

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Report to the Walloon Parliament

#### *Environmental Police Missions of the Pollution Policy Enforcement Unit (URP) in the Walloon Region*



**In 2006, the Walloon government created a Pollution Policy Enforcement Unit (URP) in order to investigate serious environmental offenses and sue the perpetrators thereof. Ten years later, the Court of Audit examines the actions of the unit.**

An important part of the activities of the Pollution Policy Enforcement Unit (URP) does not deal with the fight against organised environmental crime but is limited to report on offenses the unit itself considers minor.

The Court of Audit identifies the following problems as the source of the inconsistency between the unit's objectives and its actions: a lack of an accurate definition of the missions; the absence of an action plan; a smaller number of agents than initially planned at creation date; a shortage of staff's technical and scientific skills, and poor human resources management.

The vague definition of the URP's missions prevents it from targeting its activities, whereas the absence of action plans, definition of operational objectives and report of the functions hamper hierarchizing its interventions.

There is a lack of supervision of the human resources within the unit, and there are shortcomings regarding the technical and scientific skills in comparison to the complex nature of the mission.

In order to improve the fight against environmental crime and thereby enable the Pollution Policy Enforcement Unit to fulfil its mission, the Court of Audit recommends to clarify the definition of serious offenses according to their category and their impact on the environment. It also advises to define the operational objectives and design action plans to look for this type of offenses, and to inquire into priority themes. These plans will have to be followed up.

Finally, the Court of Audit advises to abide by the planned scheme regarding the number of employees and their technical and scientific skills, and to reflect on the relevance of the decentralisation model.

***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 audit report *Environmental Police Missions of the Pollution Policy Enforcement Unit (URP) in the Walloon Region* has been sent to the Walloon Parliament. The full version (in French only), the summary and the press release can be found on the Court's website: [www.courtfaudit.be](http://www.courtfaudit.be).