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**RESOLUTION OF STANDING COMMITTEE 14**  
(European Union Policies)

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*adopted at the sitting of 14 October 2015*

ON THE

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION — PROGRESS REPORT ON THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON APPROACH ON EU  
DECENTRALISED AGENCIES (COM(2015) 179 FINAL)  
(COMMUNITY INSTRUMENT No 72)**

*in accordance with Article 144(1) and (6) of the Rules of Procedure*

**Notified to the President's Office on 20 October 2015**

Having examined the Community instrument referred to in the heading:

whereas, since 1975, the European institutions have availed themselves of the support of agencies with a view to: securing independence and avoiding conflicts of interest in respect of legislators or decision-makers; carrying out intergovernmental duties; carrying out tasks in the context of dialogue with the social partners or stakeholders and developing specific capacity or expertise. The agencies may be divided into two main categories: ‘regulatory agencies’ (also referred to as ‘decentralised agencies’), which operate in the various spheres of responsibility of the European Union, including the common foreign and security policy and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, and the ‘executive agencies’, established under Council Regulation (EC) No 58/2003 of 19 December 2002, directly supervised by the Commission and carrying out tasks relating to the management of specific Community programmes;

whereas, as the number and diversity of regulatory agencies has grown, in the absence of an overall vision of their place within the EU, the Commission decided that a common framework would help to clarify and standardise their functions and working methods. After the failure of an initial draft interinstitutional agreement, submitted in 2005, to agree conditions relating to the creation, operation and control of regulatory agencies, by means of Communication COM(2008) 135 on ‘European agencies — The way forward’ the Commission initiated an interinstitutional dialogue on the decentralised agencies, designed to assess the aspects of consistency, efficiency, accountability and transparency, in order to produce a coherent vision of the place of agencies in the Union and their contribution to the governance of the European Union, as well as to strengthen their legitimacy;

whereas the above-mentioned assessment, carried out by an interinstitutional working group, produced, in July 2012, a ‘Common Approach’ (not legally binding) by the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament, which defines a more coherent and efficient framework for the functioning of agencies. In December 2012, this was followed by a ‘Roadmap’ listing 90 actions to be undertaken by the European institutions, the agencies and Member States;

whereas the report referred to in the heading — which concerns only the 37 decentralised agencies, and not the six executive agencies or the three agencies for common security and defence — is the second report on the implementation of the said Roadmap. It focuses specifically on the progress made, following the adoption of the first report in December 2013, on actions for which the Commission is responsible. The actions in the Roadmap for which the agencies themselves are responsible are set out in the report adopted by the Network of EU Agencies in February 2015;

whereas, in particular, in 2013 the Commission adopted: guidelines on headquarters agreements; a Communication Handbook; guidelines on conflicts of interest and guidelines on budget drafting;

whereas, since 2014:

- the Commission, with input from the agencies, has put together guidelines on procedures to be followed when agencies are being set up. With regard to headquarters agreements, at present seven agencies lack these, including Eurofound (Ireland) and Frontex (Poland);

- the Commission has also issued guidelines on programming documents and a template for the annual financial report, which will help enhance coherent governance and accountability across agencies;

- regarding structural measures to rationalise the functioning of the agencies, guidelines have been adopted on the provision of services by the Commission to agencies, on support for participation in tenders and for the certification of annual accounts;

- with regard to the prevention of conflicts of interest, on the basis of the December 2013 guidelines, the Commission called on the agencies to adopt the relevant regulatory frameworks on this issue;

- the Commission is continuing its work to revise its guidelines on evaluating agencies, their activities and their programmes, including in terms of accounting, combating fraud and combating corruption;

- with regard to the management of financial and human resources, work is being done to reduce, by 2018, the staffing levels of all EU institutions, bodies and agencies by 5 % against 2014 levels, as already provided for in the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework;

- agencies' internal procedures and practices will be further harmonised to avoid the multiplication of different operating rules;

whereas, furthermore, in parallel to the actions listed in the Roadmap, the Common Approach also requires the founding acts of existing agencies, following a case-by-case analysis, to be brought into line with the new legislative reference framework;

whereas, finally, the Commission reports that it has not activated the alert system, which enables Commission representatives on agencies' boards to formally oppose a decision with a view to ensuring consistency with EU policies and the compatibility of the agencies' activities with their mandate and relevant EU legislation and subsequently alert the European Parliament and the Council,

the Committee:

welcomes the operating method adopted by the three European institutions, concerning the need to rationalise the functioning of the decentralised agencies, set out specifically in 2012 through the drawing up of a Common Approach, which highlights the problems and the goals to be reached, the implementation of which is set out in detail in a Roadmap made up of 90 specific actions to be carried out;

strongly urges the Commission to continue to pay close attention to the need to reduce expenditure on the bureaucracy of the agencies, assessing, on a case-by-case basis, the advisability of implementing

synergies or amalgamations of agencies and, in any event, closely monitoring the audit procedures and the goal of more efficient use of resources, particularly for agencies financed by the EU budget;

on this point, would like to see greater involvement by the European Parliament and the national parliaments, as already proposed by COSAC LII (Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union) held in Rome from 30 November to 2 December 2014, both in terms of constant attention to the rationalisation of administrative units and their costs, and the need to step up political scrutiny of the operations of the agencies, and thus their democratic legitimacy.