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**Dr. Inge Gräßle (EPP/CDU):**

## **Budget 2013: Court of Auditors refuses Commission accounts for 20th time**

The European Court of Auditors has refused to give the European Commission the green light for the implementation of the EU budget 2013 for the 20th time. "An error rate of 4.7% means that almost €7 billion was illegally issued in 2013. This is not peanuts", said the Rapporteur for the European Commission budget 2013 in the European Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee, Inge Gräßle MEP, on the figures presented by the Court today. "We must be aware that even after 20 years, our Member States and the European Commission are failing to deal compliantly with money. As regards regional funds, Slovakia, the United Kingdom and Spain have the highest error rates this year and in the agricultural sector, Romania, Bulgaria and Portugal are guilty of the same. "The problems in the areas of structural funds and rural development are particularly significant: here, the error rates are 6.9% in the structural funds and 6.7% in rural development."

The situation with the new financial instruments (blending) is particularly serious. "Banks get money so they can give it as credit to the Member States. Instead, they keep it and the taxpayers feed the bank balance sheets instead of being able to invest in growth and employment. This is untenable", said Gräßle. In addition, the Court showed that for projects from the European Social Fund, many Member States fleece the EU: "As soon as the EU pays, the Member States legally increase office rental prices and pay the salaries of the civil servants working on the projects 500% more salary than other national colleagues. This is unacceptable."

Shared management remains the problem: the supervisory authorities of the Member States often made false statements and the European Commission only corrected this superficially. So the error rate in the structural funds which the European Commission determined is 2.8% instead of the error rate presented by the European Court of Auditors which is 6.9%. "They still have a lot to explain to us, especially why the provision of false information is going unpunished", Gräßle concluded.

For further information:

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