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As part of ongoing financial reform efforts, Pope Francis updated the role and authority of the auditor general's office, calling it the Vatican's "anti-corruption authority."

The Vatican announced Feb. 9 that the new statutes go into effect Feb. 16 and replace those first promulgated on an experimental basis by the pope in 2015.

The work of the auditor general's office remains largely the same: to perform a financial and compliance audit "with full autonomy and independence" of all offices of the Roman Curia, institutions connected to the Holy See and all offices of Vatican City State.

It will continue to perform specific audits when requested or deemed necessary, as well as receive and investigate reports on anomalous or irregular activities concerning budgets, allocation of resources, financial records, procurement services, transactions of assets or acts of corruption, embezzlement and fraud, according to the statutes.

It will continue to protect the identity of those who report anomalous activities, but it specified it would not consider anonymous complaints.

The office will have the authority to "ask for and obtain" information and documentation necessary for conducting its work, using stronger language than the original statutes, which said it "may request" such information.

While outside experts still may be hired to assist the auditor general, the new statutes no longer mention the role of two assistant auditors that existed previously.

The office of the auditor general has been temporarily led by Alessandro Cassinis Righini, who was assistant to Libero Milone, an Italian accountant and expert in corporate risk management, who resigned in June 2017 after just two years of working as the Vatican's first independent auditor.

No reason had been given for Milone's request to step down.

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