

ECA Report on Commission's Assessment of National Recovery and Resilience Plans

News

Thomas Wahl

On 8 September 2022, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published its [Special Report no. 21/2022](#) entitled “The Commission’s assessment of national recovery and resilience plans – Overall appropriate but implementation risks remain”.

This assessment is the first in a series of ECA audits on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The RRF is the EU’s centrepiece to respond to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic amounting to nearly €724 billion (in current prices) in total. The ECA selected a sample of six Member States (Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia and Italy) and examined the appropriateness of the Commission’s assessment of the national Recovery and Resilience plans and the guidance provided to the Member States in this context. The audit also addressed compliance with the RRF regulation.

The ECA found that the Commission’s assessment was generally appropriate, given the complexity of the process and the time constraints. It pointed, however, to a number of weaknesses in the process (e.g. comprehensive internal Commission guidelines and checklists had not been used systematically or uniformly for the qualitative assessment). According to the report, there are also risks to the successful implementation of the RRF, such as unclear milestones and target values.

In the context of the audit on the Commission’s assessment of the monitoring and control arrangements proposed by Member States, the ECA acknowledged that the Commission correctly identified gaps and deficiencies requiring additional measures. It criticised, however, that the assessment was to some extent based on the description of systems which were yet to be set up. It is also noted that some Member States decided not to use the Commission’s data-mining and risk scoring tool, which may increase the risk of non-detection of fraud.

As a result, the ECA made several recommendations to the Commission, e.g.:

- To improve assessment procedures and documentation;
- To promote the exchange of good practices between Member States;
- To ensure clear verification mechanisms for milestones and targets and their adequate definition;
- To verify compliance with the specific milestones for monitoring and control.

ECA’s audit is a basis for any future assessment by the Commission, particularly in relation to the submission of amended recovery and resilience plans, highlighting the risks and challenges that might affect the implementation of the RRF.

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