



Brussels, 24. March 2015

Dr. Inge Gräßle (EPP/CDU):

Discharge Report Budget 2013: EU has no money to waste, sanctions must apply to Member States

The European Parliament Report on the European Commission's spending in 2013 indicates a clear misuse of EU funds. Information communicated by Member States is in need of improvement, access to control systems is inadequate and misinformation remains unpunished. "Turning a blind eye is not the solution. We must ensure once and for all the transparent and correct use of EU funds," said Inge Gräßle MEP, EPP Group Spokeswoman in the Budgetary Control Committee of the European Parliament.

The figures for 2013 are clear: in total, 42 of 68 pieces of information provided by the directors were wrong. The Commission, in correcting the data, raised the residual error rate in these cases more than 2% upwards. "For years, the United Kingdom, Greece and Spain, inter alia, have submitted poor and incorrect or false information without consequences. If there are no consequences, they will never change. Finally, we must shed light on the discrepancies. We must check where the gaps in the system are," said Gräßle.

The case of the International Management Group (IMG) particularly interests Inge Gräßle. "For years, the Commission seemingly paid unknown sums of money to an organisation that didn't exist and then tried to cover it up. We can only hope that this is an exceptional case."

The disbursement of EU funds is also not well organised. Only 47% of financial instruments has been paid to the beneficiaries. "We need tools that work - the EU has no money to waste. The management and control systems currently resemble a sleeping watchdog. Coincidentally, it seems to me that we must take a closer look at the programmes in Greece," said Gräßle.

The error rate shows that the misuse of EU money is still high. Member States and the Commission must focus on preventive and corrective measures. The Report demands more transparency from Member States in cooperation with the European Commission and says that permanent misinformation by Member States must be followed up with sanctions. The Committee adopted the Discharge Report 2013 by Inge Gräßle with an overwhelming majority.

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