

AIReF REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO EVALUATION AND PRESENTS AN OBSERVATORY OF FINDINGS AND PROPOSALS

- **Cristina Herrero points out that evaluation bodies must be given a strong mandate and sufficient financial and human resources to carry out their work**
- **It highlights the decrease in the amounts evaluated in the framework of the *Spending Review* commissioned by the central government, in contrast to the growing interest of the Autonomous Regions**
- **AIReF's new interactive observatory makes it easier to monitor the findings and proposals of its evaluations**
- **The tool incorporates the results of 21 evaluations involving 103 billion of annual public expenditure, which have identified 294 findings and made 440 proposals**
- **It also incorporates the follow-up by the Ministry of Finance on the proposals of the *Spending Review*. To date, according to the Ministry, 100 proposals have been implemented that affect 27% of the public spending on which AIReF has issued proposals**

The Independent Authority for Fiscal Responsibility (AIReF) today reaffirmed its commitment to the evaluation of public policies and presented its new interactive Observatory to facilitate the monitoring of the findings and proposals it makes in its evaluations. Furthermore, the president of the institution, Cristina Herrero, called for a real commitment to evaluation, which must be consolidated as a key tool in the sustainability of public finances. Although important steps have been taken to achieve this, there is still a long way to go and it is essential to continue working to find ways to guarantee the adequate provision of public services to citizens without putting sustainability at risk.

At a press conference at AIReF, Cristina Herrero stressed the importance of making this commitment in the current economic context, given the vulnerability of public finances and at a time when medium and long-term pressures are beginning to be felt that will require the generation of fiscal space to cope with possible *shocks*. Moreover, the assessment will be central to the future European governance framework, which places the quality of public finances, sustainability and economic growth at the heart of the new framework.

In this context, the president of AIReF called for more coordination and a comprehensive evaluation strategy that gives the evaluation bodies a strong mandate and guarantees them sufficient financial and human resources specialised in evaluation. Likewise, these

bodies must be guaranteed access to information to be able to carry out evaluations and ensure that the findings and proposals of their work are made public.

For their part, the administrations being evaluated must show willingness and interest in evaluation, integrate the findings into their decision making and ensure that the legal framework is appropriate for the evaluating bodies. According to the president of AIReF, there is still some way to go to create a culture of evaluation at all levels of government.

Cristina Herrero highlighted the decline in the evolution of the amounts of the assessments made through the *Spending Reviews*, the mechanism through which the studies commissioned by the central government are structured. The amount assessed by AIReF has fallen in the latest commissions (the third phase of the *Spending Review* 2018-2021 and the first phase of the *Spending Review* 2022-2026), despite the commitment made in the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan (RRTP) to make these analyses permanent. On the other hand, AIReF notes a growing interest on the part of the Autonomous Regions, which are increasingly commissioning AIReF to carry out work on cross-cutting policies such as health and education.

In the RRTP the Ministry of Finance also undertook to monitor the implementation of the proposals made in the *Spending Reviews*. As Cristina Herrero recalled, this is a step in the right direction, but there is still a long way to go as this monitoring has been limited to the proposals made by AIReF in the *Spending Review*, leaving out evaluations such as the Minimum Income Scheme or FONPRODE, among others. Specifically, there are currently 38 proposals that AIReF has made to the Central Government in the framework of other evaluations that are not monitored.

Furthermore, the monitoring done by the Ministry of Finance is limited to the proposals made by AIReF on the General Government Administration, despite the fact that the *Spending Reviews* have also made proposals aimed at the Autonomous Regions or Local Authorities. This currently leaves 65 of the institution's proposals included in the *Spending Review* studies and addressed to regional and local governments with no follow-up.

The Observatory of findings and proposals

The director of the Public Expenditure Review Division, José María Casado, presented the new interactive Observatory developed by the institution to facilitate the monitoring of the findings and proposals made by AIReF in its reviews. The aim of this new tool, which aggregates the results of all AIReF's evaluations, is to make it easier for citizens to follow up and to improve the availability to policy makers of evidence, analysis and objective data on which they can base their decisions.

The tool, which is now available on AIReF's website, currently incorporates the results of 21 evaluations conducted by the institution that address 22 different policies and affect 103 billion in annual public spending. In these evaluations AIReF has identified 294 findings and has made 440 proposals to the general government to a total of 40 organisations.

This includes the already published evaluations of the *Spending Review* (first and second phase of the *Spending Review* 2018-2021), which took the form of 11 studies analysing

18 public policies and affecting a total volume of spending of 90 billion euros. In these assessments AIReF identified 159 findings and made 277 proposals addressed to 28 public bodies.

In the case of the *Spending Review*, the Observatory also includes the monitoring done and published by the Ministry of Finance with regard to the implementation of proposals, limited to those made to the General Government Administration. According to the information published by the Ministry of Finance, to date the proposals implemented (100 in total) affect 27% of the public spending affected by AIReF's proposals (81 billion euros). Most of the proposals implemented relate to healthcare.

As José María Casado recalled, tools such as the Observatory of findings and proposals improve dissemination and reinforce the quality and systematisation of evaluations. They enable a rapid review and assessment to be made of the evidence detected in each assessment and systematic reviews to be carried out. To develop this Observatory, AIReF has based itself on tools similar to those used in other countries, thus joining the best practices in terms of communication of assessments established by international organisations such as the OECD.