

## Speech by Jan O. Karlsson (8 March 2000)

**Caption:** Speech by Jan O. Karlsson, President of the European Court of Auditors, delivered on 8 March 2000 on the occasion of the swearing-in ceremony for four new Members of the Court.

**Source:** The Court of Auditors, Speeches. Speech by Jan O. Karlsson, President of the European Court of Auditors, on the occasion of the swearing-in ceremony for four new Members of the Court. [ON-LINE]. [Luxembourg]: European Court of Auditors, [14.05.2001]. Disponible sur [http://www.eca.eu.int/EN/press\\_room.htm](http://www.eca.eu.int/EN/press_room.htm).

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## Speech by Jan O. Karlsson, President of the European Court of Auditors, on the occasion of the swearing-in ceremony for four new Members of the Court

**Luxembourg 8 March 2000**

Messrs Presidents, Members of the Court, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the European Court of Auditors is renewing some of its Members. Four Members, Messrs Clemente, Mohr, Salmi and I, have had their mandate renewed. Four new Members, Mrs Geoghegan-Quinn and Messrs Reynders, Fabra Vallés and da Silva Caldeira have joined our institution and, in accordance with the Treaties, will swear an oath before the Court of Justice.

First of all, I would like to pay homage to our four colleagues who are leaving: Barry Desmond, Patrick Everard, Armindo Sousa Ribeiro and Antoni Castells. They have given of all their ability and energy to consolidate our Institution during a decisive period in which its tasks and areas of responsibility have increased. I would like to thank them warmly and wish them the very best for the future.

The Members of our Institution are proposed by the Member States, but unanimously appointed nominated by the Council. Their qualifications are examined by the Parliament before it gives its opinion.

The entire appointment procedure demonstrates the wish of the legislator to preserve, in the general interests of the Communities and against any interference by States or private interests, the Court's vocation of independent expertise.

Today's oath-swearing is the culmination of this procedure.

As the President of the Court of Justice, Mr Rodriguez Iglesias, has just mentioned, the fact that this commitment is made before the Court of Justice emphasises its importance and the fact that the European Community is a Community based on law.

Personally, I must admit that I stand before this solemn assembly still full of emotion and memories. It is here that I swore the same oath in March 1995. I think that the same must be true for my colleagues.

The oath that we will be swearing today is more than a mere legal requirement. Each Member of our institution gives a personal commitment to the citizens of Europe. But, given the collegial nature of the Court, he or she is, at the same time, giving a commitment on behalf of the whole Institution. Such is the importance of today's ceremony. Its full meaning is clear in the current context, where still recent events, in particular the resignation of the previous Commission, have put the auditing of European public funds into the political and media limelight. This means greater responsibility for our Institution and thus greater commitment, and a need to accomplish our tasks with greater expertise and rigour.

The Court of Auditors is not responsible for managing European policies and funds directly. However, its audit work must be such as to contribute to improving the quality of this management. In order to do this, its reports cannot be merely fault-finding lists of failings, errors or irregularities.

They must also be a useful tool for the institutions that manage the Community and for the discharge authorities, and should thus contain observations and recommendations which help them to take concrete action to improve management effectiveness at all levels.

This is the challenge we must take up in the near future and I call on our four new colleagues to join us in achieving this goal. Public opinion is looking for concrete proof of the transparency and smooth working of our European institutions.

You may be assured that this new college of the Court of Auditors wishes to work towards this aim, in order to revive the confidence of European citizens in the future of the Union.

Mr President, I would like to thank the Court of Justice for allowing me to address you today.

I am convinced that we will maintain the excellent relations that exist between our two institutions and that, as proof of this, our regular, productive exchanges of views will continue.

In the event of any discrepancies the spoken text shall prevail

Embargo : 8 March 2000 at 6pm