

ECA: Assessment on the Future of EU Agencies

Cornelia Riehle

News

At the end of October 2020, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a [special report on the future of EU agencies](#). The report assesses the conditions put in place by the EU to ensure the agencies' adequate performance. Furthermore, the report is intended to serve as a basis for discussion on the EU's future management of the performance of its agencies.

Decentralised EU agencies and other bodies (EU agencies) are bodies governed by European public law and equipped with their own legal personality. At the moment, there are different legal types of EU agencies: six executive Commission agencies and 37 decentralised EU agencies. In 2018, the total budget of all EU agencies (excluding the Single Resolution Board) was €4.0 billion, forming 2.8% of the EU's general 2018 budget.

In its assessment, the report looks at two key criteria that are relevant for all EU agencies, namely their flexibility to serve the relevant EU policy and European cooperation as well as the extent to which they act as centres of expertise and networking for the implementation of EU policies. The assessment also includes those EU agencies in the areas of security and justice, e.g., CEPOL, Eurojust, Europol, and Frontex.

In its conclusions, the report identifies a lack of flexibility in the set-up and operation of EU agencies as well as in the maximisation of their full potential. Furthermore, the report criticises the European Commission for not always fully considering alternative solutions to setting up an EU agency.

Hence, the ECA recommends the following:

- Ensure the relevance, coherence, and flexibility of the set-up of EU agencies;
- Allocate resources to EU agencies in a more flexible manner;
- Improve governance and reporting on performance;
- Strengthen the role of EU agencies as centres for sharing expertise and networking.

This is the first time that the ECA has made an overall assessment of all EU agencies at once, instead of focusing on the performance of individual agencies as in the past.

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