



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 16 March 2011

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"I/A" ITEM NOTE

from: Working Party on Financial Agricultural Questions (AGRIFIN)
on: 15 March 2011
to: Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) / Council

Subject: Special Report No 5/2010 from the European Court of Auditors entitled
"Implementation of the Leader approach for rural development"
- Adoption of Council conclusions

1. At its meeting on 10 December 2010, the Working Party on Financial Agricultural Questions (AGRIFIN) examined Special Report No 5/2010 from the European Court of Auditors entitled "Implementation of the leader approach for rural development" as well as the Commission's reply to the Court's report (doc. 16487/10).
2. At its meeting on 15 March 2011, the Working Party on Financial Agricultural Questions (AGRIFIN) reached agreement on draft Council conclusions on the above report.
3. In accordance with the conclusions adopted by the Council on 8 May 2000 on improving the examination of special reports drawn up by the Court of Auditors, the Working Party on Financial Agricultural Questions (AGRIFIN) invites the Permanent Representatives Committee to suggest to the Council that it adopt the draft Council conclusions as set out in the Annex to this note as an "A" item at a forthcoming session.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

**on Special Report No 5/2010 from the European Court of Auditors entitled
"Implementation of the Leader approach for rural development"**

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- (1) WELCOMES Special Report No 5/2010 from the European Court of Auditors, entitled 'Implementation of the Leader approach for rural development';
- (2) UNDERLINES the need to continue with the concept of the Leader approach in the future, without prejudice to the negotiations on the next multiannual financial framework;
- (3) RECALLS that the bottom-up approach of Leader allows greater involvement of local stakeholders and local authorities, thus enabling rural development policy to better meet local needs, and that local action groups bear substantial responsibility for achieving the Leader objectives and ensuring sound financial management under the supervision of Member States' authorities and the European Commission;
- (4) RECOGNISES that further efforts from all actors involved are required to realise the full added-value potential of the Leader approach;
- (5) IS AWARE of the need to improve the management of local development strategies by ensuring transparent project selection procedures and applying the necessary monitoring and evaluation systems at the level of local action groups as well as appropriate control systems and UNDERLINES that these improvements must allow an efficient implementation of local development strategies and avoid any counterproductive effect;
- (6) REQUESTS the European Commission to continue its permanent dialogue with Member States to improve the implementation of the Leader approach and to provide support for Member States in this regard on an ongoing basis.