

Pericles 2020 programme: exchange, assistance and training for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting (2014-2020)

2011/0449(COD) - 06/12/2017 - Follow-up document

The Commission presented a report on the **mid-term evaluation** of the Pericles 2020 programme for the protection of the euro against counterfeiting.

According to Regulation (EU) No 331/2014, an independent mid-term evaluation of the Programme shall be presented by the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council by 31 December 2017.

The evaluation covered the different type of actions committed or implemented under the Programme in 2014, 2015 and 1st semester of 2016. It addressed, inter alia:

- the achievements of the objectives of all actions,
- the relevance,
- effectiveness,
- efficiency,
- sustainability,
- added value and coherence taking into consideration all elements necessary to support a decision to either renew, modify or suspend the measures/types of actions financed under the Programme.

According to the evaluation all the findings converge towards an **unambiguously positive overall assessment**. In particular, it shows that the Programme has performed very well in respect of all the above mentioned evaluation criteria while taking into account some room for improvement.

Continuation of the current Programme: the Commission is of the opinion that the Programme should continue until its natural expiry in 2020 given that all available evidence suggests that:

- the general and specific objectives are relevant and will remain so during the Programme's life;
- the actions of the Programme were typically implemented, planned and achieved the intended outputs;
- a discontinuation of the Programme would have serious detrimental effects.

Continuation of the Programme post 2020: the Commission further supports the continuation of the Programme beyond 2020 given its EU added value, its long-term impact and sustainability. It considered that euro protection goes beyond the interest and the responsibility of individual EU Member States and must by definition be ensured at EU-level. The Programme's EU added value lies in its focus in supporting transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation between a restricted group of highly specialised competent national authorities, such as national central banks, police, judicial authorities and technical laboratories that would otherwise be beyond reach of those national authorities. The discontinuation would have an adverse impact on strengthening the institutional capacity in national authorities, which constitutes the Programme's 'core business'.

Continuation of the Programme post 2020 as a standalone programme: the Commission concurs with the assessment of the evaluation on the continuation of the Programme as a **standalone programme** beyond 2020.

An elimination of Pericles 2020 as a standalone programme or its possible merging with other EU programmes to achieve economies of scale would entail a loss in specificity, and more importantly, a considerable erosion of expertise of the highly effective framework protecting the euro. Potential financial savings would be made to the detriment of the current level of euro protection and the ability of the Commission and stakeholders to swiftly react to emerging threats.

Way forward: only a limited number of competent national authorities apply for funding under the Programme. In particular, Italy, France and Spain are the most frequent implementers of the Programme's actions. The Commission notes that **Italy, France and Spain, together with Germany**, account for approximately **three-quarters of all counterfeit euros detected in circulation**. They therefore regard the problem of euro counterfeiting with greater concern than other Member States.

The Commission called for **greater participation** of the competent national authorities. Over the past two years, competent national authorities in Bulgaria, Austria, Portugal and Romania applied for funding for the first time.