

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Parliament of the French Community Report on Youth accommodation as a part of youth care



As a part of its general mission of protecting and assisting youth at risk or in trouble, the French Community runs actions including general prevention, guidance and social support for youth as well as specialised care services operating within their living environments and accommodation services.

The Court of Audit audited the youth accommodation management as well as the certification process and the financing of the actors.

#### **Youth care management**

The Court of Audit noted delays when it comes to the placement of youth in accommodation services. The French Community admits that this waiting time is extending. Indeed, need for youth care significantly exceeds the current offer of available space. This shortage leads to inappropriate actions towards the difficulties young people are facing.

Recently, the French Community took new measures in order to avoid competition between principals in charge of youth placement, to increase the care offer by 500 new places and to spread them more equally across the territory.

However, the Court of Audit considers that these measures are insufficient. Indeed, it is not sure that youth who need it the most are given priority. Moreover, the relevance of refusals cannot be controlled enough if institutions remain in charge of accepting a young person or not. Furthermore, there has been no real assessment of the occupation of the 500 new places and the new rules for sharing offer across the territory are not based on real needs. These new measures do not solve the major problem of blocking. Despite the willingness of the previous and current government, the lack of space is still not quantified: the number of youth awaiting as well as the delays are still unknown and the existing offer has not been estimated. Despite the development of tools, the policy management remains insufficiently elaborated.

Among its recommendations, the Court of Audit advocated a global reflection based on a requirements analysis that included the structure costs. One of the solutions might consist of reconfiguring the services offer.

Moreover, prevention work is one of the elements limiting the upstream offer. There should be a quantified monitoring of these actions. The Court of Audit also considers necessary to strengthen collaboration with services taking action before youth care (student guidance centres, public social assistance centres, etc.) and to better define their respective jurisdiction, in order to reduce the number of youth ending in youth care services.

The public services and the minister replied that a great number of the Court's recommendations will be implemented. The needs and the offer are to be analysed – particularly within the current decree reform –, and the computerised monitoring system is to be developed.

## **Certification process and subsidisation**

The institutions are certified for an unlimited period. However, these certifications are not frequently nor regularly controlled, which does not ensure them to operate effectively.

Regarding subsidisation, the Court brought several breaches into focus. Some are related to the non-implementation of certain aspects of the regulation, others concern rules regarding financial interventions, or even the weakness of the administrative control.

Finally, the Court also noted that internal control evolved in an uneven and unorganized way. It noticed several issues: insufficient process descriptions, partial formalisation of the procedures and case law, lacking files supervision, low standardised training program for agents.

Therefore, the Court of Audit advocated to take appropriate measures in order to compensate for these deficiencies and recommended to increase subsidies and payments control. The public services and the minister announced their intention to adopt the internal control measures in order to meet the observations. Regulatory reforms were also implemented.

### ***Information for the press***

*The Court of Audit exerts an external control on the financial operations of the Federal State, the Communities, the Regions and the provinces. It contributes to improving public governance by transmitting to the parliamentary assemblies, to the managers and to the audited services any useful and reliable information resulting from a contradictory examination. As a collateral body of the Parliament, the Court performs its missions independently of the authorities it controls.*

The report on *Youth accommodation as a part of youth care*, the summary and the press release are all available (in French only) on the Court's website [www.courdescomptes.be](http://www.courdescomptes.be).