



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Bureau of European Policy Advisers

# **ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT**

## **2010**

## **BEPA**

# 1. POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS

## **Objective 1: Economic Reform**

### ***Assisting the President and the Cabinet in the Economic and Monetary Union review process by reaching out to experts and opinion formers***

The current economic and financial situation has led the Commission to propose a reinforcement of economic governance in the euro area. Following the adoption in June of the package of tools to reinforce economic governance in the European Union and the legislative instruments in September, BEPA began working with the Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs on the organization of a Conference on the subject. The Conference was held on 12 January 2011, and was chosen to coincide with the adoption by the Commission of the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) which marked the beginning of the first cycle of coordination of the Member States' macro-economic, budgetary and structural reform policy, known as the "European Semester".

The Conference was a great success, with more than 400 participants and high level speakers from the national governments, the European Institutions, Think Tanks and academia. The discussions underlined the positive role taken by the Commission in leading the process towards recovery from the crisis in order for the Member States to avoid stagnation, unsustainable debt trends, and accumulated imbalances and ensure European competitiveness.

Also in the context of a response to the economic and financial crisis, which has had serious consequences not only on public budgets but also on employment and social conditions, BEPA worked on a report on "Social Innovation" (which was published at the end of the year on BEPA website - [http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/publications/special-issues/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/bepa/publications/special-issues/index_en.htm)), as part of the Renewed Social Agenda. To uphold sustainable, smart and inclusive growth, social innovation is a key element in addressing poverty, creating employment, developing capabilities and participation, and promoting changes in production and consumption habits.

This report presented some recommendations and policy options for EU level action, which are currently being discussed by the relevant services within the Commission (within an inter-services group).

BEPA continued to follow the development of the international climate negotiations in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the run-up to the negotiations at the end of the year in Cancun.

BEPA contributed to various Commission initiatives and Communications in the field of energy and climate change, for instance, the Energy 2020 Strategy, the follow-up to the third energy liberalisation package, the debate on whether the Union should decrease its greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 by 30% rather than 20% and the infrastructure package for energy which was published in November.

BEPA also contributed to the wider debate of the necessary technical, policy and behavioural changes required by the decarbonisation objectives for the middle of the century and engaged in the growing debate on resource efficiency beyond energy.

In order to support the President and the Cabinet on the prioritisation of the 2020 Flagship Initiatives contributing to structural economic reforms, BEPA was involved in the preparatory work for several Commissioners' Groups and delivered strategic input in key areas, including research and innovation, industrial policy and the internal market.

Together with the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, BEPA worked with some experts groups on forward-looking studies, notably on the Euro-Med region in 2030, which was presented to a Conference organized with the Belgian Presidency in December.

### **Objective 2: Budget review**

#### ***Provide constructive approach to the Budget review exercise and the preparatory work for the forthcoming Multiannual Financial Framework***

Following the mandate of the Council to carry out a comprehensive revision of the EU budget aiming at examining how it can respond effectively to evolving policy challenges, BEPA continued working in 2010 on a series of initiatives to contribute to the Commission-wide work. BEPA participated in the various meetings/discussions within the Core Group (composed by the President's Cabinet, the Secretariat General and the Directorate General for the Budget) and in the Group of Directors General on the preparation of the forthcoming Multiannual Financial Framework. Moreover, BEPA contributed to the preparatory work of the Commissioners Group on the Budget Review/Multiannual Financial Framework.

### **Objective 3: Global Europe**

#### ***Contribute to a Commission wide debate and process aimed at rethinking the EU's role in global governance, multilateral cooperation, and key bilateral relationships.***

Following the amendment of the European Parliament to the 2009 EU budget, the Commission was asked to implement a pilot project setting up an international system aimed at identifying long-term trends on major policy issues facing the EU. This will be co-ordinated between the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council, using the already well established European Union Institute for Securities Studies (EUISS) as the core of the system. The European Parliament has asked this system to be established by 2012.

BEPA represented the Commission on the Inter-Institutional Task Force entrusted with the task of laying down the organisational foundation of the new system, called European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS). BEPA's role is to lead on the substantive part of the project, while the SG remains responsible for the financial management. Up to end of the year, the inter-Institutional Task Force met three times. At its meeting on December 14 the contract with the EUISS Institute was signed.

The project is now in a more operational phase, which will include the preparation of two reports: i) the first will assess the long-term, international and domestic, political and economic environment facing the European Union over the next 20 years; ii) the second will identify the main policy challenges and choices which are likely to confront the EU Institutions during the next institutional cycle, namely from 2014-2019. In addition, the Task Force will investigate the possibility of setting up a joint inter-institutional website, to act as a repository for material on future policy trends, challenges and choices, pulling in documents available from many sources. The results are expected in 2011.

In order to assist the President in maximising the role of the Commission on the global stage, BEPA began a series of meetings with international counterparts to discuss issues of common interest and to strengthen the relations with strategic partners. For example,

BEPA organised two seminars with NATO on the perspectives for further enlargement of the EU.

In December 2010, the Director General started the planned visits to our strategic partners in third countries. He was invited to participate in a workshop organized by the US National Intelligence Council to prepare the report "Global Trends 2030" and met with several US Think Tanks, representatives of the US government and academics to discuss transatlantic relationships. During this mission, the ESPAS project (see above) was presented. Other visits are planned for 2011.

BEPA's role in assisting the President's Cabinet in the review process of the European Neighbourhood Policy should also be mentioned.

Finally, BEPA is also assisting the Diplomatic Adviser of the President in his daily activities, with advance missions to third countries and preparatory work for Council. For example, BEPA prepared last year's visit of President Barroso to Brazil in the context of the EU/Brazil Summit

#### **Objective 4: Contribute to better communicating the European Union**

BEPA has been asked by the President's cabinet to participate with targeted initiatives and distinctive contributions – in cooperation with the Spokesperson's service – to the Commission's collective effort to better communicate the European Union, and particularly, to contribute promoting awareness on EU 2020 strategy.

To this end, BEPA launched in October a call for study on how to promote the Europe 2020 strategy. The overall idea is to provide ideas on how to foster and widen ownership of the Europe 2020 strategy by creating awareness and increasing understanding through actions and instruments for the 27 Member States and by identifying key/core partners and potential and strategic multipliers (i.e. those actors in the civil society and governments/national parliaments/institutions that can play a significant role in getting the message across and raising awareness).

The selection procedure was concluded in December and operational suggestions are expected by the end of the first quarter of 2011.

In line with the objective of contributing to improved communication about the EU, BEPA has increased its networking activities with Think Tanks and interested parties.

In the course of 2010, the service organised two meetings – one with the Brussels-based Think Tanks and another with Think Tanks outside the Brussels "beltway"; both were dedicated to an exchange of views on topical issues linked to the Commission's policy. The agenda for the meeting with Brussels-based Think Tanks focused on presenting the new BEPA and the political priorities of the current Commission. Benefiting from the participation of the Directors General, the other meeting was devoted to discussions on the new Financial Framework, to the forthcoming Research Framework Programme and to the way in which the Commission communicates to the outside world.

In order to improve communication about Europe, it is necessary to revisit and remind ourselves about past achievements in European construction. This is why BEPA organized the inauguration ceremony of the Salle François-Xavier Ortoli (former President and Vice President of the Commission 1973-1984) in the Berlaymont in October.

As part of BEPA's outreach mission, linking with EU capitals is crucial. To this end, BEPA undertook in December 2010 a two-day mission to London with the objectives of liaising with UK Think Tanks and government advisers, presenting the "new" BEPA, exploring areas of mutual interest, and to gain a greater understanding of the UK political landscape. Similar visits to other EU capitals are planned for 2011.

BEPA continued the well established tradition of organising seminars for all Commission staff using the successful format of the "Jaquemin seminars". In 2010, two of these seminars took place; the first in June with the participation of Dennis Snower, President of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, who spoke on "Presenting global economic solutions", while the second was held in September, involving Steven Hill, author, columnist and political commentator from the United States, on "Europe's promise: why the European way is still the best hope for an insecure age".

Finally, it should be mentioned that BEPA is part of the Communication Steering Board (CSB), together with DG Communication and the Spokespersons Service at the level of their Directors General. The Board, together with its operational group, contributes to ensuring a coordinated communication policy for the Commission.

### **Objective 5: Consolidation of the dialogue with Churches, religious communities and non confessional organizations**

In the framework of the regular dialogue with Churches, religious communities and philosophical non-confessional organisations, BEPA organized a series of dialogue seminars and meetings.

It is worth mentioning two high-level meetings co-chaired by President Barroso and his counterparts in the European Parliament and in the Council.

- A high-level meeting of the Presidents of the three EU institutions with faith leaders. The discussion focused on the topic "Combating poverty and social exclusion".
- A high-level meeting with a large delegation of philosophical non-confessional organisations.

With regard to the dialogue seminars, a joint meeting was held with the European federative bodies of the Christian Churches (the COMECE and the CEC) under the title "Fighting poverty and social exclusion in the framework of the EU 2020 strategy". Another such seminar was organized with the AEPL, the "Association Européenne de la Pensée Libre" on the same topic "Combating poverty and social exclusion".

BEPA also organised and hosted a meeting with the "Foundation for Ethnic Understanding", bringing together a very large delegation of European Jewish and Muslim leaders.

Alongside these conferences, BEPA met with several other interlocutors in this field of interest. The discussions mainly focused on article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE) and on the general dialogue framework of the Commission with the communities of belief.

## **Objective 6: Ensure a smooth running of the activities of European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE)**

The EGE Group concluded its mandate at the end of the year (it was postponed for some months until end of January 2011). A new call for expressions of interest was launched in January 2010, with a year-long selection process. The new EGE Group had its first meeting on February 8, 2011.

The first two working meetings of the Group have been dedicated to the drafting of the General Report of the Activities 2005-2010 (published in June 2010)

Under the auspices of the Spanish Presidency, the EGE held its 43<sup>rd</sup> working meeting, as well as a bilateral meeting with the Spanish Bioethics Committee, the "Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas" (CSIC), and the Forum of the National Ethics Councils (NEC Forum) in Madrid on March 2 and 3. The discussions centred on scientific integrity, the role of EGE in the EU decision-making process and synthetic biology.

Also in Madrid, on March 4 and 5, the second meeting of the International Dialogue on Bioethics took place, bringing together the Chairs of the National Ethics Councils from the 27 EU Member States with equivalent bodies from US, Canada, China, Brazil, India, Japan, South Africa, Australia, Korea. Topics discussed included the ethics of multi-centre research and clinical trials in a global perspective.

Under the Belgian Presidency, the EGE held bilateral meetings with the Belgian Advisory Committee on Bioethics and the Forum of NECs in Brussels on October 27 and 28. Issues debated included: the role of ethics after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and bio-banking.

## **Publications**

BEPA continued to publish the BEPA monthly newsletter with a change in content, Editor-in-Chief and structure. This bulletin aims at providing information to the President, his Cabinet and the Commission services on issues linked to the political agenda of the President and the College. In 2010 BEPA published ten editions of the BEPA Monthly.

BEPA also published four papers in 2010:

- The role of Ethics in international medical research. Report of the second meeting of the European Commission's International Dialogue on Bioethics (March 2010)
- Opening Europe's doors to unskilled and low-skilled workers. A practical handbook (July 2010)
- Madrid: a European Capital embracing integration (September 2010)
- Lisbon Treaty: Year I (December 2010)

BEPA also continued to publish the "Ethically Speaking" newsletter.

## **Meetings**

In 2010, BEPA successfully organised 31 meetings and seminars with external experts.

## Speeches

The speechwriters produced 90 speeches for the President until mid-November 2010 when the speechwriting function was moved from BEPA to the Directorate General for Communication at the request of the President's Cabinet.

## **2. MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEMS**

### **2.1 Introduction to BEPA**

2010 was a year of profound restructuring for the Bureau of European Policy Advisers. The decision to restructure was taken by the College on March 9 to coincide with the beginning of the Commission new mandate, and established a new mission, responsibilities and organisational structure for BEPA.

On mission, the Bureau of European Policy Advisers reports directly to the President and operates under his authority. It is composed of a professional staff of advisers, policy analysts and support staff with appropriate experience and track record, in order to provide professional and targeted policy advice to the President and the College.

BEPA's core tasks are therefore support and policy advice to the President, as well as outreach to civil society, institutional activities in the field of ethics in science and new technologies, and pursuing the dialogue with religions, churches and communities of conviction.

Its mission is complementary to that of the President's Cabinet and to the Spokesperson's Service (SPP). The Cabinet provides day-to-day management of the President's political activities, and the SPP media outreach. BEPA completes this picture by providing support to the Cabinet on specific subjects, as well as policy advice of a more long term nature, and by complementing SPP's operations through its own outreach to civil society.

In terms of structure, BEPA has been re-organised into two teams (previously there were three):

1. The Outreach Team, divided into a) European dialogue- which coordinates contacts with Think Tanks, academia and stakeholders on general issues of European integration as well as contacts in the field of culture and art; b) Global dialogue – which also coordinates contacts on globalization issues and c) speech writing (as mentioned previously, at the end of 2010 the speechwriting task was transferred – following a request by the President's Cabinet – to the Directorate General for Communication).
2. The Analysis Team, which provides policy analysis and general or specific policy advice as requested by the President and the Cabinet, in close liaison with other Commission services. It is also responsible for organising regular meetings between the President and his Cabinet and relevant experts and academics. It provides support to the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies.

BEPA is by far the smallest service in the Commission, with the majority of staff operating on temporary assignments. It comprises twenty-four AD staff: twelve temporary agents, three seconded national experts, one contractual agent and eight permanent officials – including those in management positions.

On May 15, a new Director General, Mr Jean-Claude Thébaud, was appointed. Prior to this Mr Margaritis Schinas (who joined the Bureau as Director on February 1<sup>st</sup>) acted as Director General (from March 1<sup>st</sup>). During this period, the Director undertook a staff

review as requested by the President. Once the new Director General was appointed, the staff review was completed and agreed and, following the President's instructions, the staff was reorganised. During 2010, there was a significant turnover in BEPA personnel, involving nearly 50% of the staff.

Because of this major restructuring, the new BEPA only became fully operational in the summer (with some advisers joining in the autumn and in February 2011). The Action Programme was finalised and approved by the President in July.

As a means to ensure a better balance between BEPA's political responsibilities and its compliance with administrative and financial procedures, the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between BEPA and the Secretariat General, signed in 2006, has been maintained. Under this agreement, the SG should provide support to BEPA in a number of areas, including *inter alia* the management of human and financial resources, internal audit capability, and IT tools.

According to this SLA, the Secretary General has received a cross-sub delegation from the Director General of BEPA for the financial circuits. As a consequence, all the credits of BEPA are managed by the SG, under the centralised model (model 4). Financial initialisation and verification (ex-ante controls) are centralised in the SG financial unit. A description of the financial circuits, of the various authorisations granted (SAOs and authorisations to sign "conforme aux faits" et "bon à payer"), as well as check lists accompanying each transaction are documented and updated as necessary. The authorising officers by sub-delegation reported in March 2011 on implementation of the budget at 31/12/2010.

The risks faced by BEPA are mainly reputational; this is why BEPA considered it particularly important to concentrate its 2010 efforts on the Internal Control Standard on information and communication, signalled accordingly as a priority in the Management Plan for 2010.

In relation to financial management, all appropriations fall under Heading 5 of the financial perspectives ("Administrative Expenditure") and risks are considered as low, because of the limited amount of budget involved.

Finally, the working arrangements between BEPA and the President's Cabinet have been fully implemented. Regular contacts and exchanges have been kept as well as through regular meetings between the Head of the Cabinet and the Head of BEPA.

## **2.2 The functioning of the entire Internal Control system**

The Internal Control system in BEPA has considerably improved since 2007, when the first audit on the ICS was carried out. In 2010 two audits were performed, one on the financial review of the 2009 cut-off exercise (final report issued on 7/7/2010) and one on the legality and regularity of selected financial transactions of the SG and BEPA (final report issued on 17/12/2010).

A third audit completed in 2010 concerned the third follow up to the audit on financial circuits in the SG and BEPA, and it was addressed only to SG.

The above mentioned audits led to the conclusion that the internal control system in place provides reasonable assurance and that there are no outstanding critical or very important observations from audit reports issued prior to 2010 with risks not mitigated as at 31/12/2010. The only issues underlined by the Internal Audit Capability concerned – as indicated below in point 3.1.2 – are tasks which were not in BEPA's but in that of SG.

### ***2.2.1 Compliance with the requirements of the Internal Control Standards***

Like last year, BEPA is particularly focused on the following two Internal Control Standards and on the actions taken:

#### ***- ICS 2: Ethical and Organizational Values***

Despite the fact that its ethical environment is considered to be sound, BEPA continued to work on improving the awareness of staff on the main ethics rules. All newcomers are made aware of ethical rules upon their arrival and invited to participate in training on this issue, among others.

#### ***- ICS 6: Risk management process***

A risk analysis assessment was organized in December 2010, involving a sample of staff from each of the two teams and from the Coordination Unit. A risk registry has been updated and the outcome has been validated by the Director General.

Concerning the remaining standards, BEPA is fully compliant.

### ***2.2.2 Effectiveness of implementation of the Prioritised Control Standards***

In the 2010 Annual Management Plan, particular attention was given to *internal and external communication*, underlying the need to better structure the management of information and to improve the understanding of BEPA's mission and tasks and to ensure the dissemination of the outcome of analytical work.

On internal communication, the new BEPA Management sought to improve the flow of information within the service. Weekly meetings with the staff and circulation of all relevant documents ensure that communication within BEPA is effective. Contrary to what was indicated in the 2010 Management Plan, the management decided not to pursue the suggestion of developing an IntraNet, given the size of BEPA and the improvement in internal communication.

Regarding external communication, BEPA's "Europa" website was completely re-designed in 2010 and is currently updated daily. The number of visitors has continuously increased since then (with an average of 15.000 unique visitors per month – compared to the average of 5.000 for the Commissioners web sites).

### ***2.2.3 Conclusion***

Given the above, it can be concluded that BEPA has a robust, reliable and effective internal control system, which gives reasonable assurance to the management.

## **2.3 Information to the President**

The main elements of this report and assurance declaration have been brought to the attention of the President, Mr José Manuel Barroso.

### 3. BUILDING BLOCKS TOWARDS THE DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

#### **3.1. Building blocks towards reasonable assurance**

The building blocks to support reasonable assurance are based on the functioning and effectiveness of the implementation of the Internal Control Standards (described above in section 2.2) including risk management, the audit findings and the assurance received from sub-delegated authorising officers through bi-annual reporting. Findings are checked against the materiality criteria as described in Annex 4 to the AAR.

<b><u>Assessment by management</u></b>	<b><u>Results from independent audits during the reporting year</u></b>	<b><u>Follow up of action plans in reply to audit work performed in previous years</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ key indicators on legality and regularity and sound financial management</li> <li>➤ assessment of effectiveness of the implementation of internal control standards</li> <li>➤ ICC contribution (i.e. the statement of the Resource Director annexed to the AAR)</li> <li>➤ AOSD reporting</li> <li>➤ High-level exception reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ IAC's opinion (see below)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Follow-up of other identified system weaknesses including significant delays in implementation of action plans.</li> </ul>

#### ***3.1.1. Building block 1: Assessment by management***

BEPA has not developed its own specific key indicators on the legality and regularity of underlying transactions and sound financial management. However, it is compliant with regulations and guidelines on budget management and ensures strict monitoring of budget implementation and payment delays.

***KEY INDICATORS ON THE LEGALITY AND REGULARITY OF UNDERLYING TRANSACTIONS***

Input: Resources devoted to ex-ante controls to ensure legality and regularity of underlying transactions:

- Within the financial circuits, 2 different staff members perform the ex-ante control: one the ex-ante operational verification and ex-ante financial verification
- Financial resources: 5 persons
- As above mentioned, ex-ante controls are centralised in the SG financial unit

<p>Output: Level and nature of controls carried out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The budget coverage of first level ex-ante control is 100%</li> <li>• The budget coverage of second level ex-ante control is 100%</li> <li>• The budget execution percentage for 2010 is 74%</li> </ul>
<p>Results of controls: What the controls allowed to discover/remedy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instances of overriding of controls or deviations from established policies (ICS 8):</li> </ul> <p>In BEPA, exceptions from standard procedures, financial or operational are duly approved and recorded centrally. None of the exceptions registered in 2010 is deemed to be of a nature or extent to lead neither to a reservation nor to the identification of a material weakness in the Internal Control System.</p>

Appropriate financial circuits have been approved by the delegated authorising officers and implemented in BEPA. They are documented. The operational part of the process is separate from the financial part. The persons entitled to sign "*conforme aux faits*" or "*bon à payer*" is clearly identified in writing, and all financial transactions are checked by a financial verifying agent other than the initiating officer.

BEPA generally uses framework contracts concluded by other services for the selection of contractors in the following fields:

- Publications are entirely contracted through the Publications office;
- Informatics projects, if any, are managed through DG Informatics framework contracts;
- As for studies, BEPA organises calls for tenders, and then the "*Comité de Pilotage*" ensures the respect of rules and procedures.

Verifications are carried out at the financial initiation stage of operations. Information is verified by a financial verifying agent of the financial unit. A second verification is performed in the final phase of the process, based on the supporting documents submitted for the payment requests.

### **3.1.2. Building block 2: Results from audits during the reporting year**

As mentioned before (point 2.2) BEPA was submitted to two audits during the reporting year, and there was a third follow up to the audit on financial circuits in the SG and BEPA.

The first one concerned the "2009 cut-off exercise of BEPA". The scope of this audit was to assess compliance with the guidelines provided by DG BUDG in respect of cut-off postings for 2009, with a focus on completeness, accuracy, reliability and presentation of cut-off postings for 2009, efficiency and effectiveness of the process as well as of the control procedures applied in order to ensure accounting quality of underlying transactions.

The scope of the audit relates to the accounting year 2009. The cut-off exercise did not provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of BEPA 2009 financial statements and achievement of other objectives set up for the audited process. The misstatements were deemed material for the cut-off exercise, but not for reporting purposes (AAR)

because of the limited budget and because legality/regularity of underlying transactions was not affected. As indicated before, the weaknesses concerned control mechanisms for revision of accounts, reliability of the financial statements, information on studies in ABAC, analysis of accounting risks, methodology for establishing cut-off postings compliance with closure instructions, posting on suspense accounts and recording of accrued charges, and, because of the SLA, were all not competence of BEPA but of the Secretariat General.

The second audit was on the "Legality and regularity of selected BEPA transactions". This audit had the objective of establishing whether the existing rules and the financial circuits applicable to the selected BEPA transactions have been appropriately applied as regards commitment, validation, authorisation and payment of expenditure operations and of assessing effectiveness of control mechanisms applied to the selected transactions to ensure their legality and regularity. The audit concluded that the only weak point was the application of cost/profit centre in ABAC; this was again, because of the SLA, a competence not belonging to BEPA. All necessary corrections have been completed by the Secretariat General before the official closure of the 2010 accounts.

The third follow up to the audit on financial circuits in the SG and BEPA, addressed to SG, concerned the status of implementation of the remaining recommendations. One of the recommendations to SG is still in progress (updating of the Financial Manual).

The IAC delivered his overall opinion on 9/2/2011, stating that he was not aware of any outstanding critical or very important observations from audit reports issued prior to 2010 with risks not mitigated as 31/12/2010.

In the above opinion, the IAC declared also that, taking into account the coverage of activities/processes in BEPA, he was not aware of anything not reported which may lead to a potential reservation in the AAR.

***3.1.3. Building block 3: Follow-up of previous years reservations and action plans from audits from previous years***

Not applicable

***3.1.4. Building block 4: Assurance received from other Authorising Officers in cases of cross-sub delegation***

The AOSD report on the execution of sub-delegated budget lines received in March 2011 states that the overall execution of accounts for 2010 was 74 %, and this due to the profound restructuring of the service as indicated before under point 2.1.

#### **4. DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE**

*I, the undersigned,*

*Director-General of BEPA,*

*In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation*

*Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view<sup>1</sup>.*

*State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.*

*This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the work of the internal audit capability for years prior to the year of this declaration.*

*Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the institution.*

*Brussels, 25 March 2011*

*Jean Claude Thébault*

*(signed)*

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<sup>1</sup> True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the service.