Abstract

Over the past fifteen years, the accounting framework of local authorities has undergone major changes, which have progressively affected all categories of local administrations (municipalities, provinces, PSAC (OCMW), police zones).

The originality of the reform is the result of having maintained a twofold accounting circuit combining the budgetary accounting (based on transactions) that prevailed until then and general accounting (partly double-entry), providing a very detailed picture of assets and debts as well as the development of both.

Having briefly outlined the history of the accounting framework of local authorities in Belgium, the article gives a relatively detailed description of the two pillars of local authority accounting, i.e. budgetary and general accounting. The main accounting structures are illustrated on the basis of figures covering the entire municipal sector. In conclusion, the article assesses the main contributions made by the accounting reform and finally endeavours to set out a number of possible future developments.

Keywords: municipalities, local authorities, public accounting, Belgium

JEL classification code: H83