same number of Members as the Commission. Members should have, at the least, professional experience of auditing and management and be especially qualified for their function, and their independence must be beyond doubt.

In parallel, Members proposed a new appointment method regarding the candidates for membership of the Court of Auditors. It shall be based on the following principles, selection criteria and procedures:

- hearings will be public and the discussions will be relayed via video;
- Parliament will take its decisions on the basis of the majority of the votes cast at the plenary sitting, and its opinion must be respected by the Council (in the case of a negative vote, the candidate should withdraw their candidacy);
- high-level professional experience acquired and high standards of integrity and morality of the candidate (Members should not be over 67 years of age at the time of their appointment);
- they should not serve more than two terms of office.

Lastly, Members called on the Council to undertake to:

- present Parliament with at least two candidates from each Member State, one being a woman and one being a man;
- frame its proposals in such a way as to comply fully with the criteria set out in Parliament's resolutions;
- pass on any information concerning nominations which it has received from Member States on the understanding that if it were to withhold information, Parliament would be obliged to conduct its own inquiries;
- avoid withdrawing nominations and submitting new ones which take account of new proposals made by Member States that are motivated exclusively by political criteria and respect, if such a case arises, Parliament's unfavourable opinion of the situation, and propose a new candidate(s).

Future role of the Court of Auditors. Procedure for the nomination of Members of the Court of Auditors: consultation of the European Parliament

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the future role of the Court of Auditors. The procedure on the appointment of Court of Auditors Members: European Parliament consultation.

Parliament recalled that under Article 286 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Members of the Court of Auditors must be chosen from among persons who belong or have belonged in their respective Member State to external audit bodies or who are especially qualified to hold the office in question, and whose independence is beyond doubt.

Moreover, it stated that some appointments have given rise to differences of opinion between Parliament and the Council, the persistence of which risks harming the good working relations of the Court with the aforementioned institutions. It recalled in particular that the Council's decision to appoint Members to the Court of Auditors in cases where Parliament has held hearings and expressed unfavourable opinions is incomprehensible and shows a lack of respect for Parliament.

It is for this reason that Parliament proposed a new procedure on the appointment of Court of Auditors Members based on the European Parliament consultation according to strictly defined criteria.

Parliament's vision for the ECA and its operating principles: Parliament considered that the Court should operate according to the following criteria:

- the Court should remain committed to independence, integrity, impartiality and professionalism, while building strong working relationships with its partners, particularly the European Parliament;
- the Court should be able to present to the discharge authority a midterm review and a summary report in addition to the annual DAS on the final performance of a programming period;
- the Court should devote more resources to the examination of whether economy, effectiveness and efficiency have been achieved in the use of the public funds entrusted to the Commission: the results of the findings obtained in Special Reports should imply corresponding adjustments in EU programmes;
- the Court, without prejudice to its independence, should form its opinion on the basis of the materiality threshold rather than the tolerable error rate alone, since this appears to be more in line with international audit standards;
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- closer cooperation between national audit institutions and the European Court of Auditors in connection with the auditing of shared-management arrangements;
- the Court should synchronise its multiannual work programme with the MFF and include a midterm review, as well as a comprehensive review of the Commission's closure of accounts, regarding the respective MFF;
- economies of scale and scope could be achieved by a thorough analysis of the resource needs of the Court's Members (Members called on the Court to regularly communicate statistics on the presence of Members at its seat in Luxembourg to Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee);
- an independent public external control report on the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Stability Mechanism (ESM).

Parliament considered that the Court is in a pre-eminent position to provide the legislator and the Budgetary Authority, especially Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee, with valuable opinions on results achieved by the Union's policies, as well as spillover effects among national policies of Member States.

The procedure on the appointment of Court of Auditors Members: Parliament stressed the need for a Treaty change putting the Council and Parliament on an equal footing when appointing Members of the Court of Auditors, in order to ensure the democratic legitimacy, transparency and complete independence of the Members of the Court of Auditors. The Council should, in the spirit of good cooperation among the European Institutions, respect decisions taken by Parliament subsequent to its hearing. Parliament called for the European Parliament, under the next review of the EU Treaty, to be made responsible for the selection of ECA Members on a proposal from the Council.

Parliament took the view that the present geographic representation rule relating to high-level management, according to which there may be one Member per Member State, has by far outlived its initial usefulness and credibility, and that it could be replaced by a light management structure. Therefore, it proposed that the Court should have the same number of Members as the Commission. Members should have, at the least, professional experience of auditing and management and be especially qualified for their function, and their independence must be beyond doubt.

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- avoid withdrawing nominations and submitting new ones which take account of new proposals made by Member States that are motivated exclusively by political criteria and respect, if such a case arises, Parliaments unfavourable opinion of the situation, and propose a new candidate(s).

It should be noted that an alternative resolution presented by the S&D group was rejected in plenary.