

## **Workshop on “Ethics related audits”**

The Supreme Audit Institution of The Netherlands organized the first Young EUROSAI Congress, which was held in Rotterdam, between 20 and 22 November.

The Congress had 25 workshop sessions in total, which were spread out over 4 rounds and 2 days. Each day had two rounds of sessions. All sessions lasted 60 minutes.

The Task Force on Audit & Ethics, represented by Paulo Costa, had its workshop on day 1 (21 November). The number of participants in the session was 17.

The objective of the workshop was to explore and collect ideas on the challenges of auditing ethics related issues.

The workshop started with a brief presentation of the TFA&E. Then participants were invited to choose one of following themes: “Conflict of Interests”; “Rotating Doors”; “Ethical Leadership”. They have chosen the “Conflict of Interests” as the main theme of the workshop.

It was discussed two blocks of questions in groups of 4 elements. One of the elements of the table was the “President” or the “Auditor General” of the SAI, that represented the table, collected arguments and presented the proposals of the table.

On the First Block the main question was the following: “Why conduct an audit on Conflicts of Interests?”. It was asked to the participants to think on arguments to convince the “President” or “Auditor General” of their SAI about the importance of conducting audits on Conflicts of Interests.

The main arguments presented were the following:

- Auditing Conflicts of Interests would promote transparency, accountability and value for money;
- Auditing Conflicts of Interests would have preventive effects (audit as a preventive tool);
- This issue is relevant in the field of public procurement;
- Because of the social impact of this kind of audit (it promotes public trust);
- The Conflicts of Interests issue has associated a high risk of asset-lost.

The composition of the groups changed for the second block (except the element that represented the group). On this Block the main questions were the following: “What should be the scope of audit?”; “What should be the audit criteria?”.

In order to answer to these questions, it was asked to the participants to indicate up to 3 audit questions and the adequate audit criteria.

The participants contributed with the following set of audit questions:

- Does the public organisation pay attention to Conflicts of Interests (risk analysis)?
- Does the public organisation have an ethical policy? Is there any general act or specific legal rules about ethics?
- Are those rules effective?
- Does the public organisation have prevention tools to avoid Conflicts of Interests?
- Are those tools applied?
- Is there some case of nepotism or favoritism?
- In case of Conflicts of Interests, what is its impact on public funds?

In what concerns the audit criteria, the participants pointed the following:

- Legal Rules;
- Codes of Ethic;
- Guidelines.

In conclusion, we may say that participants recognized the importance, for SAIs and for citizens, of auditing ethics related issues, namely the issue of conflicts of interests.

# Mindmap of the Workshop elaborated by the YES Team

