



European Economic  
and Social Committee

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# **ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2022**

**Section VI of the EU-budget**

June 2023

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## Table of contents

		<b>Page</b>
	<b>Statement of Assurance</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PART I</b>	<b>Presentation and main Achievements 2022</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PART II</b>	<b>Annual General Accounts 2022 (Accrual Accounting Principle)</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>PART III</b>	<b>Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022 (Modified Cash Accounting Principle) and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>PART IV</b>	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>149</b>



Brussels, June 2023

**Statement of Assurance  
by the  
Authorising Officer by Delegation**

I, the undersigned, Gianluca Brunetti,

Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC),

In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation,

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view:

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions;

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, the rigorous verification procedures applied at the EESC in accordance with the internal financial rules, the result of ex-post controls, the observations of the Internal Audit Service and the findings of the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration;

I confirm that I am not aware of anything not declared here which could harm the interests of the institution.

However, the following reservation should be noted:

- The observations of the Internal Audit Service in relation to meeting authorisations are currently being addressed.

Gianluca BRUNETTI  
EESC Secretary-General



# **PART I**

## **Presentation and main achievements 2022**

## PART I – INDEX

<b>1. PRESENTATION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 The European Economic and Social Committee .....	9
1.2 Mission .....	10
1.3 Organised civil society.....	10
1.4 Allocation of seats .....	12
1.5 EESC opinions .....	12
1.6 Structure of the EESC.....	13
1.7 The EESC and the Conference on the Future of Europe .....	18
1.8 Solidarity with Ukraine.....	19
<b>2. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2022.....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1 Legislative and related work .....	20
2.1.1 Plenary sessions .....	20
2.1.2 Cooperation with other institutions .....	24
2.1.3 Structured dialogue with European citizens .....	29
2.1.4 Conferences, debates and key topics in the spotlight in 2022.....	32
2.1.5 Fostering equality .....	41
2.1.6 Outreach activities.....	41
2.2 Administration.....	50
2.2.1 EESC administration .....	50
2.2.2 Administrative cooperation agreement between the EESC and the CoR ....	59
2.2.3 Efficient environmental management.....	60



# I.

## 1. PRESENTATION

### 1.1 THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

**The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** is an advisory body of the European Union based in Brussels. Since it was set up in 1957, the EESC has provided a unique forum for consultation, dialogue and consensus among representatives of the various economic, social and civil components of organised civil society. The EESC has a distinctive place in the EU's decision-making process as a consultative body that acts as an intermediary between the legislative (European Parliament and Council) and executive (European Commission) institutions of the EU.

**The EESC gives civil society organisations a say in Europe's development.**

#### **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union**

##### *Article 300*

1. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be assisted by an Economic and Social Committee and a Committee of the Regions, exercising advisory functions.
2. The Economic and Social Committee shall consist of representatives of organisations of employers, of the employed, and of other parties representative of civil society, notably in socio-economic, civic, professional and cultural areas.
4. The members of the Economic and Social Committee and of the Committee of the Regions shall not be bound by any mandatory instructions. They shall be completely independent in the performance of their duties, in the Union's general interest.
5. The rules referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 governing the nature of the composition of the Committees shall be reviewed at regular intervals by the Council to take account of economic, social and demographic developments within the Union. The Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt decisions to that end.

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## 1.2 MISSION

The EESC is committed to European integration. It strengthens the European Union's democratic legitimacy by enabling national civil society organisations to express their views at European level.

### EESC Mission statement

The Committee has three key missions:

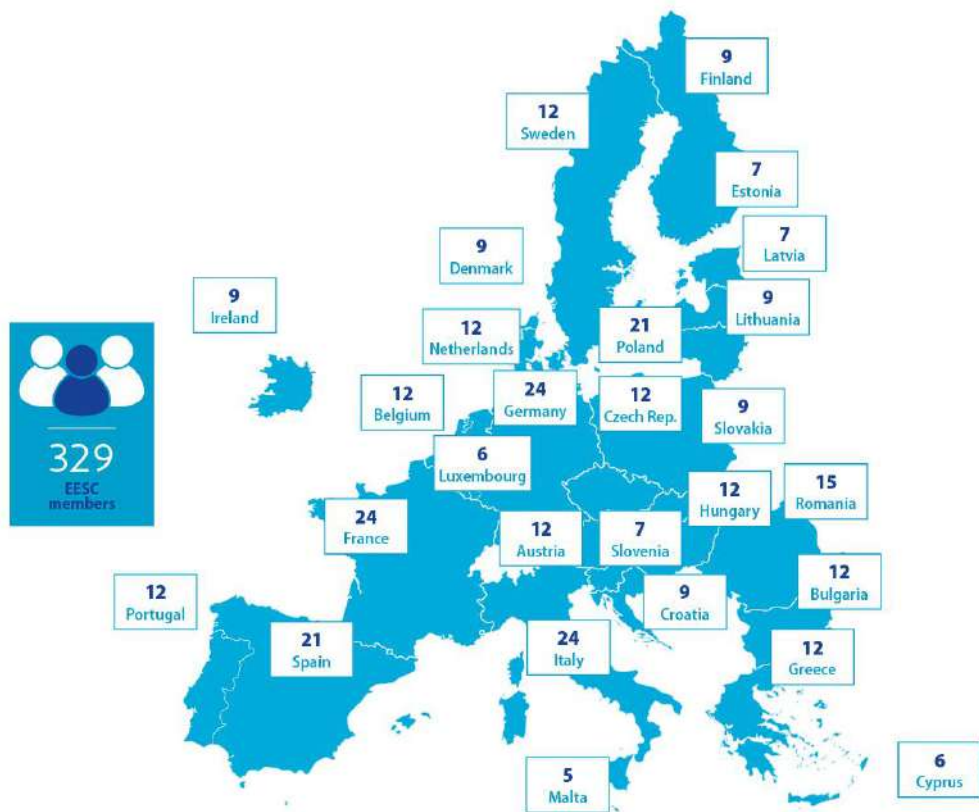
- ✚ helping to ensure that European policies and legislation are more in tune with economic, social and civic circumstances on the ground. It does this by making the expertise of its members, as civil society representatives, available to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, and by stimulating dialogue and efforts to secure consensus serving the general interests of the EU;
- ✚ promoting the development of a more participatory European Union that is more in touch with public opinion, by acting as an institutional forum representing, informing, and being in dialogue with organised civil society;
- ✚ promoting the values on which European integration is founded and advancing the cause of participatory democracy, as well as the role of civil society organisations, in Europe and across the world.

## 1.3 ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY

Organised civil society is formed of a wide range of organisations, networks, associations, groups and movements that are independent of governments and which sometimes come together to advance their common interests through collective action. These groups often act as intermediaries between decision-makers and the public, and enable people to get involved in public life by playing an active role in their workplace or, for example, by joining a political organisation or supporting a good cause.

Currently, the EESC is made up of 329 members from across the 27 Member States. The members are not politicians, but employers, trade unionists and representatives of groups such as professional and community associations, farmers, youth organisations, women's groups, consumers, environmental campaigners, and many more.

# I.



The members come from all social and professional backgrounds and have a vast range of knowledge and experience. They are not based full-time in Brussels, but have their own jobs in their home countries, which ensures that they maintain direct contact with their grassroots. Nominated by their governments, members are appointed by the Council of the European Union for a period of five years and work independently in the interests of all EU citizens. By debating issues that involve and affect civil society and by delivering opinions conveying the Committee's views, members play an integral part in the process of policy- and decision-making at EU level. Through its Liaison Group, the EESC also connects European civil society organisations and networks that are not members of the EESC. The Liaison Group provides a framework for political dialogue and cooperation on cross-cutting issues of common interest.

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### 1.4 ALLOCATION OF SEATS

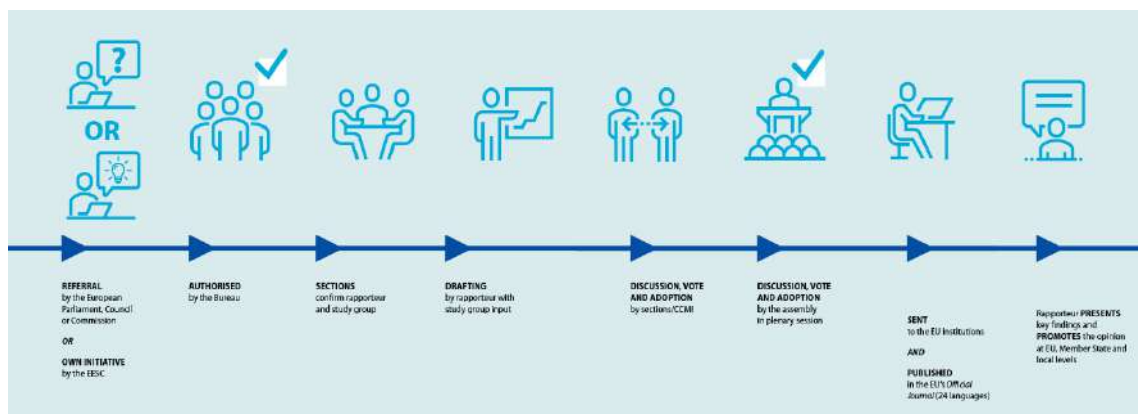
EESC members are proposed by the Member States and appointed by the Council of the European Union for a renewable five-year term. The national distribution of seats is shown in the graphic above.

### 1.5 EESC OPINIONS

The European Parliament (EP), the European Commission and the Council of the European Union are obliged under the EU Treaties to consult the EESC on a wide range of policy issues – from social affairs to economic and monetary policy, energy and sustainability – before passing new laws<sup>1</sup>. The EESC examines proposals and draws up and adopts opinions on the basis of consensus reached between its members. It also draws up own-initiative opinions related to issues of key interest for European citizens. After they are adopted by the EESC assembly, opinions are sent to the EU institutions and published in the Official Journal.

The EESC also adopts own-initiative opinions on any question pertaining to the European Union, on its policies and on how these might evolve. Exploratory opinions may be drawn up at the request of the European Council presidencies and other EU institutions before the Commission has drafted a proposal, enabling the various components of organised civil society to express their expectations, concerns and needs. The EESC may also publish information reports examining any aspect of EU policy.

This is the process for drafting and adopting opinions:



EESC opinions are published in the Official Journal in the 24 official languages of the EU.

<sup>1</sup> A description of all the areas on which the EESC must be consulted according to the Treaties can be found at <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/policies>.

## 1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE EESC

### Groups

Members belong to one of three groups: Employers (Group I), Workers (Group II) or Civil Society Organisations (Group III). **The aim is to build dialogue and consensus between all three groups so that EESC opinions reflect the economic, social and civic interests of society.**

For the term of office 2020-2023, Stefano Mallia (Malta) is president of the Employers' Group, Oliver Röpke (Austria) is president of the Workers' Group, and Séamus Boland (Ireland) is president of the Civil Society Organisations' Group.

### Working bodies

Members may also form categories representing the various economic and social interests of organised civil society in the European Union. Group I has two categories: MSMEs, Crafts and Family Business (which also includes Group III members), and Transport. As of March 2021, Group II has one category, entitled "Workers' Voice for more democratic participation". Group III encompasses a wide range of categories, which include Social Economy, Associational Life, Consumers and Environment, Farmers, and Professions.

The EESC has:

- six sections, which cover different aspects of the EU's work, ranging from the economy to social affairs. Members belong to one or more of these sections depending on their areas of expertise, and it is here that most of the preparatory work on opinions is carried out;
- a Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI), which anticipates and examines the impact of industrial change across a wide range of sectors;
- three observatories – on the digital transition and the single market, the labour market, and sustainable development – as well as two crosscutting groups: the European Semester Group and the Group on Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law.

# I.

## Working bodies



### 6 Sections

- ECO** Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion
- INT** Single Market, Production and Consumption
- TEN** Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society
- SOC** Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship
- NAT** Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment
- REX** External Relations

### 1 Commission

- CCMI** Consultative Commission on Industrial Change

### 3 Observatories

- DSMO** Digital Transition and Single Market Observatory
- LMO** Labour Market Observatory
- SDO** Sustainable Development Observatory

### 3 Other bodies

- ESG** European Semester Group
- LG** Liaison Group
- FRRL** Group on Fundamental Rights and the Rule of Law

Every two and a half years the EESC elects a Bureau, currently made up of 39 members, along with a president and two vice-presidents chosen from each of the three groups in rotation. The Bureau has political responsibility for the general management of the Committee. In particular, it ensures that the activities of the Committee and its bodies and staff are in keeping with its institutional aims.

### I.

In 2022, the president of the EESC was Austrian member Christa Schweng (Group I). As president, Ms Schweng was responsible for the orderly conduct of the Committee's business and represented the EESC in its relations with other institutions and bodies. The two vice-presidents, Italian member Giulia Barbucci (Group II) and Irish member Cillian Lohan (Group III), were responsible for the budget and communication, respectively. The Bureau's main task is to organise and coordinate the work of the EESC's various bodies and to lay down policy guidelines for that work.

On 26 April 2023, Oliver Röpke (Group II) replaced Ms Schweng as president, while Czech member Lucie Studničná took over from him as president of Group II. At the same time, Polish member Krzysztof Pater (Group III) replaced Ms Barbucci as vice-president with responsibility for the budget, and Romanian member Laurențiu Plosceanu (Group I) took over from Mr Lohan as vice-president responsible for communication.

### Administration



The EESC members are assisted by a secretariat-general, headed by a secretary-general-, Gianluca Brunetti, who has overall responsibility for managing the administration.

The EESC secretariat-general advises the members in the definition of their strategic values and provides effective and efficient policy, communication, organisational, linguistic and material support for all their activities. It is composed of approximately 700 staff members (officials, temporary staff and contract staff).





## Presidency and political bodies 2020-2023







## Presidency and political bodies 2023-2025



## 1.7 THE EESC AND THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

The EESC took an active role in promoting a "full civic experience" for all Europeans by involving itself extensively with an 18-member delegation to promote the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE). As the voice of organised civil society, the Committee recognised the utmost importance of the conference, and provided overarching support for its successful execution. The EESC endorsed the conference in the following ways.

### SUPPORT FOR THE ROLL-OUT OF 75 EVENTS



- **33** at national level, and **42** at central level.
- 60% of these events, gathering more than **7300 participants**, produced reports on the CoFoE Platform.

### COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN ON SOCIAL MEDIA



With a potential reach of **21.8 million people** on Twitter alone.

- **60 new ideas** uploaded;
- **national events** promoted in English and in the local language; and
- **the overarching endorsement** of every CoFoE plenary and conference-related meeting.

### MAJOR EESC EVENTS



June 2021  
online

"Bringing the European  
project back to citizens"



November 2021  
Lisbon

"Connecting  
EU" seminar



February 2022  
Online/Brussels

"Shaping Europe  
together"

Notably, the *Report on the Final Outcome of the CoFoE*, concluded in May 2022, stresses the need to improve the overall EU decision-making process to better reflect the needs and expectations of EU citizens. It was proposed that the institutional role of the EESC be strengthened, considering its role as facilitator and guarantor of participatory democracy through engaging in structured dialogue with civil society organisations.

## 1.8 SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE



Following the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the EESC took several measures to support Ukrainian civil society.

The Committee adopted two resolutions on Ukraine<sup>2</sup> in which it suggested ways to alleviate citizens' suffering and to assist civil society in its humanitarian efforts.

As early as February 2022, the EESC launched a dedicated website named [\*EESC stands with Ukraine – organised civil society in solidarity and action\*](#). It was set up in order to centralise the concrete actions carried out by the Committee and its members in support of Ukrainian civil society. Members were invited to individually engage by expressing their point of view and share their testimony through interviews, videos, articles and podcasts, and at conferences and on social media.

Major EESC events – such as the annual seminar for journalists, the *Connecting EU* seminar for communication officers of civil society organisations, and the civil society prize – focused on the war, its consequences for Europe, and on the role of civil society in providing help to the population. In Krakow, on 19 July, a conference was held on [\*Relief and reconstruction of Ukraine and its European perspective\*](#). Additionally, in December and in cooperation with the NGO Promote Ukraine, the EESC hosted the photo exhibition *Children in War*, which shows the dramatic fate of Ukrainian children.

The April special edition of the newsletter [\*EESC INFO\*](#) also dedicated words to the invasion of Ukraine. Ukrainian themes have been present in every edition of *EESC INFO* thanks to the participation of special guests from the Ukrainian community, whether academic, journalistic or civic.

The Committee also opened its premises to Ukrainian civil society organisations active in Brussels. This provided them with a safe place to continue working and keeping Ukrainian civil society alive.

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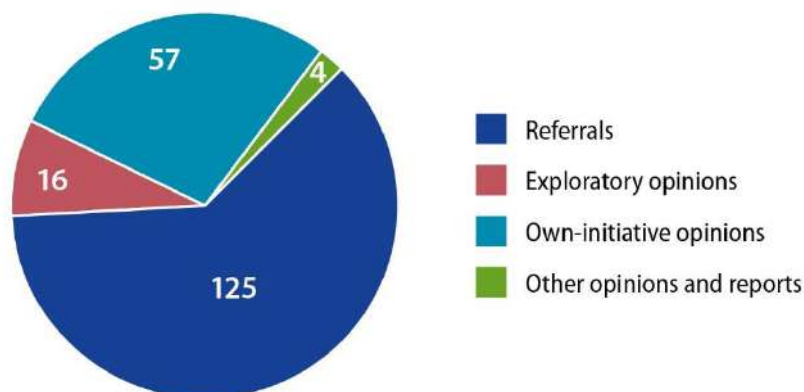
<sup>2</sup> *War in Ukraine and its economic, social and environmental impact*, March 2022.  
*Ukraine – from relief to reconstruction – proposals by the European civil society*, June 2022.

## 2. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

### 2.1 LEGISLATIVE AND RELATED WORK

In 2022, the EESC adopted a total of 202 opinions and reports.

#### 202 opinions and reports adopted in 2022



#### 2.1.1 Plenary sessions

The Committee held a number of high-level debates on topical issues at its plenary sessions.

January	
19-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presentation of the priorities of the French Presidency</b> by <b>Clément Beaune</b>, Secretary of State for European Affairs in the French Government.</li> <li>• <b>Debate related to the <i>European Year of Youth 2022</i></b>, with the participation of <b>Anne Kjær Bathel</b>, representing the European Young Leader's programme, <b>Joe Elborn</b>, Secretary General of the European Youth Forum, and <b>Miriam Teuma</b>, President of the European Steering Committee for Youth at the Council of Europe.</li> </ul>

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February	
23-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Fit for 55: delivering the EU's 2030 climate target on the way to climate neutrality</i></b>, with <b>Frans Timmermans</b>, Executive Vice-President of the Commission, in charge of the European Green Deal.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>The impact of COVID-19 on fundamental rights and the rule of law across the EU and the future of democracy</i></b> with <b>Věra Jourová</b>, European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency.</li> <li>• <b>Debate entitled <i>How can we create a more resilient, innovative and sustainable tourism?</i></b> with the participation of <b>Martha Schultz</b>, Managing Director of the Schultz Group, Vice-President of EUROCHAMBRES and Vice-President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber; <b>Alberto Corti</b>, Head of the Tourism Sector of the Italian General Confederation of Enterprises, Professions and Self-Employment (Confcommercio-Imprese per l'Italia), <b>Kerstin Howald</b>, Political Secretary of the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions; and <b>Claudia Monteiro de Aguiar</b>, Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur on the topic <i>Establishing an EU strategy for sustainable tourism</i>.</li> </ul>
March	
23-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Debate on the <i>New European Bauhaus initiative</i></b>, with <b>Mariya Gabriel</b>, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on the Resolution <i>War in Ukraine and its economic, social and environmental impact</i></b> with the participation of <b>Ylva Johansson</b>, Commissioner for Home Affairs; <b>Anatoliy Kinakh</b>, President of the National Tripartite Social and Economic Council in Ukraine; <b>Alexander Shubin</b>, Chair of the Ukrainian Civil Society Platform; <b>Gennadiy Chyzhykov</b>, President of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and representative of the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine; and <b>Mikhail Khodorkovsky</b>, Founder of the Open Russia Foundation.</li> <li>• <b>Presentation of the European Citizens' Initiative <i>Save bees and farmers! Towards a bee-friendly agriculture for a healthy environment</i></b>, with <b>Helmut Burtscher-Schaden</b>, PhD, representative of the ECI, and biochemist at GLOBAL 2000 – Friends of the Earth Austria.</li> </ul>
May	
18-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>European responses to strengthen our economies and societies against the background of the current geo-political context</i></b>, with <b>Charles Michel</b>, President of the European Council.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Recovery &amp; Resilience</i></b>, linked to the adoption of the resolution entitled <i>Involvement of Organised Civil Society in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans – How can we improve it?</i> with <b>Valdis Dombrovskis</b>, Executive Vice President of the European Commission for an Economy that Works for People.</li> </ul>

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June	
15-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Debate on the results and the follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe</b>, with <b>Dubravka Šuica</b>, Vice-President of the European Commission for Democracy and Demography.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on the situation in Ukraine and the adoption of the EESC resolution entitled <i>Ukraine – from relief to reconstruction – proposals by European civil society</i></b>, with <b>H.E. Ambassador Vsevolod Chentsov</b>, Head of the Ukrainian Mission to the European Union, <b>Marta Barandiy</b>, representing Promote Ukraine, and <b>Mariya Korolchuk</b>, representing the Community Organised Relief Effort (CORE) and Funky Citizens.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Digital rights and principles</i></b>, with <b>Professor Andrea Renda</b>, Senior Research Fellow and Head of Global Governance, Regulation, Innovation and the Digital Economy at the Centre for European Policy Studies.</li> </ul>
July	
13-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presentation of the <i>Priorities of the Czech Presidency of the Council</i></b>, with <b>Jan Lipavský</b>, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czechia.</li> <li>• <b>Presentation of the <i>Priorities of the European Committee of the Regions</i></b>, with <b>Vasco Alves Cordeiro</b>, President of the European Committee of the Regions.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Ensuring gender equality and tackling gender-based violence</i></b>, with <b>Cristina Fabre</b>, Team leader on gender-based violence, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).</li> <li>• <b>Debate on the <i>New EU-US Trade and Technology Council in Action: priorities for business, workers and consumers, and necessary safeguards</i></b>, with <b>Fredrik Erixon</b>, economist and writer.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on the <i>Resolution on the European Economic and Social Committee's contribution to the 2023 European Commission's work programme</i></b>.</li> </ul>
September	
21-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Achieving efficient, accessible and fit-for future health and care policies in the EU</i></b> with <b>Margaritis SCHINAS</b>, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Promoting our European Way of Life;</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>The role of organised civil society and cities on resilience and recovery in the context of asymmetric shocks and unforeseen crises</i></b>, with <b>Ivan Bartoš</b>, Deputy Prime Minister for Digitalisation, and Czech Minister of Regional Development.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>SMEs in Europe – challenges and perspectives</i></b>, with <b>David Clarinval</b>, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Middle-Classes, the Self-Employed, SMEs, Agriculture, Institutional Reforms and Democratic Renewal of Belgium; <b>Isabelle Schömann</b>, Confederal Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC); and <b>Véronique Willems</b>, Secretary-General of SMEunited.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Decent Work Worldwide</i></b>, with <b>Heinz Werner Koller</b>, Regional Director of the ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia.</li> </ul>



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October	
26-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Improving women's participation in jobs and entrepreneurship: gender and intersectionality issues</i></b>, with <b>Evelyn Regner</b>, Vice-President of the European Parliament.</li> <li>• <b>Debate and signing of the <i>renewed protocol on cooperation between the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee, and the European Commission's 2023 work programme</i></b>, with <b>Maroš Šefčovič</b>, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>A strategic vision on energy transition to enable the EU's strategic autonomy</i></b>, with <b>Prof. Leonardo Meeus</b>, European University Institute, Director of the Florence School of Regulation and Loyola de Palacio Chair in the Robert Schuman Centre.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on the resolution on <i>Jointly tackling an existential threat: social partners and civil society for implementation of ambitious climate action</i></b>, with <b>Pegah Moulana</b>, Advocacy Coordinator at Youth and Environment Europe.</li> </ul>
December	
14-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Young people and the labour market in the context of the 2022 European Year of Youth and the 2023 European Year of Skills</i></b>, with <b>Nicolas Schmit</b>, European Commissioner responsible for Jobs and Social Rights.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on the <i>EU's relations with its Southern Neighbourhood</i></b>, with <b>Álvaro Albacete Perea</b>, Deputy Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean, and <b>Josep Ferré</b>, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation.</li> <li>• <b>Debate on <i>Investments to promote gender equality: the role of finance and public recovery policies</i></b>, with <b>Ivailo Kalfin</b>, Executive Director of Eurofound; <b>Kinga Stanislawska</b>, Founder of European Women in Venture Capital; and <b>Xenia Kazoli</b>, Executive Vice Chairwoman of the Hellenic Corporate Governance Council.</li> <li>• <b>The EESC Civil Society Prize.</b></li> </ul>

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## 2.1.2 Cooperation with other institutions



The Committee is constantly maintaining and developing effective cooperation with the other EU institutions and bodies.

The Committee members regularly take part in various interinstitutional working groups, taskforces and platforms, echoing the voice of organised civil society. They also take the floor in

forums and conferences, within and outside Europe, to present the results of the Committee's work.

### ***European Parliament***



The gradual return to "normality" following the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2022, which resulted in an increase of in-person meetings. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) participated in EESC meetings or events on 68 occasions, returning to a normal, pre-pandemic level following the boost of online meetings in 2021. While meetings between

EESC members and MEPs remained at the same level as in 2021, EESC members almost doubled their participation in EP-organised events.

During 2022, there were several high-level contacts between the Parliament and the EESC. In March, EESC President Christa Schweng met with Bernd Lange, the new chair of the Conference of Committee Chairs (CCC). Mr Lange also participated in an EESC Bureau meeting in July. Evelyn Regner, the EP Vice-President responsible for relations with the EESC, participated in the EESC's 573rd plenary session in October for a debate on improving





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women's participation in jobs and entrepreneurship, which was linked to Gender Equality Week at the European Parliament.

At legislative level, many good practices were established with the Parliament. The cooperation between the EESC's external relations section (REX) and the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA) is one clear example, with INTA often participating in the work of the domestic advisory groups set out in the EU trade agreements, for which the EESC provides the secretariat.

The two institutions continued the established practice that the results of the European Migration Forum be presented in a meeting of the Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), with the LIBE chair taking part in the forum.

In 2022, the EESC focused on intensifying these relations with the European Parliament and on promoting the EESC's added value, thus fostering even closer ties between EESC sections and parliamentary committees. A meeting between the secretariats of both institutions in September 2022 presented the advisory services provided by the EESC, including exploratory opinions, and prepared the ground for the participation of the EESC President in a meeting of the Conference of Committee Chairs in February 2023.

### ***European Commission***



High-level meetings were held throughout 2022, which saw nine Commissioners attend seven EESC plenary sessions. The EESC adopted its contribution to the 2023 Commission work programme on 14 July 2022. The Commission adopted its work programme for 2023 on 18 October 2022, setting out a bold and transformative agenda in the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which has increased energy prices and had knock-on effects on the economy.

The Vice-President of the European Commission for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight participated in the EESC's October plenary session, where he debated the Commission work programme and challenges ahead with the EESC members. On 27 October 2022, the EESC and the Commission signed a revised protocol on cooperation, which further consolidates and intensifies the political and legislative cooperation between the two institutions, as well as their joint efforts to communicate about Europe. It strengthens the Committee's strategic function vis-à-vis the EU institutions, as well as its role with regard to the implementation of the European Citizens' Initiative and within the better regulation agenda. Ten years after the last revision of the protocol on cooperation, the EESC and the Commission deemed an update crucial in order to reflect the challenges of the current political European agenda, and to provide the tools and processes to address them. Through this renewed

### I.

partnership, both institutions also acknowledge the essential role that organised civil society plays in achieving an EU that is economically prosperous, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

At legislative level, cooperation with the Commission has been effective. Commission representatives cooperate closely with the secretariats of the EESC sections and the CCMI, and regularly exchange information. The revised protocol reinforces this already well-established practice and opens up further opportunities, such as to work closely with the Commission services through knowledge-exchanges, joint participation in events, and one-off initiatives.

### ***European Council and the Council of the European Union***



European Council



Council of the  
European Union

France held the Council Presidency in the first half of 2022, followed by Czechia in the second half. Mr Clément Beaune, Secretary of State for European affairs, and Mr Jan Lipavský, Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, presented the priorities of their EU presidencies at EESC plenary sessions.

The French and Czech EU presidencies formally requested a total of 15 exploratory opinions from the EESC.

Ministers and representatives of the EU presidencies attended a variety of EESC-organised events on subjects ranging from the *Role of nuclear energy in the stability of EU energy prices*, to *Social dialogue within the green transition*.

Many Council conclusions and discussions in Council meetings made reference to Committee opinions and initiatives. The French EU Presidency highlighted that the EESC's work on food security and sustainable food systems had been a particularly useful element, with a view to continuing the work of the ministers on this question. The opinion has been widely disseminated to other European institutions and has become very topical due to the consequences of the war in Ukraine.

### I.

The EESC also organised/co-organised eight events throughout France and abroad which were included in the calendar of activities of the French Presidency, obtaining its political, logistical and financial support. The Committee's representatives were invited to numerous presidency events. The rapporteurs of the opinion on the benefits of the outermost regions for the European Union participated as speakers at the Outermost Presidential Forum, organised by the French presidency in May 2022 in Martinique. Furthermore, on 3 May 2022, the Commission presented its new strategy for the outermost regions, which made concrete reference to the EESC's work.

#### ***European Committee of the Regions***



Administrative cooperation between the two committees is enshrined in the Administrative Cooperation Agreement (see point 2.2.2).

Mr Vasco Alves Cordeiro, newly elected President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), presented his priorities to the EESC plenary in July 2022, taking the opportunity to discuss renewed prospects for joint action and cooperation between the two committees.

In the framework of this renewed prospect of joint action, both presidents have maintained close contact on various topics, such as the implementation of the cooperation agreement, the building strategy, and the EMAS environmental policy, which was signed in November 2022 by both presidents and both secretaries-general. Through the latter, both expressed their strong commitment to reduce the committees' carbon and greenhouse gas emissions in the context of the European Green Deal, in the context of the Commission's main priorities for 2019-2024.

Several events saw EESC members actively involved in the CoR's activities, including the European Week of Regions and Cities. The CoR members are also systematically invited to flagship EESC events, with the aim of creating direct communication channels between local authorities who are closer to civil society organisations.

# I.

## *Economic and Social Councils of the EU*



The EESC continued its close cooperation with the national Economic and Social Councils (NESC)s of the EU, both on a bilateral basis and within the network of NESC)s. In order to further strengthen working relations between the EESC and the national councils, the EESC proposed launching new on-site or online pilot exchange programmes. These programmes aim to foster increased cooperation on working topics of common interest and on good practices, contributing to finding common solutions to shared problems. To bring the existing [CESlink portal](#) to the next level, the EESC started a process to assess the feasibility of an additional online community tool enabling the sharing of information, opinions and documents.



The EESC president had meetings with the national ESC presidents of France and Malta, and with a delegation of the Economic, Social and Environmental Regional Council (CESER) of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes. The EESC was also invited to meet with colleagues in the Dutch ESC in The Hague.

The cooperation with NESC)s also included their contributions in the framework of the European semester group.

The annual meeting of the presidents and secretaries-general of the ESC)s was co-organised with the Romanian Economic and Social Council, in Bucharest on 9 and 10 November. Grouped under the title *Turning geopolitical challenges into a European Union success story: the contribution of organised civil society*, three workshops aimed at illustrating how civil society brings its contribution to today's EU challenges, be they the refugee crisis, participatory democracy, or the EU's open strategic autonomy in the energy and food sectors.

### 2.1.3 Structured dialogue with European citizens

Every year EESC flagship events promote structured civil dialogue between organised civil society.

#### *ECI Day: The European Citizens' Initiative 10 years on: ready for the future?*



On 2 June, the EESC hosted the 2022 edition of its annual European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) Day, providing a platform for dialogue and information on the ECI tool, as well as on specific citizens' initiatives. Under the title *The European Citizens' Initiative 10 years on: ready for the future?*, the event marked the 10th anniversary of this unique cross-border instrument, thus providing a good opportunity to take stock and to look towards the future.

High-level speakers included Commission Vice-President Dubravka Šuica and MEP Helmut Scholz, who joined EESC President Christa Schweng for the opening debate. This was then followed by two parallel workshops and a showcase of ongoing initiatives, as well as a plenary session focusing on the ECI's readiness for the future. More

specifically, as part of the European Year of Youth, the ECI Day drew particular attention to the involvement of young people in citizens' initiatives.

Held in a hybrid format, the event brought together more than 300 participants. With a potential reach of 1.2 million people, the social media impact of the event can also be classified as very good for a single-day event. Preceded by the promotion campaign in different media channels (including Euractiv and Politico), this year's conference was mentioned in different online news articles and blogs (e.g. the ECI Forum).

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**Civil Society Days: *The EU as a driver of shared prosperity – civil society for an economy that works for people and the planet***



This civil society EESC flagship conference took place over three days, with participants on-site at the EESC and online. High-level speakers from EU institutions, national governments and some of the most prominent civil society networks in Europe joined the lively debates organised over nine sessions.

The overall number of 88 speakers included 2 commissioners, 5 MEPs, 2 representatives of national EU governments and 14 EESC members.

The discussions in plenary sessions and the seven thematic workshops focused on how EU civil society can help build a thriving economy that leaves no one behind, in the new context shaped by COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, against the backdrop of the twin green and digital transitions.

The participation of civil society organisations at the workshops was very strong, as were their contributions. With more than 200 participants in the opening and closing sessions, and on average 100 participants in each workshop, the conference enjoyed an enthusiastic audience. With a potential reach of 4.3 million people, the social media impact was also very positive. Furthermore, the conference event was promoted on the online media channel Euractiv, as well as on LinkedIn.



# I.

## Meeting of the presidents and secretaries-general of the EESC and national EU Economic and Social Councils (ESCs)



The presidents and secretaries-general of the European Economic and Social Committee and national Economic and Social Councils (NESC) of the European Union met on 9 and 10 November to discuss the theme *Turning geopolitical challenges into a European Union success story: the contribution of organised civil society*. The meeting was co-organised with the Romanian Economic and Social Council and was chaired by Christa Schweng, President of the EESC, and Bogdan Simion, President of the Romanian ESC.

The participants discussed the role of organised civil society across the EU in addressing a wide range of needs for people fleeing the war in Ukraine, such as humanitarian aid, housing, healthcare, education and jobs. They then briefly commented on the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe and discussed the participation of NESC and the EESC in its follow-up. Finally, they debated strengthening the EU's open strategic autonomy, viewed from the NESC and EESC perspective, particularly in the energy and food sector.

The event was also an occasion to give an update on the pilot exchange project among the NESC and between the NESC and the EESC. After deep and extensive discussions, the participants of this well-attended meeting endorsed the conclusions, which were subsequently shared with the EU institutions and key EU actors.

#### 2.1.4 Conferences, debates and key topics in the spotlight in 2022



The impact of the EESC's work was felt throughout civil society and the EU institutions as it made closer connections with the EU's legislators through its opinions, conferences and events. It also structurally included civil society actors in these activities, bringing them closer to the decision-makers. Listed below are some of the Committee's **main activities and the topics they addressed** which helped achieve this in 2022.

1. A strategic vision on the energy transition to enable the EU's strategic autonomy
2. Integrating strategic foresight into EU policy
3. Civil society, youth and local communities for the implementation of ambitious climate action
4. Health and care challenges in the EU
5. Social housing policy and building renovation
6. Civil society as a driving force of transition to a fairer and more sustainable world
7. Financing the EU economy as a driver for long-term sustainable economic growth
8. Circular economy and the packaging industry



# I.

## 1. A strategic vision on the energy transition to enable the EU's strategic autonomy

Achieving the energy transition is one of the EU's most pressing objectives for secure, competitive and sustainable energy. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent rise in energy prices, the need to design a new energy model and to make the EU energy-independent are now more necessary than ever. In this context, the EESC decided to work on a comprehensive approach for the energy transition. The sections and the CCMI elaborated own-initiative opinions covering different aspects of the energy transition. The conclusions of these opinions fed into an umbrella opinion entitled [\*A strategic vision on the energy transition to enable the EU's strategic autonomy\*](#).

The umbrella opinion, which gathered recommendations from civil society organisations, supports the implementation of immediate measures to address the most pressing issues, in particular to ensure security of supply at a cost that is "as affordable as possible" for both consumers and industry, and to compensate for lost energy supplies from Russia, without creating new long-term dependencies on fossil fuels.

At the EESC plenary session in October, the adoption of the umbrella opinion was followed by a debate with Professor Leonardo Meus from the European University Institute. The discussion concluded that there was a strong need to reform the EU's energy market and to guarantee security of supply and affordable prices for consumers and industry.

## 2. Integrating strategic foresight into EU policy

In line with the EU process aimed at increasingly integrating strategic foresight into the EU policy cycle to improve EU capabilities and preparedness for the challenges of the future, the EESC has been mainstreaming more and more foresight into its activities.

In addition to the contribution to the European Commission's annual strategic foresight cycle with its [\*2021 Annual Foresight Report\*](#), the EESC has organised conferences and section seminars on foresight (i.a. a seminar on [\*A vision for the future of Europe\*](#), a joint conference of the three EESC observatories on [\*Accelerating transitions to build open strategic autonomy for Europe\*](#)) and has adopted opinions with a clear foresight approach<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, the EESC has organised several

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<sup>3</sup> [\*A strategic vision on the energy transition to enable the EU's strategic autonomy\*](#).  
[\*How will given industrial ecosystems contribute to the strategic autonomy of the EU and the wellbeing of Europeans?\*](#)  
[\*EU Long-term vision for rural areas\*](#).

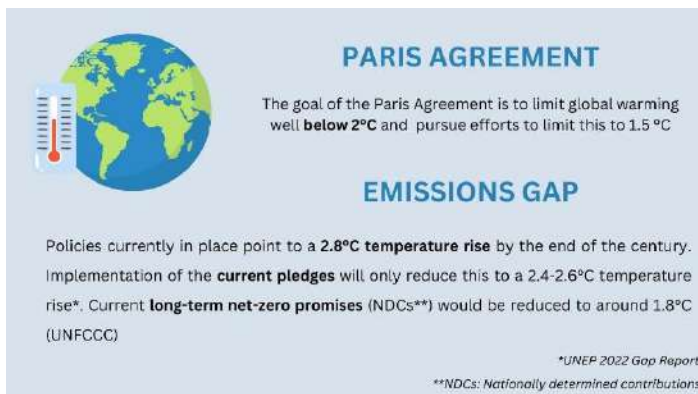
# I.

trainings on foresight to build a forward-looking mindset and to provide tools and methodologies for its members and staff, and also for networks of civil society organisations.

The EESC has also contributed to the EU's work in the field through its active involvement in ESPAS, the interinstitutional network on foresight, by participating in the EU Foresight Days and in ESPAS activities.

### 3. Civil society, youth and local communities for the implementation of ambitious climate action

The EESC has repeatedly expressed its commitment and support for the European Green Deal. In 2022 it adopted more than 25 opinions, in addition to those already adopted the year before, related to the Fit for 55 package, climate change and energy transition. It also organised several hearings, press conference and public events, such as the Conference on [\*REPowering our EU: How to speed up the shift to renewable energy in Europe\*](#).



The EESC also urged the Commission and Member States to ensure that climate policies address the social impacts of the transition (thus making the Green Deal a social deal), and to provide adequate funding to face the socio-economic effects of carbon pricing responsibly. In particular, the chapeau opinion on [\*Fit for 55: delivering the EU's 2030 climate target on the way to climate neutrality\*](#) encouraged Member States to create tripartite Just Transition Commissions to allow regional authorities, social partners and civil society organisations to participate in the implementation of the national and regional just transition plans.

The EESC has also actively participated in the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) since 2014. In 2022, the year that marked the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the *UN Climate Change Convention*, the EESC Bureau decided to establish – for the first time – an EESC ad hoc group on the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC, in order to raise awareness and foster the cross-cutting nature of its process, thus weighing more significantly on the climate change negotiations.

# I.

The ad hoc group prepared the EESC resolution on *Jointly tackling an existential threat: social partners and civil society for the implementation of ambitious climate action*, calling on the EU institutions and governments to step up climate ambition, following science and scientific information, and placing a particular focus on the role of organised civil society to accelerate climate action.

As the home of civil society, the EESC has also promoted a better integration of the voices of young Europeans in its work and in the EU decision-making process. In particular, given the key role young people have played in making climate change a top priority for the EU agenda, the EESC committed to putting young people at the heart of the engagement process, going far beyond ad hoc meetings and mere calls for consultation. Following the own-initiative opinion *Towards structured youth engagement on climate and sustainability in the EU decision-making process*, the EESC included a youth delegate in its UNFCCC COP delegation for the second time in 2022.

The EESC also continued the project of the *Youth Climate and Sustainability Round Tables* in cooperation with the European Youth Forum and Generation Climate Europe, to promote structured and meaningful dialogue between young people and EU decision-makers on sustainability.

The EESC contributed to highlighting the role of food system transformations in supporting climate ambition, through the organisation of two specific side events at COP27, and further promoted concrete initiatives in this direction. In 2022, the EESC, the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, COPA-COGECA and IFOAM Organics Europe launched – for the first time – the EU Organic Awards to recognise excellence throughout the organic value chain, and rewarding the best and most innovative actors in EU organic production. The EESC's involvement is a direct result of its opinion on the organic action plan.

The EESC, with the European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability (ECOLISE), hosted a policy stakeholder event on *Community-led initiatives and the European Green Deal: towards transformational local development policies*. This event enabled conversations about the role of communities and EU policies on the path to transformational systemic change.

In 2022, the EESC also committed to contributing to facilitating the Rural Pact process, a framework for cooperation among authorities and stakeholders dealing with rural territorial development, and one of the main initiatives of the long-term vision for the EU's rural areas up to 2040.

# I.

## 4. Health and care challenges in the EU

The EESC worked on the impact of **the pandemic on its health** systems by organising a conference on [\*Health challenges in the EU in the pandemic context\*](#). The aim of the conference was to discuss possible recommendations in order to come out of the crisis, to prevent future health threats from spiralling out of control, and to build stronger and more resilient health systems for the future.

The conference explored various dimensions of the health crisis, including the role of international cooperation in providing resilience at global level, the importance of reinforcing the EU's strategic autonomy in the field of health, and taking account of the interdependence between human health and the health of animals and the environment according to the One Health approach.

Regarding care, the EESC adopted various own-initiative opinions ahead of the publication of the European care strategy. It presented a new vision for care for older people, drawing attention to the role of family caregivers and of the healthcare workforce<sup>4</sup>. After its publication, a conference was organised on [\*The European Care Strategy: challenges and the way forward\*](#). The event focussed on the role of the EU, Member States and regional and local authorities, as well as that of organised civil society for successfully implementing the strategy.



## 5. Social housing policy and building renovation

Energy poverty rates are growing. The Committee has therefore put forward recommendations so that social housing policy and building renovation are treated as a priority for population groups suffering energy poverty, with special attention to accessibility of the physical environment in construction and renovation rules.

- Even though central governments usually make the rules on social housing, local governments or landlords determine whether individual households fulfil those

<sup>4</sup> [\*Towards a New Care Model for the Elderly: learning from the Covid-19 pandemic.\*](#)  
[\*The role of family members caring for people with disabilities and older persons: the explosion of the phenomenon during the pandemic.\*](#)  
[\*Health Workforce and Care Strategy for the future of Europe.\*](#)  
[\*The European Care strategy.\*](#)

### I.

requirements. The responsibility of municipalities when assessing housing needs is key. These local needs have to be taken on board when eligibility criteria are set.

- At national level, governments should boost efforts to provide energy-efficient housing, aligned with the Green Deal and the Renovation Wave Strategy to achieve the set targets by 2050. To this aim, investment in public buildings and boosting funding, while ensuring access to decent, affordable housing for the lowest income groups, are key. Improving the national legal frameworks could also help to build partnerships with associations and business organisations.
- The role of civil society organisations – and prominently among them consumer organisations, local communities, people with a lived experience of homelessness and actors on the ground – is key for promoting an affordable housing policy that involves all stakeholders, relevant population groups and policy-makers at local, national and EU level.
- The EESC is actively involved in the participatory approach in the implementation of a New European Bauhaus movement through debates with the Commission and the Parliament. This maintains the dialogue between citizens and civil society, so as to provide solutions to their daily problems and to improve their quality of life.

Three EESC conferences tackled this issue in 2022.

- The conference on [\*Tackling energy poverty at the heart of the ecological and energy transition\*](#) took place in Brussels on 21 April 2022. It was attended by 136 participants and key stakeholders, including Kadri Simson, Commissioner responsible for energy (via a video message); Laurent Michel, Director of the Direction Générale de l'énergie et du climat (French Presidency representative); and Aleksandra Tomczak, Member of Cabinet of Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans, from the European Commission.
- The conference on [\*Affordable and sustainable housing in the EU\*](#), which was organised in Riga on 6 July 2022, involved 173 participants and key stakeholders, including Ilze Indriksone, Latvian Minister for Economics, Marcos Ros Sempere, MEP, Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats; and André Viola, Rapporteur for the European Performance of Building Directive, European Committee of the Regions.
- The conference *Towards an EU framework against homelessness based on the principle of 'Housing*



# I.

*First'* took place in Brussels on 7 October 2022. It was attended by 60 participants and key stakeholders, including Zdislava Odstrčilová, Czech Labour and Social Affairs Deputy Minister (Czech Presidency representative); Yves Leterme, Chair of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness; and Maria Jepsen, Deputy Director of Eurofound.

## 6. Civil society as a driving force of transition to a fairer and more sustainable world

**Disinformation** is a plague for the EU, both within our communities and in our relations with the Global South. In 2022 the EESC started work on this subject, which will continue in 2023.

The EESC has also continued working with civil society in like-minded partner countries (the [UK](#), the [US](#), and the [European Economic Area countries](#), [ACP countries](#), and [Latin American countries](#)) on promoting an open and sustainable economy, free and fair trade, the green transition and respect for democratic values, decent work and human rights in turbulent geopolitical times. For example, Committee members went on a fact-finding mission to the UK in October to prepare an information report on bilateral relations, the preliminary findings of which were presented during the November meeting of the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly in London. With its opinion on [The new EU-US Trade and Technology Council](#), the EESC underlined that trade and technology are not just about regulatory issues, but essential tools for protecting and promoting universal values worldwide.



The EESC analysed the [Geopolitical impact of energy transition](#), welcoming the initiative to connect Ukraine and Moldova to the European energy grid and underlining the importance of energy diplomacy, in particular in the [Euromed region](#).

The European perspective of the [Western Balkans](#), the need for further reforms, and the important role of youth for the future of the region was an important focus of the EESC's

work this year.

The [EU domestic advisory groups \(DAGs\)](#) continued their work to ensure that EU trade agreements benefit all, focusing on topics such as the ratification of ILO core conventions (including on occupational health and safety), global supply chains, due diligence, platform work, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and on a green and just energy transition.



# I.

The structured dialogue with civil society from Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova continued, and on 1 September the EU-Armenia civil society platform held its first meeting in Yerevan. The EESC adopted an information report on [\*Supporting the independent media sector in Belarus\*](#), organised an exhibition on Belarusian political prisoners, and called for the release of independent trade unions leaders.

## 7. Financing the EU economy as a driver for long-term sustainable economic growth

To overcome the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression on Ukrainian territory, investment towards the green and digital transformations is essential. It is therefore crucial to encourage European institutions and national governments to speed up the implementation and enforcement of the national Recovery and Resilience Plans<sup>5</sup> and make the associated investments and reforms.

Moreover, the EESC noted that it was necessary to add new forms of revenue to the EU budget to cover the debt repayment resulting from borrowing under the NextGenerationEU initiative without jeopardising the budgets of other EU programmes and instruments, or substantially increasing the contributions to the EU budget from Member States based on their gross national income<sup>6</sup>.



Additionally, further progress is needed to complete the capital markets union, which is essential for a well-functioning single market and for overcoming the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>7</sup>.

In this respect, the EESC adopted a relevant resolution on the [\*Involvement of organised civil society in the national recovery and resilience plans – how can we improve it?\*](#), two opinions on the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey 2022<sup>8</sup>, and three opinions on the capital markets union package<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> [Additional considerations on the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey 2022.](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Proposal for an own-resources decision.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Review of the Markets in Financial Instruments Regulation \(MiFIR\) \(consolidated tape\).](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Annual Sustainable Growth Survey 2022.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Additional considerations on the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey 2022.](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Review of the Markets in Financial Instruments Regulation \(MiFIR\) \(consolidated tape\).](#)

[Review of the European Long-Term Investment Funds \(ELTIFs\) Regulation.](#)

[European Single Access Point \(ESAP\).](#)

# I.

The EESC also organised several events on this subject, such as public hearings on a *New own resources package: The three engines for financing growth and recovery of the European economy*; on *A social taxonomy for sustainable investment – challenges and opportunities*; and on *Recapitalising EU businesses – an innovative way towards a sustained and inclusive recovery*. It also organised the annual European Semester Group conference on *Reforming the European Semester for a resilient, sustainable and inclusive Europe – tackling present and future challenges*; and a conference on *Prospects for the European economy in times of crisis*.

## 8. Circular economy and the packaging industry

The transition process towards a circular economy requires strong and coordinated commitments by civil society organisations and public authorities.

The *European Circular Economy Stakeholders Platform* (ECESP), a Commission and EESC joint initiative, supports such efforts through collaborations, events and webinars aimed at fostering dialogue, sharing knowledge and exchanging good practices. In 2022, such activities included, inter alia, 12 #EUCircularTalks events with over 2 000 participants registered, the Europe Circular Days during the Dubai Expo Global Goals Week, and the ECESP Annual Conference.

The EESC also adopted an opinion on *Making packaging a safe, affordable and eco-friendly industry*. The EESC pointed out the need to take the necessary steps throughout each product's life cycle to increase the sustainability of the packaging industry, emphasising ecodesign, current and future recycling technologies, and strong measures to combat dispersion.

Finally, the EESC organised *a debate* on packaging with the Czech Chamber of Commerce in order to highlight the critical role of the packaging sector for the EU economy's resilience, pointing out the exceptional challenges faced by this industry, including exposure to high price fluctuations, energy shortages and the unavailability of raw materials.

The EESC took several initiatives on this topic.

- An #EUCircularTalks Event – *Together for Circular Packaging* – organised with the Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP).
- A CCMI debate on the *European Packaging Sector*, organised in cooperation with the 2022 Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Czech Chamber of Commerce.
- An EESC opinion on *Making packaging a safe, affordable and eco-friendly industry*.



### 2.1.5 Fostering equality

The EESC continuously aims to foster a culture of equality, and from this the ad hoc group on equality was established. The group's mission is to promote a cross-cutting culture of equality and non-discrimination across the EESC. The first step in this process was to identify the areas in which members might potentially receive unequal treatment due to their origin, gender, sexual orientation or beliefs. The group's ultimate goal is to increase women's participation in the EESC and to reach a gender-balanced workforce in the near future.

### 2.1.6 Outreach activities

Particularly noteworthy activities in 2022 were the adoption of a new external communication strategy, the activities related to the Conference on the Future of Europe (see point **Error! Reference source not found.**), the active communication efforts on the EESC's support for Ukraine (see point 1.8), increased outreach on social media (and in particular the rapid growth of followers on Instagram), and improved multilingualism and accessibility of the EESC website. Additionally, visits to the EESC premises and partnership events resumed in the second part of the year.

#### **A new external communication strategy based on an ex-post evaluation of the previous strategy**

A key priority in the area of communication was the adoption of a new communication strategy to equip the EESC with the most appropriate tools and procedures to better reach out to its target audiences and improve its image and impact. The new strategy, which is based on the comprehensive evaluation report of the previous strategy presented to the EESC Bureau in April 2022, was drafted using an inclusive approach, with broad consultation of all relevant stakeholders both at political and administrative level throughout the process, in order to ensure appropriate ownership and to match real needs. The new strategy, addresses strategic issues such as communication governance, the EESC's target groups, channels and activities on one hand, and more practical aspects such as the synergies and resources needed to implement it and measure performance on the other. The 22 chapters of the strategy are enriched by close to 100 concrete action points and more than 20 annexes with guidelines, templates and other implementation tools. Actions were implemented in priority areas such as social media, web and consistent communication right after the strategy was adopted by the EESC Bureau in October 2022.

### I.

In October 2022, the EESC also updated the rules on partnerships to keep up with increasing requests by civil society organisations to partner with the EESC on thematic events. In order to accommodate a broad range of subjects linked to the EESC's work, the partnership events can now be held on-site, in hybrid or online format, or outside EESC premises.

### Major events

#### **CoFoE - *Shaping Europe together, the future is in your hands***

On 24 February 2022, significant communication efforts were dedicated to the high-level event *Shaping Europe together, the future is in your hands*. Despite the appalling news of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on that day, the event proved to be very interactive and managed to attract good levels of participation: in addition to the maximum number of physical participants allowed in the room in accordance with health and safety rules (50 people), around 163 participants connected remotely through Interactio, plus 326 viewers on Facebook and 286 on Twitter, with a potential reach of 1.6 million. The event featured lively discussions – in a room that was transformed into a TV studio – polls and two videos prepared for the event, one on EESC consultations in the Member States, the other on young people's views on the CoFoE.

The EESC continued to contribute to the interinstitutional communication coordination group until the conclusion of the Conference on 9 May 2022. After the adoption of the final recommendations, communication efforts focused mainly on internal communication channels at high-level with other EU institutions' representatives. The objective was to promote the EESC's views and ideas on the follow-up, namely how to monitor the implementation of the proposals (online dashboard) and how to give the EESC a bigger role in citizens' consultations, as explicitly asked for in proposals 36 and 39.



# I.

### *Your Europe, Your Say!*



*Your Europe, Your Say!* (YEYS) is the EESC's annual youth plenary session. This flagship event was launched in 2010 as a way to connect teenagers with the European Union.

The 2022 edition was linked to the *European Year of Youth* and took place online on 31 March and 1 April under the title *The Truth about Lies. Youth challenging Disinformation*.

It brought together 99 teenage students and 44 teachers from the 27 EU Member States, five candidate countries and a Brussels-based European school to reflect, engage in workshops and discuss how to tackle disinformation more effectively, how to better educate themselves, their teammates and others. The students presented their recommendations live to European Commission Executive Vice-President Věra Jourová .

In the run up to the Brussels summit, EESC members visited the participating schools. The visits were organised in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) and their outcome uploaded to the CoFoE platform.

### *EESC Gender Equality Week*

At the initiative of Ms Maria Nikolopoulou – chair of the Gender Equality Group – and following on from the European Parliament's *Gender Equality Week*, the Committee organised a series of debates from October 2022 to January 2023 on gender equality open to the public. Each section prepared a topic related to its specific area of expertise, for example



gender equality in the social economy and the EU, women in energy poverty, women's potential in entrepreneurship and access to finance, and the situation of women in geographical areas such as Latin America and Iran. Each debate was web streamed and promoted on the EESC press twitter account and with short articles. Feedback from the debates was published on a dedicated page on the EESC website. The *Gender Equality Week* is an example of the interinstitutional synergy between the European Parliament and the EESC.

# I.

### Connecting EU seminar



The 15th edition of the *Connecting EU* seminar, which was also web streamed, took place in Zagreb on 24-25 November 2022. The topic of the seminar was *Geopolitical turmoil at Europe's door: the perspective of civil society*. Three panels were on the agenda, respectively on EU enlargement to the Western Balkans, communication in times of crisis and energy. The discussion focused on the

impact of Russian aggression against Ukraine on the EU. More than 120 people participated in the event, including the EESC president and the presidents of its three groups, other EESC members, press officers from civil society organisations and national economic and social councils, representatives of EU institutions, journalists – including Ukrainian journalists – academics and other experts. The key speaker and special guest was Galia Ackerman, writer specialised in Ukraine and Post-Soviet States, historian, journalist and French translator of Anna Politkovskaya's work. During the event, networking workshops were organised with press and communication experts from civil society organisations in order to exchange experiences, increase knowledge about the EESC and develop closer links with them.

### Civil Society Prize – a dual prize to reward initiatives on two topical themes

In December 2022, the 13th edition of the *Civil Society Prize* rewarded six civil society organisations for their outstanding projects in two categories: *Empowering Young People* (linked to the *European Year of Youth*) for projects which aim to create a better future for and with young Europeans by tackling the specific needs of young people and contributing to their empowerment and participation in all spheres of economic and social life (category 1) and



*European civil society for Ukraine* – for projects aiming to help civilians suffering as a result of the war in Ukraine. In the words of jury member Ms Leitane, the over 100 applications received are "the most inspirational book written by European citizens". Concluding the award ceremony, EESC President Christa Schweng pointed out that "the winners" projects and their commitment in implementing them are a true example of active citizenship. In this difficult time, Europe needs these examples and this commitment more than ever.



# I.

### Seminar for journalists



The 6th seminar for journalists took place on 14-15 December 2022 under the title *Energy and media as weapons in the wartime*. There were two panel discussions, respectively on *The energy market reshuffled in the geopolitical context* and *Media propaganda as a tool to conduct war and resistance: a challenge towards*

*media freedom*. The 30 participants – journalists from EU Member States and some EU correspondents – also attended the plenary session and participated in a press point with the winners of the Civil Society Prize. Journalists had the opportunity to learn about the work of the members during the plenary and conducted more than 35 interviews. The three group presidents Stefano Mallia, Oliver Röpke and Seamus Boland shared their views on EESC solidarity and support to Ukraine, and answered questions during a press conference. The journalists also visited two exhibitions: *Through their eyes -Visions of Forced Labour* organised at President Röpke initiative, in cooperation with the International Labour Organisation, and *Children in War*, an exhibition organised by the NGO Promote Ukraine, showing photos of children experiencing war and Ukrainian cities devastated by war.

### Increased outreach through virtual tools and channels



To reach as many EU citizens and civil society organisations as possible, the EESC is active on social media. From Twitter to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube, it engages daily with our audience on a wide range of topics closely linked to the Committee's role, activities and priorities. The EESC plenary sessions are widely covered on our social media channels nine times a year. From teasing content to live coverage and follow-up content, most of the plenary content includes the hashtag #EESCplenary for monitoring purposes and to help our audience join the conversation. By the end of 2022, the EESC had a community of 163k followers across platforms, with almost 60k followers on Twitter, 48k on LinkedIn and 45k on Facebook. Instagram – our youngest platform launched just three years ago – doubled its number of followers in one year by reaching over 12k followers by the end of 2022. All accounts experienced a greater increase of followers in 2022 compared to 2021.

	Facebook followers	Twitter followers	LinkedIn followers	Instagram followers
2022	44 486	58 529	47 910	12 139
2021	38 669	54 318	37 442	6 483
2020	36 664	50 351	31 345	3 712
2019	32 600	43 300	14 500	1 105
2018	24 486	36 634	9 407	-
2017	20 674	31 053	7 829	-
2016	16 352	25 303	6 728	-

The overall reach of the content published across platforms was also on the rise in 2022 compared to 2021. This is mainly due to an increased publication pace on the central channels and to the new content mix approach that was implemented.

Our Facebook page reached over 6 million users (+1.1%), while our content on Instagram reached over 3 million people (+33.3%). The posts published on LinkedIn generated almost 1.2 million impressions and the tweets published on Twitter gathered over 6 million impressions\*.

It is also worth mentioning that in 2022, the Committee's central Facebook page received over 57k visits (+96.9%) and the Instagram account over 20k visits (+97.9%).

Besides the extensive coverage of the plenaries and the opinions, the EESC's social media accounts focused on important corporate initiatives such as the *European Year of Youth* campaign, the EESC resolution on the war in Ukraine and COP27, among others. Moreover, the Committee's social media activity helped raise awareness among EU citizens of activities, including the European Citizens' Initiative, the *Connecting EU* seminar and *Your Europe, Your Say!*.

# I.

### Top 5: Social media coverage across platforms in 2022 (EESC account)

- EESC Plenary sessions
- Ukraine
- Europe Day
- Thank YOUth
- EESC Civil Society Prize



### Top 5: Social media support coverage across platforms in 2022<sup>10</sup>

- Your Europe, Your Say!
- ECI Day 2022
- Conference on the Future of Europe
- EU Organic Awards
- COP27



The EESC also continued its cooperation with the European media network EURACTIV. In 2022, ten EESC members participated in debates organised by EURACTIV on topics related to

<sup>10</sup> "Support coverage" refers to the events or activities covered primarily by the accounts of other services like Sections and Groups and supported by the central account.

### I.

European issues. In total, Committee members have taken part in 29 debates since the beginning of its cooperation with EURACTIV in 2018.

#### **Podcasts and videos to illustrate European civil society's engagement**

In 2022, the EESC published season 3 of the [Grassroots View podcast](#), exploring the hot topics being debated in Brussels from a civil society perspective, with testimonies from EESC members and other civil society players acting on the ground. The ten episodes released in 2022 covered the green transition; European civil society's engagement in support of the Ukrainian people fighting the Russian invasion, EU-Africa cooperation in the face of common challenges; the Western Balkans and the long road to EU accession; the energy crisis; the first EU organic awards and the state of organic food production in the EU; COP27 as seen by civil society; gender equality and the future of Europe; the EU's endemic migration crisis; digital Europe. All episodes were published on the EESC Twitter account, Facebook and Soundcloud as the most used podcast platform; they are also available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

The EESC also produced 15 videos of the [EESC in a flash](#) series – all of them available on the EESC's corporate (@EU\_EESC) and news (@EESC\_PRESS) Twitter accounts, as well as on the EESC website – featuring EESC members from all three groups in two-minute interviews on key EESC opinions covering issues of great importance for Europe. The aim of the short videos was to attract journalists' attention to the work of EESC members.

#### **Opening the EESC (virtually) to external visitors**

On 7 May 2022, the EESC celebrated Europe Day with a fully virtual event attended by more than 600 people. A [dedicated webpage](#) was set up in all 24 EU official languages, featuring several tabs, including a [Youth engagement corner](#), an [Events, Visits and Culture corner](#) and the possibility to send a real postcard to someone. On Europe Day, the EESC also promoted its webpage dedicated to the [EESC stands with Ukraine – organised civil society in solidarity and action](#), which presents the initiatives launched by EU civil society to support Ukraine, as well as testimonies from EESC members and the resolutions and initiatives of the EESC on the war in Ukraine.

One of the main attractions of this year's Europe Day event was the [EESC 360° visit experience](#): visitors could take a virtual tour of the premises and discover what the EESC, as the house of European civil society, stands for and what it does for them.



# I.

Following the pandemic crisis, and a long two-year period of online visits, the EESC fully reopened its doors to groups of visitors in July 2022. Approximately 5 500 visitors, corresponding to around 230 groups, were welcomed on-site by the EESC Visitors' Service, while the virtual *EESC Online Talks*, which had replaced physical visits during the pandemic, continued being organised as a supplementary service to present the EESC and its work.

## **Culture as a tool to highlight the EESC's political agenda**

In 2022, the EESC organised 11 cultural initiatives, all of them linked to the political priorities of the Committee and its flagship events. Their aim was to highlight the political agenda and legislative work and to support the political message. The activities were also staged online on the EESC's dedicated webpage and the EESC Arts & Culture Facebook page. The online format resulted in a maximisation of the audiences' reach and the growth of the engagement rate.

Some of the most impactful events were staged during the second semester of 2022, such the series of videos entitled *COVID cannot cancel creativity* – a joint initiative of the three EESC groups on the impact of the pandemic on the creative industry and the positive side-effect of fostering the sector's digitalisation and innovative solutions – and the *Voices of Violence*, a series of short videos presenting real stories of victims of gender-based violence.

## **2.2 ADMINISTRATION**

The members of the European Economic and Social Committee are assisted by a General Secretariat, led by the Secretary-General, who reports to the President. The General Secretariat provides policy, communication, organisational, linguistic and material support that enables members to fulfil their task of building and strengthening links with other EU Institutions and civil society. The secretariat-general counts approximately 700 staff members. It constantly takes initiatives to attract, train and retain skilled staff, optimise its organisational structure and working methods and promote a respectful working environment, within the context of limited budget.

Key administrative developments from 2022 are outlined below.

### **2.2.1 EESC administration**

#### ***Strategic planning***

The current management plan adopted by the EESC administration entered into force in 2021. This document frames the General Secretariat's strategy and defines five core values and five key strategic objectives that steer its work for the period 2021-2025.

Subsequently, the annual work programme establishes and details the annual operational objectives, which are directly linked to the management plan. For 2022, it set a total of 31 objectives designed for all entities of the administration.

The EESC administration uses 16 internal control standards that represent the backbone of the internal control environment, in order to reduce the inherent risks that may impact the objectives' achievement. The compliance and effectiveness of these internal control standards are assessed every year. Similarly, in the context of EESC risk management methodology, a risk assessment exercise is also performed. Since 2020, a tool linking objectives, risks and control measures for each directorate was set-up, as part of the risk assessment process. In the context of the 2022 risk assessment exercise, a proposal for a set of measures to further decrease the cross-cutting risks was presented to the management board in May 2022.

In order to enhance the risk management capability within the Committee, a series of training sessions have been proposed both to the staff and for the managers. An advanced risk management training course, delivered by an external risk management professional, was also organised. At the end of this course, a Professional Risk Management Certificate was granted to the first seven colleagues.

# I.

## ***Support to legislative work***

The main mission of the EESC General Secretariat is to advise and provide support to members to ensure that they fulfil the institutional role granted to the EESC by the Treaties. This included strengthening follow-up activities and interinstitutional relations with regard to legislative work. The main legislative achievements are outlined under point 2.1.

The revised Protocol on Cooperation signed between the EESC and the Commission in October 2022, which further consolidates and intensifies the political and legislative cooperation between the two institutions, also reinforces the links between the two administrations and contributes to the anticipation of upcoming legislative work and follow-up activities.

The EESC also launched its new Strategic Management Tool: NaviGate. This visual dashboard is an in-house digital interface for viewing the EESC work. With this, staff and members of the EESC can keep track of opinions, documents and meetings resulting from legislative work.

In the autumn, a reinforced follow-up of the opinions pilot project was launched and an internal working group set-up to reflect on promoting more interactivity in events.

## ***Capitalising on new working methods***

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted even more consistently the need for any organisation to constantly adapt its working methods to the reality encountered in daily work. The EESC is no exception to this rule, and is constantly seeking to take advantage of all the measures it can put in place. This trend is visible across the whole Committee.

In 2021, the EESC had already set up a recovery action plan, aligned with its management plan and annual administrative work programme. In 2022, this action plan was reviewed and approved following feedback from staff, the recovery task force and management. It foresees a series of eight key actions, to complement the strategies already in place (widespread teleworking, building strategy, digital strategy, paperless policy, etc.).

In September 2022, senior management performed a brainstorming exercise on the topic *New ways of working: the transition to the 'new normal'*. In parallel, a working group gathering all internal stakeholders is also pursuing the reflection and implementation of short- and long-term initiatives (increased number of internal meeting rooms equipped for hybrid meetings, reflection on the teleworking rules and working conditions, optimisation of the IT governance through cartography of IT projects, etc.).

Particular attention is also regularly paid to cross-cutting synergies, both at the level of the General Secretariat and internally within the directorates. Indeed, major issues such as the EESC contribution to the EC 2023 work programme, or the revision of the EESC rules of procedures

# I.

and its implementing measures, were coordinated at central level, with the participation of the different entities involved.

Similarly, several cross-cutting and cross-section/CCMI events (for instance a high-level conference on *Tackling energy poverty at the heart of the ecological and energy transition*) were organised by horizontal teams, allowing optimal use of the skills available within the Committee. The coordination of cross-cutting files is also facilitated, with the increased use of collaborative tools such as Microsoft Teams.

## ***Focus on communication***

In October, the EESC adopted its new external communication strategy. This comprehensive document, based on an external evaluation of the previous EESC communication strategy, has been drafted using an inclusive approach, where both the political level (Communication Commission, groups, president's cabinet, Bureau) and all relevant administrative services were involved, throughout the process. It comprises 22 chapters (strategy papers), 24 annexes with templates and guidelines and close to 100 concrete action points for its implementation. Several priority areas are identified in this strategy such as social media, web and consistent communication. For more information about communication activities, see point 0.

## ***Preparing the ground for a comprehensive document management framework***

A new framework for EESC document management enhancing transparency and accessibility is under preparation. A working group is currently preparing the ground for this, analysing all aspects this strategy should take into account, such as: registration, retention and publication of documents, e-archiving, digitisation, use of e-signatures.

The electronic workflow has been fully implemented, and the strategy for the digitisation and opening of EESC archives to internal users and the public is being defined. The development of online information services is ongoing in the Information Centre.

A decision on the use of e-signatures has been drafted and should be signed in 2023. It will notably define the use of advanced and qualified electronic signature in the Committee.

The EESC is also preparing its involvement in the EU Transparency Register set up by the three institutions (European Parliament, Commission and Council) in 2021 with the aim of providing citizens with information about interest groups and individuals engaged in activities aimed at influencing the policy- and decision-making processes of the EU institutions.

Last but not least, following the assessment carried out in 2022, in 2023 the EESC will start the process of making the minutes and presence lists of a wide range of meetings regularly available

# I.

on its website. When no minutes are available, or if their content is confidential, the meeting agenda and presence list will be made available instead.

## ***A new integrated Human Resources strategy***

The vision, principles and implementation path of the Integrated HR strategy, were developed in 2021 on the basis of an internal survey within the Directorate for Human Resources and Finances, a dedicated one-day management seminar, as well as additional consultations of the services within the directorate. The integrated HR strategy was presented to the Management Board, the Joint Committee (COPAR) and the Staff Committee in the second half of 2022, and subsequently adopted.

This strategy will consolidate measures such as recruitment, internal mobility, retention policy and well-being, as well as diversity and inclusion, so that the EESC not only becomes an attractive employer, but also a fully inclusive workplace, where every individual is valued and can fully develop their potential.

Its roll-out started with the initiation of its first milestone, i.e. the new EESC staff engagement survey. The integrated HR strategy provides a benchmarking at internal level; staff are surveyed on the workplace, including in light of the new post-COVID reality. The main focus of the survey will be staff engagement, and the questions pertain to key work aspects, health at work and general job satisfaction. The results of the survey, launched in January 2023, will be thoroughly analysed, and all staff will be informed of the results in a timely manner. The survey results will feed into the detailed action plan to implement the HR strategy from 2023 to 2025, focusing on the priorities identified.

On the communication front, the adopted integrated HR strategy was officially presented to all staff of the HRF directorate in November 2022, and a dedicated intranet page with all relevant documents and links to HR policies will be launched in 2023.

Post COVID-19 working conditions also constitute one of the cornerstones of the integrated HR strategy. Following the successful conclusion of negotiations between the two Committees, and the fruitful social dialogue between the administration and staff unions, a new decision concerning working arrangements came into force on 1 April 2022 as a six-month pilot project. Highlights of this decision include the forward planning of working hours instead of a rigid control of hours worked, more flexible working arrangements where remote working becomes an institutionalised and normal part of professional life (for compatible posts) and a better definition of the line manager's role towards their staff, including safeguarding the right to disconnect for everyone. The pilot project is currently being jointly evaluated (by the administration and staff representatives) based on the results of a dedicated staff survey on the new framework for teleworking and flexitime organised at the end of 2022.

# I.

The integrated HR strategy will also include the new strategy on diversity and inclusion, which should be adopted in early 2023. This strategy reiterates the firm commitment of the EESC towards creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace where individual staff members with various backgrounds are respected and valued. Its action plan (for the period 2023-2027) contains several measures touching on gender equality, LGBTQI+ staff, persons with disabilities, staff from various generations, from various ethnic origins and of various beliefs and religions.

Finally, the integrated HR strategy will also further build on the achievements of the action plan on staff recruitment and retention adopted in 2021, and which already produced marked improvements, with the EESC becoming once again a net importer of talent in 2022 (with more EU officials joining from other institutions than EESC officials leaving, a reduced turnover with less vacancy notices being published compared to the previous year and a higher success rate of selection processes).

## ***Modernisation of the social dialogue***

The EESC has always focused on sustained social dialogue with the staff representatives.

This was again visible in 2022, particularly during the negotiations on the pilot project concerning working conditions (Teleflex decision) and the preparation of the new reclassification decision for temporary agents at the EESC. These were addressed either via means of joint preparatory work groups or upfront constructive discussions with the staff representatives.

EESC management, both at political and administrative level, regularly meets staff representatives and staff as a whole in order to present and discuss issues of general interest. The HR director, either solely or with their counterpart from the CoR, also regularly participates in Staff Committee as well as Joint Committee meetings to present and discuss specific HR matters (such as the integrated HR strategy – see above). All concertation requests (for example on the issue of energy saving measures or the implementation of the cooperation agreement with the CoR), have been accepted by the administration and followed-up in the spirit of a constructive social dialogue.

## ***Ethics and integrity***

In January 2021, the EESC adopted its revised Code of Conduct for members. The changes include the adoption of appropriate penalties and the establishment of the Ethics Committee.

Earlier that month, the Secretary-General had validated an action plan on the strengthened ethical framework, with immediate implementation of the three pillars: revision of the legal framework,

# I.

revision of the operational and administrative framework and the setting up of a communication and awareness-raising framework.

Almost all achievable actions of this plan were completed in 2022. In particular, the revised decision on preventing harassment and the decision on whistleblowing were adopted, the guide on respect at work for staff was published and new compulsory training courses in the field of ethics were delivered to staff and managers. Moreover, the team of confidential counsellors was renewed and the mandate of the new ethical counsellors started in January 2022. A service level agreement with the Commission's Investigation and Disciplinary Office (IDOC) was signed in order to broaden cooperation between the EESC and IDOC. Staff, represented by 50 colleagues from all EESC services, developed a new charter of values through an inclusive one-day workshop in June 2022.

In 2022, a tailor-made training course was delivered to its members and the newly created Ethical Committee dealt with the first cases brought to its attention. Its draft internal rules were drawn up and discussed at the Ethical Committee, and their adoption is scheduled in the course of 2023.

The policy on respect at work and zero tolerance has fully entered into the collective conscience of EESC staff, notably through a continuous and varied communication strategy using different communication channels to raise awareness among the staff.

## ***Financial management***

The EESC constantly adapts its procedures in order to improve its budgetary and financial management.

For this purpose, an important project, called the Integrated Business Improvement Project (IBIP), was launched. The IBIP is a comprehensive approach aiming to reduce variance between the estimated and real costs of the main EESC budget lines (budget lines 1004, 1008 and 1422, used for the expenses directly linked to members' activities). It focused on the analysis of the root causes of variances, through a mapping of 137 business processes organised on four layers.

Detailed requirements were collected through workshops with process owners from all directorates, and gaps were identified. Workshops were concluded in December 2022, and the final report with the 'to be' scenarios is under preparation.

At the same time, discussions on aligning the reimbursement rules for members' expenses with the new working methods – and notably with the new EESC rules of procedure now allowing for meetings to be held in hybrid format – took place both within the EESC and with the Council, leading to a request for the Council to consider adopting a decision on a structural allowance for remote attendance at EESC meetings.



# I.

## ***Legal advice***

In 2022, the Legal Service continued to assist the EESC in ensuring the legality of its decisions by providing legal advice on institutional and administrative issues (Rules of Procedure, public procurement, contracts, building projects, security, taxation, staff matters, personal data protection, procedures for accessing documents, etc.). Therefore, it actively participated in meetings of the Bureau and the management board and in other meetings, in the framework of legal consultations.

Specifically, the Legal Service was highly involved in the drafting of proposals, and in the discussions among the relevant panel for the adoption of the EESC's new rules of procedures (in March 2022) and of their implementing provisions (in November 2022).

In total, the Legal Service delivered 40 formal legal opinions, 72 other legal consultations and eight replies/actions linked to legal matters. It represented the EESC before the Courts: one case is ongoing before a national court, another one is ongoing before the Court, and three cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union were closed in 2022. It has also been involved in one case before the European Ombudsman and one case before the European Public Prosecutor's Office.

## ***Data Protection***

The EESC Data Protection Officer's (DPO) role is to ensure the internal application of the data protection rules by providing advice and monitoring compliance with these rules.

Every year, its team receives requests, mainly from data controllers, but also from data subjects, other DPOs and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS). In total, during 2022, the DPO opened and dealt with 103 cases. The register of processing activities currently includes 134 records (of which 24 were created this year and several others have been updated).

The EESC adopted implementing rules concerning Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.

The DPO also continued closely cooperating with the EDPS. In particular, the DPO contributed to an EDPS file concerning a staff matter, and to the interinstitutional working group concerning the cooperation framework between the DPOs of all institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and the EDPS.

# I.

## ***Internal audit***

The Internal Audit Sector (IAS) continued its efforts to strengthen the EESC's internal audit function. Out of a total of four audits launched in 2022, one was completed, with a report being issued. This audit concerned the EESC's payment times and was prompted by a substantial proportion of late payments in recent years. By the end of 2022, the situation had greatly improved.

A draft internal audit charter was adopted by the audit committee in February 2023 and the final adoption by the bureau was completed in March 2023.

The 2022 internal audit report can be found under Part IV, Appendix 2, of this annual activity report.

## ***Buildings strategy***

In October 2017, the EESC adopted a long-term buildings strategy. Since then, its implementation has continued, with the aim of ensuring optimal, high-quality, efficient, appropriate and modern working conditions for members and staff, and with a high priority being attached to health, safety, well-being and comfort.

In 2022, the major priority of this strategy, the "geographical concentration of the buildings", was achieved with all the buildings used by the Committees being physically connected to the main building (JDE).

This was possible due to the exchange of the Committees' B68 (rue Belliard 68) and TRE74 (rue de Trèves 74) buildings for the Commission's VMA building which became effective on 16 September 2022, as agreed with OIB in an administrative agreement signed in 2019.

As this exchange of buildings resulted in a significant loss of office space for the two Committees (about 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>), which could not be entirely offset by alternative measures in the short term, such as stepping up the office-space density of the other buildings and increasing teleworking, additional office space had to be found. Based on an administrative agreement concluded with the European External Action Service, the takeover of the rental contract of the B100 building was agreed as from 1 September 2021 to first of all allow a "buffer" during the renovation works in the VMA building, and, secondly, to compensate to a certain extent for the above-mentioned loss in spaces.

The renovation works in the VMA building thus started, following the moves from the VMA to the B100 building in March 2022. This renovation was necessary to ensure proper functioning in the coming years. In addition to the main renovation, it included works to modernise the working environment, allow for a flexible layout and introduce measures limiting energy and water consumption. Following the renovation works in the VMA building, and the refurbishment works

# I.

in the B100 building, the final moves from the B68, TRE74 and B100 buildings to the VMA and B100 buildings took place between August and November 2022. The renovation works of the VMA building were concluded at the end of 2022 in terms of works in offices. Works on the technical installations, especially in the technical rooms, as well as the installation of intelligent glazing and cleaning of the facades will continue until mid-2023.

## ***IT and digital strategy***

In June 2019, the Bureau adopted a digital strategy for the EESC that presents the vision for the EESC IT environment and identifies the major IT challenges supporting that vision.

During 2022, the set of human resources e-forms was consolidated through significant improvements to the applications for supporting the staff and trainee selection processes.

A new strategic management tool was also launched: Navigate. It provides a dynamic, responsive, personalised dashboard of opinions produced by the EESC. Members and staff can access it from anywhere using Multifactor Authentication.

Other IT applications were deployed or improved, facilitating procedures such as the back-office processing of amendments (DITO), or the management of document registration (Adonis).

On 1 November 2021, a new five-year cooperation agreement entered into force (see also point 2.2.2). Building on this, the Joint Services are structured around three pillars: the existing Directorates for Logistics and Translation and a new third pillar, the Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology. This reflects the importance of IT-related activities in an increasingly digitalised world. These activities consist of further implementing the digital strategy, improved resilience of the IT infrastructure and supporting the setting up of a robust cybersecurity framework.

## ***Translation and other linguistic services***

In a multilingual and multicultural environment, translation is an essential tool for both internal and external communication. It is thus important to integrate translation considerations into the EESC's activities. Various initiatives are regularly taken with this in mind. For instance, the *Clear writing* campaign, launched in 2020 which aims to encourage the drafting of documents in the most clear and impactful manner, continues, with training sessions offered to both staff and members. The Directorate for Translation also held a conference on a cross-cutting theme (*Back to the Future of Editing*) which gathered more than 300 participants from different international organisations.

# I.

The modernisation and simplification of the translation services' administrative environment is also ongoing through: the development of a new translation management system, an update of the online repository of procedures and electronic workflows, the upgrade of the new server-based translation environment, the publication of online training video tutorials and the launch of a pilot project to assess the possibility of using unrevised machine translation on certain documents, etc.

These measures aim to increase and improve the range of linguistic services offered to the EESC members as part of their activities. They are also in line with the goal to further deepen and develop the sustainable multilingualism policy.

## **2.2.2 Administrative cooperation agreement between the EESC and the CoR**

The EESC always strives to increase its outreach by strengthening its relations with the other EU institutions and bodies (for more information see point 2.1.2).

Notably, it has a very close relationship at administrative level with the European Committee of the Regions, with which it shares both buildings and staff.

A new cooperation agreement between the two committees was signed in October 2021 for a duration of five years and two months, with the purpose of reinforcing the existing administrative cooperation in numerous ways. The practical terms for implementation of this new agreement were approved by the EESC Bureau in May 2022, and by the CoR Bureau in June 2022. They were subject to joint concertation with both staff committees and joint meetings with the staff of the affected services and with all EESC staff.

This comprised a new organisational chart, launched in October 2022, including:

- a new Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology (IIT);
- a centralised Public Procurement and Financial Management Unit (MPGF), directly under the authority of the Secretaries-General;
- the transfer of reception and paper distribution activities from Own Services to Joint Services (Directorate for Logistics).

A project on the creation of a multipurpose area for members was also launched in 2022 under the cooperation agreement.

In addition to the new cooperation agreement, and as has been the case since the creation of the CoR, the two Committees continue to strengthen their synergies through close collaboration between services, for instance in human resources, communications and meeting room services.

# I.

In the light of the current energy-crisis situation, the Committees also managed to align decisions related to energy-saving measures (for instance, closing several buildings during the Christmas period and disconnecting the electric car chargers for private use).

### 2.2.3 Efficient environmental management



The EESC, in cooperation with the CoR, is pursuing its objective of putting the *European Green Deal* into practice in all of its work. Through the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the Bilan Carbone®<sup>11</sup>, the EESC aims to adopt exemplary environmentally responsible practices to reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

On January 2022, the EMAS Steering Committee adopted new environmental objectives for the period 2022-2025, including a new target on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction (reduction of 10% by 2030 compared to 2019<sup>12</sup>). On 30 November 2022, a new environmental policy was signed by the EESC President and the EESC Secretary-General, which includes the EESC's commitment to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

#### ***Eco-management***

The EESC, in cooperation with the CoR and within the framework of the joint services, has set up an environmental management system as part of a process of continuous improvement in this sphere. These efforts have yielded remarkable results over the last few years and earned the Committees the Brussels Ecodynamic Enterprise label in 2009 (under renewal). In 2011, the Committees were awarded EMAS and ISO 14001 certifications.

During 2022, the EMAS service carried out internal and external environmental audits. Many positive aspects were highlighted by the external auditor, including the consistency of the environmental objectives, the excellent communication on environmental aspects, the dynamism of the EMAS network and the high level of staff awareness. As a result, the EESC maintained its environmental certifications, as in previous years.

A series of new actions were undertaken in 2022: installation of new waste sorting corners, organisation of a campaign on waste management within the EESC during the European Week for Waste Reduction, collection of winter clothes for a migrant reception centre, visit to a

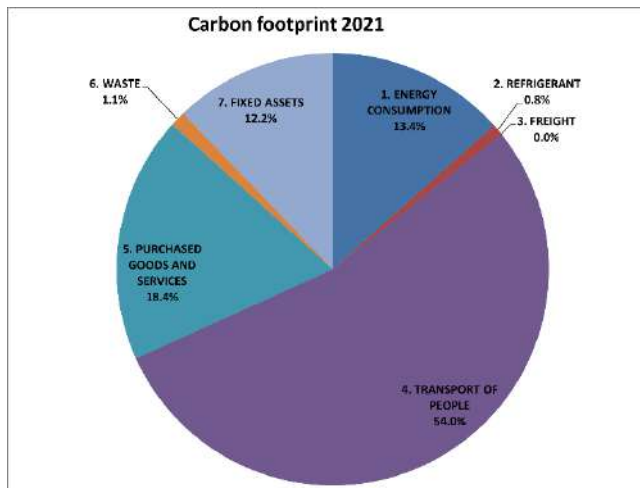
<sup>11</sup> Method developed by the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) and used by the Committees and other institutions to calculate their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

<sup>12</sup> This target does not include any potential reduction stemming from member-related activities. This aspect will be addressed later, after the conclusions of the specific ad-hoc working group set up by the Bureau.

# I.

composting centre and support for staff initiatives aimed at reuse and recycling (EMAS supported projects). The EMAS service also enhanced communication to staff via different channels (redesign of its intranet site, eco-tips in the HR Newsletter, Teams group for EMAS contact persons, etc.).

## Carbon footprint



The Committee has been calculating its carbon footprint since 2016.

In 2022, the Committees calculated their carbon footprint for the year 2021. Total emissions amounted to 8 500 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, which corresponds to 5.61 tonnes per FTE (full-time equivalent). Although the results can be perceived as extremely good (a 58.9% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to 2019), they are not representative of a normal year.

In their new environmental objectives for 2022-2025, the two Committees targeted a 10% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2030 compared to 2019. A study commissioned by the Committees was launched in 2022. Its report, made available in January 2023, provides the scenario and action plan for activities under the administration's responsibility regarding this target. It will be the basis for drawing up a carbon neutral strategy.

## Main environmental results in 2021<sup>13</sup>

As in the previous year, most Committees' environmental indicators showed a downward trend in 2022. The consumption of electricity and water has decreased slightly compared to the previous year (by 2.1% and 14.3%, respectively), the consumption of paper has declined dramatically (-55%), and the amount of waste produced per person has also decreased (-4%).



<sup>13</sup> 2022 data will not be available until validation by the external auditor in summer 2023.





# **PART II**

## **Annual General Accounts 2022 (Accrual Accounting Principle)**

**(Final)**



## PART II - INDEX

<b>1. CERTIFICATION OF THE ACCOUNTS.....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES.....</b>	<b>69</b>
2.1 LEGAL PROVISIONS AND THE FINANCIAL REGULATION .....	69
2.2 ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES .....	69
2.3 CURRENCY AND BASIS FOR CONVERSION .....	70
2.4 THE ECONOMIC OUTTURN ACCOUNT .....	70
2.4.1 Revenue.....	70
2.4.2 Expenditure.....	70
2.5 BALANCE SHEET.....	71
2.5.1 Intangible fixed assets .....	71
2.5.2 Tangible fixed assets.....	71
2.5.3 Depreciation rates.....	71
2.5.4 Leases.....	72
2.5.5 Impairment of assets.....	72
2.5.6 Receivables .....	72
2.5.7 Cash and cash equivalents.....	73
2.6 THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT .....	73
2.7 USE OF ESTIMATES.....	73
<b>3. THE ECONOMIC OUTTURN ACCOUNT .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>5, STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS .....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>6, THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>7, NOTES.....</b>	<b>82</b>



**1. CERTIFICATION OF THE ACCOUNTS**

Brussels, June 2023

I acknowledge my responsibility for the preparation and presentation of the annual accounts of European Economic and Social Committee in accordance with Article 246 of the Financial Regulation ('FR')<sup>1</sup> and I hereby certify that the annual accounts of the European Economic and Social Committee for the year 2022 have been prepared in accordance with Title XIII of the FR and the accounting rules adopted by the Commission's Accounting Officer, as are to be applied by all the institutions and union bodies.

I have obtained from the Authorising Officer, who certified its reliability, all the information necessary for the production of the accounts that show the European Economic and Social Committee's assets and liabilities and the budgetary implementation. Based on this information, and on such checks as I deemed necessary to sign off the accounts, I have a reasonable assurance that the accounts present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position, the results of the operations and the cash-flow of the European Economic and Social Committee.



**Giaprakis Stavros**  
**Accounting Officer of the**  
**European Economic and**  
**Social Committee**

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<sup>1</sup> REGULATION (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.



## **2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

This chapter provides a description of the policies, principles, methods and assumptions underpinning the annual general accounts.

### **2.1 LEGAL PROVISIONS AND THE FINANCIAL REGULATION**

The main source of principles is the Financial Regulation (FR). Over and above this, the Accounting Officer of the Commission has issued rules regarding the Harmonised Chart of Accounts and, in addition, 20 accounting rules covering important accounting topics. The Commission also provides a Consolidation Manual.

From 2005 the accounting rules have been based on the Accrual Accounting Principle as well as drawing on International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) or by default International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

### **2.2 ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES**

The objectives of financial statements are to provide information about the financial position, performance and cash flows of an entity that is useful to a wide range of users. For a public sector entity such as the EESC, the objectives are more specifically to provide information useful for decision-making and to demonstrate the accountability of the entity for the resources entrusted to it.

If they are to present a true and fair view, financial statements must not only supply relevant information to describe the nature and range of an institution's activities, explain how it is financed and supply definitive information on its operations, but must do so in a clear and comprehensible manner which allows for comparisons to be made between financial years.

The accounting system of the European Institutions comprises general accounts and budget accounts. These accounts are kept in euros on the basis of the calendar year. The budget accounts (Part III of this report) give a detailed picture of the implementation of the budget. They are based on the modified cash accounting principle<sup>2</sup>. The general accounts allow for the preparation of the financial statements as they show all charges and income for the financial year and are designed to establish the financial position in the form of a balance sheet at 31 December.

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<sup>2</sup> This differs from cash-based accounting because of elements such as carry-overs.



The accounting policies described in this document are the basis of the general accounts (accrual accounting).

### **2.3 CURRENCY AND BASIS FOR CONVERSION**

The financial statements are presented in euros, which is the EESC's functional and reporting currency.

Foreign currency transactions are translated into euros using the exchange rates prevailing on the dates of the transactions.

Year-end balances of monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are converted into euros on the basis of the exchange rates applying on 31 December of the reporting year.

Foreign exchange gains and losses resulting from the settlement of foreign currency transactions and from the translation at year-end exchange rates of monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are recognised in the economic outturn account.

### **2.4 THE ECONOMIC OUTTURN ACCOUNT**

#### **2.4.1 Revenue**

Revenue consists for the most part of funds transferred from the Commission. All transfers received in the bank account of the EESC within the reporting year are recognised as revenue.

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the significant risk and rewards of ownership of the goods are transferred to the purchaser.

Revenue associated with a transaction involving the provision of services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the transaction at the reporting date.

#### **2.4.2 Expenditure**

Exchange expenses arising from the purchase of goods are recognised when the supplies are delivered and accepted by the EESC. They are valued at original invoice cost.

When any request for payment or cost claim is received and meets the recognition criteria, it is recognised as an expense for the eligible amount. At year-end, incurred eligible expenses already due to the beneficiaries but not yet reported are estimated and recorded as accrued expenses.

## 2.5 BALANCE SHEET

### 2.5.1 Intangible fixed assets

Intangible fixed assets are valued at their acquisition price, with the exception of assets acquired free of charge, which are valued at their market value. Tangible and intangible fixed assets are valued at their historic value converted into euros at the rate applying when they were purchased. The book value of a fixed asset is equal to its acquisition price or production cost, plus or minus revaluations, depreciation and other amounts written off. See depreciation rates below.

### 2.5.2 Tangible fixed assets

All property, plant and equipment are stated at historical cost minus depreciation (excluding land), and impairment. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the items.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the EESC and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to the economic outturn account during the financial period in which they are incurred.

Land is not depreciated. Depreciation on other assets is calculated using the straight-line method to allocate their cost to their residual values over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

### 2.5.3 Depreciation rates

Type of asset	Straight-line depreciation rate
Intangible assets	25%
Buildings	4%
Plant, machinery and equipment	12.5% to 25%
Furniture	10%, 12.5% to 25%
Fixtures and fittings	12.5% to 25%
Computer hardware	25%

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted, if appropriate, at each balance sheet date. An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with carrying amount. These are included in the economic outturn account.

#### **2.5.4 Leases**

Leases of tangible assets, where the EESC in substance has all the risks and rewards of ownership, are classified as financial leases. Financial leases are classified at the inception of the lease at the lower of the fair value of the leased asset and the present value of the minimum lease payments. Each lease payment is allocated between the liability and finance charges so as to achieve a constant rate on the finance balance outstanding. The rental obligations, net of finance charges, are included in other long-term liabilities. The interest element of the finance cost is charged to the economic outturn account over the lease period so as to produce a constant periodic interest rate on the remaining balance of the liability for each period. The assets acquired under financial leases are depreciated over the shorter of the assets' useful life and the lease term.

Leases where the lessor retains a significant portion of the risks and rewards of ownership are classified as operating leases. Payments made under operating leases are charged to the economic outturn account on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

#### **2.5.5 Impairment of assets**

Assets that have an indefinite useful life are not subject to amortisation and are tested annually for impairment. Assets that are subject to amortisation are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognised as the amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds its recoverable amount. The recoverable amount is the higher of an asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use.

#### **2.5.6 Receivables**

Receivables are carried at original invoice amount less write-down for impairment. A write-down for impairment of receivables is established when there is objective evidence that the EESC will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of receivables. The amount of the write-down is recognised in the economic outturn account statement.

### **2.5.7 Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents are carried in the balance sheet at cost. They include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

## **2.6 THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

Cash flow information is used to provide a basis for assessing the ability of the European Union to generate cash and cash equivalents, and its need to utilise those cash flows.

The cash flow statement is prepared using the indirect method. This means that the net surplus or deficit for the financial year is adjusted for the effects of transactions of a non-cash nature, any deferrals and accruals of past or future operating cash receipts or payments, and items of revenue or expenses associated with investing cash flows.

## **2.7 USE OF ESTIMATES**

In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, the financial statements necessarily include amounts based on estimates and assumptions by management. Significant estimates include, but are not limited to, amounts for employment benefits, provisions for future charges, financial risk on accounts receivables, accrued income and charges, contingent assets and liabilities, and degree of impairment of fixed assets. Actual results could differ from those estimates. Changes in estimates are reflected in the period in which they become known.

## 3. THE ECONOMIC OUTTURN ACCOUNT

	Note	2022	2021
<b>From ordinary activities</b>		<b>11,351,431</b>	<b>4,405,570</b>
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>			
Funds transferred from the Commission		139,000,000	110,100,000
Revenue from administrative operations		18,948,812	21,883,192
Other operating revenue		1,585	1,205
	<b>1</b>	<b><u>157,950,397</u></b>	<b><u>131,984,397</u></b>
<b><u>Expenses</u></b>			
Staff expenses and members' expenses		-99,104,699	-86,913,978
Depreciation, amounts written off, provisions and accruals		-5,133,744	-10,824,428
Land and building related expenses		-15,222,184	-8,232,342
Other expenses		-27,138,339	-21,608,079
		<b><u>-146,598,966</u></b>	<b><u>-127,578,827</u></b>
<b>From financial activities</b>		<b>-3,200,974</b>	<b>-6,605,556</b>
Financial operations revenue		0	0
Financial operations expenses	<b>2</b>	<b>-3,200,974</b>	-6,605,556
<b>Economic result of the year</b>		<b>8,150,457</b>	<b>-2,199,986</b>

As the EESC is not a profit-making organisation, the economic result of the year should be interpreted with care, and no direct management conclusions should be derived from it. The revenue side is inherently difficult to predict. The funds transferred from the Commission are not based on accruals.

**Revenue :**

The increase by 20% is mainly explained by the higher replenishment amounts received from the European Commission. The total funds received from EC varied by about 29 mio € compared to the year 2021. It was required to cover, on one hand, the additional payments related to the planned VMA building renovation works (6,5 mio € paid by both Committees) and, on the other hand, the high increase of prices due to an unprecedented inflation. In addition, 2022 was the first 'post-covid' year marked by a normal resumption of EESC activities.

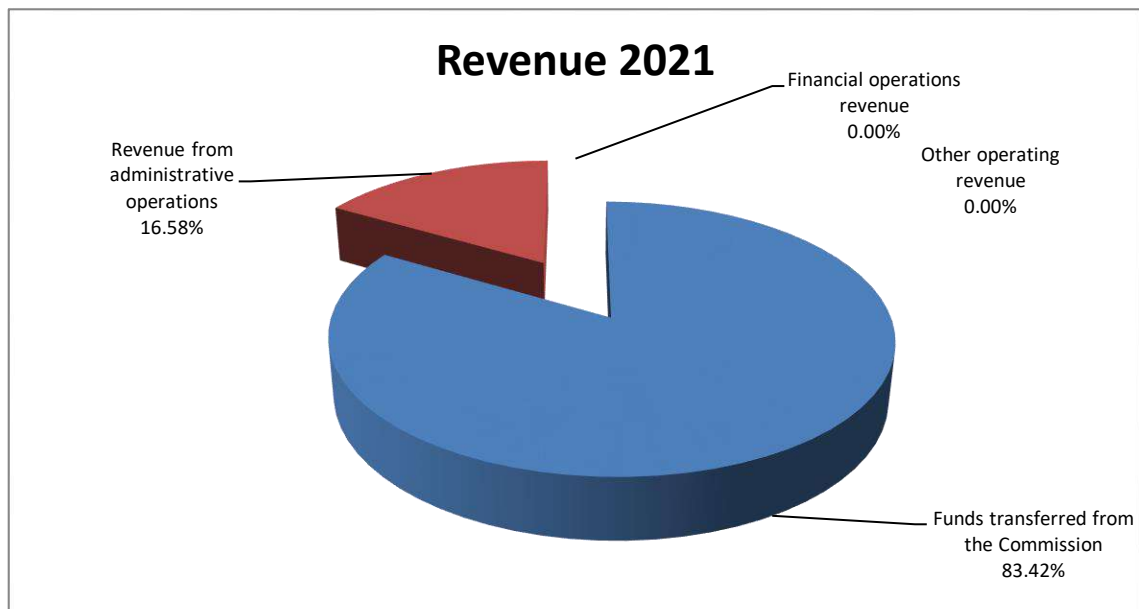
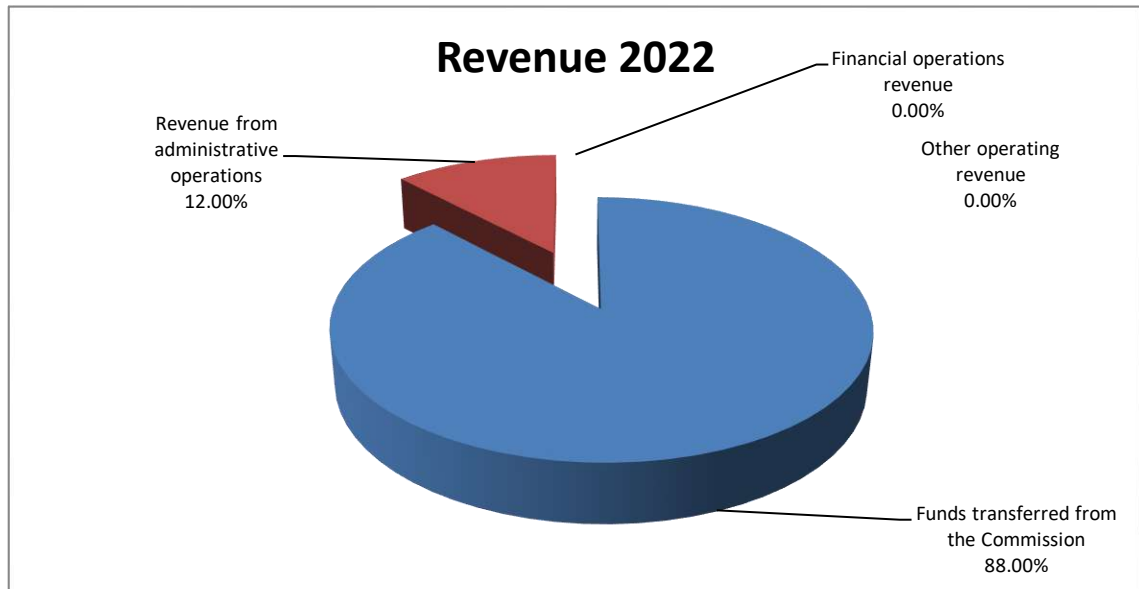
**Expenses :**

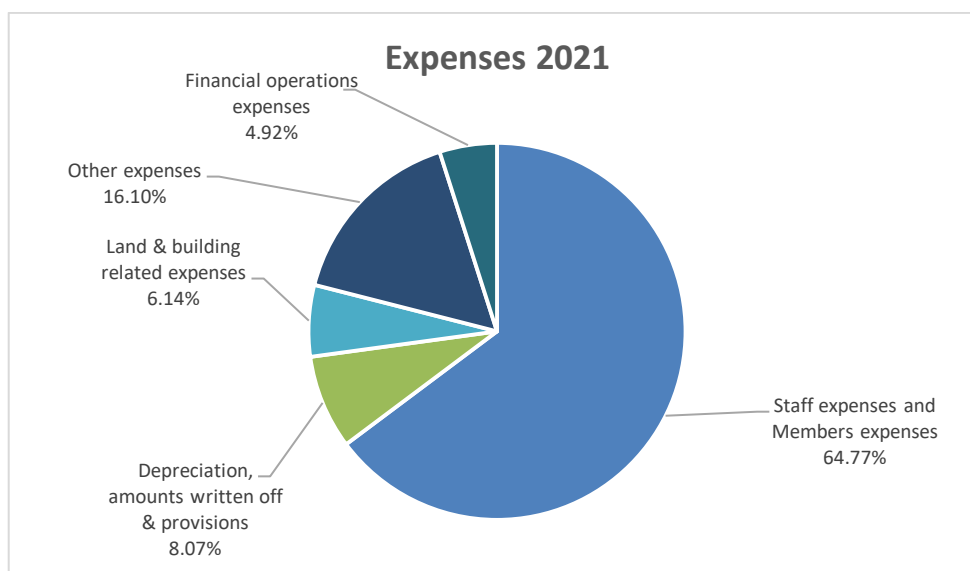
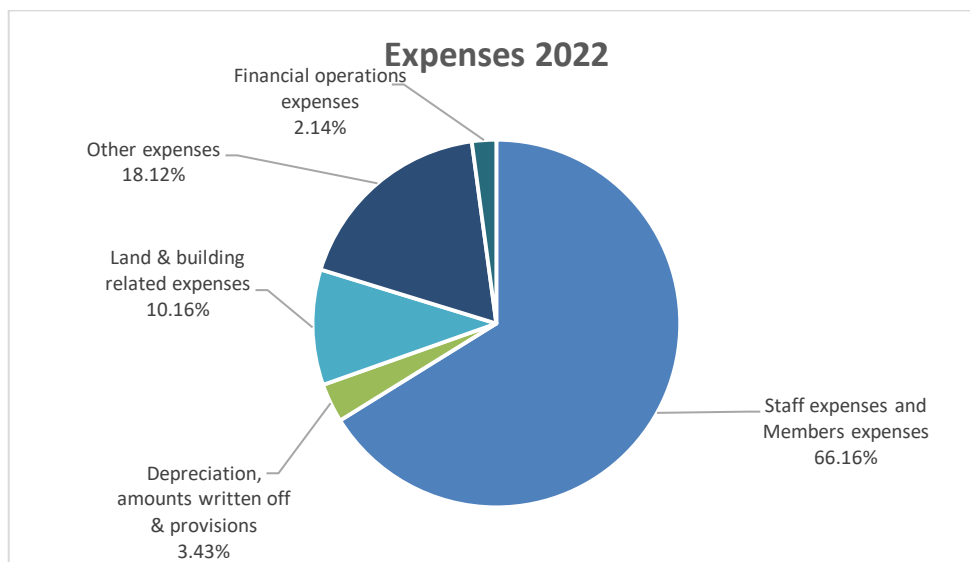
The overall expenses have increased by 12% compared to last year.

Staff and Members expenses increased by 14% as a result of the high indexation of this year.

Reclassifications have been made at the level of the inter-entity reconciliations in order to align with the interco policy implemented into the accounting SAP tool. These reclassifications have impacted the accounts of 'Other expenses' and 'Land & building related expenses'.

The decrease of the financial expenses is mainly explained by the reclassification of accruals amounts which have been splitted under 'interest expense on leasing' and 'indexation cost related to finance lease'. Indexation costs should not be included under those provisions.

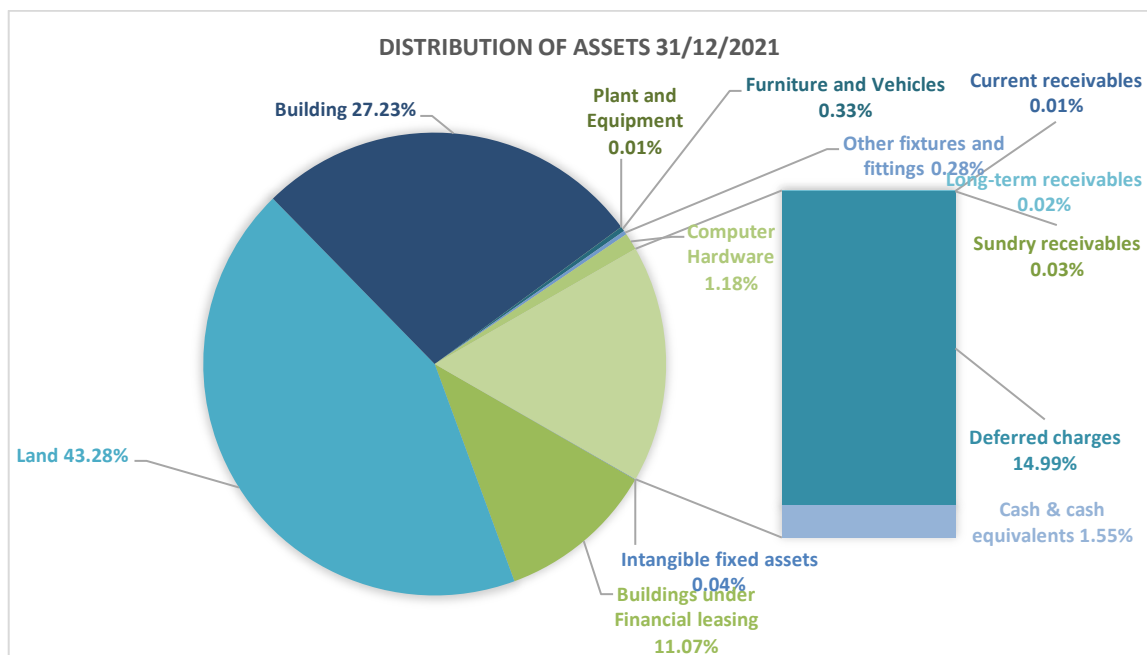
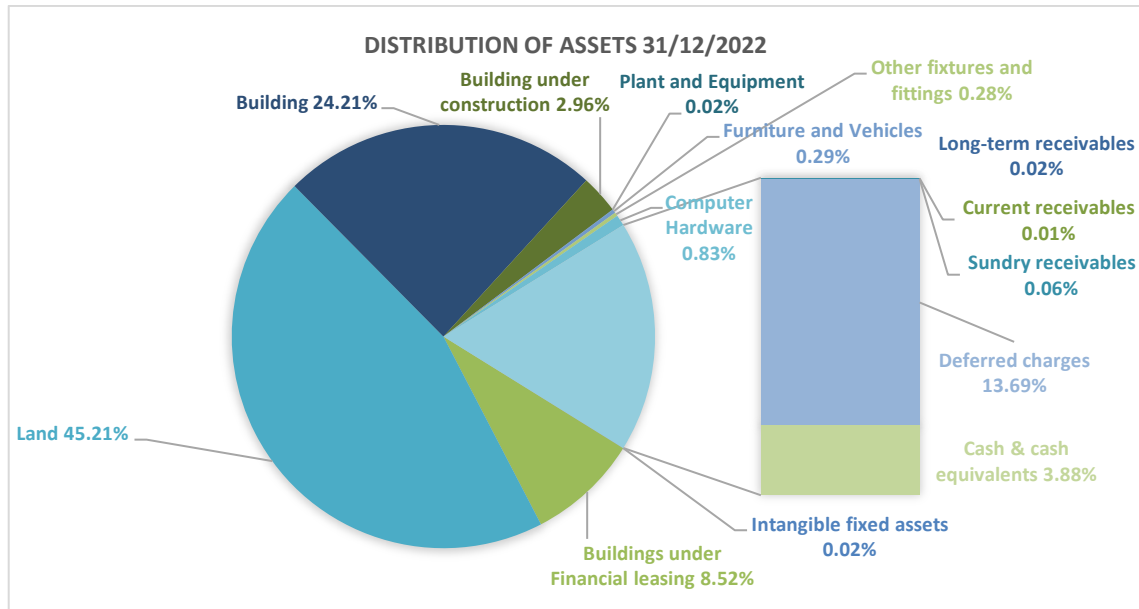






## 4. THE BALANCE SHEET

	Note	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b><u>I. Non-current assets</u></b>			
Intangible fixed assets	3	<u>19,197</u>	<u>39,028</u>
<u>Tangible fixed assets</u>			
Land and buildings under financial leasing	4	8,040,367	10,906,997
Land	4	42,643,384	42,643,384
Buildings	4	22,835,014	26,833,731
Building under construction		2,787,770	0
Plant and equipment	5	16,653	8,472
Other fixtures and fittings	5	265,964	273,644
Furniture and vehicles	6	271,303	323,323
Computer hardware	7	782,676	1,164,890
		<u>77,643,131</u>	<u>82,154,442</u>
Long-term receivables	8	<u>19,298</u>	<u>19,298</u>
		<b><u>77,681,626</u></b>	<b><u>82,212,768</u></b>
<b><u>II. Current assets</u></b>			
<u>Short-term receivables</u>			
Current receivables	9	9,707	8,224
Sundry receivables		58,432	26,896
Deferred charges		<u>12,910,644</u>	<u>14,765,809</u>
		<u>12,978,783</u>	<u>14,800,929</u>
Cash and cash equivalents		<u>3,662,105</u>	<u>1,523,186</u>
		<b><u>16,640,888</u></b>	<b><u>16,324,115</u></b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>94,322,514</b>	<b>98,536,883</b>
<b><u>III. Non-current liabilities</u></b>			
Other long-term liabilities	10	48,654,631	57,917,124
		<b><u>48,654,631</u></b>	<b><u>57,917,124</u></b>
<b><u>IV. Current liabilities</u></b>			
Provisions for risk and charges	11	<u>250,000</u>	<u>282,000</u>
		<b><u>250,000</u></b>	<b><u>282,000</u></b>
<u>Accounts payable</u>			
Current payables	12	4,363,150	3,132,516
Long-term liabilities falling due within the year	13	6,978,600	6,372,525
Sundry payables		16,475	11,453
Accrued charges		13,111,079	18,027,963
Other passive accruals and deferrals		4,819	
		<b><u>24,474,123</u></b>	<b><u>27,544,456</u></b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>73,378,754</b>	<b>85,743,580</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>20,943,760</b>	<b>12,793,303</b>
Contingent assets	14		
Contingent liabilities and commitments for future funding	15		



## 5, STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

	Accumulated surplus(/deficit)	Economic outturn of the year	Total net assets
<b><u>Balance as of 31 December 2021</u></b>	<b><u>14,993,289</u></b>	<b><u>-2,199,986</u></b>	<b><u>12,793,303</u></b>
Allocation of the economic outturn 2021	-2,199,986	-2,199,986	0
Economic Outturn of 1/1-31/12 2022	0	8,150,457	8,150,457
<b>Balance as of 31 December 2022</b>	<b><u>12,793,303</u></b>	<b><u>8,150,457</u></b>	<b><u>20,943,760</u></b>

**Note:** The EESC has no share capital or previously injected capital, The net assets are the difference between the value of the assets and the value of the liabilities,

## 6, THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b><u>Cashflows from ordinary activities</u></b>		
Surplus/(deficit) from ordinary activities	8,150,457	-2,199,986
<b><u>Operating Activities</u></b>		
Amortization (intangible fixed assets)	<u>19,831</u>	<u>24,485</u>
Depreciation (tangible fixed assets)	<u>5,350,025</u>	<u>5,389,943</u>
(Increase)/decrease in provision for risks and liabilities	<u>-32,000</u>	<u>-67,606</u>
Increase/(decrease) in long-term receivables	0	0
Increase/(decrease) in short-term receivables	<u>1,822,146</u>	<u>961,558</u>
Increase/(decrease) in other long-term liabilities	-6,978,600	-6,541,852
(Increase)/decrease in accounts payable	<u>-3,070,333</u>	<u>4,212,180</u>
Other non-cash movements	264	-72,550
<b>Net cash flow from operating activities</b>	<b><u>5,261,790</u></b>	<b><u>1,706,172</u></b>
<b><u>Investing activities</u></b>		
Increase in intangible and tangible fixed assets (-)	<u>-3,122,871</u>	<u>-1,054,202</u>
<b>Net cash flow from investing activities</b>	<b><u>-3,122,871</u></b>	<b><u>-1,054,202</u></b>
<b>Net (Increase)/decrease in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>2,138,919</b>	<b>651,970</b>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	<u>2,138,919</u>	<u>651,970</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of 2022	<u>1,523,186</u>	<u>871,216</u>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of 2022</b>	<b>3,662,105</b>	<b>1,523,186</b>

## 7, NOTES

## NOTE 1

## Operating revenue

	2022	2021
Funds transferred from the Commission	<u>139,000,000</u>	<u>110,100,000</u>
Revenue from staff	14,257,913	13,267,751
Other administrative revenue	<u>4,690,898</u>	<u>8,615,442</u>
Revenue from administrative operations	<u>18,948,812</u>	<u>21,883,192</u>
Other operating revenue	0	0
Exchange rate gains	<u>1,585</u>	<u>1,205</u>
Other operating revenue	<u>1,585</u>	<u>1,205</u>
	<b>157,950,397</b>	<b>131,984,397</b>
Non-exchange revenue	153,257,913	123,367,751
Exchange revenue	4,692,484	8,616,646
	<b>157,950,397</b>	<b>131,984,397</b>

According to the EU Accounting Rules, all revenue needs to be split into revenue from exchange transactions and revenue from non-exchange transactions,

In a non-exchange transaction, an entity receives (gives) value from (to) another entity without directly giving (receiving) an approximately equal value in exchange,

Non-exchange revenue includes mainly the treasury replenishment and revenue from staff (miscellaneous taxes),

## II.

### Annual General Accounts 2022

#### NOTE 2

#### Financial operations expenses

	2022	2021
Other interest expenses	-3,194,200	6,597,788
Other financial expenses	-6,774	-7,768
Bank charges	0	0
	<b>-3,200,974</b>	<b>-6,605,556</b>

## NOTE 3

## Intangible fixed assets

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b><u>Computer software</u></b>		
Gross carrying amount 1 January	1,323,841	1,314,707
Additions	0	9,134
Disposals	0	0
Transfers between headings	0	0
Other changes	0	0
Gross carrying amount 31 December	<b><u>1,323,841</u></b>	<b><u>1,323,841</u></b>
Accumulated amortization 1 January	-1,284,813	-1,260,328
Amortization	-19,831	-24,485
Disposals	0	0
Transfers between headings	0	0
Other changes	0	0
Accumulated amortization 31 December	<b><u>-1,304,644</u></b>	<b><u>-1,284,813</u></b>
<b>Net carrying amount 31 December</b>	<b>19,197</b>	<b>39,028</b>
Non-capitalised research costs	0	0
Non-capitalised development costs	516,086	826,845
	<b>516,086</b>	<b>826,845</b>

At 31 December 2022, the EESC and the CoR had external research and development costs for a total amount of 764,082 EUR(5 projects), This amount was split according to an agreed division between the two Committees as follows:

100% EESC (project developed only for EESC): EUR 144,092

60% EESC: EUR 371,994

40% COR : EUR 247,996

The common threshold for joint projects for capitalisation of research and development costs has been established according to the standards of the European Commission and the CoR at EUR 1 million,

## NOTE 4

## Land and buildings (owned and under financial leasing)

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b><u>Land and Buildings under Financial Leasing</u></b>		
Gross carrying amount, 1 January	20,866,410	20,866,410
Additions	<u>22,983,075</u>	0
Disposals (TR74+B68: 16/09/2022)	<u>-20,866,410</u>	0
Transfer between amount, 1 January	<u>0</u>	0
<b><u>Gross carrying amount, 31 December</u></b>	<b><u>22,983,075</u></b>	<b><u>20,866,410</u></b>
Accumulated depreciation, 1 January	-9,959,412	-9,394,141
Write-back of depreciation	9,959,412	0
Transfer between headings	0	0
Depreciation	-14,942,708	-565,271
<b><u>Accumulated depreciation, 31 December</u></b>	<b><u>14,942,708</u></b>	<b><u>-9,959,412</u></b>
	<b><u>8,040,367</u></b>	<b><u>10,906,998</u></b>
<b><u>Land</u></b>		
Gross carrying amount 1, January	<b><u>42,643,384</u></b>	<b><u>42,643,384</u></b>
Gross carrying amount 31, December	<b><u>42,643,384</u></b>	<b><u>42,643,384</u></b>
<b><u>Own Buildings</u></b>		
Gross carrying amount, 1 January	100,174,488	100,174,488
Additions	0	0
Disposals	-422,358	0
Transfer between headings	0	0
Gross carrying amount, 31 December	<b><u>99,752,131</u></b>	<b><u>100,174,488</u></b>
Accumulated depreciation, 1 January	-73,340,758	-69,349,647
Write-back of depreciation	413,726	0
Transfer between headings	0	0
Depreciation	-3,990,085	-3,991,111
Accumulated depreciation, 31 December	<b><u>-76,917,117</u></b>	<b><u>-73,340,757</u></b>
	<b><u>22,835,014</u></b>	<b><u>26,833,731</u></b>
<b>Net carrying amount, 31 December</b>	<b>73,518,765</b>	<b>80,384,113</b>

The presentation changes in 2020 in order to highlight the depreciation of own buildings versus the leased buildings,



	Capital	Interest
<b><u>Distribution of charges</u></b>		
Cumulative charges paid	<b>94,983,707</b>	<b>115,533,090</b>
Buildings	94,660,200	115,408,244
Buildings under Financial Leasing	323,507	124,846
<b><u>Charges to be paid</u></b>		
Buildings		
< 1 year	5,827,072	2,408,424
1-5 years	27,072,068	5,869,915
> 5 years	14,836,175	891,173
	<b><u>47,735,315</u></b>	<b><u>9,169,512</u></b>
Buildings under Financial Leasing		
< 1 year	1,151,528	390,472
1-5 years	5,253,473	914,527
> 5 years	1,492,915	49,085
	<b><u>7,897,916</u></b>	<b><u>1,354,084</u></b>
Buildings and Buildings under Financial Leasing		
< 1 year	6,978,600	2,798,895
1-5 years	32,325,541	6,784,442
> 5 years	16,329,090	940,259
	<b><u>55,633,231</u></b>	<b><u>10,523,596</u></b>
<b>Gross carrying amount 31 December</b>	<b>150,616,938</b>	<b>126,056,686</b>

## II.

### Annual General Accounts 2022

	Total net asset value	Total debt
<b><u>Buildings</u></b>		
Bertha von Suttner building (BvS), Rue Montoyer 92-102	27,728,841	19,946,668
Jacques Delors building (JDE), Rue Belliard 103-113	65,466,664	51,300,070
Remorqueur building (REM), Rue Belliard 93	6,074,818	0
	<b><u>99,270,323</u></b>	<b><u>71,246,738</u></b>
<b><u>Buildings under Financial Leasing</u></b>		
VMA	20,100,918	19,744,791
	<b><u>20,100,918</u></b>	<b><u>19,744,791</u></b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>119,371,241</b>	<b>90,991,528</b>

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Land & Building under Finance Lease	8,040,367	10,906,998
Land	42,643,384	42,643,384
Own Buildings	22,835,014	26,833,731
	<b>73,518,765</b>	<b>80,384,113</b>

At 31 December 2022, the EESC and the CoR jointly :

- owned 3 buildings :
  - Since 19 November 2018, both Committees acquired the JDE building by exercising the purchase option,
  - Since 9 December 2019, both Committees acquired the BVS and REM buildings by exercising the purchase option,
- hold the VMA building under long-term lease, since 16 September 2022,

From 1st January to 15 September 2022, the committees held the TR74 and B68 buildings under long-term lease,

### Exchange of buildings

On 28 August 2019, the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions signed an administrative agreement concerning the exchange of emphyteosis of the following 3 buildings:

- 1, Building Belliard 68 (B68), located rue Belliard 68-72 to 1000 Brussels;
- 2, Building Trèves 74 (TR74), located rue de Trèves 74 to 1000 Brussels;
- 3, Building Van Maerlant (VMA), located rue Van Maerlant 2 to 1000 Brussels

As of 16 September 2022, the committees proceeded, with the Commission, to the exchange of Emphyteoses TR74 and B68 for the Emphyteose VMA,

From this date, the committees exercise and support all the rights and obligations arising from contracts relating to the VMA, at the discharge of the Commission and the latter assumes and supports all the rights and obligations of contracts relating to the B68 and TR74 at the discharge of the committees,

Obviously, from 1st January to 15 September 2022, each committee continued to exercise the obligations due to it, as in the past, according to the distribution key provided for in the cooperation agreement which unites them,

Consequently, until 15 September 2022, long-term leases of TR74 and B68 buildings were defined as financial leases and were therefore recognized and recognized as active, and their associated rental obligations as liabilities,

As a part of the deal, the committees planned in 2019 consequent renovation works for the VMA.

Except for a small amount committed in 2021, most of the expenses occurred in 2022. About 6,5 mio € have been paid for the works at the end of 2022.

In collaboration with the CoR Accounting officer, we decided to capitalize all concerned amounts as Asset under construction until the future reception of the works, each Committees assuming their part as defined by the cooperation agreement.

The EESC's part of the total net asset value is EUR 73,518,765, On the liability side, the EESC's part of the total debt is EUR 55,633,231 (long-term debts of more than 5 years amount to 16,329,090 EUR, and medium-term debts (from 1 to 5 years) amount to 32,325,541 EUR and debts at less than one year amount to 6,978,600 EUR,

Land is included in the total net asset value, the acquisition values of the corresponding land for both Committees are as follows:

BvS	EUR 22,059,400
JDE	EUR 38,915,800
REM	EUR 3,580,000
B68-72 <sup>3</sup>	EUR 8,840,000
TR74 <sup>4</sup>	EUR 7,670,000
VMA <sup>5</sup>	EUR 13,872,138

In 2016, the EESC and the CoR introduced a new administrative cooperation agreement prolonged in 2019, A new administrative cooperation agreement was signed at the end of 2021, In accordance with practice in previous years, each Committee's share in the net asset values and the liabilities of the five buildings is fixed as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> Until 15th of September 2022

<sup>4</sup> Until 15th of September 2022

<sup>5</sup> As of 16th of September 2022

## II.

### Annual General Accounts 2022

	EESC	CoR
BvS	67%	33%
JDE	67%	33%
REM	50%	50%
B68-72 <sup>6</sup>	40%	60%
TR74 <sup>7</sup>	40%	60%
VMA <sup>8</sup>	40%	60%

Each Committee's contribution to the lease payments is defined in the cooperation agreement between the two Committees, The payments depend on the proportion of staff of each Committee according to the respective establishment plans, adopted by the budgetary authority, on 1 January of the previous financial year and may differ from the shares as defined in the table above.

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<sup>6</sup> Until 15th of September 2022

<sup>7</sup> Until 15th of September 2022

<sup>8</sup> As of 16th of September 2022

## NOTE 5

## Plant and equipment

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Gross carrying amount, 1 January	90,207	90,207
Additions	11,247	0
Disposals	0	0
Transfer between headings	0	0
Other changes	0	0
Gross carrying amount, 31 December	<b><u>101,454</u></b>	<b><u>90,207</u></b>
Accumulated depreciation, 1 January	-81,735	-79,837
Depreciation	-3,066	-1,898
Disposals	0	0
Transfer between headings	0	0
Other changes	0	0
Accumulated depreciation, 31 December	<b><u>-84,801</u></b>	<b><u>-81,735</u></b>
<b>Net carrying amount, 31 December</b>	<b>16,653</b>	<b>8,472</b>

## Other fixtures and fittings

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Gross carrying amount, 1 January	2,793,479	2,729,832
Additions	231,934	63,647
Disposals	-5,648	0
Transfer between headings		
Other changes	0	0
Gross carrying amount, 31 December	<b><u>3,019,765</u></b>	<b><u>2,793,479</u></b>
Accumulated depreciation, 1 January	-2,519,835	-2,324,528
Depreciation	-239,614	-195,307
Disposals	5,648	0
Transfer between headings	0	0
Other changes	0	0
Accumulated depreciation, 31 December	<b><u>-2,753,801</u></b>	<b><u>-2,519,835</u></b>
<b>Net carrying amount, 31 December</b>	<b>265,964</b>	<b>273,644</b>

## NOTE 6

## Furniture and vehicles

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Gross carrying amount, 1 January	3,457,480	3,349,786
Additions	28,414	114,054
Disposals	-32,746	-6,360
Transfer between headings		0
Other changes		0
Gross carrying amount, 31 December	<b>3,453,148</b>	<b>3,457,480</b>
Accumulated depreciation, 1 January	-3,134,157	-3,043,604
Depreciation	-80,953	-91,077
Disposals	33,265	524
Transfer between headings		0
Other changes	-	0
Accumulated depreciation, 31 December	<b>-3,181,845</b>	<b>-3,134,157</b>
<b>Net carrying amount, 31 December</b>	<b>271,303</b>	<b>323,323</b>

## NOTE 7

## Computer hardware

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Gross carrying amount, 1 January	4,947,783	4,124,280
Additions	128,162	867,367
Disposals	-745,698	-43,864
Transfer between headings	0	0
Other changes	0	0
Gross carrying amount, 31 December	<b><u>4,330,247</u></b>	<b><u>4,947,783</u></b>
Accumulated depreciation, 1 January	-3,782,893	-3,237,089
Depreciation	-510,376	-550,815
Disposals	745,698	5,011
Transfer between headings	0	0
Other changes	0	0
Accumulated depreciation, 31 December	<b><u>-3,547,571</u></b>	<b><u>-3,782,893</u></b>
<b>Net carrying amount, 31 December</b>	<b>782,676</b>	<b>1,164,890</b>

Since 1 January 2019, the EESC has increased the threshold beyond which goods purchased are considered as assets from the previous acquisition value of 420€ to the new one of 1000€,

The depreciation rates are applied as per table of depreciation in point 2,5,3,



## II.

### Annual General Accounts 2022

#### NOTE 8

##### Long-term receivables

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Other (advances to members)	19,298	19,298
	19,298	19,298

## NOTE 9

## Current receivables

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b><u>Customers</u></b>		
Gross total	2,463	1,062
Amounts written down	<u>0</u>	0
Net value	<b><u>2,463</u></b>	<b><u>1,062</u></b>
<b><u>Member States</u></b>		
Gross total	6,368	7,162
Amounts written down	0	0
Net value, VAT to be recovered	<b><u>6,368</u></b>	<b><u>7,162</u></b>
<b><u>Other institutions</u></b>		
Gross total	876	0
Amounts written down	<u>0</u>	0
Net value	<b><u>876</u></b>	<b><u>0</u></b>
	<b>9,707</b>	<b>8,224</b>

## NOTE 10

## Other long-term liabilities

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b><u>Buildings(*)</u></b>		
LT EESC part of the total debt (>5)	14,836,175	22,214,487
MT EESC part of the total debt (1-5)	27,072,068	25,520,828
	<b><u>41,908,243</u></b>	<b><u>47,735,315</u></b>
<b><u>Buildings under Financial Leasing(*)</u></b>		
LT EESC part of the total debt (>5)	1,492,915	6,062,257
MT EESC part of the total debt (1-5)	5,253,473	4,119,552
	<b><u>6,746,388</u></b>	<b><u>10,181,809</u></b>
	<b><u>48,654,631</u></b>	<b><u>57,917,124</u></b>
	<b>48,654,631</b>	<b>57,917,124</b>

\* Part of the charges (capital) that has to be paid after one year, See also note 4,

Since 2021, the long term liabilities are splitted between long and medium term,

## II.

### Annual General Accounts 2022

#### NOTE 11

##### Provisions for risks and charges

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Possible outcome of pending court case	250,000	282,000
	250,000	282,000

## NOTE 12

## Current payables

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b><u>Vendors</u></b>		
Gross total	<b><u>4,160,413</u></b>	<b><u>809,623</u></b>
<b><u>Staff</u></b>		
Gross total	<b><u>-5,500</u></b>	<b><u>0,00</u></b>
<b><u>Other institutions</u></b>		
European Commission	208,237	2,314,781
European Parliament	0	2,328
European Council	0	123
European Committee of the Regions	0	0
EU decentralised agencies	0	5,660
Gross total	<b><u>208,237</u></b>	<b><u>2,322,892</u></b>
	<b>4,363,150</b>	<b>3,132,516</b>

**NOTE 13****Long-term liabilities falling due within the year**

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Buildings(*)	5,827,072	5,493,184
Buildings under Financial Leasing(*)	1,151,528	879,341
	<b>6,978,600</b>	<b>6,372,525</b>

\* Part of the charges (capital) that has to be paid within one year, See also note 4,

In 2021, the long term liabilities falling due within the year are splitted between unleased buildings and leased buildings,

**NOTE 14****Contingent assets**

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
Performance guarantees*	0	0
	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

(\*) The sum of performance guarantees in supplier contracts is EUR 1,178,429 at 31/12/2022. As the probability of inflow of economic benefits is low (estimated by management to be less than 5%) the value is insignificant.

**NOTE 15****Contingent liabilities and commitments for future funding**

	31/12/2022	31/12/2021
<b><u>Commitments for future funding</u></b>		
Commitments against appropriations not yet consumed (RAL)	-1,497,880	2,150,771
Operating leases	4,791,953	8,477,781
Contractual commitments	2,305,480	2,727,053
Other	0	0
	<b>5,599,553</b>	<b>13,355,605</b>

**NOTE 16 Disclosures****Salaries**

In order to harmonize the methodologies on the distribution of salary codes with the respective GLs between the COR and the EESC, the accounting department decided to split the GL accounts of salaries which were previously included in the general account ( GL 62000000).

**Covid-19**

During 2021, the coronavirus outbreak has had huge impacts on the EU economy, As a non-adjusting event, the outbreak of the coronavirus does not require any adjustments to the figures reported in these annual accounts, For subsequent reporting periods, COVID-19 may affect the recognition and measurement of some assets and liabilities on the balance sheet and also of some revenue and expenses recognised in the statement of financial performance, Based on the information available at the date of signature of these annual accounts, the financial effects of the coronavirus outbreak cannot be reliably estimated,

**Brexit**

On 1 February 2020 the United Kingdom ceased to be a Member State of the European Union, Following the conclusion of the Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (the ‘Withdrawal Agreement’) between the two parties, the United Kingdom committed to pay all its obligations under the current MFF and previous financial perspectives following from its membership of the Union, The United Kingdom has paid into the 2020 EU Budget during the year, and received payments, as if it were a Member State,

At the date of transmission of these accounts, and based on the Withdrawal Agreement concluded and already in operation, there is no financial impact to be reported in these accounts, For further information on the impact of the Withdrawal Agreement on the EU, please see the 2021 consolidated EU annual accounts,



**Ukraine**

In accordance with EU accounting rule 19, Events after Reporting Date, the war in Ukraine, that began in February 2022 is a non adjusting event, thus not requiring any adjustments to the figures reported in these financial statements at 31 December 2021, For subsequent reporting periods, the war may affect the recognition and measurement of some assets and liabilities on the balance sheet and also of some revenue and expenses recognised in the statement of financial performance. Based on the facts and circumstances at the time of preparation of these financial statements, in particular the evolving situation, the financial effect of the war in Ukraine can not be reliably estimated.

# **PART III**

**Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022  
(Modified Cash Accounting Principle)  
and  
Report on Budgetary and Financial  
Management  
(Final)**



## PART III - INDEX

<b>1. GENERAL REMARKS ON THE BUDGET .....</b>	<b>107</b>
1.1 BUDGET OUTTURN 2022.....	107
1.2 ESTABLISHING THE 2022 BUDGET .....	107
1.3 BUDGET GOVERNANCE 2022.....	109
<b>2. REVENUE.....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>3. FINAL APPROPRIATIONS .....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>4. USE OF FINAL APPROPRIATIONS (C1) IN 2022.....</b>	<b>120</b>
4.1 COMMENTS ON USE OF FINAL APPROPRIATIONS (C1) IN 2022 .....	124
<b>5. USE OF APPROPRIATIONS AUTOMATICALLY CARRIED FORWARD FROM 2021 TO 2022 (C8) .....</b>	<b>130</b>
5.1 COMMENTS ON USE OF APPROPRIATIONS AUTOMATICALLY CARRIED FORWARD FROM 2021 TO 2022 (C8) .....	134
<b>6. USE OF ASSIGNED REVENUE IN 2022 (C4).....</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>7. RE-USED ASSIGNED REVENUE FROM 2021 (C5) .....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>8. APPROPRIATIONS FROM EXTERNAL ASSIGNED REVENUE (R0) .....</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>9. EESC BUDGET RESULT .....</b>	<b>148</b>



## **1. GENERAL REMARKS ON THE BUDGET**

### **1.1 BUDGET OUTTURN 2022**

The total 2022 budget was EUR 152.5 million, of which EUR 146.5 million was spent or carried forward to 2023 as commitments<sup>1</sup>. This equals a take-up rate of 96.1%, compared to 90.8% in 2021. The 2022 figure shows that the EESC budget execution rate increased to almost the average level of the pre-pandemic period. The take-up of appropriations carried forward from 2021 to 2022 was lower than in 2021: 76.9% (EUR 15.5 million) in 2022 as compared to 79.6% in 2021 (EUR 10.5 million)<sup>2</sup>. In that context, it should be noted that the volume of carry-forward was roughly 50% higher in 2022 than in the previous year, but this was mainly linked to the high amount carried forward in the context of the VMA renovation.

### **1.2 ESTABLISHING THE 2022 BUDGET**

The EESC 2022 budget estimates submitted to the Commission totalled EUR 150 995 643, an increase of 4.12% on the 2021 budget.

The most important budget increase was on salary-related expenses, totalling EUR 3.7 million and representing 2.54% of the overall increase on the 2021 budget. The estimates for salary-related expenditure were based on a stable establishment plan, with the exception of one additional AD9 post to establish an internal ombudsman at the EESC. Furthermore, they included the impact of actual or expected salary adjustments, based on the parameters provided by the Commission.

The second reason behind the rise in expenditure was to continue catching up on an acknowledged backlog in IT and buildings totalling EUR 1.9 million. The need for a solid IT infrastructure has been underlined by the COVID-19 health crisis, and thus additional funds needed to be provided. Furthermore, both Committees achieved in September 2022 the geographical concentration of the buildings by exchanging the B68 and TRE buildings for the VMA building, which in future will allow economies of scale. In 2022 a reinforcement in the appropriations requested for buildings took place to cover for extra building maintenance linked with the ongoing refurbishment work in the VMA and BvS. The total increase in the draft 2022 budget estimates compared to 2021 expenditure was EUR 5 970 705.

During the budget procedure, the European Commission applied a downward adjustment to the EESC budget request totalling EUR 124 000 in order to respect the stable staffing policy.

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<sup>1</sup> See table "Use of final appropriations (C1) in 2022", page 60.

<sup>2</sup> See table "Use of appropriations automatically carried forward from 2021 to 2022 (C8)", page 70.

However, the Commission acknowledged that the EESC budget remains within the 2% limit stipulated in the guidelines for non-salary related expenditure increases when taking into account the correction of the 2021 base for the special effects in that year. Following the cut made, the increase in the 2022 draft estimates compared to 2021 came down to 4.03%, compared to 4.12% before.

In its reading, the Council introduced reductions on seven different budget lines, which reduced the EESC draft budget by a further EUR 1 765 000. The cuts were mainly focused on the activities "other expenditure on buildings" (EUR 553 000), "data-processing and telecommunications" (EUR 850 000) and in the field of "translation and interpreting" (EUR 320 000). The Council position of EUR 149 106 643 implied a nominal increase for the EESC budget of 2.81% compared to the 2021 budget.

The European Parliament (EP) subsequently suggested reinstating appropriations amounting to EUR 1 289 000. The EP restored all cuts by the Council, except for the item 2102 "Outside assistance related to software systems", which had been frontloaded via a transfer INF6/2022 for an amount of EUR 600 000 at the end of 2021 to anticipate the stop in an interinstitutional framework contract for this type of services. After the EP's reading, the EESC budget amounted to EUR 150 395 643, an increase by 3.70% compared to 2021.

On 15 November, the negotiators from the European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the 2022 EU budget during the conciliation procedure. The conciliation set the budget back to the draft budget as proposed by the European Commission. This decision therefore reintroduced the amount of EUR 600 000 previously cut by the Council on item 2102 "Outside assistance related to software systems", as mentioned above, but confirmed the cut of EUR 124 000 for one AD9 post (ombudsman) on item 1200 "Remuneration and allowances" made from the Commission. This agreement meant that the EESC budget rose again by EUR 476 000.

On the basis of the outcome of the conciliation procedure, the Council adopted its official position on 23 November at the General Affairs Council meeting, and the European Parliament finally adopted the budget at its plenary session on 24 November.

The budget procedure resulted in a total initial EESC budget for 2022 of EUR 150 871 643, corresponding to an increase of 4.03% on 2021. The establishment plan approved by the budgetary authority showed the same number of establishment posts in 2022 as in 2021 (669).

Due to high inflation and rapidly rising energy prices, an amending budget was set up in the fourth quarter of 2022 for all European institutions and bodies. A reinforcement provided the appropriations to take account of the expected salary update for 2022 and galloping energy prices.

Amending budget 5/2022 was adopted on 23 November 2022, and the EESC received a total of EUR 1 580 000, of which EUR 1 080 000 for "Remuneration and allowances" and EUR 500 000 for "Energy consumption".

This reinforcement brought the EESC budget up to EUR 152 451 643, representing a 5.12% increase on 2021.

### **1.3 BUDGET GOVERNANCE 2022**

The CAF, the EESC's supervisory body for financial and budgetary affairs, prepares all decisions of a financial or budgetary nature for the EESC Bureau. The CAF meets, in general before each EESC Bureau meeting, around 11 times per year. In order to be able to deal with specific subjects more efficiently, the CAF can set up subgroups on different topics. These subgroups are composed of three members, one from each group represented in the Committee.

The CAF supervises all budgetary procedures and, in particular, the establishment of budget estimates, budget implementation, the annual activity report, the discharge and the response to the Court of Auditors' annual report.

Each year, in preparation for the next budget, a three-member subgroup is set up by the CAF to analyse the draft estimates prepared by the administration and presented by the secretary-general. Based on this preparatory work and after deliberation, the CAF then submits the proposed draft estimates to the Bureau for approval and subsequent submission to the budgetary authority.

In 2022, as a direct consequence of the continuing public health crisis and the related travel restrictions, which impacted members' activities and the organisation of meetings especially in the first half of the year, leftovers materialised towards the end of the year. These leftovers mainly appeared on the budget lines for members' travel costs and allowances, as well as on related items covering the organisation of events and hearings, including catering related to these events. At the same time, increasing energy prices and the resulting effects on nearly all prices and on salaries due to obligatory indexation put the EESC budget under strain. The EESC initiated transfers to provide the necessary appropriations for the areas in need, which concerned energy from the beginning of the year, but were extended later in the year also to communication and IT, resulting in a high total transfer amount of around EUR 2.9 million. Transfers were made to the article "Other expenditure on buildings" (EUR 769 000), for "Energy consumption" but also "Maintenance of buildings". The chapter "Communication, information and publications" was reinforced by EUR 693 000, to help launching the implementation of a new communication strategy approved by the EESC Bureau in the last quarter of 2022. Important transfers within articles were also made to reinforce the items "IT hardware" and "Fitting-out of premises". The effects of the reallocation of resources are also reflected in the increased 2022 execution rate of 96.1% (2021: 90.80%), returning to the range of the pre-COVID execution rate.



Upon solicitation from the EESC, in June 2021 the Council adopted a specific temporary allowance for remote attendance at meetings, limited to the period where travel difficulties linked to COVID-19 or related restrictive measures compromise the possibility to organise or attend EESC meetings in person. Council Decision 2021/1072 established this allowance at a rate of EUR 145 (half of the normal daily allowance of EUR 290). Every six months the EESC submits an evaluation report on the application of this decision and on the continued existence of travel difficulties.

While restrictive measures related to COVID-19 had almost disappeared by the end of 2022, the health crisis has had a long-lasting impact on travel, with a reduced number of flights and/or connections for many destinations. Moreover, to some extent, remote attendance has proven to be a valuable tool for attendance at EESC meetings. The evaluation report submitted in December 2022 therefore contains a request to the Council to consider establishing a decision on a structural allowance for remote attendance at certain EESC meetings. The general possibility to allow for hybrid meetings is included in the new EESC Rules of Procedure.

This request to transform the existing temporary allowance into a structural solution was discussed in-depth at meetings of the CAF in 2022. The CAF unanimously supported the suggestion on requesting a structural solution, as remote participation has proved to be an effective and efficient way to conduct meetings, it supports equal treatment of all members and can guarantee business continuity in varied circumstances.

The CAF and its building subgroup also dealt with the follow-up to the building strategy. The main element of the building strategy, "geographical concentration", was achieved by exchanging the TRE and B68 buildings for the VMA building in September 2022. In 2022, the building subgroup therefore focussed on the progress of the refurbishment works in the VMA. Furthermore, the effects of the price increase of raw construction materials and of the energy price rise were discussed, including possible strategies for negotiation with the contractors.

In 2022, including in the context of an extraordinary meeting, the EESC CAF also looked into the practical implementation of gender budgeting in public institutions, based on information given by external speakers from private and public institutions, including the chair of the European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.

In the past, the EESC has consistently taken a moderate approach to its budget estimates and has requested increases only based on well-justified exceptions, which were accepted by the budgetary authority. Following the "one-off" building investments requested to proceed with the renovation of the VMA building via the 2021 budget, the 2022 EESC budget strived again for a very balanced approach.



## 2. REVENUE

		Revenue and income recognised from:	
		2022	Carried over
<b>Total</b>		<b>18,978,588</b>	<b>1,326</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Administrative revenue</b>	<b>18,978,588</b>	<b>1,326</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>Revenue from staff</b>	<b>14,257,913</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>300</b>	<b>Taxes and levies</b>	<b>7,563,565</b>	<b>0</b>
3000	Tax on the remunerations	6,322,162	
3001	Special levies on remunerations	1,241,403	
<b>301</b>	<b>Contributions to the pension scheme</b>	<b>6,694,348</b>	<b>0</b>
3010	Staff contributions to the pension scheme	6,434,007	
3011	Transfer or purchase of pension rights by staff	260,341	
<b>31</b>	<b>Revenue linked to property</b>	<b>1,841,463</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>311</b>	<b>Sale of other property</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>312</b>	<b>Letting and subletting immovable property — Assigned revenue</b>	<b>1,841,463</b>	
<b>32</b>	<b>Revenue from the supply of goods, services and work — Assigned revenue</b>	<b>2,694,322</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>320</b>	<b>Revenue from the supply of goods, services and work — Assigned revenue</b>	<b>2,694,322</b>	<b>0</b>
3202	For other Institutions, agencies and EU bodies — Assigned revenue	2,694,322	0
<b>33</b>	<b>Other administrative revenue</b>	<b>184,890</b>	<b>1,326</b>
<b>330</b>	<b>Repayment of amounts wrongly paid — Assigned revenue</b>	<b>23,157</b>	<b>733</b>
<b>338</b>	<b>Other revenue from administrative operations — Assigned revenue</b>	<b>161,733</b>	<b>413</b>
<b>339</b>	<b>Other revenue from administrative operations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Financial revenue, default interest and fines</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>Revenue from investments and accounts</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>400</b>	<b>Revenue from investments, loans granted and bank accounts</b>		

## Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022 and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management

2022			2021				
Revenue and income cashed from:		Outstanding Balance	Revenue and income recognised from:		Revenue and income cashed from:		Outstanding Balance
2022	Carried over		2021	Carried over	2021	Carried over	
18,978,588	733	593	21,861,906	593	21,861,173	0	1,265
18,978,588	733	593	21,861,906	593	21,861,173	0	1,265
14,257,913	0	0	13,267,751	0	13,267,751	0	0
7,563,565	0	0	6,993,729	0	6,993,729	0	0
6,322,162			5,827,334	0	5,827,334	0	0
1,241,403			1,166,395	0	1,166,395	0	0
6,694,348	0	0	6,274,022	0	6,274,022	0	0
6,434,007			6,022,911	0	6,022,911	0	0
260,341			251,111	0	251,111	0	0
1,841,463	0	0	1,896,704	0	1,896,704	0	0
0			24	0	24	0	0
1,841,463			1,896,680	0	1,896,680	0	0
2,694,322	0	0	6,541,903	0	6,541,903	0	-62
2,694,322	0	0	6,541,903	0	6,541,903	0	-62
2,694,322			6,541,903	0	6,541,903	0	-62
184,890	733	593	155,549	593	154,816	0	1,326
23,157	733	0	97,409	0	96,675	0	733
161,733	0	413	40,140	413	40,140	0	413
0	0	180	18,000	180	18,000	0	180
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### 3. FINAL APPROPRIATIONS

Total	
<b>1</b>	<b>Persons working with the institution</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Members of the institution and delegates</b>
<b>100</b>	<b>Specific allowances and payments</b>
1000	Specific allowances and payments
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure
1008	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure of delegates of the CCMI
<b>105</b>	<b>Further training, language courses and other training</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Officials and temporary staff</b>
<b>120</b>	<b>Remuneration and other entitlements</b>
1200	Remuneration and allowances
1202	Paid overtime
1204	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service
<b>122</b>	<b>Allowances upon early termination of service</b>
1220	Allowances for staff retired or placed on leave in the interests of the service
<b>14</b>	<b>Other staff and external services</b>
<b>140</b>	<b>Other staff and external persons</b>
1400	Other staff
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials
1408	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service
<b>142</b>	<b>External services</b>
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service and translation-outsourcing related tools
1422	Expert advice connected with legislative work
1424	Interinstitutional cooperation and external services in the field of personal management
<b>16</b>	<b>Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution</b>
<b>161</b>	<b>Expenditure relating to staff management</b>
1610	Expenditure on recruitment
1612	Further training
<b>162</b>	<b>Missions</b>
<b>163</b>	<b>Activities relating to all persons working with the institution</b>
1630	Social welfare
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures
1634	Medical service
1636	Restaurants and canteens
1638	Early childhood centre and approved day nurseries

**Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022  
and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management**

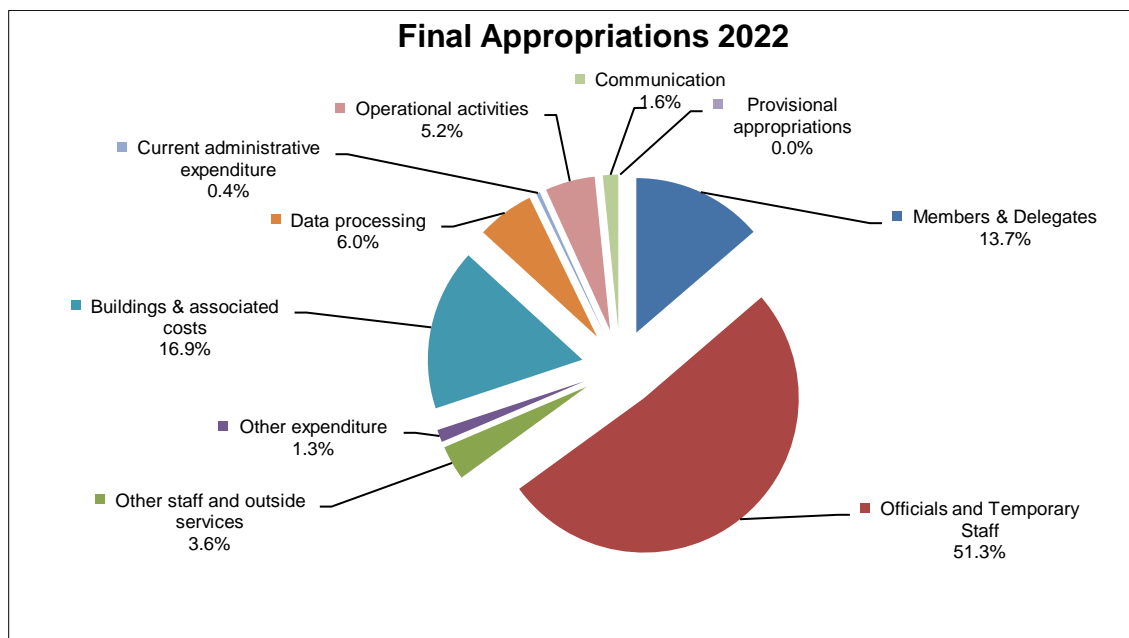
2022				2021
Initial	Amending Budget	Transfers	Final	Final
<b>150,871,643</b>	<b>1,580,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>152,451,643</b>	<b>145,024,938</b>
<b>106,749,430</b>	<b>1,080,000</b>	<b>-1,142,323</b>	<b>106,687,107</b>	<b>101,518,194</b>
<b>22,056,804</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1,142,323</b>	<b>20,914,481</b>	<b>20,778,892</b>
<b>21,977,477</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1,142,323</b>	<b>20,835,154</b>	<b>20,700,814</b>
449,320	0	0	449,320	449,320
21,006,981	0	-1,217,323	19,789,658	19,730,318
521,176	0	75,000	596,176	521,176
<b>79,327</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>79,327</b>	<b>78,078</b>
<b>77,186,926</b>	<b>1,080,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>78,266,926</b>	<b>73,421,086</b>
<b>76,996,926</b>	<b>1,080,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>78,076,926</b>	<b>73,147,604</b>
76,547,535	1,080,000	0	77,627,535	72,712,963
23,062	0	0	23,062	19,534
426,329	0	0	426,329	415,107
<b>190,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>273,482</b>
190,000	0	0	190,000	273,482
<b>5,476,069</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,476,069</b>	<b>5,458,615</b>
<b>3,464,489</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,464,489</b>	<b>3,412,755</b>
2,612,989	0	0	2,612,989	2,576,430
789,807	0	10,000	799,807	776,256
61,693	0	-10,000	51,693	60,069
<b>2,011,580</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,011,580</b>	<b>2,045,860</b>
1,200,000	0	0	1,200,000	1,200,000
696,750	0	0	696,750	696,750
114,830	0	0	114,830	149,110
<b>2,029,631</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,029,631</b>	<b>1,859,601</b>
<b>607,437</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>607,437</b>	<b>540,127</b>
44,100	0	-20,000	24,100	40,661
563,337	0	20,000	583,337	499,466
<b>378,974</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>403,974</b>	<b>261,974</b>
<b>1,043,220</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-25,000</b>	<b>1,018,220</b>	<b>1,057,500</b>
55,000	0	0	55,000	55,000
189,220	0	-48,000	141,220	187,500
143,000	0	0	143,000	130,000
0	0	23,000	23,000	45,000
656,000	0	0	656,000	640,000

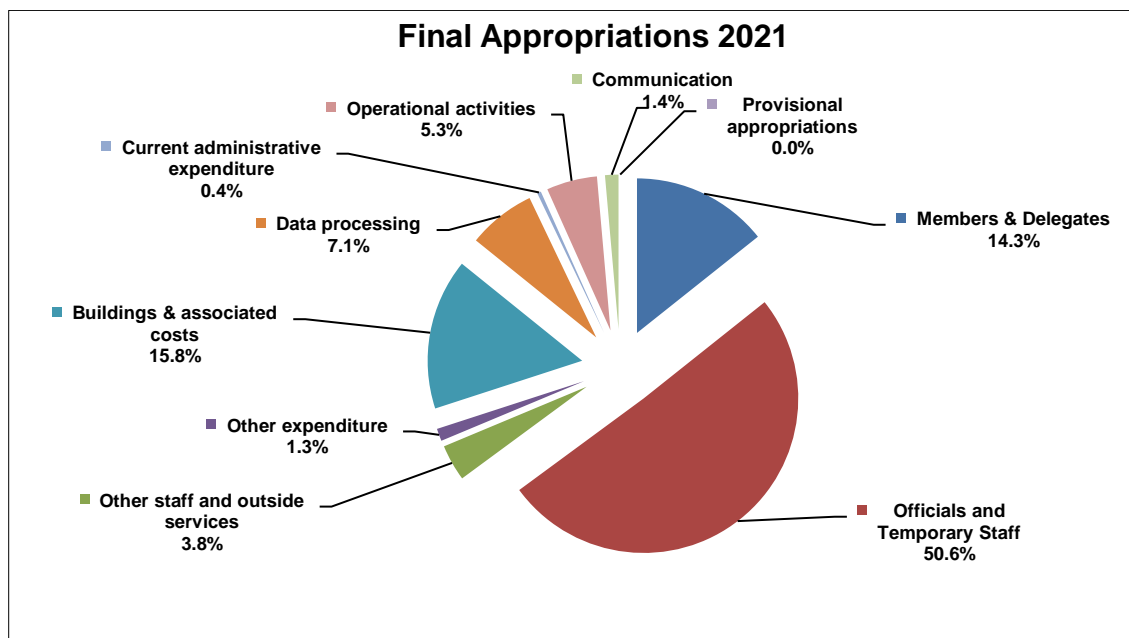
Total	
<b>2</b>	<b>Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Buildings and associated costs</b>
<b>200</b>	<b>Buildings</b>
2000	Rent
2001	Annual lease payments and similar expenditure
2007	Fitting-out of premises
2008	Other expenditure on buildings
<b>202</b>	<b>Other expenditure on buildings</b>
2022	Cleaning and maintenance
2024	Energy consumption
2026	Security and surveillance
2028	Insurance
<b>21</b>	<b>Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance</b>
<b>210</b>	<b>Equipment, operating costs and services relating to data-processing and telecommunications</b>
2100	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work
2102	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems
2103	Telecommunications
<b>212</b>	<b>Furniture</b>
<b>214</b>	<b>Technical equipment and installations</b>
<b>216</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Current administrative expenditure</b>
<b>230</b>	<b>Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables</b>
<b>231</b>	<b>Financial charges</b>
<b>232</b>	<b>Legal costs and damages</b>
<b>236</b>	<b>Postage on correspondence and delivery charges</b>
<b>238</b>	<b>Removal costs and other administrative expenditure</b>
<b>239</b>	<b>EMAS activities, including promotion, and carbon offsetting scheme</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Operational activities</b>
<b>254</b>	<b>Meetings, conferences, congresses, seminars and other events</b>
2540	Miscellaneous expenditure on internal meetings
2542	Expenditure on the organisation of and participation in hearings and other events
2544	Costs of organising the work of the CCMI
2546	Representation expenses
2548	Interpreting
<b>26</b>	<b>Communication, publications and acquisition of documentation</b>
<b>260</b>	<b>Communication, information and publications</b>
2600	Communication
2602	Publishing and promotion of publications
<b>262</b>	<b>Acquisition of information, documentation and archiving</b>
2620	Studies, research and hearings
2622	Documentation and library expenditure
2624	Archiving and related work

**Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022  
and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management**

2022				2021
Initial	Amending Budget	Transfers	Final	Final
<b>150,871,643</b>	<b>1,580,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>152,451,643</b>	<b>145,024,938</b>
<b>44,122,213</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>1,142,323</b>	<b>45,764,536</b>	<b>43,506,744</b>
<b>24,652,894</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>559,769</b>	<b>25,712,663</b>	<b>22,903,535</b>
<b>17,173,899</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-209,554</b>	<b>16,964,345</b>	<b>16,121,266</b>
2,478,551	0	89,906	2,568,457	1,260,611
13,215,819	0	-733,955	12,481,864	7,673,996
1,100,185	0	438,714	1,538,899	6,568,530
379,344	0	-4,219	375,125	618,129
<b>7,478,995</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>769,323</b>	<b>8,748,318</b>	<b>6,782,269</b>
4,095,512	0	146,583	4,242,095	4,560,486
759,264	500,000	569,942	1,829,206	544,287
2,514,642	0	57,520	2,572,162	1,585,640
109,577	0	-4,722	104,855	91,856
<b>9,085,845</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-4,804</b>	<b>9,081,041</b>	<b>10,253,047</b>
<b>7,627,058</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,627,058</b>	<b>8,559,971</b>
2,528,879	0	700,137	3,229,016	2,346,339
3,753,529	0	-600,000	3,153,529	4,967,462
1,344,650	0	-100,137	1,244,513	1,246,170
<b>211,960</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-31,169</b>	<b>180,791</b>	<b>249,729</b>
<b>1,175,101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,365</b>	<b>1,181,466</b>	<b>1,376,441</b>
<b>71,726</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>91,726</b>	<b>66,906</b>
<b>621,584</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-32,642</b>	<b>588,942</b>	<b>600,812</b>
<b>155,611</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>155,611</b>	<b>108,052</b>
<b>8,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>
<b>150,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>150,000</b>
<b>61,140</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>61,140</b>	<b>58,344</b>
<b>226,701</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-32,642</b>	<b>194,059</b>	<b>225,756</b>
<b>20,132</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,132</b>	<b>52,660</b>
<b>7,989,811</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-73,000</b>	<b>7,916,811</b>	<b>7,711,374</b>
<b>7,989,811</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-73,000</b>	<b>7,916,811</b>	<b>7,711,374</b>
218,500	0	46,500	265,000	273,000
641,311	0	-83,000	558,311	601,811
40,000	0	0	40,000	40,000
90,000	0	-36,500	53,500	90,000
7,000,000	0	0	7,000,000	6,706,563
<b>1,772,079</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>693,000</b>	<b>2,465,079</b>	<b>2,037,976</b>
<b>1,241,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>512,000</b>	<b>1,753,000</b>	<b>1,444,958</b>
815,000	0	67,000	882,000	1,050,958
426,000	0	445,000	871,000	394,000
<b>531,079</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>181,000</b>	<b>712,079</b>	<b>593,018</b>
250,000	0	0	250,000	250,000
189,061	0	38,000	227,061	191,000
92,018	0	143,000	235,018	152,018







#### 4. USE OF FINAL APPROPRIATIONS (C1) IN 2022

		Final Appropriations
	<b>Total</b>	<b>152,451,643</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Persons working with the institution</b>	<b>106,687,107</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Members of the institution and delegates</b>	<b>20,914,481</b>
<b>100</b>	<b>Specific allowances and payments</b>	<b>20,835,154</b>
1000	Specific allowances and payments	449,320
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	19,789,658
1008	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure of delegates of the CCMI	596,176
<b>105</b>	<b>Further training, language courses and other training</b>	<b>79,327</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Officials and temporary staff</b>	<b>78,266,926</b>
<b>120</b>	<b>Remuneration and other entitlements</b>	<b>78,076,926</b>
1200	Remuneration and allowances	77,627,535
1202	Paid overtime	23,062
1204	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	426,329
<b>122</b>	<b>Allowances upon early termination of service</b>	<b>190,000</b>
1220	Allowances for staff retired or placed on leave in the interests of the service	190,000
<b>14</b>	<b>Other staff and external services</b>	<b>5,476,069</b>
<b>140</b>	<b>Other staff and external persons</b>	<b>3,464,489</b>
1400	Other staff	2,612,989
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	799,807
1408	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	51,693
<b>142</b>	<b>External services</b>	<b>2,011,580</b>
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service and translation-outsourcing related tools	1,200,000
1422	Expert advice connected with legislative work	696,750
1424	Interinstitutional cooperation and external services in the field of personal management	114,830
<b>16</b>	<b>Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution</b>	<b>2,029,631</b>
<b>161</b>	<b>Expenditure relating to staff management</b>	<b>607,437</b>
1610	Expenditure on recruitment	24,100
1612	Further training	583,337
<b>162</b>	<b>Missions</b>	<b>403,974</b>
<b>163</b>	<b>Activities relating to all persons working with the institution</b>	<b>1,018,220</b>
1630	Social welfare	55,000
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	141,220
1634	Medical service	143,000
1636	Restaurants and canteens	23,000
1638	Early childhood centre and approved day nurseries	656,000

## Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022 and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management

Committed	Committed (%)	Payments	Appropriations carried forward to 2023	Unused appropriations	Unused Appropriations (%)
<b>146,533,872</b>	<b>96.12%</b>	<b>134,344,006</b>	<b>12,189,866</b>	<b>5,917,771</b>	<b>3.88%</b>
<b>101,493,607</b>	<b>95.13%</b>	<b>99,401,507</b>	<b>2,092,101</b>	<b>5,193,500</b>	<b>4.87%</b>
<b>17,318,033</b>	<b>82.80%</b>	<b>16,244,254</b>	<b>1,073,780</b>	<b>3,596,448</b>	<b>17.20%</b>
<b>17,261,795</b>	<b>82.85%</b>	<b>16,202,819</b>	<b>1,058,975</b>	<b>3,573,359</b>	<b>17.15%</b>
380,961	84.79%	237,024	143,937	68,359	15.21%
16,309,658	82.42%	15,464,090	845,568	3,480,000	17.58%
571,176	95.81%	501,705	69,471	25,000	4.19%
<b>56,239</b>	<b>70.89%</b>	<b>41,434</b>	<b>14,804</b>	<b>23,088</b>	<b>29.11%</b>
<b>77,284,187</b>	<b>98.74%</b>	<b>77,186,084</b>	<b>98,104</b>	<b>982,739</b>	<b>1.26%</b>
<b>77,111,493</b>	<b>98.76%</b>	<b>77,013,389</b>	<b>98,104</b>	<b>965,433</b>	<b>1.24%</b>
76,696,641	98.80%	76,631,973	64,668	930,894	1.20%
3,050	13.23%	3,050	0	20,012	86.77%
411,802	96.59%	378,366	33,435	14,527	3.41%
<b>172,694</b>	<b>90.89%</b>	<b>172,694</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,306</b>	<b>9.11%</b>
172,694	90.89%	172,694	0	17,306	9.11%
<b>4,983,713</b>	<b>91.01%</b>	<b>4,662,567</b>	<b>321,147</b>	<b>492,356</b>	<b>8.99%</b>
<b>3,248,198</b>	<b>93.76%</b>	<b>3,183,654</b>	<b>64,545</b>	<b>216,291</b>	<b>6.24%</b>
2,465,488	94.36%	2,438,515	26,973	147,501	5.64%
772,286	96.56%	734,714	37,571	27,521	3.44%
10,425	20.17%	10,425	0	41,268	79.83%
<b>1,735,515</b>	<b>86.28%</b>	<b>1,478,913</b>	<b>256,602</b>	<b>276,065</b>	<b>13.72%</b>
1,080,400	90.03%	900,490	179,910	119,600	9.97%
590,000	84.68%	513,308	76,692	106,750	15.32%
65,115	56.71%	65,115	0	49,715	43.29%
<b>1,907,673</b>	<b>93.99%</b>	<b>1,308,602</b>	<b>599,071</b>	<b>121,958</b>	<b>6.01%</b>
<b>571,993</b>	<b>94.17%</b>	<b>309,074</b>	<b>262,919</b>	<b>35,444</b>	<b>5.83%</b>
12,707	52.73%	8,244	4,463	11,393	47.27%
559,286	95.88%	300,829	258,457	24,051	4.12%
<b>400,974</b>	<b>99.26%</b>	<b>318,385</b>	<b>82,589</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>0.74%</b>
<b>934,706</b>	<b>91.80%</b>	<b>681,143</b>	<b>253,562</b>	<b>83,514</b>	<b>8.20%</b>
30,804	56.01%	25,075	5,729	24,196	43.99%
113,352	80.27%	62,747	50,606	27,868	19.73%
111,676	78.10%	36,065	75,611	31,324	21.90%
22,873	99.45%	22,873	0	127	0.55%
656,000	100.00%	534,383	121,617	0	0.00%

## Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022 and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management

		Final Appropriations
	<b>Total</b>	<b>152,451,643</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure</b>	<b>45,764,536</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Buildings and associated costs</b>	<b>25,712,663</b>
<b>200</b>	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>16,964,345</b>
2000	Rent	2,568,457
2001	Annual lease payments and similar expenditure	12,481,864
2007	Fitting-out of premises	1,538,899
2008	Other expenditure on buildings	375,125
<b>202</b>	<b>Other expenditure on buildings</b>	<b>8,748,318</b>
2022	Cleaning and maintenance	4,242,095
2024	Energy consumption	1,829,206
2026	Security and surveillance	2,572,162
2028	Insurance	104,855
<b>21</b>	<b>Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance</b>	<b>9,081,041</b>
<b>210</b>	<b>Equipment, operating costs and services relating to data-processing and telecommunications</b>	<b>7,627,058</b>
2100	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work	3,229,016
2102	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems	3,153,529
2103	Telecommunications	1,244,513
<b>212</b>	<b>Furniture</b>	<b>180,791</b>
<b>214</b>	<b>Technical equipment and installations</b>	<b>1,181,466</b>
<b>216</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>	<b>91,726</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Current administrative expenditure</b>	<b>588,942</b>
<b>230</b>	<b>Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables</b>	<b>155,611</b>
<b>231</b>	<b>Financial charges</b>	<b>8,000</b>
<b>232</b>	<b>Legal costs and damages</b>	<b>150,000</b>
<b>236</b>	<b>Postage on correspondence and delivery charges</b>	<b>61,140</b>
<b>238</b>	<b>Removal costs and other administrative expenditure</b>	<b>194,059</b>
<b>239</b>	<b>EMAS activities, including promotion, and carbon offsetting scheme</b>	<b>20,132</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Operational activities</b>	<b>7,916,811</b>
<b>254</b>	<b>Meetings, conferences, congresses, seminars and other events</b>	<b>7,916,811</b>
2540	Miscellaneous expenditure on internal meetings	265,000
2542	Expenditure on the organisation of and participation in hearings and other events	558,311
2544	Costs of organising the work of the CCMI	40,000
2546	Representation expenses	53,500
2548	Interpreting	7,000,000
<b>26</b>	<b>Communication, publications and acquisition of documentation</b>	<b>2,465,079</b>
<b>260</b>	<b>Communication, information and publications</b>	<b>1,753,000</b>
2600	Communication	882,000
2602	Publishing and promotion of publications	871,000
<b>262</b>	<b>Acquisition of information, documentation and archiving</b>	<b>712,079</b>
2620	Studies, research and hearings	250,000
2622	Documentation and library expenditure	227,061
2624	Archiving and related work	235,018

**Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022**  
**and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management**

Committed	Committed (%)	Payments	Appropriations carried forward to 2023	Unused appropriations	Unused Appropriations (%)
146,533,872	96.12%	134,344,006	12,189,866	5,917,771	3.88%
45,040,264	98.42%	34,942,499	10,097,765	724,272	1.58%
25,678,768	99.87%	21,981,111	3,697,657	33,895	0.13%
16,935,945	99.83%	14,907,811	2,028,134	28,400	0.17%
2,554,192	99.44%	2,414,888	139,304	14,265	0.56%
12,481,864	100.00%	12,481,864	0	0	0.00%
1,538,634	99.98%	0	1,538,634	265	0.02%
361,255	96.30%	11,059	350,196	13,870	3.70%
8,742,823	99.94%	7,073,300	1,669,523	5,495	0.06%
4,242,095	100.00%	3,455,369	786,726	0	0.00%
1,829,206	100.00%	1,829,206	0	0	0.00%
2,570,075	99.92%	1,688,848	881,228	2,087	0.08%
101,447	96.75%	99,878	1,569	3,408	3.25%
8,967,600	98.75%	5,302,349	3,665,252	113,441	1.25%
7,566,156	99.20%	4,633,129	2,933,028	60,902	0.80%
3,229,005	100.00%	1,883,207	1,345,798	11	0.00%
3,152,939	99.98%	1,706,789	1,446,150	590	0.02%
1,184,212	95.15%	1,043,132	141,080	60,301	4.85%
177,313	98.08%	0	177,313	3,478	1.92%
1,150,761	97.40%	608,051	542,710	30,705	2.60%
73,370	79.99%	61,170	12,200	18,356	20.01%
490,148	83.23%	268,657	221,491	98,794	16.77%
147,971	95.09%	77,979	69,992	7,640	4.91%
4,500	56.25%	0	4,500	3,500	43.75%
71,462	47.64%	23,162	48,300	78,538	52.36%
53,951	88.24%	15,941	38,010	7,189	11.76%
192,133	99.01%	131,444	60,689	1,926	0.99%
20,132	100.00%	20,132	0	0	0.00%
7,495,127	94.67%	6,758,227	736,901	421,684	5.33%
7,495,127	94.67%	6,758,227	736,901	421,684	5.33%
236,236	89.15%	187,289	48,947	28,764	10.85%
348,921	62.50%	277,545	71,376	209,390	37.50%
13,273	33.18%	10,064	3,209	26,727	66.82%
41,725	77.99%	21,498	20,227	11,775	22.01%
6,854,973	97.93%	6,261,832	593,141	145,027	2.07%
2,408,620	97.71%	632,155	1,776,465	56,459	2.29%
1,725,289	98.42%	418,948	1,306,342	27,711	1.58%
869,836	98.62%	264,480	605,356	12,164	1.38%
855,454	98.22%	154,468	700,986	15,546	1.78%
683,331	95.96%	213,208	470,123	28,748	4.04%
221,850	88.74%	0	221,850	28,150	11.26%
226,463	99.74%	168,270	58,193	598	0.26%
235,018	100.00%	44,938	190,080	0	0.00%

#### 4.1 COMMENTS ON USE OF FINAL APPROPRIATIONS (C1) IN 2022

For all budget headings with non-committed appropriations of more than EUR 25 000, representing more than 5% of the final appropriations, more detailed information is provided below.

##### *1000: Specific allowances and payments*

- ❖ Amount not committed: EUR 68 359 (15.21%)

These appropriations cover insurance for members, the special duty allowance for the president and the vice-presidents, the issuing of laissez-passers for members, management fees for the travel agency, specific measures for members with disabilities and expenses for preventive medical activities for members. A certain safety margin is needed to cover measures for members with disabilities and unforeseen expenses not covered by the insurance contract. Furthermore, medical care for members was used less than expected.

##### *1004: Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure*

- ❖ Amount not committed: EUR 3 480 000 (17.58%)

This budget heading covers travel expenses and travel allowances for members. Reimbursement claims for meetings in 2022 were to be submitted within a six-week deadline as in previous years. The ongoing COVID-19 health crisis and associated travel disruption resulted in the organising of meetings mainly in hybrid format, particularly in the first half of the year, and thus at a reduced in-person attendance rate.

In addition, the continued application of the allowance that provided for a fixed-rate reimbursement for remote attendance of meetings, which was introduced on 1 July 2021 and will stay in place as long as travel difficulties linked to COVID-19 or related restrictive measures compromise the possibility to organise or attend in-person EESC meetings, led to a considerable reduction in expenditure, given that the amount reimbursed is only half of a daily allowance and no travel costs are eligible in these cases. However, this effect was partly undermined by the far less optimal way of working at the Committee, but helped to ensure business continuity and the equal treatment of participants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As reimbursements can be made until the end of 2023, a certain amount has been carried forward to cover any remaining obligations for meetings held in 2022.

##### *1400: Other staff*

- ❖ Amount not committed: EUR 147 501 (5.64%)

These appropriations are intended to cover salary costs and allowances for contractual and interim staff and special advisors. The low uptake can be explained by several unforeseen developments. Firstly, a number of recruitments which took place with a considerable delay due to last-minute withdrawals by candidates and the need to find another suitable candidate, as well as notice periods to be respected and other unforeseen circumstances. Secondly, contracts which due to the personal situation or limited professional experience of the candidate generated lower costs than initially forecast based on an average remuneration in the respective function group, and lastly certain delays in selection procedures due to a specific situation in the requesting service. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis, there was less need to cover in-person activities and thus less need for interim staff in 2022.

***1408: Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service***

❖ Amount not committed: EUR 41 268 (79.83%)

These appropriations cover various statutory allowances and removal costs for contractual agents entering or leaving the service. Their number is inherently difficult to predict. Likewise, the various allowances are highly dependent on the personal situation of the agent concerned (family composition, place of recruitment, grade). Removals and installation allowances can be granted up to one year after entering the service and three years after leaving the service. Given the small amount in appropriations on this item, even a single case could have a significant budgetary impact. Therefore, a sufficient margin must be maintained. However, recent years have showed a quite low uptake of this budget, since most contractual agents are recruited in Belgium and very rarely from abroad, and at the end of their contract very seldom return to their country of origin. In light of the underspending of the last few years, the 2024 budget request was reduced.

***1420: Supplementary services for the translation service and translation-outsourcing related tools***

❖ Amount not committed: EUR 119 600 (9.97%)

This budget heading mainly covers the outsourcing of translation requests. The demand for outsourcing is impossible to predict with precision, as it depends on the needs of the requesting services and the staffing of the translation units at the moment of reception of a request. For this reason, a buffer must be kept until the end of the year, to be sure that all requests can be accepted and the legislative process is not be impacted negatively. In 2022, translation outsourcing reached 18.17%, slightly below the 20% target.

***1422: Expert advice connected with legislative work***



❖ Amount not committed: EUR 106 750 (15.32%)

These appropriations cover travel expenses and allowances for external advisors in connection with consultative work. The need for assistance from advisors depends on the type and number of opinions that the Committee has to produce and costs depend on the country of origin of the experts. Continuing travel disruptions caused by the COVID-19 health crisis, especially in the first half of the year, also affected the in-person attendance of advisors at meetings.

***1424: Interinstitutional cooperation and external services in the field of personnel management***

Amount not committed: EUR 49 715 (43.29%)

These appropriations are intended to cover interinstitutional cooperation activities and also include the costs of services provided by the European Commission's Paymaster Office (PMO) and Directorate-General for Human Resources (DG HR) to achieve administrative synergies. The service level agreement (SLA) signed with the PMO in 2021 covers the management of in/out transfers, supplementary adjustments, and payments linked to pensions. As these services are now considered as "baseline services" the PMO did not charge for them in 2022 and will also not charge for them in the future, contrary to what was initially indicated and which explains to a great extent the left-over.

***1632: Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures***

❖ Amount not committed: EUR 27 868 (19.73%)

This appropriation is intended to encourage and provide financial backing for schemes to promote social contact between staff of the institution and to develop a sense of well-being at work. Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the organisation of social activities *in situ* was not possible in the first half of the year. Moreover, the appropriations cover the institution's financial contribution towards Green Mobility to encourage the use of public transport and bicycles. With teleworking now well established in accordance with the new working conditions decision and resulting in less commuting, fewer requests were received for a contribution to public transport tickets.

***1634: Medical Service***

❖ Amount not committed: EUR 31 324 (21.90%)

This appropriation covers, on the one hand, the Medical Service's operating costs, and on the other, the reimbursement of preventive annual check-ups. In view of the COVID-19 health crisis,

the budget for 2022 was increased as a preventive measure to be able to cover additional costs for the functioning of the service. These appropriations were in the end not needed as the health situation improved.

***232: Legal costs and damages***

❖ Amount not committed: EUR 78 538 (52.36%)

Given the limited number of files and the uncertainty about the timing and outcome of court decisions, it is very difficult to predict actual expenses with accuracy, which explains the low execution rate of this budget heading. Some of the anticipated costs did not materialise at all or have not yet done so, and a part of the budget was therefore left unused. The reason for this was either that the Legal Service was successful in obtaining favourable rulings in cases before the EU Courts or because cases scheduled before the national courts have not yet been opened.

***2540: Miscellaneous expenditure on internal meetings***

❖ Amount not committed EUR 28 764 (10.85%)

These appropriations are intended to cover expenses related to office holders' reception and representation obligations on behalf of the EESC, in the interest of the service, and to statutory internal meetings. Expenses incurred under this item are closely linked to attending meetings physically, and although in-person presence has increased considerably in the last six months, it is still not yet back at pre-COVID-19 levels.

***2542: Expenditure on the organisation of and participation in hearings and other events***

❖ Amount not committed EUR 209 390 (37.50%)

During the first half of 2022, the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis was still affecting the organisation of EESC activities, which were mostly organised in hybrid mode thus allowing remote attendance. Consequently, the reimbursement of external speakers was limited due to their principally remote participation. Catering costs were also lower since there were fewer in-person events with fewer external participants present.

***2544: Costs of organising the work of the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI)***

❖ Amount not committed: EUR 26 727 (66.82%)

This budget item covers expenses similar to those on budget line 2542 but specifically for the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI). During the first half of 2022, the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis was still affecting the organisation of EESC activities, which were mostly organised in hybrid mode thus allowing remote attendance. Consequently, the reimbursement of external speakers was limited due to their principally remote participation. Catering costs were also lower since there were fewer in-person events with fewer external participants present.

***2620: Studies, research and hearings***

❖ Amount not committed: EUR 28 150 (11.26%)

This appropriation covers studies outsourced to external contractors. The lower than expected budget execution in 2022 is due to two factors: two planned studies had to be cancelled at the end of the year as no suitable tenders were received, and some study contracts were awarded for less than the estimated amounts.



5. USE OF APPROPRIATIONS AUTOMATICALLY CARRIED FORWARD  
FROM 2021 TO 2022 (C8)

Total	
<b>1</b>	<b>Persons working with the institution</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Members of the institution and delegates</b>
<b>100</b>	<b>Specific allowances and payments</b>
1000	Specific allowances and payments
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure
1008	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure of delegates of the CCMI
<b>105</b>	<b>Further training, language courses and other training</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Officials and temporary staff</b>
<b>120</b>	<b>Remuneration and other entitlements</b>
1200	Remuneration and allowances
1204	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service
<b>14</b>	<b>Other staff and external services</b>
<b>140</b>	<b>Other staff and external persons</b>
1400	Other staff
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials
<b>142</b>	<b>External services</b>
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service and translation-outsourcing related tools
1422	Expert advice connected with legislative work
1424	Interinstitutional cooperation and external services in the field of personal management
<b>16</b>	<b>Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution</b>
<b>161</b>	<b>Expenditure relating to staff management</b>
1610	Expenditure on recruitment
1612	Further training
<b>162</b>	<b>Missions</b>
<b>163</b>	<b>Activities relating to all persons working with the institution</b>
1630	Social welfare
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures
1634	Medical service
1636	Restaurants and canteens
1638	Early childhood centre and approved day nurseries

**Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022**  
**and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management**

<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Payments (%)</b>	<b>Unused</b>	<b>Unused (%)</b>
<b>20,162,518</b>	<b>15,507,157</b>	<b>76.91%</b>	<b>4,655,361</b>	<b>23.09%</b>
<b>3,107,304</b>	<b>1,179,418</b>	<b>37.96%</b>	<b>1,927,887</b>	<b>62.04%</b>
<b>2,032,988</b>	<b>585,789</b>	<b>28.81%</b>	<b>1,447,199</b>	<b>71.19%</b>
<b>2,022,840</b>	<b>578,794</b>	<b>28.61%</b>	<b>1,444,046</b>	<b>71.39%</b>
154,578	99,954	64.66%	54,625	35.34%
1,840,536	472,596	25.68%	1,367,940	74.32%
27,725	6,244	22.52%	21,481	77.48%
<b>10,148</b>	<b>6,995</b>	<b>68.93%</b>	<b>3,153</b>	<b>31.07%</b>
<b>85,966</b>	<b>85,966</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>85,966</b>	<b>85,966</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
47,455	47,455	100.00%	0	0.00%
38,511	38,511	100.00%	0	0.00%
<b>515,794</b>	<b>323,516</b>	<b>62.72%</b>	<b>192,278</b>	<b>37.28%</b>
<b>74,635</b>	<b>54,782</b>	<b>73.40%</b>	<b>19,853</b>	<b>26.60%</b>
30,670	17,196	56.07%	13,474	43.93%
43,966	37,586	85.49%	6,379	14.51%
<b>441,159</b>	<b>268,735</b>	<b>60.92%</b>	<b>172,425</b>	<b>39.08%</b>
255,879	215,647	84.28%	40,232	15.72%
98,239	26,438	26.91%	71,801	73.09%
87,042	26,650	30.62%	60,392	69.38%
<b>472,555</b>	<b>184,145</b>	<b>38.97%</b>	<b>288,410</b>	<b>61.03%</b>
<b>130,811</b>	<b>104,754</b>	<b>80.08%</b>	<b>26,057</b>	<b>19.92%</b>
10,731	7,726	71.99%	3,005	28.01%
120,080	97,028	80.80%	23,052	19.20%
<b>84,743</b>	<b>17,280</b>	<b>20.39%</b>	<b>67,463</b>	<b>79.61%</b>
<b>257,001</b>	<b>62,111</b>	<b>24.17%</b>	<b>194,889</b>	<b>75.83%</b>
13,169	4,595	34.89%	8,574	65.11%
29,038	7,287	25.09%	21,751	74.91%
56,113	39,738	70.82%	16,375	29.18%
1,717	0	0.00%	1,717	100.00%
156,964	10,491	6.68%	146,473	93.32%

Total	
<b>2</b>	<b>Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Buildings and associated costs</b>
<b>200</b>	<b>Buildings</b>
2000	Rent
2001	Annual lease payments and similar expenditure
2007	Fitting-out of premises
2008	Other expenditure on buildings
<b>202</b>	<b>Other expenditure on buildings</b>
2022	Cleaning and maintenance
2026	Security and surveillance
2028	Insurance
<b>21</b>	<b>Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance</b>
<b>210</b>	<b>Equipment, operating costs and services relating to data-processing and telecommunications</b>
2100	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work
2102	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems
2103	Telecommunications
<b>212</b>	<b>Furniture</b>
<b>214</b>	<b>Technical equipment and installations</b>
<b>216</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Current administrative expenditure</b>
<b>230</b>	<b>Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables</b>
<b>231</b>	<b>Financial charges</b>
<b>232</b>	<b>Legal costs and damages</b>
<b>236</b>	<b>Postage on correspondence and delivery charges</b>
<b>238</b>	<b>Removal costs and other administrative expenditure</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Operational activities</b>
<b>254</b>	<b>Meetings, conferences, congresses, seminars and other events</b>
2540	Miscellaneous expenditure on internal meetings
2542	Expenditure on the organisation of and participation in hearings and other events
2546	Representation expenses
2548	Interpreting
<b>26</b>	<b>Communication, publications and acquisition of documentation</b>
<b>260</b>	<b>Communication, information and publications</b>
2600	Communication
2602	Publishing and promotion of publications
<b>262</b>	<b>Acquisition of information, documentation and archiving</b>
2620	Studies, research and hearings
2622	Documentation and library expenditure
2624	Archiving and related work

**Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022**  
**and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management**

<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Payments (%)</b>	<b>Unused</b>	<b>Unused (%)</b>
<b>20,162,518</b>	<b>15,507,157</b>	<b>76.91%</b>	<b>4,655,361</b>	<b>23.09%</b>
<b>17,055,214</b>	<b>14,327,739</b>	<b>84.01%</b>	<b>2,727,474</b>	<b>15.99%</b>
<b>10,261,096</b>	<b>8,284,425</b>	<b>80.74%</b>	<b>1,976,671</b>	<b>19.26%</b>
<b>8,427,936</b>	<b>6,791,673</b>	<b>80.59%</b>	<b>1,636,264</b>	<b>19.41%</b>
1,115,535	1,036,482	92.91%	79,053	7.09%
3,049	3,049	100.00%	0	0.00%
6,521,966	4,983,960	76.42%	1,538,006	23.58%
787,387	768,181	97.56%	19,205	2.44%
<b>1,833,160</b>	<b>1,492,753</b>	<b>81.43%</b>	<b>340,407</b>	<b>18.57%</b>
1,479,410	1,189,812	80.42%	289,598	19.58%
352,630	302,257	85.72%	50,373	14.28%
1,120	683	61.02%	437	38.98%
<b>3,888,175</b>	<b>3,484,479</b>	<b>89.62%</b>	<b>403,696</b>	<b>10.38%</b>
<b>3,169,075</b>	<b>2,884,731</b>	<b>91.03%</b>	<b>284,344</b>	<b>8.97%</b>
416,414	323,691	77.73%	92,723	22.27%
2,603,612	2,450,899	94.13%	152,713	5.87%
149,049	110,141	73.90%	38,908	26.10%
<b>66,909</b>	<b>65,908</b>	<b>98.51%</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1.49%</b>
<b>649,364</b>	<b>532,165</b>	<b>81.95%</b>	<b>117,199</b>	<b>18.05%</b>
<b>2,828</b>	<b>1,675</b>	<b>59.23%</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>40.77%</b>
<b>220,721</b>	<b>87,025</b>	<b>39.43%</b>	<b>133,696</b>	<b>60.57%</b>
<b>23,655</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>0.63%</b>	<b>23,505</b>	<b>99.37%</b>
<b>3,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>50,630</b>	<b>11,000</b>	<b>21.73%</b>	<b>39,630</b>	<b>78.27%</b>
<b>36,000</b>	<b>4,060</b>	<b>11.28%</b>	<b>31,940</b>	<b>88.72%</b>
<b>107,436</b>	<b>71,815</b>	<b>66.84%</b>	<b>35,622</b>	<b>33.16%</b>
<b>1,264,395</b>	<b>1,107,442</b>	<b>87.59%</b>	<b>156,953</b>	<b>12.41%</b>
<b>1,264,395</b>	<b>1,107,442</b>	<b>87.59%</b>	<b>156,953</b>	<b>12.41%</b>
81,415	74,696	91.75%	6,720	8.25%
66,088	21,771	32.94%	44,317	67.06%
5,458	536	9.83%	4,921	90.17%
1,111,434	1,010,439	90.91%	100,995	9.09%
<b>1,420,826</b>	<b>1,364,368</b>	<b>96.03%</b>	<b>56,458</b>	<b>3.97%</b>
<b>1,050,548</b>	<b>994,194</b>	<b>94.64%</b>	<b>56,354</b>	<b>5.36%</b>
744,077	692,462	93.06%	51,615	6.94%
306,470	301,731	98.45%	4,739	1.55%
<b>370,279</b>	<b>370,175</b>	<b>99.97%</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>0.03%</b>
216,200	216,200	100.00%	0	0.00%
46,579	46,475	99.78%	104	0.22%
107,500	107,500	100.00%	0	0.00%



**5.1 COMMENTS ON USE OF APPROPRIATIONS AUTOMATICALLY CARRIED FORWARD FROM 2021 TO 2022 (C8)**

For all budget headings with appropriations carried forward from 2021 to 2022 of which more than EUR 25 000 remained unused, representing more than 5% of the amount carried forward, more detailed information is provided below.

***1000: Specific allowances and payments***

- ❖ Unused amount: EUR 54 625 (35.34%)

This budget heading covers in particular insurance for members, the special duty allowance for office holders, management fees for the travel agency, specific measures for members with disabilities and expenses for preventive medical activities for members. As some beneficiaries attended their meetings remotely, medical care for members and insurance for travel assistance were requested at a lower level than expected, as were specific measures for members with disabilities. The carry forward to 2022 was thus overstated.

***1004: Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure***

- ❖ Unused amount: EUR 1 367 940 (74.32%)

This budget heading covers travel expenses and allowances for members. Reimbursement claims for meetings in 2021 were to be submitted within a deadline of six weeks after the meeting. The ongoing COVID-19 health crisis and associated travel disruption in 2021 resulted in meetings organised nearly exclusively in hybrid format, especially in the first half of the year, and thus in a reduced in-person attendance rate. This led to savings, given that the amount reimbursed for remote attendance is only half of a daily allowance, and that no travel costs were applicable in those cases. However, due to the complexity of the situation it was not possible to precisely determine the amounts still to be claimed by EESC members and their alternates at the end of the year and a certain margin of flexibility had to be included, which was by far overstated in the end.

***1420: Supplementary services for the translation service and translation-outsourcing related tools***

- ❖ Unused amount: EUR 40 232 (15.72%)

Appropriations had to be kept available to cover translation demand until the last working day of 2021 and also to reach a high level of outsourcing. However, not all 2021 appropriations carried forward for this purpose were used to order external translation due to uncertainties in the

estimating of outsourcing-related spending. Furthermore, the cost of interinstitutional projects was committed in 2021 but the final amount to be paid was only known in October 2022, where the commitment was made in applying a safety margin to the initial estimation, as costs can vary depending on several factors such as manpower actually needed. This safety margin was not needed in the end.

***1422: Expert advice connected with legislative work***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 71 801 (73.09%)

This budget heading covers travel expenses and allowances for external advisors in connection with consultative work. The need for assistance from advisors depends on the type and number of opinions that the Committee has to produce, and costs depend on the country of origin of the advisors. Continuing travel disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the number of meetings held and the possibility to travel in 2021, especially in the first half of the year. As it was not possible to precisely determine the amounts still to be claimed by experts due to variable travel costs linked to the COVID-19 health crisis, part of the appropriations carried forward were overstated and remained unused.

***1424: Interinstitutional cooperation and external services in the field of personnel management***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 60 392 (69.38%)

The unused amount can partly be explained by the unclear situation with the service level agreement (SLA) with the Paymaster Office (PMO), which indicated a significant amount to be paid for services related to pensions, but in the end these were not invoiced. Furthermore, a reserve was kept until the end of 2021 in case a referral for an administrative enquiry to the Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the European Commission (IDOC) still needed to be requested. Administrative enquiries as per the relevant SLA signed in June 2021 are charged at a lump sum cost of EUR 30 000 per enquiry.

***162: Missions***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 67 463 (79.61%)

The amount carried forward from 2021 to 2022 was overestimated, due to the variability in forecasting the real costs of missions, especially taking into account the COVID-19 context.

***1638: Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 146 473 (93.32%)

The appropriations are based on the estimated annual cost provided by the Commission, and the final amount for each year is not known until the following year. The amount depends on the number of children registered for childcare, and a few more children in early childhood facilities can make a big difference. The amount for 2021 was committed based on the Commission's estimate, which was more than EUR 600 000. The final invoice from the Commission only arrived in November 2022, and the amount to be paid was much lower than indicated in the initial estimate (less than EUR 500 000).

***2000: Rent***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 79 053 (7.09%)

This appropriation is intended to cover rent on buildings and rental charges for meetings held in buildings that are not occupied permanently. The rental costs linked to the VMA building were to a certain extent overestimated, and thus an excessively high amount was carried forward to 2022. The final request for settlement only arrived during 2022, following the receipt of the invoices from the building's suppliers for energy, maintenance etc. by the European Commission, in its position as landlord. The final amount to be paid was thus lower than the estimate made at the end of 2021.

***2007: Fitting-out of premises***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 1 538 006 (23.58%)

This appropriation is intended to cover the performance of fitting-out works, including renovations and specific work. Some of the planned projects were not or only partially carried out, which entailed a lower than foreseen invoicing level as a result. The main part of the unused appropriations (95%) can be attributed to the non-completion of a part of the VMA renovation project before the end of 2022, which hence did not allow the full payment of the amounts reserved for this project. The project could only be ordered mid-December 2021 following the successful outcome of the call for tender. This reduced the time left for execution of this very large project to one year. Moreover, difficulties experienced by the contractor in obtaining the necessary materials caused additional delays.

***2022: Cleaning and maintenance***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 289 598 (19.58%)

The underutilisation of appropriations carried forward from 2021 resulted from a discrepancy between the estimated costs for various building maintenance projects, technical assistance and other possible activities compared to the final invoices, which were only received in 2022. This difference was mainly due to a certain safety margin included in the estimate to cover any unforeseen events, activities towards the end of the year, and any possible additional time spent. As the costs of these activities were lower than estimated, the carried forward appropriations remained unused. In addition, the non-execution or only partial execution of some works ordered in 2021 also contributed to the leftover on this budget item in 2022.

***2026: Security and surveillance***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 50 373 (14.28%)

Final invoices for security services effectively performed, with the actual amounts to be paid, were only received in 2022. The real costs were lower than the estimates made at the end of 2021. These regularly include a safety margin in order to cover possible unforeseeable costs, and this in the end was not needed.

***2100: Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 92 723 (22.27%)

This budget item also finances the costs of IT services provided by the European Commission (EC). The charge-back mechanism of the EC is based on an advance payment at the beginning of the reference year followed by a second payment during the following year, calculated on the basis of the real cost of services. Therefore, commitments carried forward in 2021 contained a safety margin to cover the payment of all costs. Final invoices received in 2022 were lower than anticipated and the main cause of under-consumption.

***2102: Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 152 713 (5,87%)

Uncertainty about the estimated consumption on this item rose as the spending period became longer due to the extension of the duration of a contract and the subsequent frontloading. As a measure of prudence, a sufficient amount was kept in reserve in order to assure the continuity of services. Moreover, effective spending was also lower due to unforeseeable absences of external consultants. However, spending on this item was close to 95% of the appropriations allocated in 2021.

***2103: Telecommunications***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 38 908 (26.10%)

This budget heading covers co-financing of IT, telecommunications and electronic office equipment. Granting of the allowance is conditional on members and delegates having attended a certain number of meetings. It is therefore not possible to establish in advance the exact number of members and delegates who will qualify for the allowance, and a certain margin of flexibility had to be included. Several beneficiaries, however, did not meet the conditions necessary to obtain the allowance.

For telecommunications expenses managed by the joint services, the definitive amount due is only known in the following year. Commitments therefore contain a safety reserve to cover changes in communications consumption and prices, a margin which in the end turned out to be too high.

***214: Technical equipment and installations***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 117 199 (18.05%)

The main amount of unused appropriations related to the security service. The underconsumption can mainly be attributed to the late arrival of a relatively significant invoice. It arrived at the accountancy service at the very end of 2022 and so could not be proceeded with in that year, and the appropriations reserved for the payment of this invoice were thus lost.

The amount carried forward in the Printing Service for the possible repair of machines at the year-end was not used, as no machines became defective. The price of the reparation of a machine can reach up to EUR 30 000. The amount carried forward corresponds to 3% of the acquisition value of the machine park to be covered.

Appropriations set aside in the Catering Service for a specific purchase of glasses were not used, as the order became unnecessary due to the outbreak of the COVID health crisis and the subsequent preferred use of recyclable paper cups.

***232: Legal costs and damages***

❖ Unused amount: EUR 39 630 (78.27%)

Certain anticipated legal costs, which had resulted in appropriations being carried forward, did not materialise or have not yet done so. The reason for this was either that the Legal Service was successful in obtaining favourable rulings in cases before the EU Courts or because cases due before the national court have not yet been opened.

**236: Postage on correspondence and delivery charges**

❖ Unused amount: EUR 31 940 (88.72%)

This appropriation covers charges for postage, processing and delivery by the postal services or private delivery firms. Costs for sending mail and parcel delivery vary depending on the mailing activity of the requesting services. As costs are difficult to estimate and final invoices arrived only in 2022, a reserve had to be kept to meet all obligations incurred by the end of the year 2021. Ultimately, consumption was lower than expected due to the overestimation of the prices of a new contract that came into force in September 2021 and a lower than anticipated number of shipments.

**238: Removal costs and other administrative expenditure**

❖ Unused amount: EUR 35 622 (33.16%)

In the infrastructure sector, actual invoicing by the service provider for the decommissioning of amortised furniture was substantially lower than budgeted for. Invoices with the final amounts to be paid only arrived during 2022, and so the amount carried forward was overestimated. The under-consumption in the field of removals was due to a higher-than-normal contingency reserve for internal moves. At the end of 2021, due to the extension of the current contract given the absence of a new contractor, the period to be covered was exceptionally longer. As a result, additional appropriations were set aside to guarantee continuity of the service. In the end, not all appropriations kept in reserve have been used.

**2542: Expenditure on the organisation of and participation in hearings and other events**

❖ Unused amount: EUR 44 317 (67.06%)

Appropriations were carried forward to cover expenditure that could not be settled in 2021, with a certain safety margin. Some of the commitments carried forward were linked to hearings in the last month of 2021 and to reimbursements to speakers, who ultimately did not all request reimbursement. Furthermore, the safety margin for the subvention to the Association of Former Members was clearly overstated, as this body was not able to hold its general assembly and annual meeting in 2021.

**2548: Interpreting**

❖ Unused amount: EUR 100 995 (9.09%)

Appropriations were carried forward to cover expenditure that could not be paid in 2021, with a certain safety margin. The safety margin allows for possible extra hours and for ordering any last-minute interpreting. In recent years thanks to improved forecasting the service has limited the carry forward, thus keeping the amount of these funds as low as possible. Real consumption cannot be estimated with 100% accuracy, as changes in agendas, participants and the varying availability of languages all have an impact on the calculation. The exact amount is only known when invoices are received, and thus the amount carried over was partly overestimated.

**2600: Communication**

❖ Unused amount: EUR 51 615 (6.94%)

Due to the low participation rate, two major events – *Connecting Europe 2021* and the *Seminar for journalists* – were less expensive than initially estimated, and so the amount carried over was overestimated. Furthermore, the amount carried forward for photos and video clips produced in 2021 was also too high, as in the end fewer purchases of images or videos and expenses linked to the treatment of these images were needed. Additionally, the direct reimbursement of invitees for various events was overestimated because exact travelling costs were difficult to forecast and the participation rate turned out to be lower than in pre-COVID-19 years.





## 6. USE OF ASSIGNED REVENUE IN 2022 (C4)

		Final Appropriations
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,561,203</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Persons working with the institution</b>	<b>1,685</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Members of the institution and delegates</b>	<b>1,145</b>
<b>100</b>	<b>Specific allowances and payments</b>	<b>1,145</b>
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	1,145
<b>16</b>	<b>Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution</b>	<b>540</b>
<b>162</b>	<b>Missions</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>163</b>	<b>Activities relating to all persons working with the institution</b>	<b>419</b>
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	292
1634	Medical service	127
<b>2</b>	<b>Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure</b>	<b>4,559,518</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Buildings and associated costs</b>	<b>4,099,013</b>
<b>200</b>	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>2,095,544</b>
2000	Rent	1,841,463
2007	Fitting-out of premises	254,081
<b>202</b>	<b>Other expenditure on buildings</b>	<b>2,003,469</b>
2026	Security and surveillance	2,003,469
<b>21</b>	<b>Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance</b>	<b>445,099</b>
<b>210</b>	<b>Equipment, operating costs and services relating to data-processing and telecommunications</b>	<b>145,285</b>
2103	Telecommunications	145,285
<b>214</b>	<b>Technical equipment and installations</b>	<b>278,049</b>
<b>216</b>	<b>Vehicles</b>	<b>21,765</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Operational activities</b>	<b>656</b>
<b>254</b>	<b>Meetings, conferences, congresses, seminars and other events</b>	<b>656</b>
2542	Expenditure on the organisation of and participation in hearings and other events	656
<b>26</b>	<b>Communication, publications and acquisition of documentation</b>	<b>14,750</b>
<b>260</b>	<b>Communication, information and publications</b>	<b>1,076</b>
2600	Communication	1,076
<b>262</b>	<b>Acquisition of information, documentation and archiving</b>	<b>13,675</b>
2622	Documentation and library expenditure	13,675

## Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022 and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management

Committed	Committed (%)	Payments	Payments (%)	Outstanding commitments	Available credits	Available percentage
3,442,032	75.46%	2,331,194	67.73%	1,110,839	1,119,170	24.54%
292	17.31%	292	100.00%	0	1,393	82.69%
0	0.00%	0		0	1,145	100.00%
0	0.00%	0		0	1,145	100.00%
0	0.00%	0		0	1,145	100.00%
292	54.01%	292	100.00%	0	248	45.99%
0	0.00%	0		0	121	100.00%
292	69.67%	292	100.00%	0	127	30.33%
292	100.00%	292	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
0	0.00%	0		0	127	100.00%
3,441,741	75.48%	2,330,902	67.72%	1,110,839	1,117,777	24.52%
3,045,633	74.30%	2,087,593	68.54%	958,041	1,053,380	25.70%
1,521,948	72.63%	1,036,306	68.09%	485,642	573,596	27.37%
1,521,948	82.65%	1,036,306	68.09%	485,642	319,515	17.35%
0	0.00%	0		0	254,081	100.00%
1,523,686	76.05%	1,051,287	69.00%	472,399	479,784	23.95%
1,523,686	76.05%	1,051,287	69.00%	472,399	479,784	23.95%
382,433	85.92%	243,309	63.62%	139,123	62,666	14.08%
145,048	99.84%	118,454	81.67%	26,594	237	0.16%
145,048	99.84%	118,454	81.67%	26,594	237	0.16%
231,064	83.10%	120,301	52.06%	110,763	46,985	16.90%
6,321	29.04%	4,554	72.05%	1,767	15,444	70.96%
0	0.00%	0		0	656	100.00%
0	0.00%	0		0	656	100.00%
0	0.00%	0		0	656	100.00%
13,675	92.71%	0	0.00%	13,675	1,076	7.29%
0	0.00%	0			1,076	100.00%
0	0.00%	0		0	1,076	100.00%
13,675	100.00%	0	0.00%	13,675	0	0.00%
13,675	100.00%	0	0.00%	13,675	0	0.00%

7. RE-USED ASSIGNED REVENUE FROM 2021 (C5)

		Final Appropriations
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,288,605</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Persons working with the institution</b>	<b>180,196</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Members of the institution and delegates</b>	<b>39,211</b>
<b>100</b>	<b>Specific allowances and payments</b>	<b>39,211</b>
1000	Specific allowances and payments	9,681
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	29,530
<b>16</b>	<b>Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution</b>	<b>140,984</b>
<b>162</b>	<b>Missions</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>163</b>	<b>Activities relating to all persons working with the institution</b>	<b>140,739</b>
1636	Restaurants and canteens	67,995
1638	Early childhood centre and approved day nurseries	72,744
<b>2</b>	<b>Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure</b>	<b>5,108,409</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Buildings and associated costs</b>	<b>5,065,805</b>
<b>200</b>	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>4,882,432</b>
2000	Rent	372,030
2007	Fitting-out of premises	4,472,381
2008	Other expenditure on buildings	38,022
<b>202</b>	<b>Other expenditure on buildings</b>	<b>183,373</b>
2026	Security and surveillance	183,373
<b>21</b>	<b>Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance</b>	<b>12,584</b>
<b>210</b>	<b>Equipment, operating costs and services relating to data-processing and telecommunications</b>	<b>12,584</b>
2100	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work	12,270
2103	Telecommunications	314
<b>23</b>	<b>Current administrative expenditure</b>	<b>25,080</b>
<b>232</b>	<b>Legal costs and damages</b>	<b>25,080</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Operational activities</b>	<b>4,941</b>
<b>254</b>	<b>Meetings, conferences, congresses, seminars and other events</b>	<b>4,941</b>
2542	Expenditure on the organisation of and participation in hearings and other events	1,411
2548	Interpreting	3,530

## Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022 and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management

Committed	Committed (%)	Payments	Payments (%)	Outstanding commitments	Available credits	Available percentage
5,239,040	99.06%	3,106,429	59.29%	2,132,611	49,565	0.94%
150,665	83.61%	140,984	93.57%	9,681	29,530	16.39%
9,681	24.69%	0	0.00%	9,681	29,530	75.31%
9,681	24.69%	0	0.00%	9,681	29,530	75.31%
9,681	100.00%	0	0.00%	9,681	0	0.00%
0	0.00%	0		0	29,530	100.00%
140,984	100.00%	140,984	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
245	100.00%	245	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
140,739	100.00%	140,739	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
67,995	100.00%	67,995	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
72,744	100.00%	72,744	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
5,088,374	99.61%	2,965,444	58.28%	2,122,930	20,035	0.39%
5,064,635	99.98%	2,953,974	58.33%	2,110,660	1,170	0.02%
4,881,262	99.98%	2,770,601	56.76%	2,110,660	1,170	0.02%
372,030	100.00%	372,030	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
4,472,381	100.00%	2,393,892	53.53%	2,078,489	0	0.00%
36,852	96.92%	4,680	12.70%	32,172	1,170	3.08%
183,373	100.00%	183,373	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
183,373	100.00%	183,373	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
12,584	100.00%	314	2.50%	12,270	0	0.00%
12,584	100.00%	314	2.50%	12,270	0	0.00%
12,270	100.00%	0	0.00%	12,270	0	0.00%
314	100.00%	314	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
6,215	24.78%	6,215	100.00%	0	18,865	75.22%
6,215	24.78%	6,215	100.00%	0	18,865	75.22%
4,941	100.00%	4,941	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
4,941	100.00%	4,941	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
1,411	100.00%	1,411	100.00%	0	0	0.00%
3,530	100.00%	3,530	100.00%	0	0	0.00%

8. APPROPRIATIONS FROM EXTERNAL ASSIGNED REVENUE (R0)

		Final appropriations
<b>Total</b>		<b>182,094</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure</b>	<b>182,094</b>
25	Operational activities	182,094
<b>254</b>	<b>Meetings, conferences, congresses, seminars and other events</b>	<b>182,094</b>
2542	Expenditure on the organisation of and participation in hearings and other events	182,094

# III.

## Annual Budgetary Accounts 2022 and Report on Budgetary and Financial Management

Committed	Committed (%)	Payments	Payments (%)	Outstanding commitments	Available credits	Available percentage
91,499	50.25%	18,499	20.22%	73,000	90,596	49.75%
91,499	50.25%	18,499	20.22%	73,000	90,596	49.75%
91,499	50.25%	18,499	20.22%	73,000	90,596	49.75%
91,499	50.25%	18,499	20.22%	73,000	90,596	49.75%
91,499	50.25%	18,499	20.22%	73,000	90,596	49.75%

9. EESC BUDGET RESULT

2022	EUR
Revenue for the financial year	18,979,321
Payments against current year's budget appropriations	-134,344,006
Payments against assigned revenue appropriations	-5,456,121
Payment appropriations carried over to year N+1	-12,189,866
Cancellation of unused payment appropriations carried over from year N-1	4,655,361
Evolution of assigned revenue	712,824
Exchange differences for the year (symbolic)	0
<b>Budget result</b>	<b>-127,642,487</b>

# PART IV

## Appendices





## PART IV – CONTENTS

<b>1. INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT: STATE OF PLAY .....</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>2. 2022 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT .....</b>	<b>155</b>
2.1 COVERAGE .....	155
2.2 INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE .....	155
2.3 RISK ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING .....	155
2.4 AUDIT ENGAGEMENTS .....	156
2.5 OTHER ACTIVITIES .....	157
2.6 AUDIT COMMITTEE .....	158
2.7 CONCLUSION .....	158
<b>3. DISPOSING OF FIXED ASSETS 2022.....</b>	<b>159</b>
3.1 DISPOSING OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY OR MAJOR INSTALLATIONS FREE OF CHARGE IN 2022 .....	159
<b>4. KEY ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ("KAPIS") .....</b>	<b>160</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	160
4.2 DIRECTORATES FOR LEGISLATIVE WORK.....	161
4.4 DIRECTORATE FOR STATUTORY BODIES AND MEMBERS' WORKING CONDITIONS .....	163
4.5 DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS....	167
4.6 DIRECTORATE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE .....	174
4.7 LEGAL SERVICE.....	189
4.8 DIRECTORATE FOR LOGISTICS.....	190
4.9 DIRECTORATE FOR TRANSLATION.....	200
<b>5. RESULTS OF EX POST CONTROLS 2022.....</b>	<b>206</b>
5.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF CONTROLS .....	206
5.2 RESULTS OF EX POST VERIFICATION .....	207
<b>6. REPORT ON BUILDING CONTRACTS 2022 AND REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ACCORDING TO ART. 266(1) OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION.....</b>	<b>212</b>
6.1 BUILDING CONTRACTS 2022 .....	212
6.2 ARTICLE 266 FR REPORT .....	213
6.2.1 Part 1: The expenditure and surface area for each building.....	213
6.2.2 Part 2: The expected evolution of the global programming.....	213

6.2.3	Part 3: Project implementation of new building projects previously submitted to the European Parliament and the Council .....	219
6.2.4	Table: Expenditure and surface for each building (CoR and EESC together) .....	220
<b>7.</b>	<b>INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN REGARDING DECISIONS WHICH ARE IRREGULAR OR CONTRARY TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DURING 2022 .....</b>	<b>221</b>
7.1	ARTICLE 92 (3) INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED IN 2022 .....	221
<b>8.</b>	<b>WAIVING OF RECOVERY OF AMOUNTS RECEIVABLE INVOLVING EUR 60 000 OR MORE IN 2022.....</b>	<b>222</b>
8.1	WAIVING OF RECOVERY OF AMOUNTS RECEIVABLE INVOLVING EUR 60 000 OR MORE IN 2022 .....	222
<b>9.</b>	<b>REPORT ON CONTRACTS AND NEGOTIATED PROCEDURES 2022 .....</b>	<b>223</b>
9.1	REPORT ON NEGOTIATED PROCEDURES ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 74 'POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE AUTHORISING OFFICER' OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION .	225
9.2	EX-POST PUBLICITY OF SIGNED CONTRACTS IN 2022, ACCORDING TO POINT 3.3 OF ANNEX I OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION.....	226
<b>10.</b>	<b>AVERAGE PAYMENT TIMES – PAYMENT DELAY SUSPENSION.....</b>	<b>227</b>
10.1	FIGURES ON AVERAGE PAYMENT TIMES – PAYMENT DELAY SUSPENSION IN 2022 .....	229
<b>11.</b>	<b>FOLLOW-UP TO OBSERVATIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT'S 2020 AND 2021 FINAL DISCHARGE RESOLUTIONS .....</b>	<b>230</b>
11.1	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION OF 18 OCTOBER 2022 WITH OBSERVATIONS FORMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DECISION ON DISCHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020, SECTION VI – EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (2021/2111(DEC)).....	230
11.2	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION OF 10 MAY 2023 WITH OBSERVATIONS FORMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DECISION ON DISCHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021, SECTION VI – EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (2022/2086(DEC)).....	245
<b>12.</b>	<b>RESULTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CLOSED EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF) CASES IN 2022 .....</b>	<b>273</b>
12.1	THE RESULTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CLOSED EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF) CASES, WHERE THE EESC OR ANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WORKING FOR THE COMMITTEE WERE THE SUBJECT OF THE INVESTIGATION ...	273
<b>13.</b>	<b>DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF BY NATIONALITY, FUNCTION GROUP, TYPE OF CONTRACT AND GENDER ON 1 MARCH 2023 .....</b>	<b>274</b>

<b>14. OCCUPATION OF POSTS BY GRADE ACTUALLY FILLED ON 31 DECEMBER 2022 .....</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>15. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF MEMBERS' EXPENDITURE CONCERNING ITEM 1004.....</b>	<b>279</b>
15.1 COUNCIL DECISION No 2013/471/EU OF 23 SEPTEMBER 2013 .....	279
15.2 EVALUATION REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF COUNCIL DECISION No 2013/471/EU IN 2022 .....	279
15.3 DETAILED ANNEXES SHOWING THE REIMBURSEMENT TO EESC MEMBERS FOR MISSIONS AND THE MEETINGS ATTENDED BY EESC MEMBERS AND THEIR ALTERNATES .....	284

## **1. INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT: STATE OF PLAY**

The annual compliance assessment exercise for 2022 was launched at the end of the year. As in the previous year, compliance with the EESC's 16 internal control standards (ICS) and the effectiveness of the ICS were measured through a 36-question quantitative and qualitative survey, filled out by all directorates and Team SG. Directorate ITT was not included in the 2022 compliance exercise since it only became functional in October 2022. Beginning with 2023, Directorate ITT will also participate in the annual compliance exercise.

The results for the 2022 questionnaire are slightly better than in 2021. Compliance (which measures to which degree the requirements of the 16 ICS are implemented) slightly increased from 79.9% in 2021 to 80.3% in 2022 (increases in ICS 1 Mission, ICS 8 Processes and Procedures and ICS 12 Information and Communication were almost entirely offset by the decrease in ICS 11 Document Management). Effectiveness (which measures to which degree the implementation of the requirements of the 16 ICS works as intended) moderately increased from 71.9% in 2021 to 74% in 2022 (the main improvements were registered in ICS 5 Objectives and Performance Indicators, ICS 8 Processes and Procedures and ICS 9 Management Supervision). As in 2021, standards were either implemented or partially implemented in 2022.

The EESC also conducts an annual risk assessment exercise to analyse the inherent risks identified for a selected number of objectives in the Annual Work Programme and to determine the residual risks after internal controls are applied. In 2022, the internal controls proved to be an effective tool for decreasing inherent risks (e.g. inherent risks in the categories "critical" and "very important" decreased by 64% from 36 to 13 following the application of internal controls). Internal controls are also expected to function properly for the 2023 risk assessment exercise.

In 2022, the Internal Control Service conducted a review of the Light Verification process at the EESC, and this review led to an updated Decision on Light Verification (No 009/23A), approved by the Secretary General in January 2023. The new decision includes, inter alia, all previous recommendations of the Internal Audit Sector in respect to Light Verification process.

With regard to the ICS 8 Processes and Procedures action point from last year – registration of revised procedures on a common SharePoint page for all directorates and the creation of a centralised registry – while significant progress was made in 2022, this action was not completed, as three directorates are yet to upload their processes and procedures. However, this action point is expected to be finalised in 2023.

## **2. 2022 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

This report reflects the situation at the end of January 2023.

### **2.1 COVERAGE**

The Internal Audit Service (IAS) covers all EESC activities and appropriations, as regards both the EESC's own structures and the Joint Services, i.e. the Directorates for Logistics and for Translation, and, since October 2022, the Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology and the unit for Public Procurement and Financial Management. Concerning audits in the Joint Services, the IAS works closely with the internal auditor of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), under the provisions of the EESC-CoR Cooperation Agreement, last updated in 2021.

### **2.2 INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE**

The staffing of the IAS has a direct impact on the volume of work that can be undertaken, and thus on the assurance that can be provided on the EESC's risk and control environment. In 2022, three posts were earmarked for the IAS: the internal auditor, one administrator and one assistant. The small size of the IAS has long been a matter of concern, but in the context of the 2023 budget procedure and following the retirement of the service's assistant, the AST post in the IAS has now been converted into an AD post.<sup>1</sup> As from January 2023, the IAS will thus comprise a total of three AD posts, including that of the internal auditor. The size of the IAS means that it continues to be vulnerable to staff absences (that were significant in 2022) and difficulties filling posts. Also, in the future, the tasks undertaken up until now by the assistant will need to be done by the administrators. However, another positive development in this context is that an assistant from outside the IAS has taken over responsibility for strictly technical issues relating to the audit committee.

### **2.3 RISK ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING**

In its risk assessment and resulting planning, the IAS utilises, inter alia, the administration's risk analysis, internal reports and various other types of available data, in combination with annual reports of the Court of Auditors (ECA) and discharge resolutions adopted by the European Parliament, including any preparatory documents used in this context. The IAS relies almost entirely on information it can obtain for itself, with little unsolicited input from the administration. It would be helpful if the IAS were always notified of official communications with external control bodies, as required by the audit charter.

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<sup>1</sup> EU officials are categorised into administrator (AD) and assistant (AST) function groups.

## 2.4 AUDIT ENGAGEMENTS

### 2.4.1. Audits finalised in 2022

Only one audit was finalised in 2022, on payment times. The resulting report was submitted to the President and the Audit Committee on 3 November.

#### *Payment Times*

The IAS found that a considerable proportion of late payments reported by the EESC in recent years constituted a reputational risk.

The audit showed that the vast majority of late payments originated from a practice of waiting for travel booked via the Committee's travel agency, currently CWT Belgium, to be completed before disbursing payments. A procedure introduced as a pilot project in the Members' Working Conditions unit more or less at the same time as the audit was launched, was found to have the potential to improve timeliness and significantly lower the EESC's overall rate of late payments.

The audit also showed that the statistics on payments comprised data that should not have been included in the first place. Therefore, clear criteria for compliance with and suspension of the time limits laid down in the Financial Regulation should be established, and appropriate rules, guidance and instructions should be put in place regarding the classification of payment types and their digital processing. In addition, certain recommendations of a more technical nature were made in view of further reducing the number of late payments.

### 2.4.2. Other envisaged audits

At the end of 2022, an audit on meeting authorisations originally included in the 2021 audit plan and launched in November 2021 was still undergoing a protracted contradictory procedure. Two audits were envisaged in the 2022 audit plan. The first one, on the strategic cycle, was launched in 2022, whereas the launch of the second, on reimbursements, was contingent on the audit on Meeting Authorisations first being finalised. The audit on reimbursements is thus envisaged to be launched in 2023.

An audit on selecting CCMI delegates was launched in November 2022, and this report is expected to be issued in early 2023.

In conclusion, three audits are still ongoing at the end of 2022, two of which are expected to result in audit reports being issued during the first months of 2023.

### 2.4.3. Independence and cooperation

The IAS has not experienced any interference in determining the scope of internal auditing, in performing its work or in communicating results, and confirms its organisational independence.

Overall, cooperation with the various EESC departments has been good.

## 2.5 OTHER ACTIVITIES

IAS activities in 2022 included, among other things:

- *Establishment of a better-defined and more coherent audit framework.* After a lengthy process, both the internal audit charter and the charter of the audit committee with procedural rules were approved by the audit committee in December 2022. They should both be adopted by the bureau in the first part of 2023. It is particularly important that an internal audit charter be adopted without further delay, as the current charter lacks legal validity due to the way in which it was adopted in 2011.<sup>2</sup>
- *Consulting engagements.* In January, the IAS issued a report in the context of a consulting engagement in the form of a brief analysis of staffing issues at the EESC, requested by the president in agreement with the three group presidents. A main concern was that, due to a lack of human resources in Legislative Work, the EESC would be unable to fulfil its advisory role. This engagement led to the decision to commission a large-scale external audit on the matter, which was still ongoing at the end of 2022. In February, the IAS also issued a report on a bureau note under preparation on compliance with institutional deadlines. At the same time, this engagement served as a partial follow-up to the 2019 audit on the same topic, an audit that has been revisited several times as corrective actions remain sketchy.
- *Organisation of meetings and other technical and secretarial assistance provided to the Audit Committee.* See point 6.
- *Cooperation with other institutions.* The cooperation with the CoR's Internal Audit Service has already been mentioned. The IAS also maintains direct contact with the ECA, the Budget Unit however being the ECA's formal contact point at the EESC.
- *Training.* In 2022, staff continued to take part in training sessions offered by the European Commission, as well as in webinars organised by the IIA and accredited companies. A staff member passed an exam under the Certified Internal Auditor scheme.

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<sup>2</sup> Both charters were adopted by the Bureau on 21 March 2023.



## **2.6 AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The audit committee consists of three EESC members, assisted by an external expert. Its task is to ensure the independence of the internal auditor, monitor the quality of the internal audit work and ensure that audit recommendations are properly taken into account and followed up by the EESC. Except for strictly technical needs, as mentioned above, the IAS provides secretarial assistance to the audit committee. Six pre-scheduled meetings took place in the course of 2022, on 21 February, 16 May, 11 July, 19 September, 7 November and 12 December. Some of these meetings were organised as hybrid meetings.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

The scarce resources and the resulting low output seriously challenge the IAS's ability to provide reasonable assurance regarding application of the principles of sound financial management and performance at the EESC. However, the IAS does not have any indications that serious risks are not being addressed.

### 3. DISPOSING OF FIXED ASSETS 2022

#### Financial Regulation, Article 87: The inventory of assets

1. *Union institutions and agencies or Union bodies referred to in Section 2 of Chapter 3 of this Title shall keep inventories showing the quantity and value of all their tangible, intangible and financial assets in accordance with a model drawn up by the accounting officer of the Commission.  
They shall also check that entries in their respective inventories correspond to the actual situation.  
All items acquired with a period of use greater than one year, which are not consumables, and whose purchase price or production cost is higher than that indicated by the accounting procedures referred to in Article 77 shall be entered in the inventory and recorded in the fixed assets accounts.*
2. *The sale of the Union's tangible assets shall be suitably advertised.*
3. *Union institutions and agencies or Union bodies referred to in Section 2 of Chapter 3 of this Title shall adopt provisions on safeguarding the assets included in their respective inventories and decide which administrative departments are responsible for the inventory system.*

#### Internal financial rules, Article 36: Inventory

*In accordance with Article 87 of the FR the authorising officer by delegation, assisted by the accounting officer, shall adopt provisions on the inventory of tangible, intangible and financial assets.*

### 3.1 DISPOSING OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY OR MAJOR INSTALLATIONS FREE OF CHARGE IN 2022

No immovable property or major installations were made available free of charge by the European Economic and Social Committee during 2022.

## 4. KEY ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ("KAPIs")

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to the Financial Regulation (articles 33.2 and 247.1 (e)), every institution must define and report annually on a set of performance indicators.

The EESC secretariat has therefore developed a set of indicators for all its directorates. Some measure the level of performance (e.g. payment lead times), whilst others measure the level of activity (e.g. a production volume). These are referred to as Key Activity and Performance Indicators (KAPIs). The KAPIs in this appendix refer to the situation in 2022, unless otherwise indicated.

The KAPI initiative is not a top-down exercise. It is, first and foremost, a management tool for the competent services and heads of units and a means to raise awareness about performance amongst all members of staff. Moreover, the exercise gives transparency to the Committee's work, not only for members or senior management, but also vis-à-vis the other institutions.

KAPIs are tools and care should be taken when interpreting them. It is not so much their absolute values as their evolution over time that can reveal trends that may need to be addressed.

KAPIs are presented by directorate and the unit monitoring them but they may reflect an overall situation, such as the absence rate in the secretariat.

For internal purposes, most KAPIs are measured on a monthly basis. For this annual activity report, only annual data have been included.

KAPIs evolve along with the secretariat's activities and organisation and are reviewed regularly. As a consequence of an increased volume of interpreting delivered by service providers other than DG Interpretation, the scope of the indicator was increased. The indicator now includes also interpreting services rendered by the European Parliament and freelance companies.

It has to be noted that in 2022 some KAPIs were influenced by a lower activity in the aftermath of the COVID-19 health crisis showing up in some figures such as:

- organisation of partnership events;
- communication related activities (e.g., visits of groups and presentations made, etc.);
- difficulties in workplace relations;
- copy shop productivity.

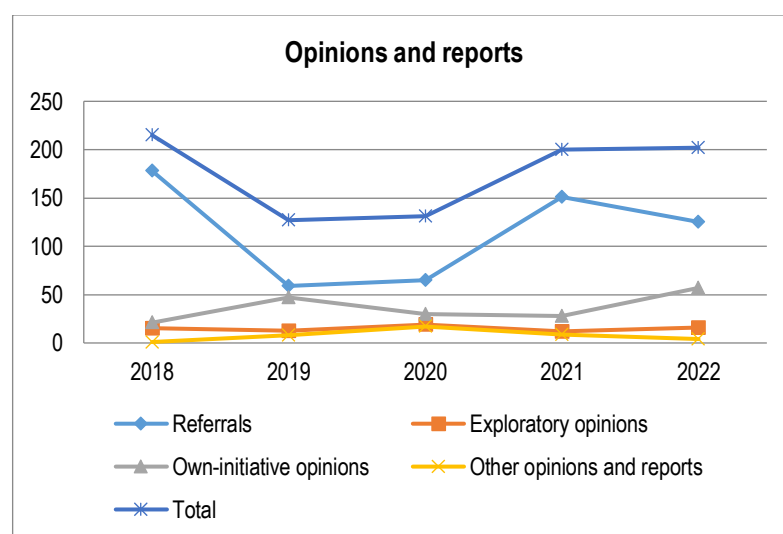
However, the main activities reflected in the organisation of physical meetings such as conferences, hearings and meetings within the EESC as well as outside have come again close to pre COVID-19 health crisis level and have thus also resulted in a higher demand for interpreting.

## 4.2 DIRECTORATES FOR LEGISLATIVE WORK

### Opinions and reports

This indicator measures the number of opinions and reports adopted by the Committee.

	Opinions and reports				
	Referrals	Exploratory opinions	Own-initiative opinions	Other opinions, position papers and reports	Total
2022	125	16	57	4	202
2021	151	12	28	9	200
2020	65	19	30	17*	131
2019	59	13	47	8	127
2018	178	15	21	1	215

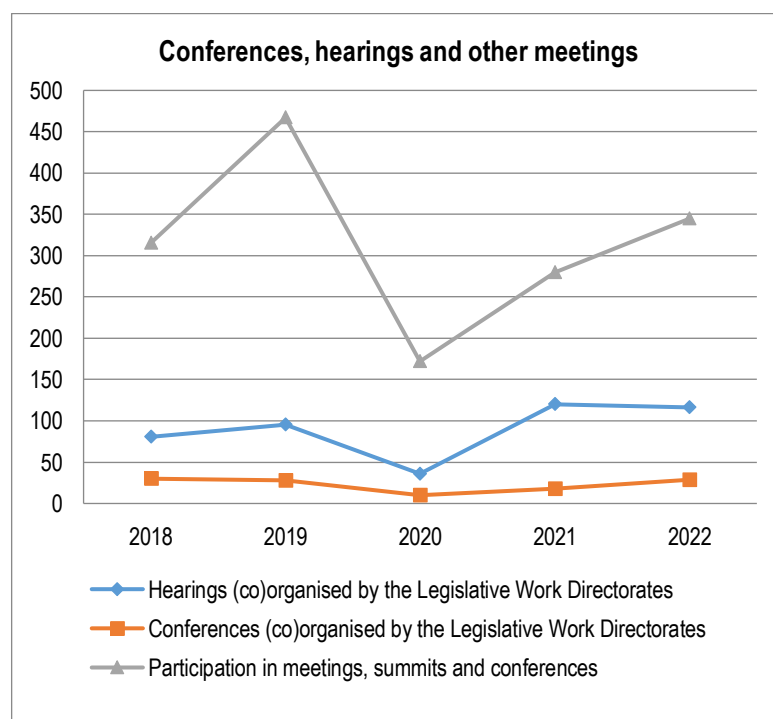


\* of which 13 position papers were adopted following referrals

### Conferences, hearings and other meetings

This indicator measures the number of meetings organised by the Legislative Work Directorates of the EESC and the participation of EESC members in high-level conferences as part of their work within these Directorates.

	Conferences, hearings and other meetings		
	Hearings (co)organised by the Legislative Work Directorates	Conferences (co)organised by the Legislative Work Directorates	Participation in meetings, summits and conferences
<b>2022</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>345</b>
2021	120	18	280
2020	36	10	172
2019	95	28	467
2018	81	30	315

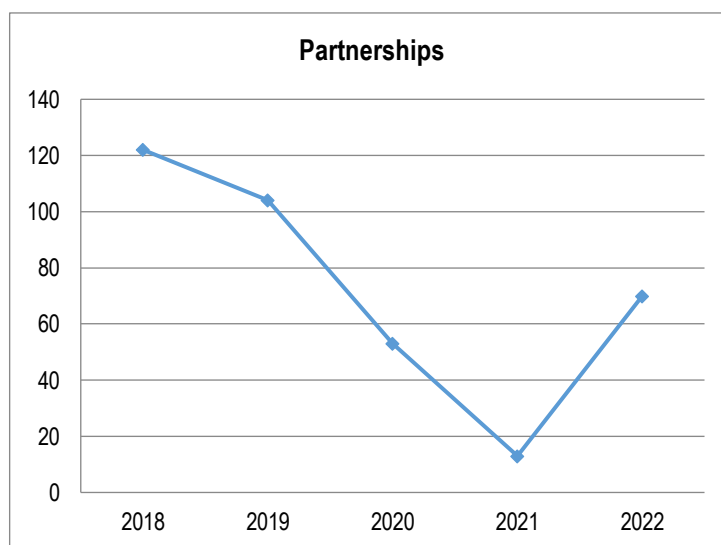


#### 4.4 DIRECTORATE FOR STATUTORY BODIES AND MEMBERS' WORKING CONDITIONS

##### Partnerships

This indicator measures the number of events requested by external organisations in partnership with the EESC.

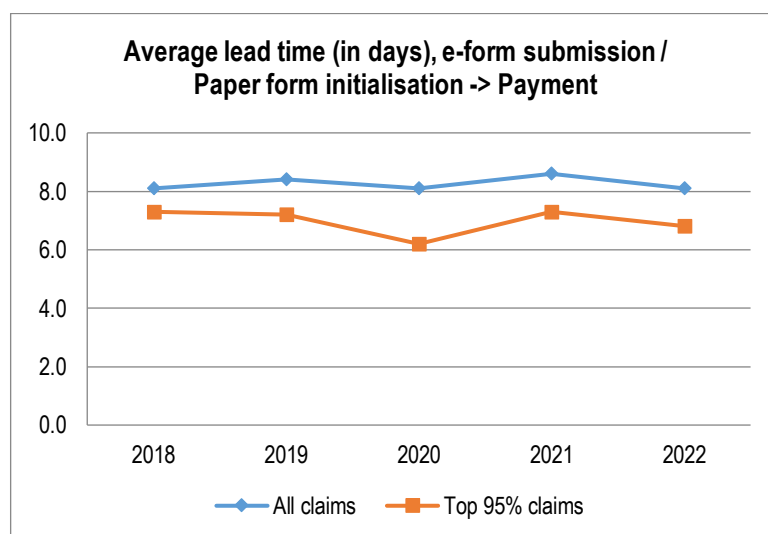
	Partnerships
2022	70
2021	13
2020	53
2019	104
2018	122



### Members' expenses – payment lead-time

EESC members receive a compensation for travel and subsistence expenses incurred in that capacity. These indicators measure the average lead-time between the submission of the reimbursement claim and the payment date. They present both the overall average and the average for the top 95% of reimbursements, the purpose of the latter being to exclude those cases where the reimbursements are delayed by exceptional circumstances (clarification of rules, further checks, etc). All lead times are in calendar days.

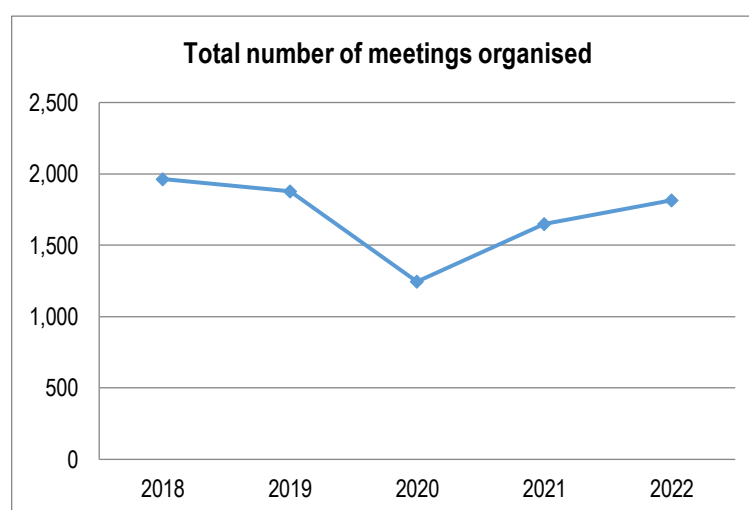
	All claims	Top 95% claims
2022	8,1	6,8
2021	8,6	7,3
2020	8,1	6,2
2019	8,4	7,2
2018	8,1	7,3



### Meetings organised

This indicator measures the number of EESC and CoR meetings taking place in the Committees' conference rooms allowing for hybrid set-up and being equipped with interpretation facilities\*.

	EESC		CoR		JS		Total	FTE	Meetings / FTE
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%			
<b>2022</b>	<b>1.045</b>	57,6%	<b>767</b>	42,3%	<b>3</b>	0,2%	1.815	<b>18,3</b>	99,2
2021	1.171	70,9%	478	29,0%	2	0,1%	1.651	21,1	78,1
2020	839	67,4%	381	30,6%	25	2,0%	1.245	20,4	61,0
2019	962	51,3%	876	46,7%	39	2,1%	1.877	20,2	93,0
2018	1.086	55,3%	861	43,8%	17	0,9%	1.964	20,5	95,8



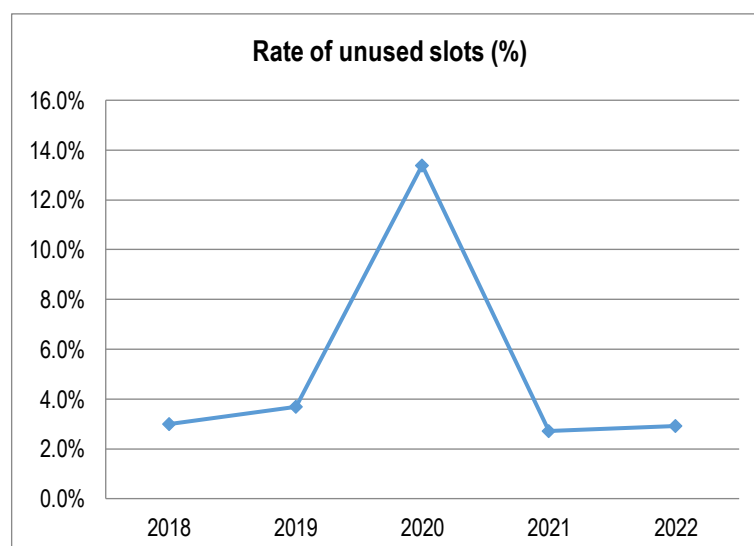
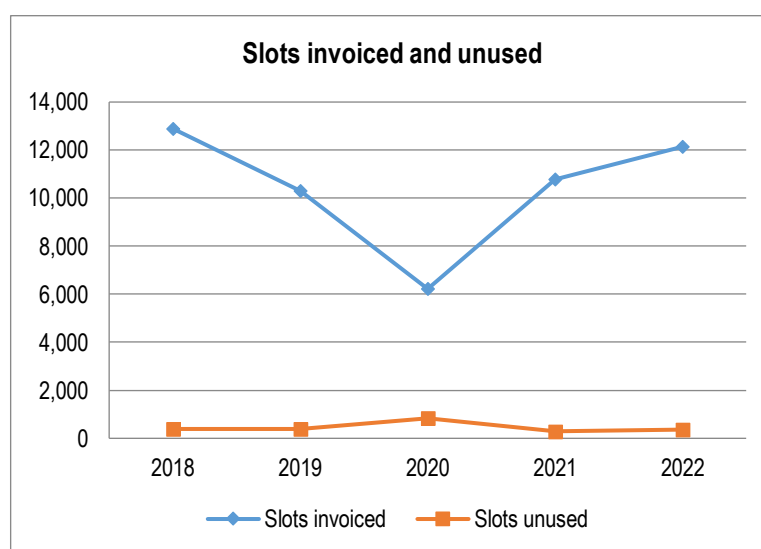
\* All types of occupation of rooms (meetings, visits, conferences, etc.).



### Interpretation activity and rate of unused interpretation

The EESC depends to a large extent (> 85%) on DG Interpretation and its rules according to which DG Interpretation bills for services which are no longer required but not cancelled 2-3 weeks in advance (depending on the day of the week). The figures below include also interpreting services rendered by the European Parliament and freelance companies. This indicator shows the global level of interpretation activity at the EESC, as well as the global level of interpreting services paid for but not rendered.

	Slots invoiced		Slots unused		
	Number	Amount (€)	Number	Amount (€)	Rate of unused slots (%)
2022	12.153	6.441.304	353	187.040	2,9%
2021	10.790	5.567.502	293	151.256	2,7%
2020	6.221	3.157.508	833	417.339	13,4%
2019	10.304	5.131.392	381	189.738	3,7%
2018	12.892	6.420.122	387	192.726	3,0%

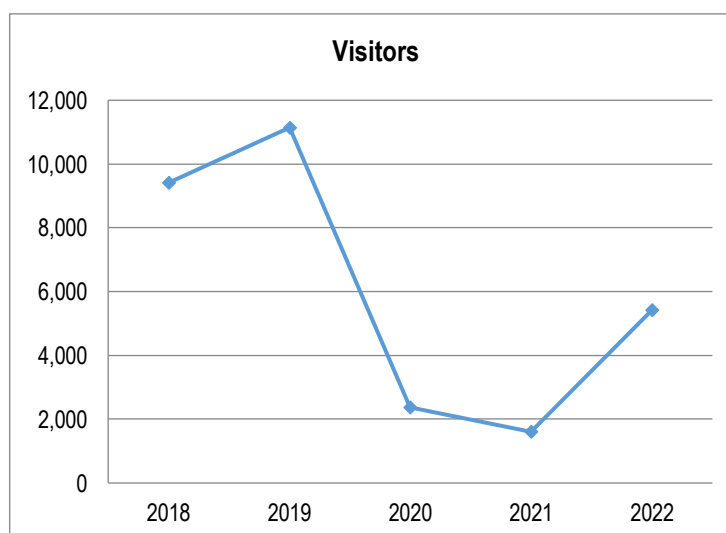
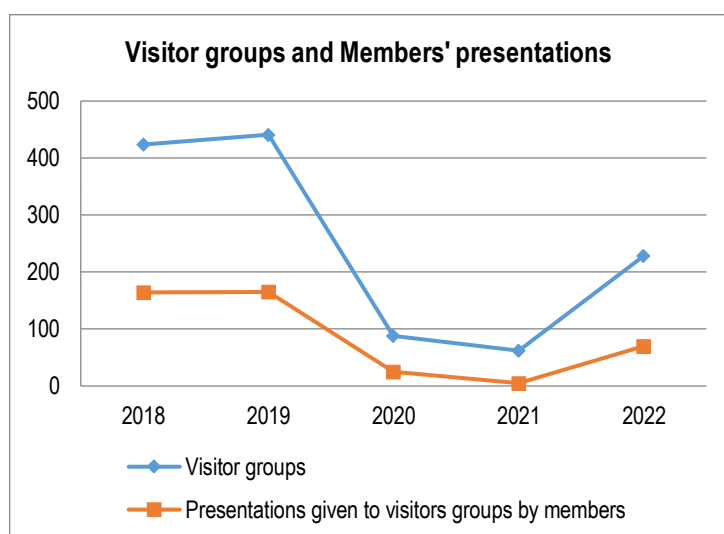


#### 4.5 DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

##### Visitor groups

This indicator measures the number of visitors groups and visitors, as well as the number of presentations given to visitor groups by members.

	Visitor groups	Presentations given to visitor groups by members	Visitors
2022	228	70	5.416
2021	62	5	1.605
2020	88	25	2.371
2019	441	165	11.144
2018	424	164	9.419

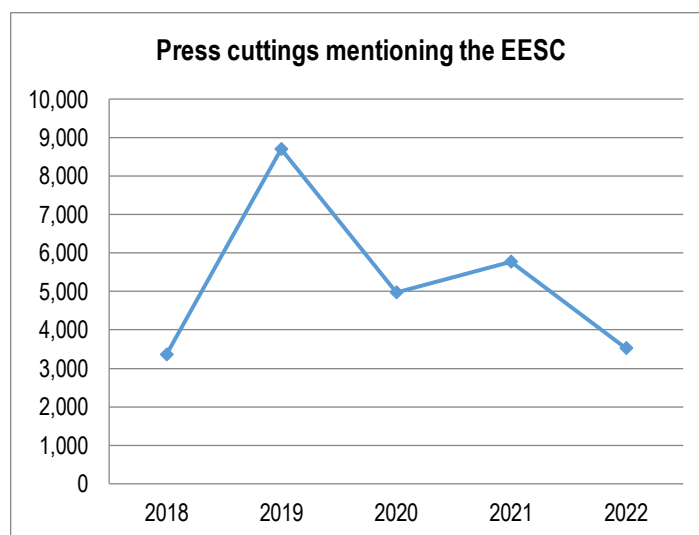
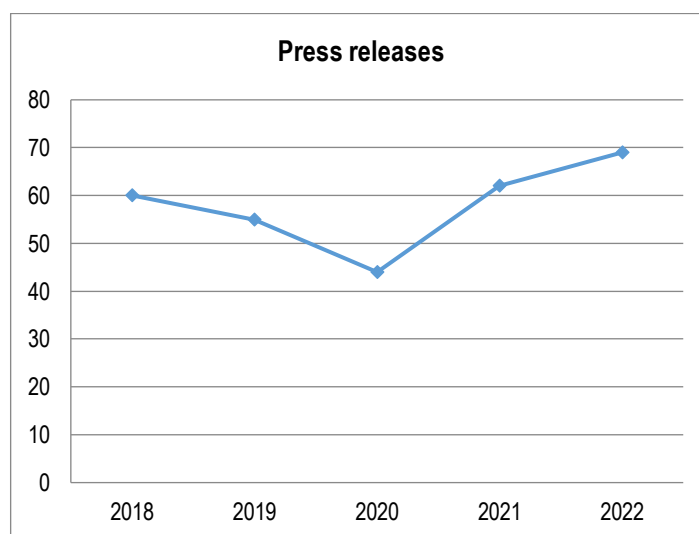


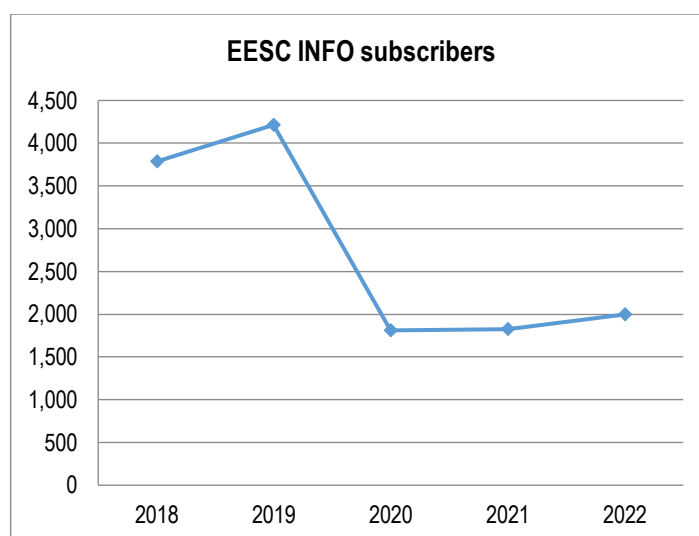
### Press activities

This indicator measures the number of press releases issued by the Committee, the number of press cuttings reported in which the Committee is mentioned and the EESC INFO subscribers.

	Press releases	Press cuttings mentioning the EESC	EESC INFO subscribers
2022	69	3.520	2.000*
2021	62	5.767	1.823*
2020	44	4.975	1.811*
2019	55	8.701	4.214
2018	60	3.364	3.782

\* The application of the new general data protection regulation (GDPR) in 2020 had an important impact on the number of EESC Info subscribers as now, they have to give their explicit consent. This led to a significant reduction of subscribers.

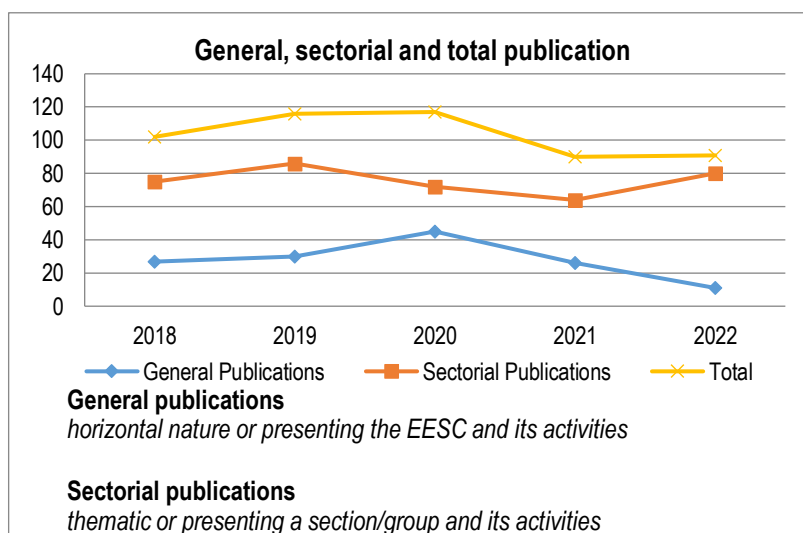




## Publications

This indicator measures the number of general or sectorial publications by the EESC.

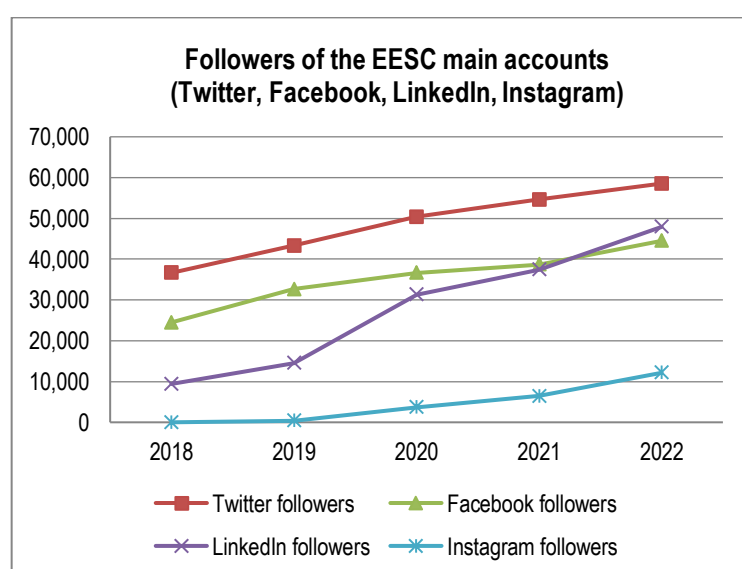
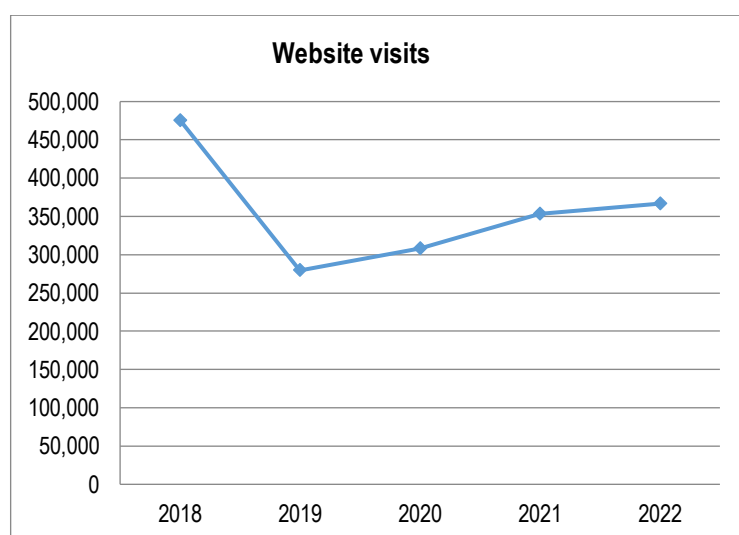
	General Publications	Sectorial Publications	Total
2022	11	80	91
2021	26	64	90
2020	45	72	117
2019	30	86	116
2018	27	75	102



### Internet and social media

This indicator measures the number of pages viewed on the Internet site of the Committee and the number of followers on the EESC corporate Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram accounts.

	Website visits	Twitter followers	Facebook followers	LinkedIn followers	Instagram followers
2022	366.549	58.529	44.486	47.910	12.139
2021	353.704	54.618	38.669	37.442	6.483
2020	308.051	50.351	36.644	31.345	3.712
2019	279.370	43.307	32.622	14.562	430
2018	475.656	36.634	24.486	9.407	-

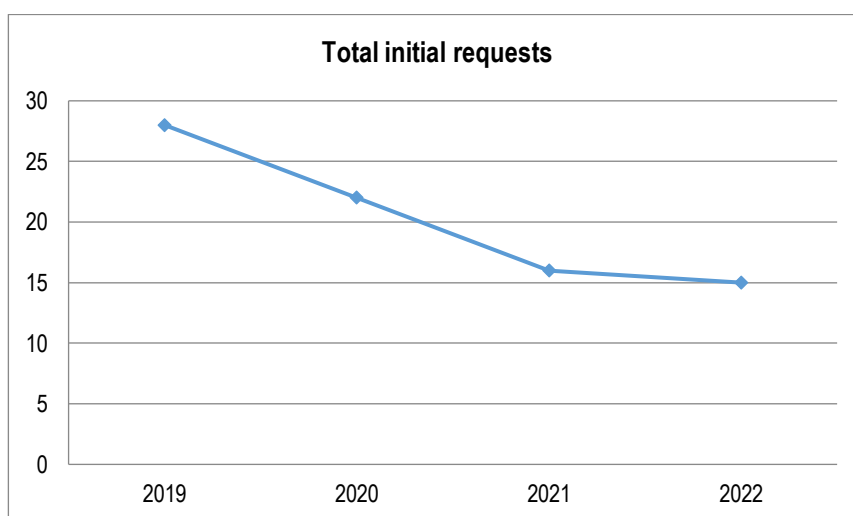
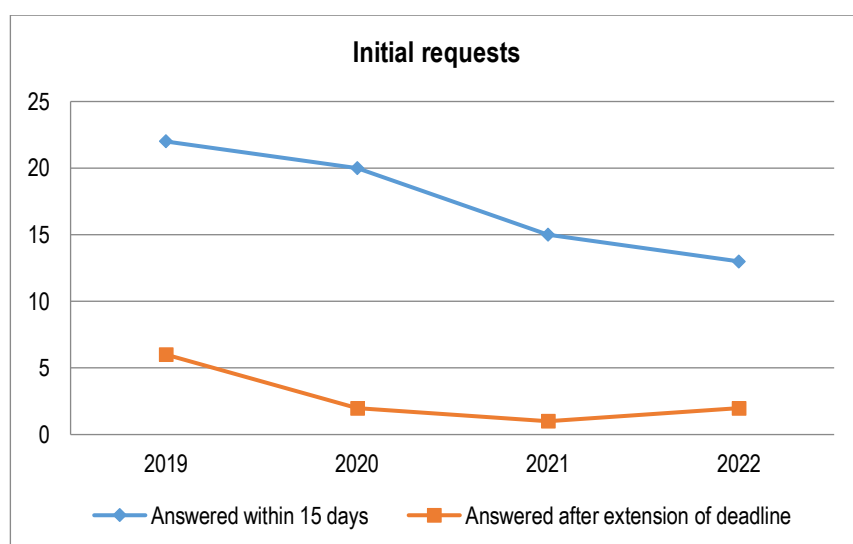


### Request for access to documents

This indicator measures the number of direct requests for access to EESC documents.

	Initial requests			Confirmatory requests*
	Answered within 15 days	Answered after extension of deadline	Total	
2022	13	2	15	1
2021	15	1	16	1
2020	20	2	22	2
2019	22	6	28	3

\* A confirmatory request is the request for review made by the author when the initial request for access to documents is rejected in whole or in part.

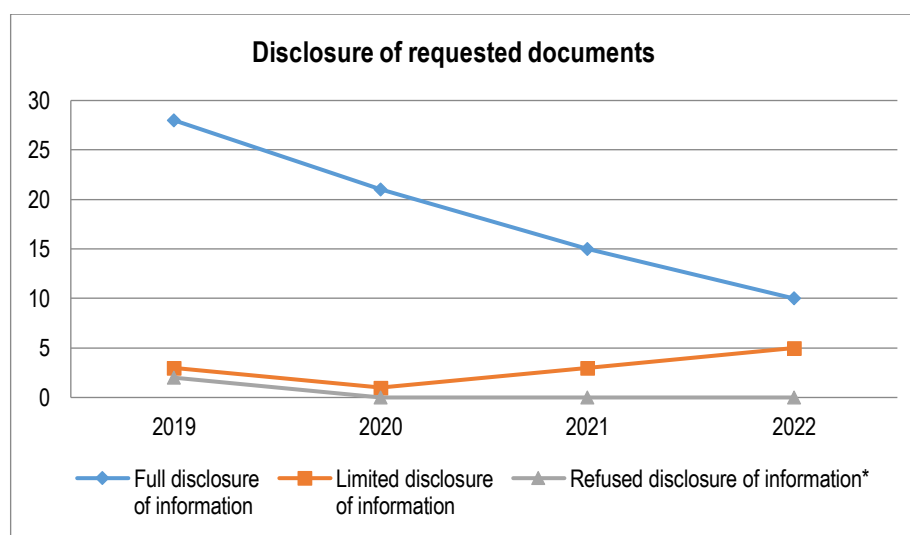


### Disclosure of requested documents

This indicator measures the number of disclosure of information following a request for direct access to EESC documents

	Full disclosure of information	Limited disclosure of information	Refused disclosure of information*
2022	10	5	0
2021	15	3	0
2020	21	1	0
2019	28	3	2

\* Refusal to access to documents requests always meet the requirements set out by article 4 of Regulation n° 1049/2001.





#### 4.6 DIRECTORATE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE

In 2022, the number of posts made available by the budgetary authority was 669. Only the KAPI on the post occupation rate refers to the number of posts, whereas the other KAPI refer to the workforce. The number of staff employed (officials (incl. one seconded in the interest of the service), temporary agents, contract agents, seconded national experts and medical adviser) was 707 on 31 December 2022. All references to the composition of staff refer to that date.

When not differently specified, the AD function group includes contract agents of FG IV, ENDS and the medical adviser; likewise, when not differently specified, the AST function group includes contract agents of GFII and FGIII, and the AST/SC function group includes contract agents of FGI.

##### *Abbreviations*

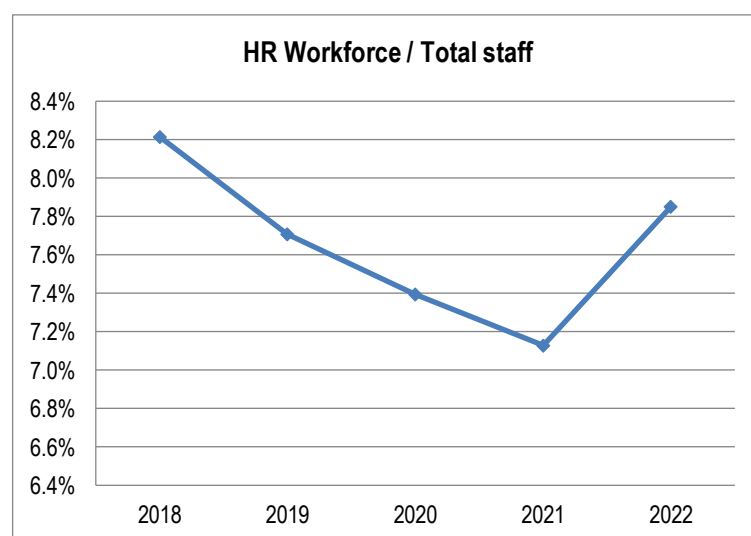
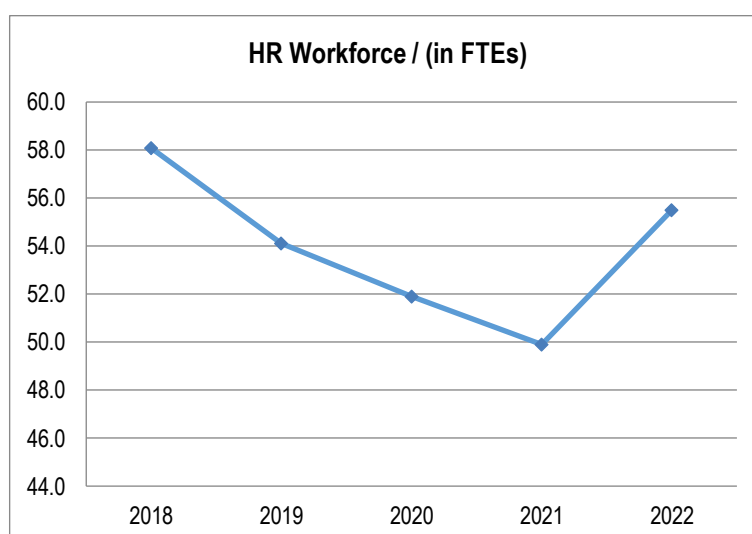
For the indicators in this area, the following abbreviations are used:

AD = administrators  
AST = assistants  
CS = special adviser (Conseiller special - doctor)  
CT = contract agents  
SNE = seconded national experts  
F = female  
FG = function group  
FS = officials on probation (fonctionnaire stagiaire)  
FT = established officials (fonctionnaire titulaire)  
FTE = full-time equivalents  
JS = Joint Services (shared by the EESC and the CoR)  
M = male  
SC = secretaries/clerks  
TP = temporary agents

### HR workforce

This indicator measures, at the end of the year, the ratio between the HR resources of the DHRF, in "full-time equivalents" (FTE's), and the total number of staff (officials, temporary and contract agents, SNE's, special advisors) of the Committee. Due to a change of the methodology, implemented in the AAR 2018, the numbers of previous years were recalculated according to this new methodology.

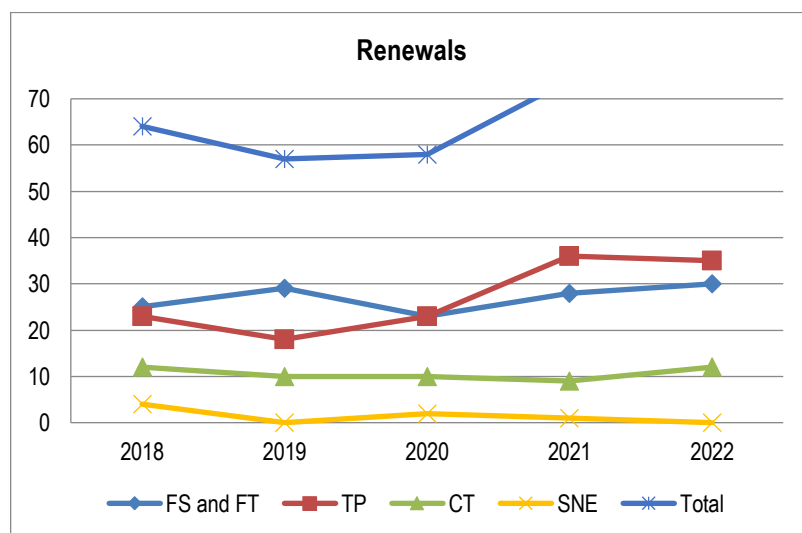
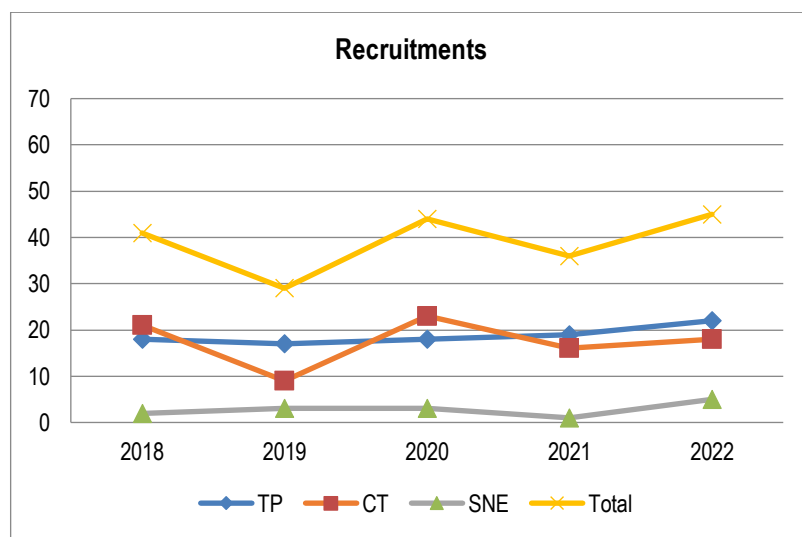
	HR Workforce (in FTEs)	Total staff	HR Workforce (in FTE) / Total staff
2022	55,5	707	7,9%
2021	49,9	700	7,1%
2020	51,9	702	7,4%
2019	54,1	702	7,7%
2018	58,1	707	8,2%



### Number of recruitments/renewals

This indicator measures the number of recruitments and renewals by type of contract.

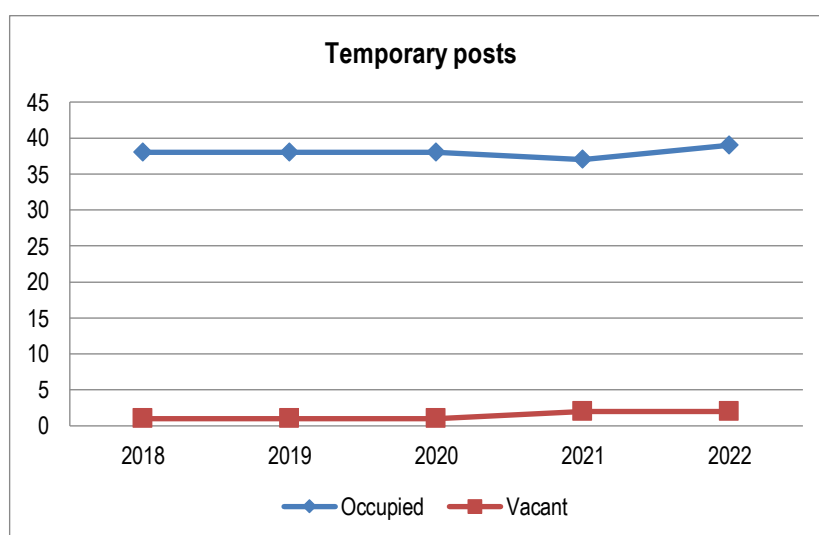
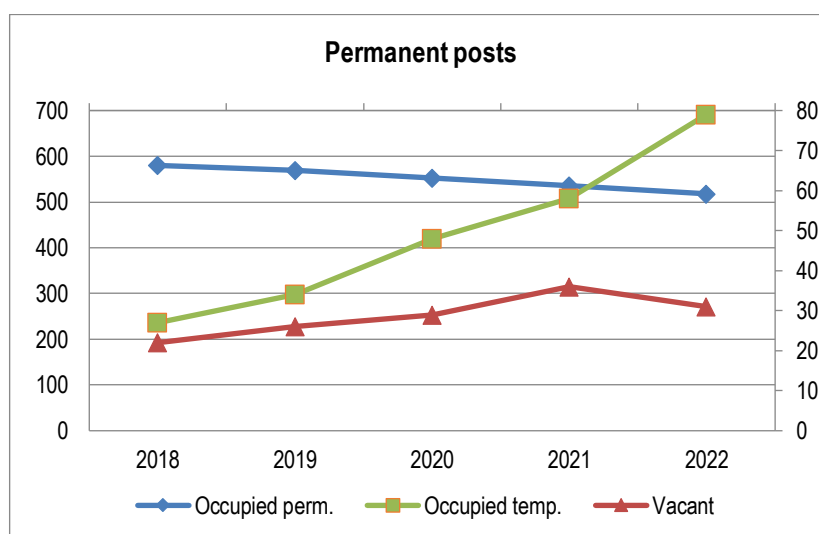
	Recruitments					Renewals			
	FS and FT	TP	CT	SNE	Total	TP	CT	SNE	Total
2022	30	35	12	0	77	22	18	5	45
2021	28	36	9	1	74	19	16	1	36
2020	23	23	10	2	58	18	23	3	44
2019	29	18	10	0	57	17	9	3	29
2018	25	23	12	4	64	18	21	2	41

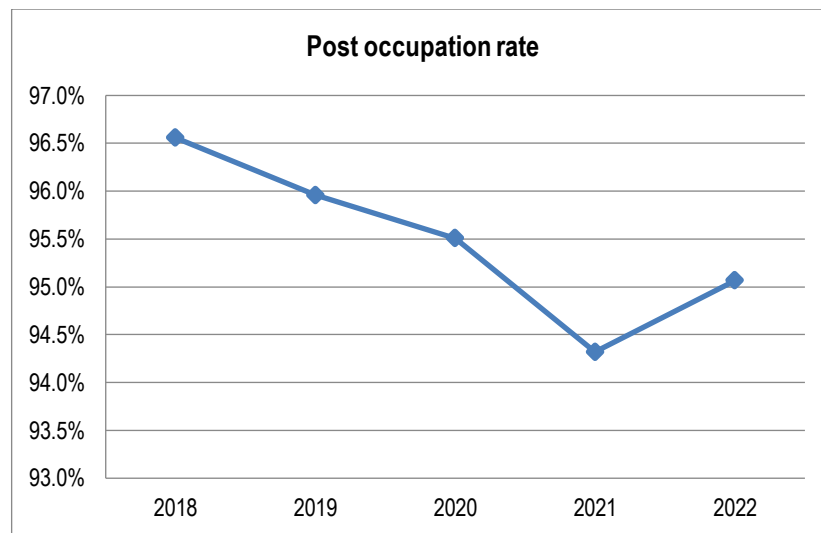


### Post occupation rate

This indicator measures, at the end of the year, the occupation rate of the Committee's posts. It distinguishes between an occupation of permanent and temporary posts (staff on parental or family leave are considered to permanently occupy the post).

	Total	Post occupation rate	Permanent posts							Temporary posts		
			All	AD	AST	SC	Occupied perm.	Occupied temp.	Vacant	All	Occupied	Vacant
2022	669	95,1%	628	314	275	39	518	79	31	41	39	2
2021	669	94,3%	630	314	277	39	536	58	36	39	37	2
2020	668	95,5%	629	313	279	37	552	48	29	39	38	1
2019	668	96,0%	629	313	279	37	569	34	26	39	38	1
2018	668	96,6%	629	313	281	35	580	27	22	39	38	1

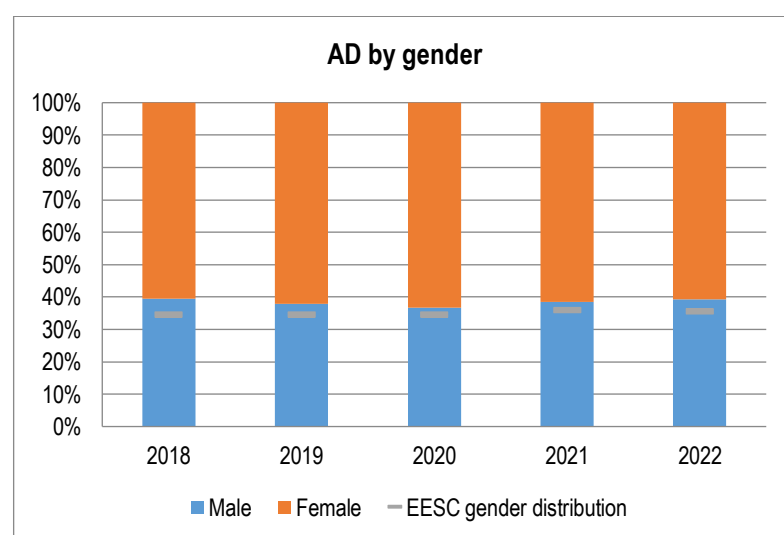
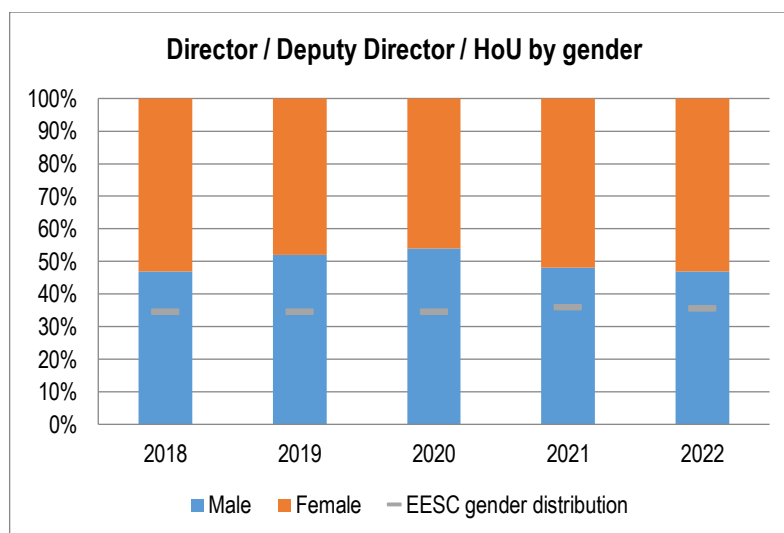


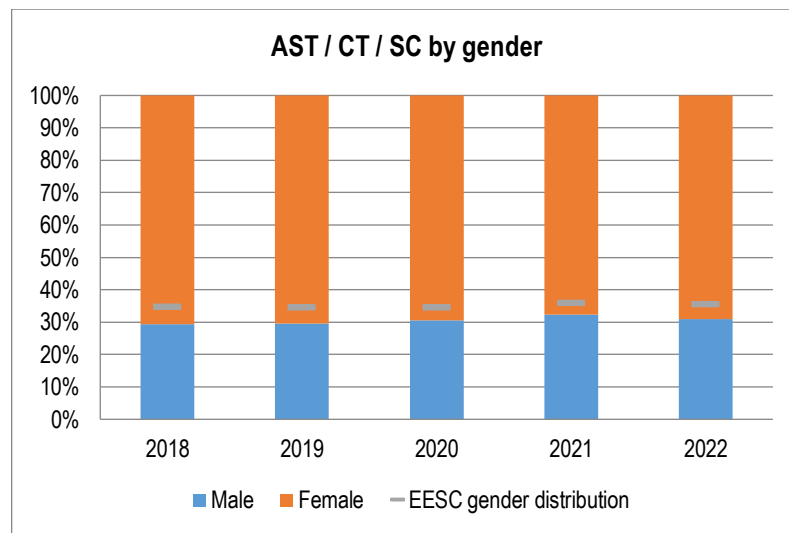


### Distribution of staff by gender

This indicator measures, at the end of the year, the gender distribution per category of staff. Numbers for management include also acting managers.

	Director/Deputy Director/Head of unit				AD/GFIV/END/CS excluding management				AST/SC/GFI-III			
	Number	% of total staff	% M	% F	Number	% of total staff	% M	% F	Number	% of total staff	% M	% F
2022	47	6,6%	47,0%	53,0%	296	41,9%	39,2%	60,8%	363	51,3%	30,9%	69,1%
2021	48	6,9%	48,0%	52,0%	286	40,9%	38,5%	61,5%	366	52,3%	32,2%	67,8%
2020	46	6,6%	54,0%	46,0%	289	41,2%	36,7%	63,3%	367	52,3%	30,5%	69,5%
2019	48	6,8%	52,1%	47,9%	283	40,3%	37,8%	62,2%	371	52,8%	29,6%	70,4%
2018	49	6,9%	46,9%	53,1%	284	40,2%	39,4%	60,6%	374	52,9%	29,4%	70,6%

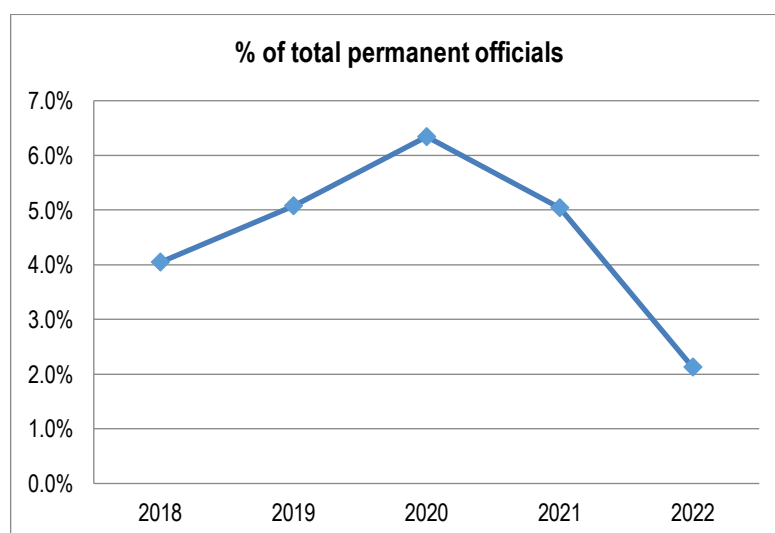
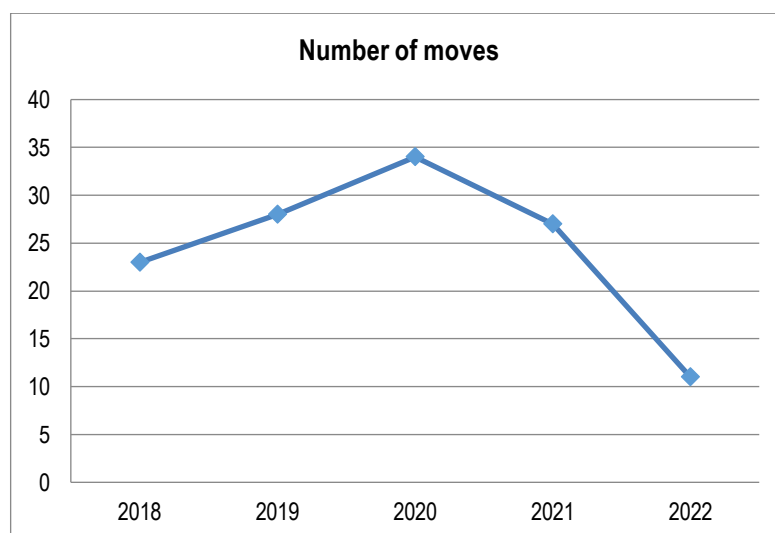




### Internal mobility

This indicator measures the number of moves of permanent officials from one organisational entity to another within the Committee. Mobility linked to internal reorganisation while keeping the same job content is not included.

	Staff changing service	
	Number of moves	% of total permanent officials
2022	11	2,1%
2021	27	5,0%
2020	34	6,3%
2019	28	5,1%
2018	23	4,0%

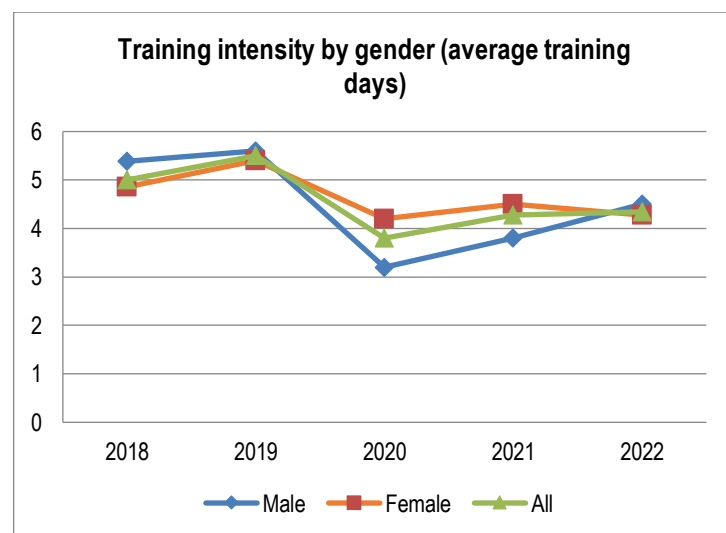
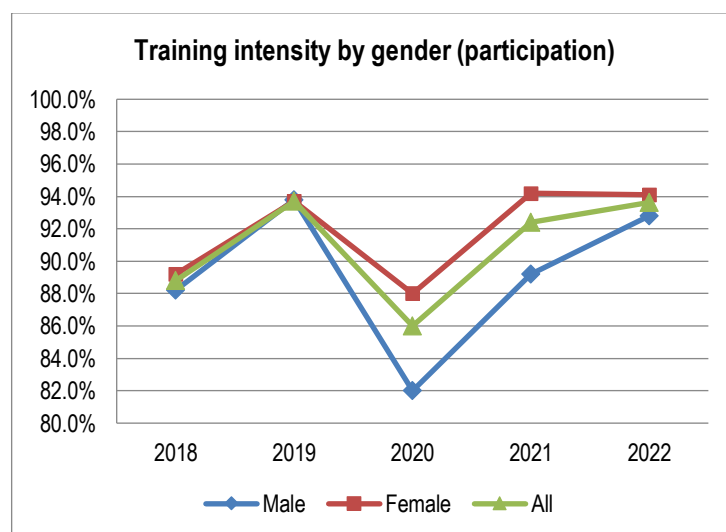


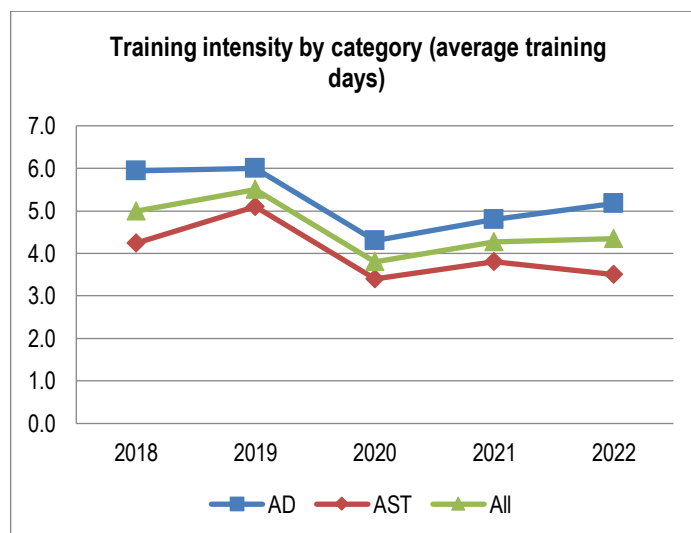
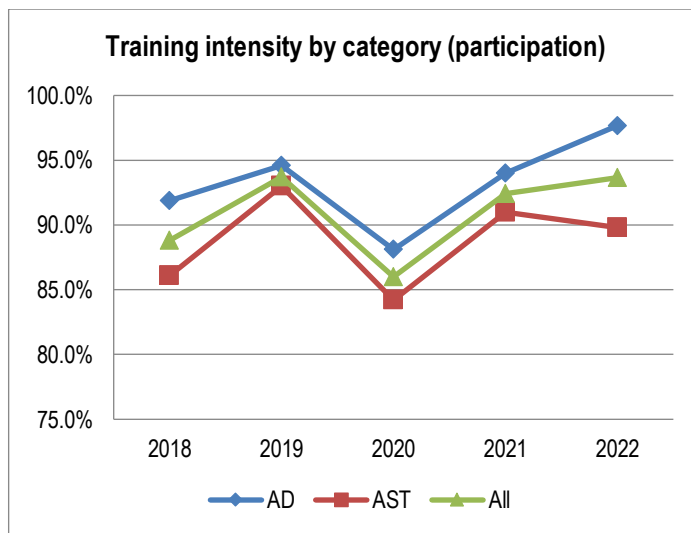


### Training intensity

This indicator measures the percentage of staff having followed training and the average number of days of training.

	By gender				By category				All	
	M		F		AD		AST			
	Participation rate (%)	Average training days	Participation rate (%)	Average training days	Participation rate (%)	Average training days	Participation rate (%)	Average training days	Participation rate (%)	Average training days
2022	92,8%	4,5	94,1%	4,3	97,7%	5,2	89,8%	3,5	93,6%	4,34
2021	89,2%	3,8	94,2%	4,5	94,0%	4,8	91,0%	3,8	92,4%	4,27
2020	82,0%	3,2	88,0%	4,2	88,1%	4,3	84,2%	3,4	86,0%	3,8
2019	93,8%	5,6	93,7%	5,4	94,6%	6,0	93,0%	5,1	93,7%	5,5
2018	88,2%	5,4	89,2%	4,9	91,9%	5,9	86,1%	4,2	88,8%	5,0



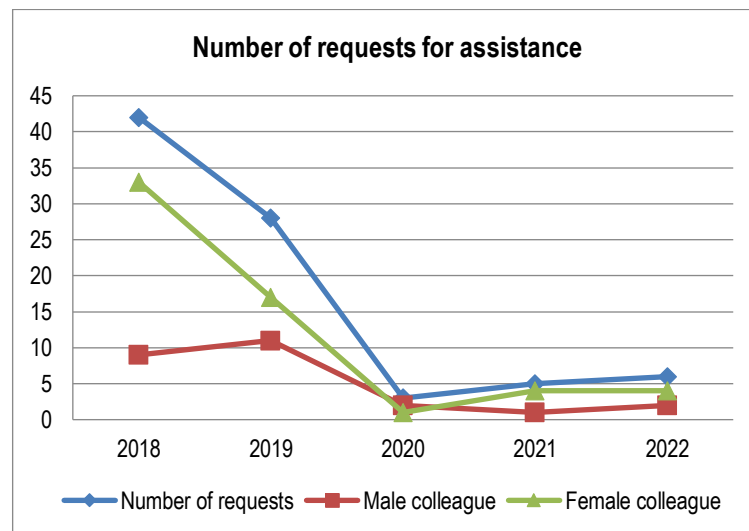


### Difficulties in workplace relations

This indicator measures the number of people who have consulted a confidential counsellor in relation to an interpersonal difficulty in their workplace, such as mismanagement, inappropriate behaviour and conflict at work. Starting in 2020, the EESC administration had set up a network of confidential counsellors with a renewable three-year mandate. This conflict resolution mechanism is part of the informal procedure for preventing and settling workplace conflicts.

For 2022 the level of requests for support is almost the same as the previous year. This may be due to the fact that face-to-face work remains limited, but also, and this is probably the main reason, to a zero-tolerance campaign which has been in place since 2020 at the EESC.

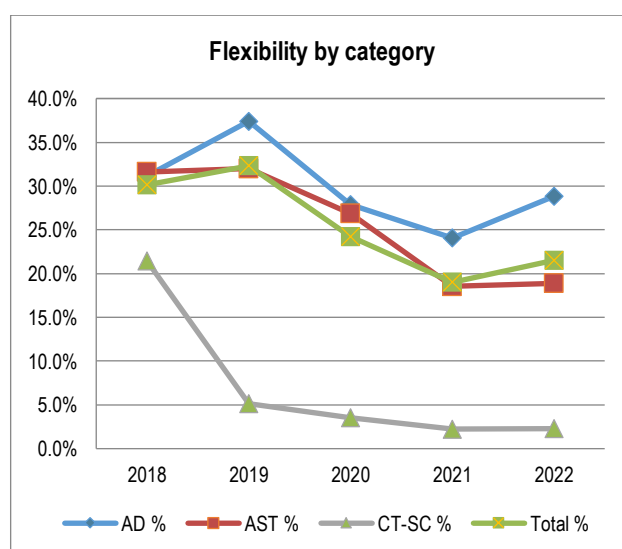
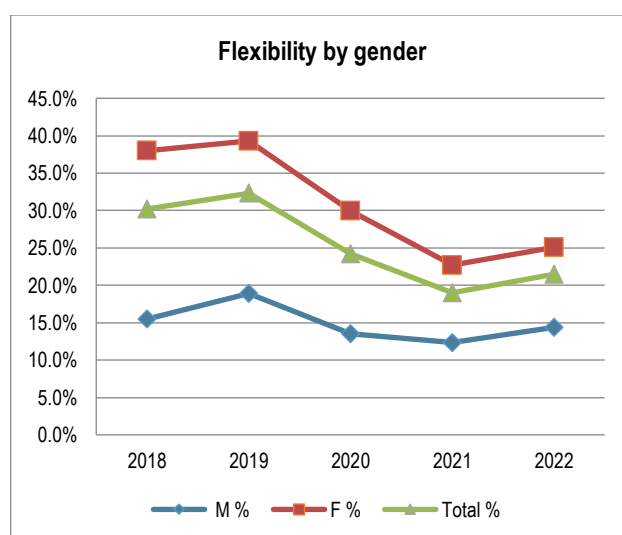
	Number of requests	By gender	
		Male colleague	Female colleague
2022	6	2	4
2021	5	1	4
2020	3	2	1
2019	28	11	17
2018	42	9	33



### Flexibility in terms of working time arrangements

This indicator measures the proportion of permanent staff working part-time, by gender and category (AD, AST and CT-SC).

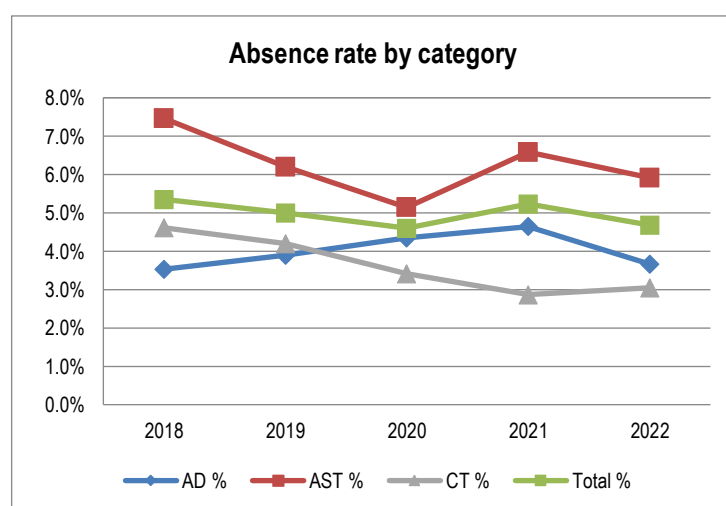
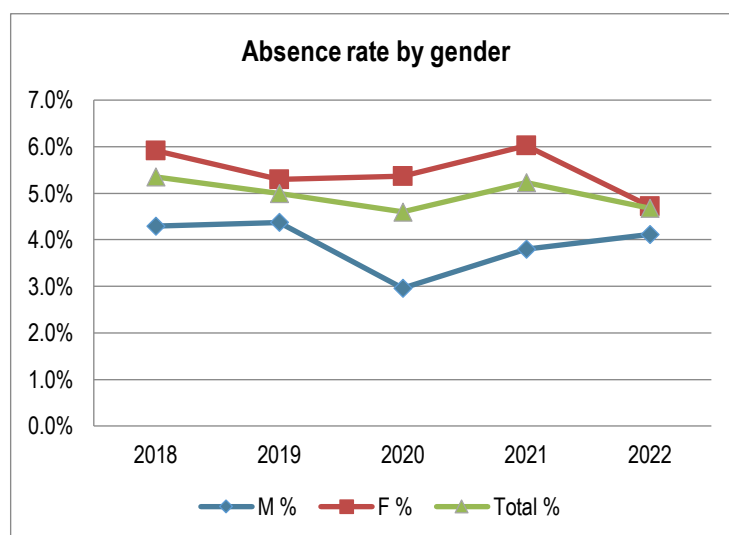
	By gender				By category						All	
	M		F		AD		AST		CT-SC			
	Number	M %	Number	F %	Number	AD %	Number	AST %	Number	CT-SC %	Number	Total %
2022	36	14,4%	114	25,1%	94	28,8%	54	18,9%	2	2,3%	150	21,5%
2021	31	12,4%	102	22,7%	77	24,1%	54	18,6%	2	2,2%	133	19,0%
2020	33	13,5%	137	30,0%	90	27,9%	77	26,8%	3	3,5%	170	24,3%
2019	46	18,9%	180	39,3%	123	37,4%	101	32,0%	3	5,2%	227	32,3%
2018	38	15,5%	175	38,0%	99	31,1%	96	31,6%	18	21,4%	213	30,2%



### Absence rate

This indicator measures the absence rate according to the interinstitutional definition (total absence in calendar days, divided by 365 and by the number of staff at the end of the year), by gender and by category (AD, AST, CT).

	Male (%)				Female (%)				All (%)			
	AD	AST	CT	M %	AD	AST	CT	F %	AD %	AST %	CT %	Total %
2022	3,5%	4,4%	6,3%	4,1%	3,8%	6,6%	1,7%	4,7%	3,7%	5,9%	3,0%	4,7%
2021	2,8%	4,1%	3,5%	3,8%	5,4%	7,6%	1,7%	6,0%	4,6%	6,6%	2,9%	5,2%
2020	3,0%	2,6%	4,9%	3,0%	5,2%	6,2%	3,1%	5,4%	4,4%	5,1%	3,4%	4,6%
2019	3,5%	4,5%	4,7%	4,4%	4,2%	7,0%	4,0%	5,3%	3,9%	6,2%	4,2%	5,0%
2018	2,9%	6,6%	11,8%	4,3%	4,0%	7,8%	4,9%	5,9%	3,5%	7,5%	4,6%	5,4%



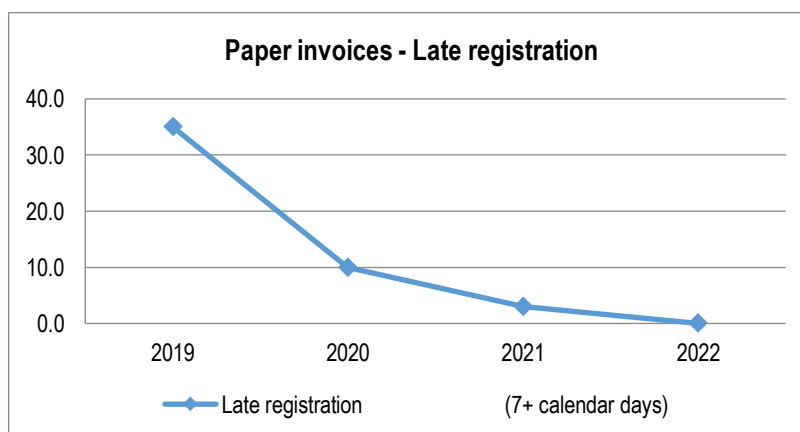
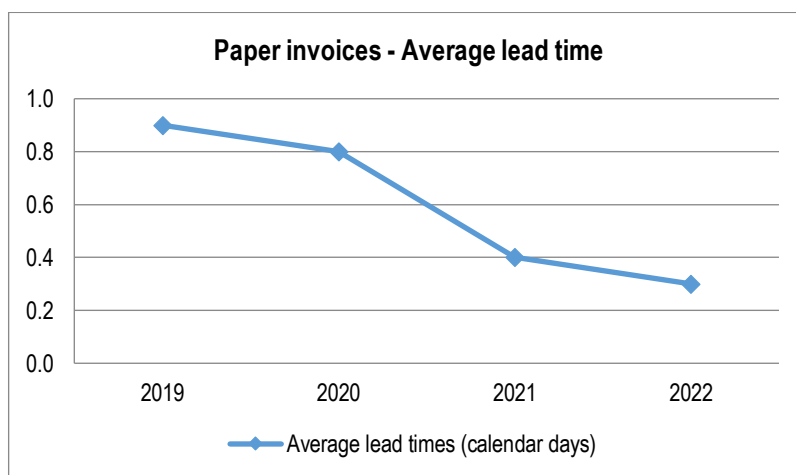
### Registration of paper invoices

This indicator measures the average lead-time between the reception of invoices and their registration and the number and percentage of invoices for which this registration took more than seven calendar days.

In 2019, the reporting parameters have been modified, excluding electronic invoices and focusing on original invoices in paper form only. Consequently, the comparison with previous years is limited. Since 2020, due to pandemic COVID-19, PDF invoices received by e-mail are also included in this indicator.

The invoices included now in this indicator are those that are not transmitted via e-prior and account for about 10 % of the total.

	Average lead times (calendar days)	Late registration (7+ calendar days)	
	Reception to registration Paper invoice	Number late registration	% of total
2022	0,3	0,0	0,0%
2021	0,4	3,0	0,2%
2020	0,8	10,0	0,5%
2019	0,9	35,0	1,2%

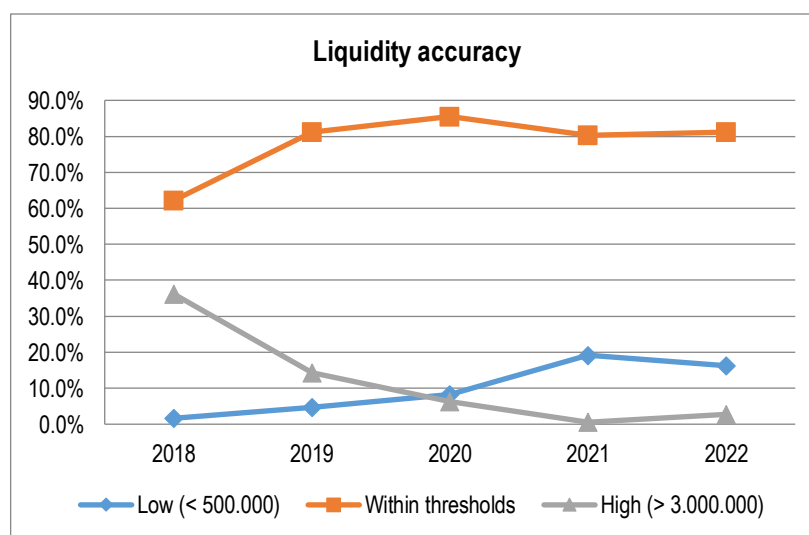


### Liquidity accuracy

The Committee's bank account should hold enough funds to ensure that payments can be made on time. However, the amount available should not be unnecessarily high. This indicator measures the percentage of calendar days when the balance of the Committees' bank account was less than EUR 500 000 (risk of unavailability of funds for a payment due), within thresholds and more than EUR 3 000 000\*.

	Bank account balance					
	Calendar days below € 500.000		Calendar days between € 500.000 and € 3.000.000*		Calendar days above € 3.000.000*	
	days	%	days	%	days	%
2022	59	16,2%	296	81,1%	10	2,7%
2021	70	19,2%	293	80,3%	2	0,5%
2020	30	8,2%	313	85,5%	23	6,3%
2019	17	4,7%	296	81,1%	52	14,2%
2018	6	1,6%	227	62,2%	132	36,2%

\* The threshold negotiated with the bank in order to avoid negative interests dropped from 5 000 000 to 3 000 000 in 2021.

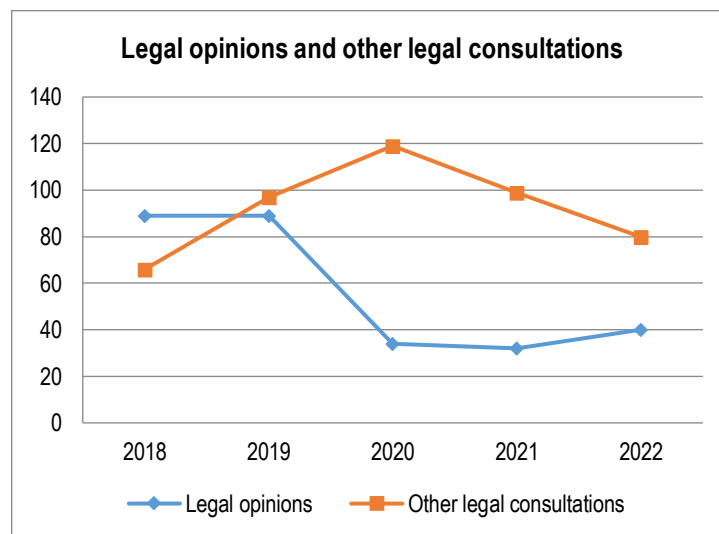


#### 4.7 LEGAL SERVICE

##### Legal opinions

This indicator measures the number of legal opinions and other legal consultations issued by the Legal Service. Informal consultations are counted as "Other legal consultations".

	Legal opinions	Other legal consultations
2022	40	80
2021	32	99
2020	34	119
2019	89	97
2018	89	66



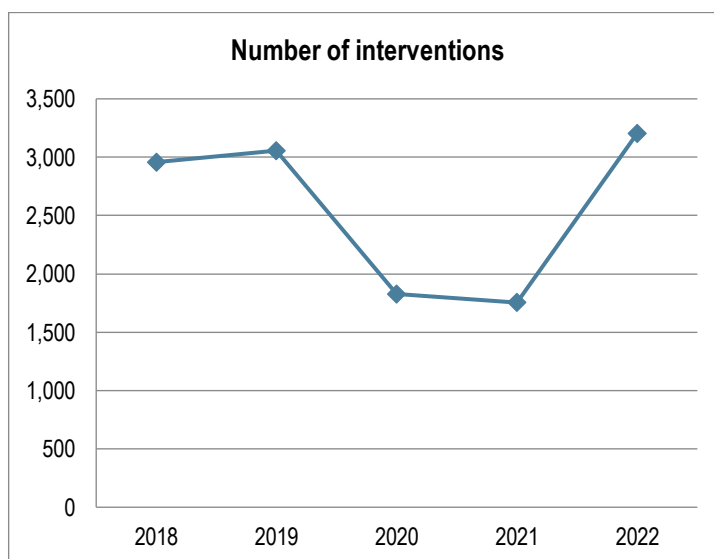


#### 4.8 DIRECTORATE FOR LOGISTICS

##### Number of building maintenance interventions

This indicator measures the number of building maintenance interventions carried out by the Infrastructure Unit.

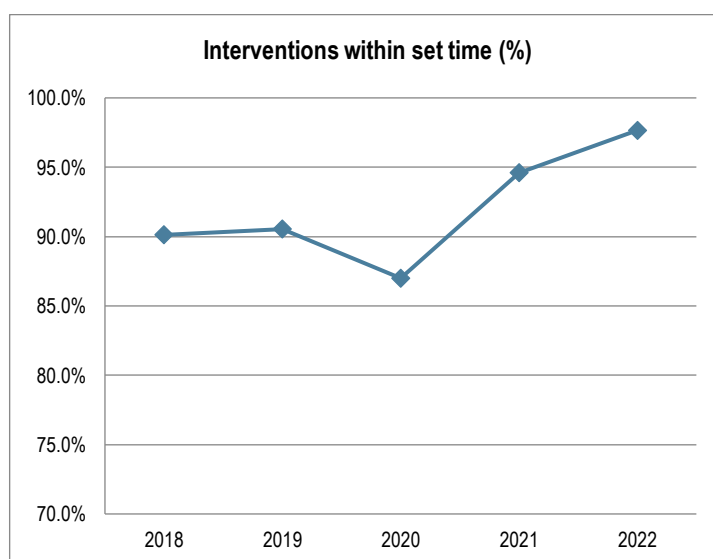
	Number of interventions
2022	3.205
2021	1.754
2020	1.826
2019	3.055
2018	2.958



**Building maintenance intervention lead time**

This indicator measures the percentage of interventions that were successfully handled within a set time (depending on the category of the intervention: two days or five days).

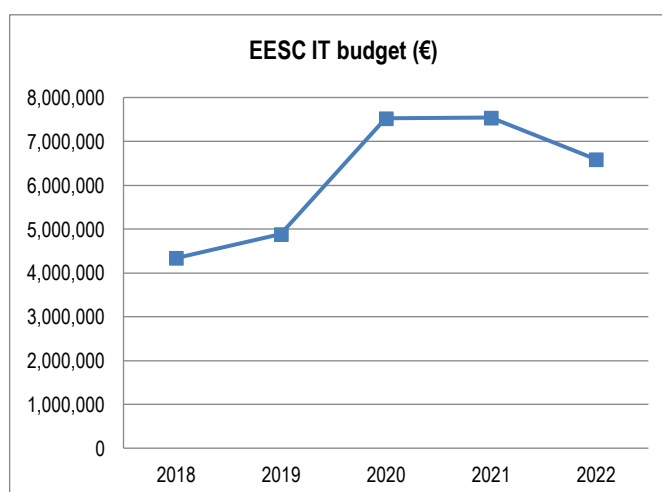
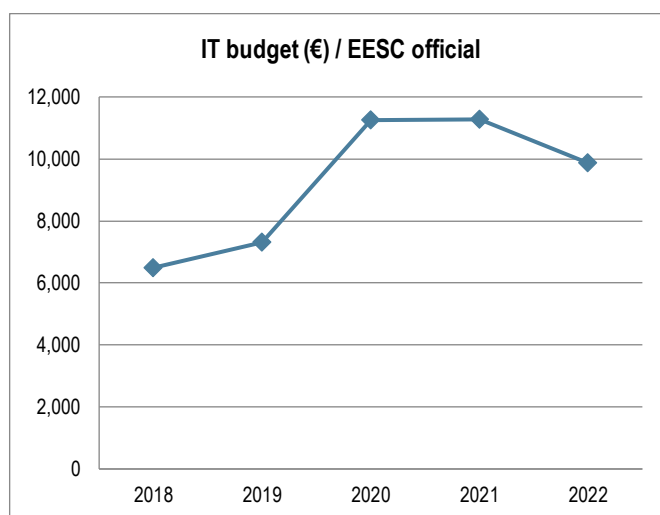
	Interventions within set time (%)
2022	97,7%
2021	94,6%
2020	87,0%
2019	90,5%
2018	90,1%



### IT costs per official

This indicator measures the ratio between the total operational IT budget after transfers (equipment, external sub-contractors, telecommunication costs; excluding cost of statutory IT staff) and the total headcount (establishment plan). It also measures the proportion of this budget vs. the overall EESC budget.

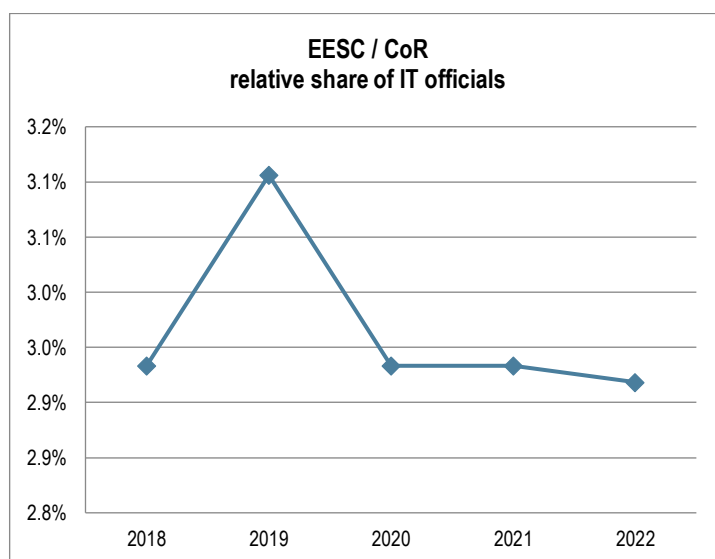
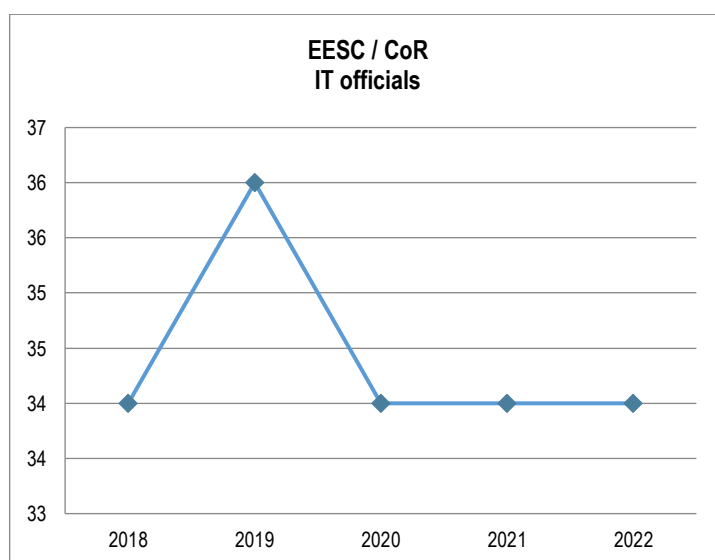
	EESC IT budget (€)	EESC officials	EESC IT budget (€) / EESC official	EESC budget (€)	% IT budget / Total budget
2022	6.598.658	669	9.878	150.871.643	4,4%
2021	7.543.099	669	11.275	145.024.938	5,2%
2020	7.519.112	668	11.256	142.539.393	5,3%
2019	4.885.433	668	7.314	138.502.768	3,5%
2018	4.336.300	668	6.491	135.630.905	3,2%



### IT Unit workforce

This indicator measures the ratio between officials working in the IT Unit and the total headcount (posts, according to establishment plans) of the two Committees.

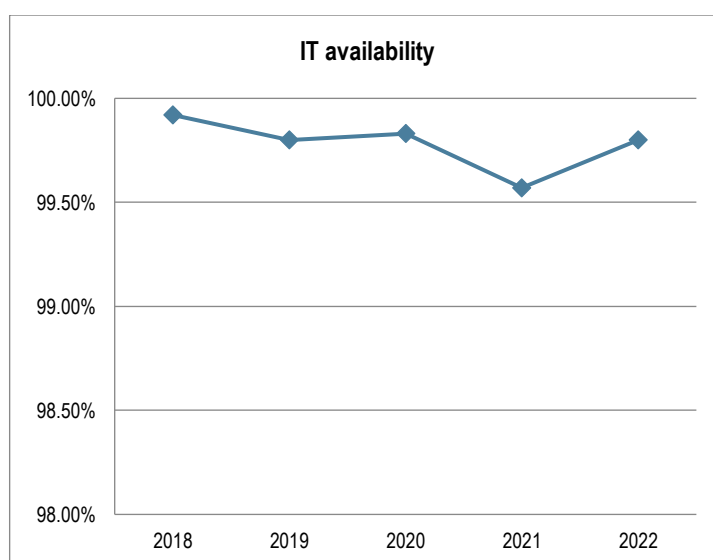
	EESC / CoR IT officials	EESC / CoR officials	EESC / CoR IT officials / officials
2022	34	1.165	2,9%
2021	34	1.163	2,9%
2020	34	1.159	2,9%
2019	36	1.159	3,1%
2018	34	1.159	2,9%



**IT availability**

This indicator measures the availability at all times (24/7) of the core IT infrastructure components (network, telephony, databases and servers) of the two Committees.

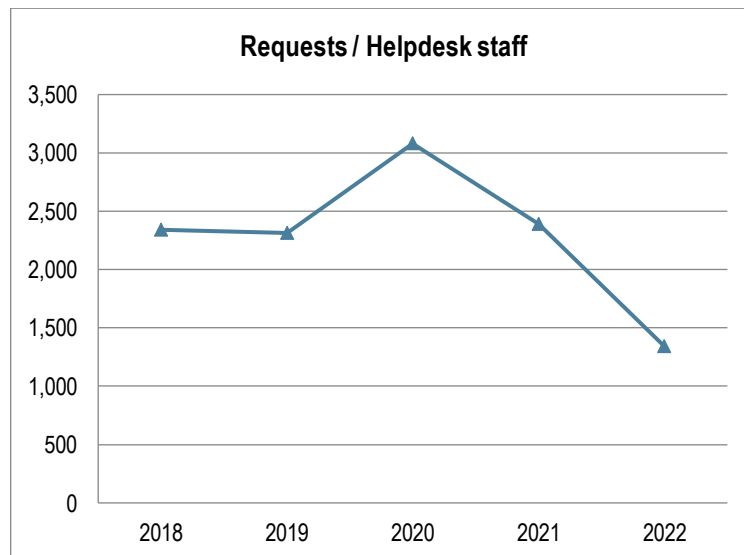
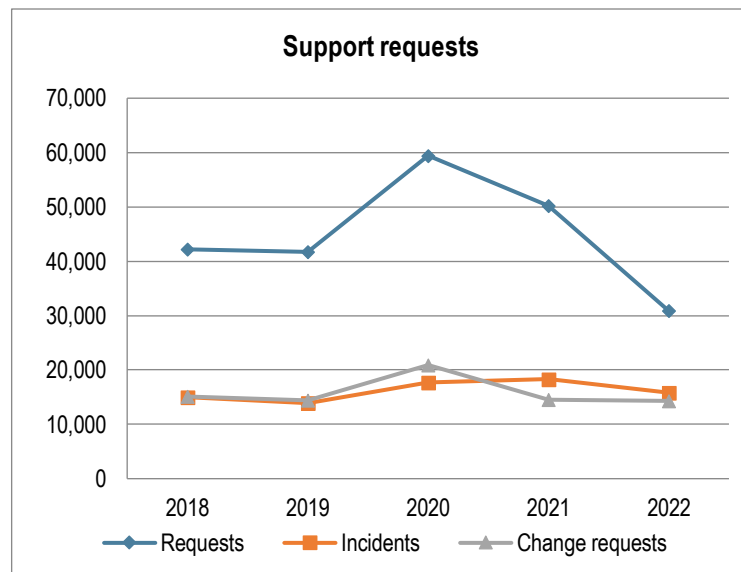
	IT availability
<b>2022</b>	<b>99,80%</b>
2021	99,57%
2020	99,83%
2019	99,80%
2018	99,92%



### IT user support requests

This indicator measures the number of IT user support requests, divided by the total staff resources (internal and external) of the service handling these. The number of user support requests accounts for all questions addressed to the IT helpdesk (by telephone or email) as registered in the helpdesk software tool. Requests may be handled immediately or give rise to an "incident" (e.g. repairing a broken hard disk) or to a "change request" (e.g. moving a PC).

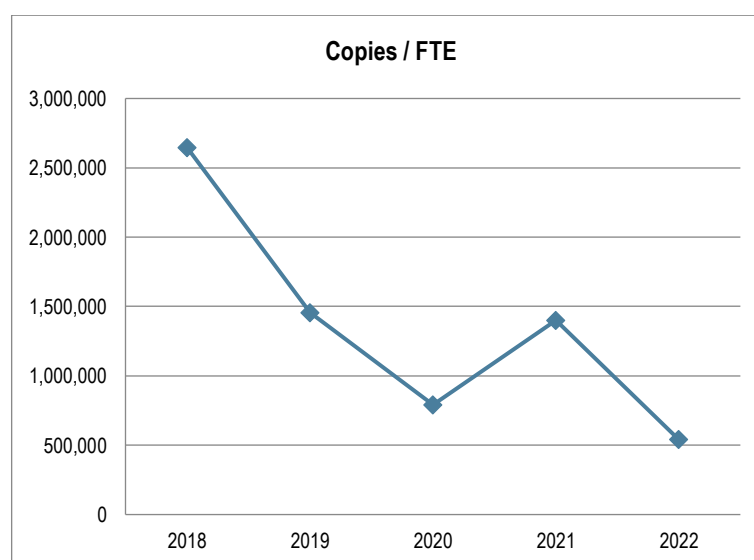
	Requests	Incidents	Change requests	Helpdesk staff (FTE)	Requests / Helpdesk staff
2022	30.859	15.849	14.308	23	1.342
2021	50.242	18.334	14.545	21	2.392
2020	59.434	17.696	20.907	19	3.079
2019	41.689	13.897	14.462	18	2.316
2018	42.159	15.011	15.133	18	2.342



### Copy shop productivity

This indicator measures the number of copies produced by the copy shop team, divided by the number of "full-time equivalent" staff (FTEs) in that team.

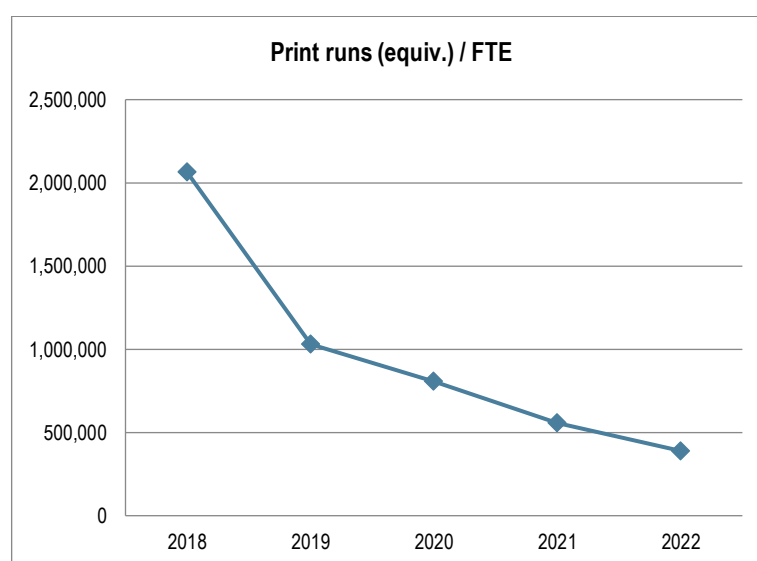
	EESC		CoR		Total	FTE	Copies / FTE
	Copies	%	Copies	%			
2022	1.262.075	80,6%	304.371	19,4%	1.566.446	2,9	540.154
2021	1.697.224	93,2%	124.642	6,8%	1.821.866	1,3	1.401.435
2020	1.519.604	83,4%	301.918	16,6%	1.821.522	2,3	791.966
2019	5.735.364	69,6%	2.503.687	30,4%	8.239.051	5,7	1.453.950
2018	7.851.014	57,7%	5.765.597	42,3%	13.616.611	5,2	2.647.523



### Offset productivity

This indicator measures the number of equivalent print runs, i.e. both real print runs (sheets) and settings (a "setting" being the initialisation of a print run, counted as equivalent to 3 700 print runs), divided by "full-time equivalent" (FTE) staff in the offset team.

	EESC		CoR		Total	FTE	Print runs (equiv.) / FTE
	Print runs (equiv.)	%	Print runs (equiv.)	%			
<b>2022</b>	<b>262.000</b>	<b>37,4%</b>	<b>438.950</b>	62,6%	700.950	<b>1,8</b>	389.417
2021	498.000	89,2%	60.150	10,8%	558.150	1,0	558.150
2020	724.510	69,1%	323.550	30,9%	1.048.060	1,3	806.200
2019	1.910.115	74,3%	662.050	25,7%	2.572.165	2,5	1.028.866
2018	2.788.510	60,0%	1.856.470	40,0%	4.644.980	2,3	2.062.822

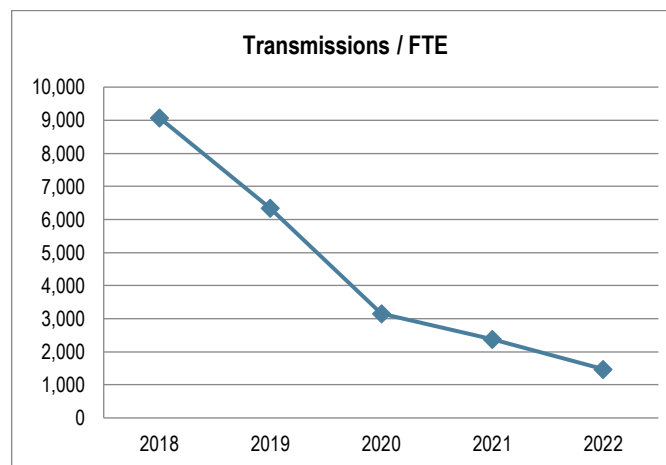




### Mailing productivity

This indicator measures the number of mailings (transmissions) done by the expedition team, divided by the number of "full-time equivalent" staff (FTEs) in that team.

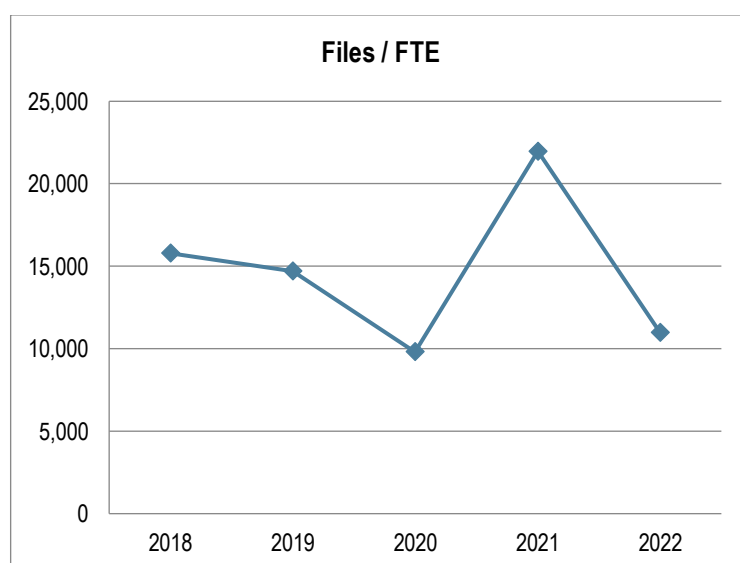
	EESC		CoR		Total	FTE	Transmissions / FTE
	Transmissions	%	Transmissions	%			
2022	995	67,3%	483	32,7%	1.478	1,0	1.478
2021	1.158	48,6%	1.223	51,4%	2.381	1,0	2.381
2020	1.994	48,5%	2.118	51,5%	4.112	1,3	3.163
2019	4.829	50,7%	4.698	49,3%	9.527	1,5	6.351
2018	7.553	55,5%	6.066	44,5%	13.619	1,5	9.079



### Internal distribution productivity

This indicator measures the number of files for members that the internal distribution team made in preparation for meetings, divided by the number of "full-time equivalent" staff (FTEs) in that team.

	EESC		CoR		Total	FTE	Files / FTE
	Files	%	Files	%			
<b>2022</b>	<b>17.965</b>	<b>91,1%</b>	<b>1.764</b>	<b>8,9%</b>	<b>19.729</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>10.961</b>
2021	21.615	98,4%	358	1,6%	21.973	1,0	21.973
2020	17.293	92,9%	1.327	7,1%	18.620	1,9	9.800
2019	42.035	81,8%	9.370	18,2%	51.405	3,5	14.687
2018	50.335	79,8%	12.731	20,2%	63.066	4,0	15.767

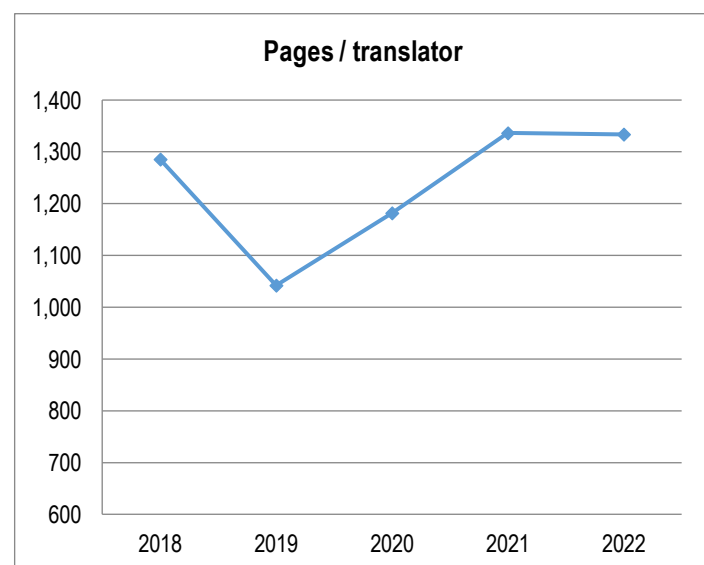
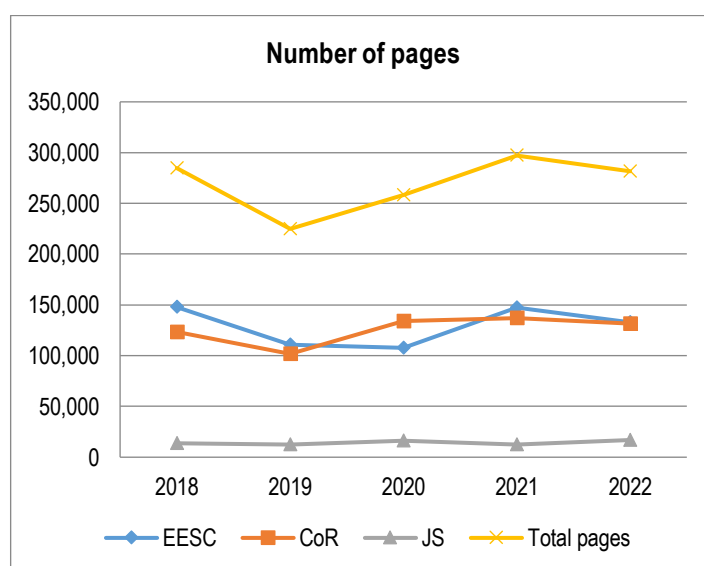


#### 4.9 DIRECTORATE FOR TRANSLATION

##### Internal translation output

This indicator measures the total number of pages translated per translator post in the establishment plan. A page is defined as 1,500 characters without spaces.

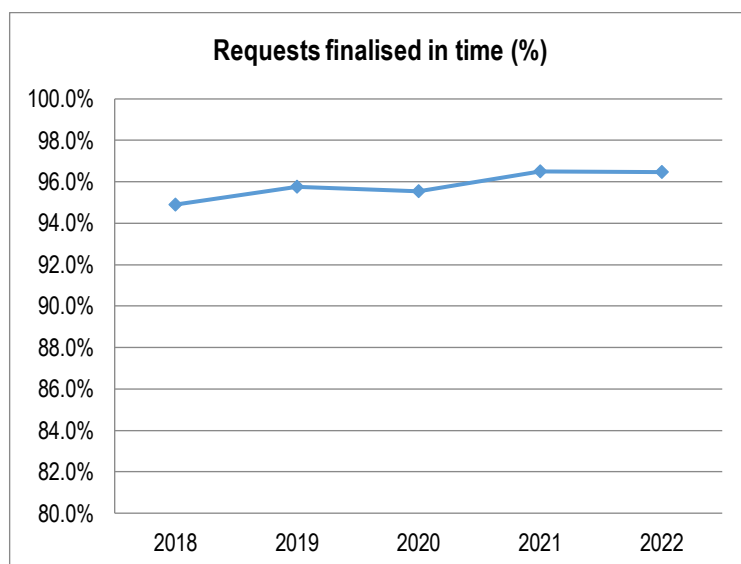
	EESC		CoR		JS		Total pages	FTE	Pages / translator
	Pages	%	Pages	%	Pages	%			
2022	133.112	47,3%	131.538	46,7%	16.922	6,0%	281.572	211,2	1.333
2021	147.497	49,6%	136.992	46,1%	12.628	4,3%	297.117	222,3	1.337
2020	107.712	41,7%	133.954	51,9%	16.516	6,4%	258.181	218,6	1.181
2019	110.658	49,2%	101.767	45,3%	12.442	5,5%	224.868	215,8	1.042
2018	147.810	51,9%	123.481	43,3%	13.765	4,8%	285.056	221,8	1.285



**Translation deadline compliance rate**

This indicator measures the percentage of translation requests that were finalised within the requested deadline.

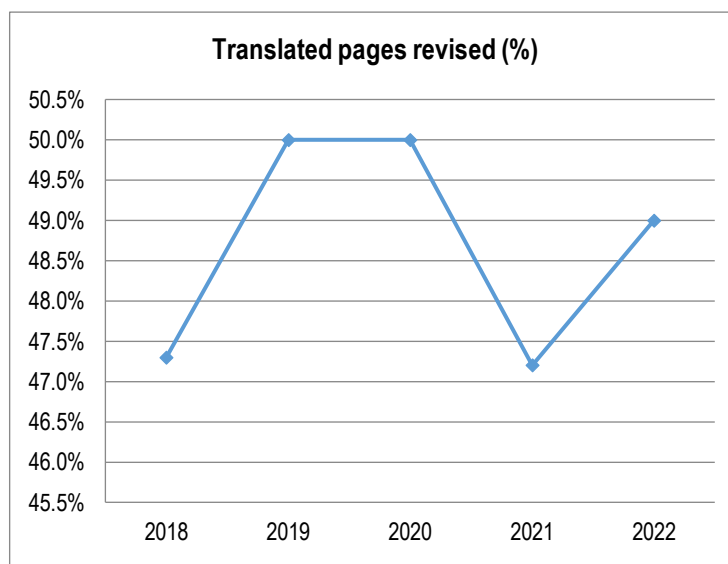
	Requests finalised in time (%)
2022	96,5%
2021	96,5%
2020	95,6%
2019	95,8%
2018	94,9%



**Translation revision rate**

This indicator measures the percentage of pages that have been revised.

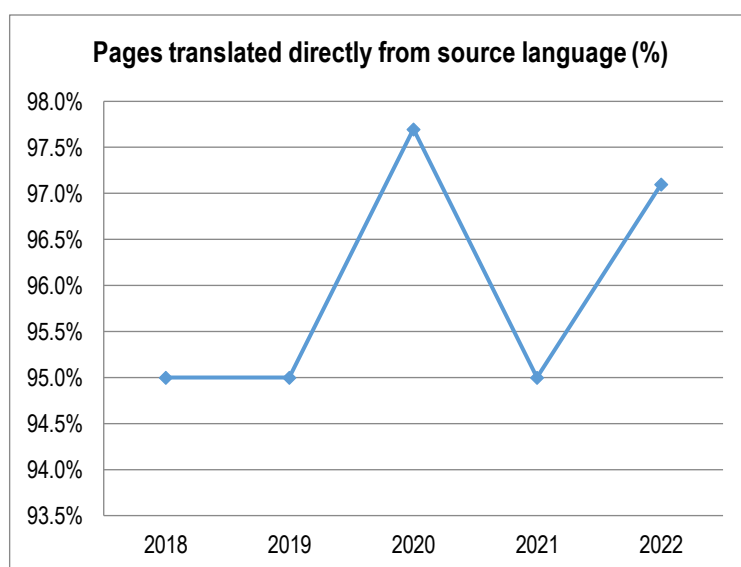
	Translated pages revised (%)
2022	49,0%
2021	47,2%
2020	50,0%
2019	50,0%
2018	47,3%



**Direct translation rate**

Until 2004, nearly all translations could be made directly from the source language into the target language. After enlargement, it was no longer possible to cover all source languages in every translation unit. Therefore, a system based on indirect translation (through "pivot" languages) was put into place. This indicator measures the percentage of pages translated directly from source language to target language, i.e. not translated via a pivot language.

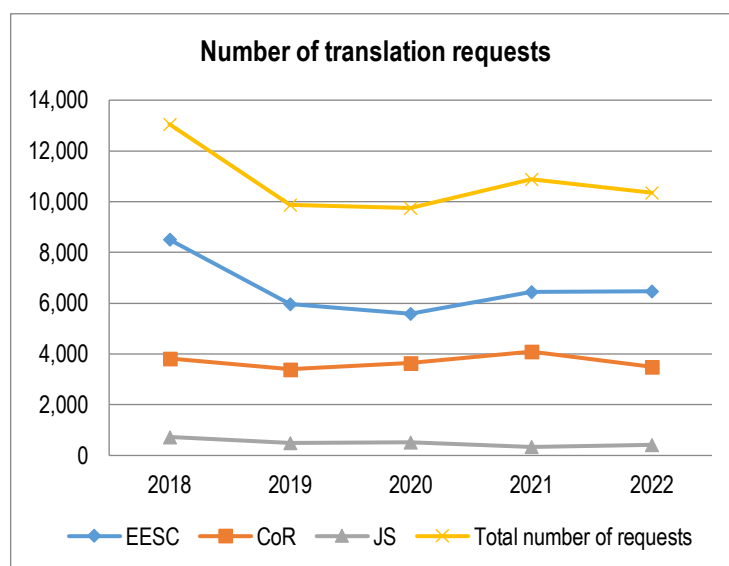
	Pages translated directly from source language (%)
2022	97,1%
2021	95,0%
2020	97,7%
2019	95,0%
2018	95,0%



### Number of translation requests

This indicator measures the number of translation requests over the reference period.

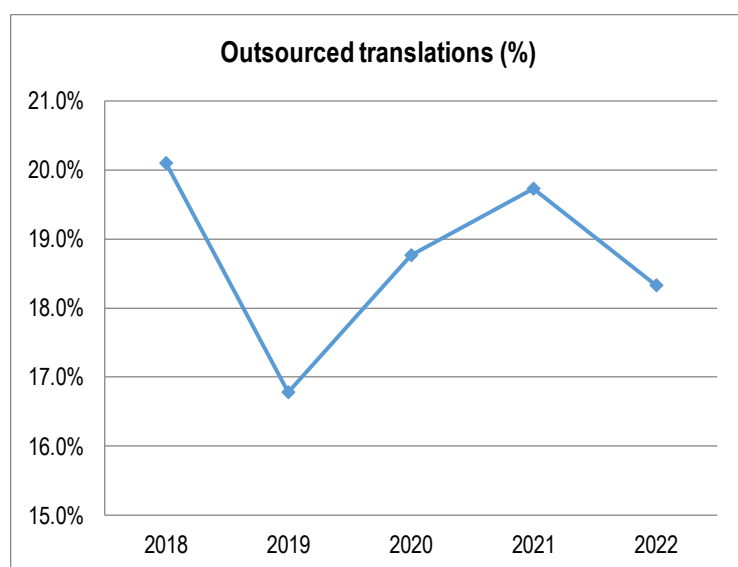
	EESC		CoR		JS		Total number of requests
	Requests	%	Requests	%	Requests	%	
2022	6.464	62,4%	3.484	33,6%	410	4,0%	10.358
2021	6.445	59,3%	4.091	37,6%	335	3,1%	10.871
2020	5.584	57,3%	3.641	37,3%	525	5,4%	9.750
2019	5.975	60,5%	3.401	34,5%	494	5,0%	9.870
2018	8.505	65,2%	3.819	29,3%	730	5,6%	13.054



**External translation rate**

This indicator compares the number of pages outsourced for translation with the total number of pages translated.

	Outsourced translations (%)
2022	18,3%
2021	19,7%
2020	18,8%
2019	16,8%
2018	20,1%





## 5. RESULTS OF EX POST CONTROLS 2022

### **Financial Regulation, Article 74 (9): Powers and duties of the authorising officer**

*The authorising officer by delegation shall report to his or her Union institution on the performance of his or her duties in the form of an annual activity report containing financial and management information, including the results of controls, declaring that, except as otherwise specified in any reservations related to defined areas of revenue and expenditure, he or she has reasonable assurance that:*

- (a) the information contained in the report presents a true and fair view;*
- (b) the resources assigned to the activities described in the report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principle of sound financial management; and*
- (c) the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.*

...

### **Rules of Application, IFR Article 23 (4): Ex-ante and ex-post controls**

*The ex post controls may be carried out on the basis of documents and, where appropriate, on the spot.*

*The outcomes of ex post controls shall be reviewed by the authorising officer by delegation at least annually to identify any potential systemic issues. The authorising officer by delegation shall take measures to address those issues.*

## 5.1 OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF CONTROLS

During 2022, a total of 12 persons were assigned to preventative and corrective controls, representing 1.7 % of the total EESC staff.

Three persons were assigned to preventative controls in the area of financial management, proactively reducing the likelihood of errors in public procurement, contract management and use of IT financial tools (ABAC, Qualified Electronic Signature, financial dashboards, reporting)

Eight staff members carried out ex-ante and ex-post controls on transactions having a direct financial impact for the institution, encompassing recruitment files, salaries and allowances. EESC verification was functionally independent from the service managing the various transactions, thus strengthening the principle of segregation of duties. For efficiency reasons, some low-value transactions were subject to ex-ante verification by authorising officers ("light verification"), and ex-post controls were then carried out on a subset of operations chosen through a random sampling.

One staff member was in charge of coordinating the internal control and risk management process during the whole year.

In conclusion, the costs associated with implementing controls were justified by the benefits provided to the EESC.

## **5.2 RESULTS OF EX POST VERIFICATION**

In response to the request from the designated authorizing officers by sub-delegation, the EESC verification sector conducted ex-post checks on the following transactions in 2022:

Field of expenditure controlled ex-post	Ex-post control undertaken	Verifier's observations	Conclusions/main action taken by the authorising officer (AOS)
Ex-post verification concerning financial files of the Directorate for <b>Logistics</b> (Printing, IT and Security Units)	The aim of conducting ex-post verification was to assess the effectiveness of the internal control chain and offer feedback to authorizing officers by sub-delegation on enhancing the control processes. The selection of transactions for ex-post checks considered various factors, including transactions involving substantial amounts, transactions with a distinct profile compared to the previous year, transactions that received comments during the 2020 ex-post control, and transactions carried out between 1 September 2021, and 31 December 2021.	The timeframe of the transactions submitted to the ex-post verification period was exceptional. The verification process uncovered only minor administrative errors related to the submission of supporting documents during the ex-post control.	As a result of the ex-post verification, a recommendation was made to focus on reducing administrative and clerical errors, as these errors can occasionally result in delayed payments.
Ex-post verification concerning allowances paid in the framework of the EESC <b>Mobility and transport plan</b>	<p>The ex-post verification encompassed the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contributions for the purchase of public transport season tickets for commuting between home and work.</li> <li>- Contributions for commuting by bicycle from home to work.</li> </ul> <p>The ex-post controls involved evaluating legal obligations, conducting financial checks, and performing other controls to ensure compliance with the specific</p>	Considering the context, it should be noted that the rules regarding mobility and transport were established prior to 2020, before the onset of the pandemic. As a result, their application during the pandemic presented challenges. The primary objective during this time was to mitigate the spread of the virus, prioritizing staff health over identifying potential inconsistencies in the application of rules that could have posed a higher level of	As a result of the verification, a recommendation was made to revise the rules concerning mobility and transportation. The original ceilings were determined based on an average of approximately 204 working days per year spent in the office. However, this approach is no longer suitable in the current work environment, which involves a combination of office presence and teleworking.

Field of expenditure controlled ex-post	Ex-post control undertaken	Verifier's observations	Conclusions/main action taken by the authorising officer (AOS)
	regulations governing these contributions. This also included the verification of entitlements and allowances that have a financial impact on the budget of the EESC.	vulnerability to the financial interests of the institution.	
Ex-Post Verification of <b>Staff Allowances</b> paid via Two-Step Light Circuit by STA Unit in 2021	The ex-post verification of allowances paid by the STA unit covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family leave;</li> <li>- Leave not taken;</li> <li>- Overtime;</li> <li>- Parental leave;</li> <li>- Part-time working patterns.</li> </ul>	The ex-post controls conducted in 2022 on 2021 samples were aimed at verifying the compliance with the applicable rules and regulations. The verification revealed no irregularities and did not uncover any remarks.	-
Ex-post verification on the payments for <b>reimbursement of medical</b> expenses	The goal of the ex-post verification was to assess the payment process for various types of expenditures in the year 2021. These expenditures included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social welfare payments aimed at assisting individuals with disabilities.</li> <li>- Medical service payments covering services provided by external medical specialists, as deemed necessary by the EESC medical officers.</li> <li>- Medical service payments for preventive medical check-ups.</li> </ul> The objective was to evaluate the payment procedures and ensure proper	No quantifiable errors were identified.	The verification resulted in the following recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish a more rigorous workflow for transaction handling;</li> <li>- enhance consistency in document management and filing.</li> </ul>

Field of expenditure controlled ex-post	Ex-post control undertaken	Verifier's observations	Conclusions/main action taken by the authorising officer (AOS)
	handling of these payments within the specified categories.		
Ex-post verification on <b>Rights</b> and Entitlements paid via Two-Step Light Circuit	<p>The ex-post verification made in 2022 covered the following 2021 payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education allowances;</li> <li>- Travel costs for entry into service in;</li> <li>- Installation allowances;</li> <li>- Child allowances in 2021;</li> </ul>	The ex-post verification did not uncover any financial or administrative errors during the control process. The provided clarifications were deemed satisfactory and accepted. However, during the examination of child allowance payments, the evidence supporting one payment was not complete.	<p>The verification sector recommends to keep a register of allowances received by beneficiaries through the national systems and linked to the payment of child allowance.</p> <p>Verification also recommends to reconsider the choice of processing these payments through two-steps simplified circuit.</p>
Operations subject to "light verification" in 2021 concerning <b>staff missions</b>	<p>The objective of the 2022 ex-post verification was to evaluate the following payment process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2021 Advance payment to travellers;</li> <li>- 2021 Payments to the EESC travel agency (currently CWT)</li> </ul>	<p>No quantifiable errors were identified.</p> <p>However, out of four samples verified, there were two requests for payment in advance of the mission that had been submitted to the Missions Service within two working days and four working days, respectively, before departure on mission. This is not compliant with the requirement of Art. 4.2 of Decision 890/10 A - EESC Mission guide, which requires that the submission to the Missions Service of requests concerning an advance, as a general rule, must be done ten working days before the start of the mission.</p>	The verification sector recommends mentioning in the next update of Decision 890/10 A (EESC Mission guide) that advance shall be paid into the same bank account where the main part of the salary is paid.

Field of expenditure controlled ex-post	Ex-post control undertaken	Verifier's observations	Conclusions/main action taken by the authorising officer (AOS)
Ex-post verification of 2022 salaries	The ex-post verification of salaries was performed on the following areas in accordance with the requirements: I. Annual travel expenses paid in June 2022; II. Parental leave with increased allowance; III. Expatriation allowance, foreign residence allowance.	The non-quantifiable findings concerned the expatriation allowance of one former UK national.	The verification sector recommends the appropriate regularisation of the requirements on expatriation allowances in relation to staff with UK nationality only.
Ex-post verification on the <b>correspondence between the beneficiary</b> of a salary or allowance <b>and the account holder</b> of the bank account where the salary is paid.	To ensure that the primary bank account used for salary payments accurately reflects the name of the beneficiary, who is an EESC staff member.	Some mismatches identified between supporting documents and encoding in ABAC	The verification sector recommends: - to update the IBANs registered in ABAC, making sure that the staff member is clearly mentioned as the account holder; - to delete inactive bank accounts from ABAC; - to assess the risks related to the payment of salaries to a bank account co-owned by the EESC staff member and another person.

ABAC: the EESC accounting system as from 2007 (Accrual Based Accounting, or ABAC)

## 6. REPORT ON BUILDING CONTRACTS 2022 AND REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL ACCORDING TO ART. 266(1) OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION

### **Financial Regulation, Article 163: Publicity measures**

1. *For procedures with a value equal to or greater than the thresholds referred to in Article 175(1) or Article 178, the contracting authority shall publish in the Official Journal of the European Union:*
  - (a) *a contract notice to launch a procedure, except in the case of the procedure referred to in point (d) of Article 164(1);*
  - (b) *a contract award notice on the results of the procedure.*
2. *Procedures with a value below the thresholds referred to in Article 175(1) or Article 178 shall be advertised by appropriate means.*
3. *Publication of certain information on a contract award may be withheld where its release would impede law enforcement, or otherwise be contrary to the public interest, would harm the legitimate commercial interests of economic operators or might prejudice fair competition between them.*

### **Financial Regulation, Annex I (3): Advertising of procedures for contracts with a value below the thresholds referred to in Article 175(1) of this Regulation or for contracts outside the scope of Directive 2014/24/EU**

- 3.2. *For contracts awarded in accordance with points (g) and (i) of the second subparagraph of point 11.1, the contracting authority shall send a list of contracts to the European Parliament and Council no later than 30 June of the following financial year. Where the contracting authority is the Commission, that list shall be annexed to the summary of the annual activity report referred to in Article 74(9).*

### **Financial Regulation, Annex I (11): Use of a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice**

- (g) *for building contracts, after prospecting the local market;*

## 6.1 BUILDING CONTRACTS 2022

No building contracts were awarded in 2022.

## 6.2 ARTICLE 266 FR REPORT

### **Financial Regulation, Article 266(1): Specific provisions regarding building projects**

*Each Union institution shall provide the European Parliament and the Council, by 1 June each year, with a working document on its building policy, which shall incorporate the following information:*

- (a) for each building, the expenditure and surface area covered by the appropriations of the corresponding budget lines. The expenditure shall include the costs of the fitting-out of buildings but not the other charges;*
- (b) the expected evolution of the global programming of surface area and locations for the coming years with a description of the building projects in planning phase which are already identified;*
- (c) the final terms and costs, as well as relevant information regarding project implementation of new building projects previously submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council under the procedure set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 and not included in the preceding year's working documents.*

### **6.2.1 Part 1: The expenditure and surface area for each building**

The information about the premises of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions can be found under point 6.2.4.

### **6.2.2 Part 2: The expected evolution of the global programming**

A buildings strategy was approved by the Bureau of the European Economic and Social Committee on 17 October 2017 and by the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on 29 November 2017.

This **buildings strategy** provides a reliable and flexible framework for future decisions in this area, and contains a set of guiding principles, which include:

- geographical concentration;
- preference for ownership rather than lease and exercising options to buy;
- sustainable buildings management; and
- multi-annual planning.

Regarding the main priority for the buildings strategy – "geographical concentration" – several scenarios were explored in 2018. The preferred scenarios all include retaining the VMA building (rue Van Maerlant 2) for use by the EESC and the CoR after 2021.



It should be noted here that, in 2016, the European Commission secretary-general informed the Committees that the Administrative Agreement on renting the VMA would not be extended beyond February 2019, and that the Commission intended to demolish the building after that date and to build a new one solely for its own use. Following negotiations, that Administrative Agreement was finally extended until the end of 2021, but no arrangement was made for further use of this building by the Committees beyond that year.

On 28 August 2019, a new Administrative Agreement was signed by the Director of the OIB and the secretaries-general of both Committees on the exchange of the Committees' B68 (rue Belliard 68) and TRE74 (rue de Trèves 74) buildings for the Commission's VMA building. The exchange will become effective on 16 September 2022, the date on which the value of both sets of buildings will be identical<sup>4</sup>.

### **NEED FOR A NEW BUILDING**

Exchanging the B68 and TRE buildings for the VMA will, however, result in a significant loss of office space for the two Committees (10 440 m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>5</sup>, which cannot be entirely offset by alternative measures in the short term such as stepping up the office-space density of the other buildings and increasing teleworking.

On 11 December 2019, the European External Action Service (EEAS) informed the Committees that the Belliard 100 building would be available by early 2021 and proposed transferring its current lease to them. With 5 200 m<sup>2</sup>, the Belliard 100 building would enable the Committees to partially offset the loss of office space following the building exchange scheduled for September 2022. In addition, renting the B100 as from early 2021 would enable the Committees to accommodate some of the staff vacating the VMA building during the refurbishment works planned between summer 2021 and summer 2022. As the B100 is adjacent to the VMA building, taking over its rental contract will also have the advantage for the Committees of having a fully interconnected single group of buildings.

Considering these elements, the Bureaus of the two Committees mandated the secretaries-general in February 2020 to undertake negotiations with the EEAS in view of concluding an agreement enabling the Committees to take over the rental contract of B100 as from early 2021.

The negotiations started in March 2020, with the initial aim of being concluded before summer 2020. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 crisis caused a major delay in the works of another building that the EEAS intended to occupy at the beginning of 2021 and as a consequence the services

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<sup>4</sup> This date was determined by an external real estate expert and takes into account the market price of the buildings minus the long-term lease instalments still to be paid.

<sup>5</sup> 13 396 m<sup>2</sup> minus the VMA surface area of 2 956 m<sup>2</sup> currently occupied by the European Commission. The other part of the building is already occupied by the Committees.

currently housed in the B100 building can only move out later in 2021. In its letter dated 12 November 2020, the EEAS informed the Committees that the takeover of the rental contract of the B100 building could only take effect on 1 September 2021.

The draft Administrative Agreement with the EEAS for the takeover of the lease of the Belliard 100 building was approved by the Bureau of the European Economic and Social Committee on 15 September 2020 and by the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on 9 October 2020.

On 18 March 2021, the Committees referred the matter to the budgetary authority in order to seek its opinion on the financial aspects of this takeover in application of Article 266 of the Financial Regulation (references CESE (2021) D/505 Official registration n° (2021) D/199 and CoR (2021) D/430 Official registration n° (2021) D/352).

The European Parliament has approved this request on 10 May 2021, confirmed by its letter EP (2021)012506 of 1 June 2021. The European Council did not take a decision contrary to the project by 16 April 2021 and therefore it was deemed approved by the Council.

Following the exchange of buildings with the Commission, savings compared to 2019 will begin to appear from the beginning of 2023, due to the lower cost of renting the entire VMA compared to the three buildings currently being paid for (B68, T74 and partially the VMA): these savings will be sufficient to cover the rent of B100.

For 2021 and 2022, i.e. before the exchange of buildings, the rent for the B100 building represents an additional one-off cost for both Committees compared to 2020.

With the exchange of the B68 and TRE74 buildings for the VMA building and the taking over of the B100 building from the EEAS in September 2021, the major priority of the 2017 buildings strategy, the "geographical concentration of the buildings", has been reached. Now all the buildings used by the Committees are physically connected to the JDE building.

#### **NEED TO REFURBISH VMA**

The VMA is a more than 35-year-old building. Its office floors from the third to the ninth floor need to be refurbished as soon as possible (2021-2022) in order to function properly in the coming years. It should be noted that if the building exchanges were not happening, the Committees would still need to refurbish the B68 and TRE74 in more or less the same period as these two buildings are also quite old.

The estimated budget for the VMA's refurbishment works from the third to the ninth floor was EUR 6 to 9 million. The main part of this budget for the renovation works of the VMA (around

EUR 6 million) was already available in the initial 2021 budget approved by the budgetary authority as a "one off" request for the year 2021. In addition, it was possible to save appropriations for an amount of 3 million from budget lines 2001 and 2000 as well as from other projects on budget line 2007 and to use them for the VMA refurbishment.

On 21 April 2021 in their joint yearly report on Buildings<sup>6</sup> in application of article 266 of the Financial Regulation, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions confirmed and extended their early warning to the budgetary authority, which had already been notified through a letter dated 24 May 2019 sent to Mr Arthuis and through the Buildings Report sent on 29 May 2020, to the Budgetary Authority:

- the need to refurbish the VMA building,
- the launch of a call for tenders in spring 2021 for the renovation works for the VMA building, to be undertaken between September 2021 and September 2022, for an estimated amount of up to EUR 9 million.

The renovation works of the VMA building have been explained to European Parliament's Committee on Budget at its meeting on 10 May 2021.

On 28 October 2021, the Committees referred the matter to the budgetary authority in order to seek its approval on the financial aspects of this renovation in application of Article 266 of the Financial Regulation (references CESE (2021) D/2660 Official registration n° 850 and CoR (2021) D/2035 Official registration n° 1253).

The European Parliament has approved this request on 18 November 2021, confirmed by its letter with reference EP (2021)308595 of 7 December 2021.

The European Council did not take a decision contrary to the project by 26 November 2021 and therefore it was deemed approved by the Council.

On 1 December 2021 the tender for the renovation works has been awarded and a few days after the framework contracts has been signed as well as the specific contracts for the works for a total amount of EUR 9 million:

- the main renovation, including new sanitary facilities, showers and lounge area for EESC members for a total amount of EUR 6,25 million
- three technical options for a total amount of EUR 2,75 million:
  1. modernise the work environment by installing glass partitions
  2. allow a flexible layout at all times (reasonable flexibility) so that the spaces can be adapted to new forms of work in smaller or larger, individual or shared, or open offices (post-pandemic phase) at low cost,
  3. measures to limit energy and water consumption (EMAS/Green Deal objectives).

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<sup>6</sup> references EESC (2021) D/1012 - Official registration N° 335 and CDR (2021) D/967 - Official registration N° 511

The total budget that was committed in 2021 and 2022 to this renovation project of the third until the ninth floor by both Committees is of EUR 9,54 million.

Since December 2021, the office floors (3rd to 9th) of the VMA building have been going through a complete renovation. They have been stripped from the very bottom and renovated up to high level standards applying the principles of the New European Bauhaus. The quality of the renovation is state of the art. A great selection of fittings, premium finishes with an attention to details and some gentle touch of colours, conservation of the existing parquet, and the beautiful plant wall which welcomes you on entering each floor.

Offices now have intelligent lighting, heating, ventilation as well as solar protection with the smart glazing on the windows of rue Belliard side. A single device controls all these systems and optimize them taking into account the presence of persons, luminosity, CO<sup>2</sup> level in the air, sunshine, indoor temperature and temperature chosen. These smart devices are for the first time being installed in Brussels. The benefits of these devices are to optimize the energy consumption while offering a level of comfort to the users that stays stable during the day and trough the different seasons. It also shuts down the lights and reduces the pace of functioning of heating and ventilation when there are no users present after a while.

Corridors have been fitted with new glass partitions which allows the offices and central zones to have more natural light. It gives the feeling of freshness and openness.

Special attention has been paid to disabled accessibility by installing automatic opening doors on both sides of the footbridge to the JDE building and by installing a toilet for people with reduced mobility on each floor.

The VMA building has now an improved performance in terms of energy savings, and offers a modern look and an efficient and comfortable working space to all its users with the aim to nurture collaboration and improve the well-being at work.

#### **New passageway between the European Parliament and the Committees**

In November 2022, a new physical connection to the EP's buildings became operational, offering a more direct, easier and 125 m shorter pathway between the Committees' BvS building (5th floor) and the EP's Zweig building.

#### **Energy crisis**

Energy saving measure are being implemented since the beginning of the implementation of the Environmental Management System within the Committees in 2009, with a significant reduction in energy consumption.

In light of the energy crisis since end 2021, exacerbated since February 2022 with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the financial consequences it entails, since 1 April 2022 a series of additional energy-saving measures have been implemented across the Committees.

These measures can be summarized as follows:

- To reduce the winter temperature in all buildings to 19°C;
- for the summer period, to increase the start-up temperature for the air conditioning system to 27°C.

### **LIFT OF PURCHASE OPTIONS**

In their letter 001071-01909 dated 11 December 2014, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions informed the budgetary authority of their intention to lift the purchase option provided in the long-term leasehold contracts for five buildings occupied jointly, namely:

- JDE building, on Rue Belliard 99-101, 1040 Brussels
- BvS building, on Rue Montoyer 92-102, 1000, Brussels
- B68 building, on Rue Belliard 68, 1000, Brussels
- TRE building, on Rue de Trèves 74, 1000, Brussels
- REM building, on Rue Belliard 93, 1000, Brussels

The budgetary and financial cost of acquiring the residual property rights is a symbolic sum of EUR 1 per building, this being the price under the contracts for the exercise of the purchase options, to which the indirect costs of legal services and notarial fees have to be added.

It is also important to note that exercising the purchase option will not change the financial conditions set out in the long-term leasehold contracts. The European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions will still have to continue paying the annual leasehold fees in accordance with the contracts for the remainder of their term.

The option to purchase the JDE building was exercised with the signing of the deed on 19 November 2018.

The option to purchase the BVS and REM buildings was exercised with the signing of both deeds on 9 December 2019.

As the Committees will swap the B68 and TRE buildings for the VMA building, the exercise of the purchase options of the B68 and TRE buildings will have to be carried out by the Commission in due time.

The Committees will exercise the option to purchase the VMA building between 1 September 2028 and 31 October 2028 as provided for in the long-term lease contract.

**In conclusion, the budgetary authority is informed about:**

- the entry into force on 16 September 2022 of the Administrative Agreement signed on 28 August 2019 between the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions concerning the exchange of the Committees' B68/TRE74 buildings for the Commission's VMA building<sup>7</sup>;
- the takeover by the Committees of the rental contract of the B100 building as from 1 September 2021, following the signature on 22 June 2021 of an Administrative Agreement with the European External Action Service for that has received the agreement of the budgetary authority in June 2021;
- the state of play of the renovation works of the third to the ninth floor of the VMA building, undertaken between December 2021 and April 2023, for an amount of EUR 9.54 million, following the agreement of the budgetary authority received in November 2021;
- the state of play related to the exercising of the options to purchase the buildings occupied by the Committees, for which there were no changes in 2022.

**6.2.3 Part 3: Project implementation of new building projects previously submitted to the European Parliament and the Council**

No new projects were presented to the European Parliament and the Council in 2022.

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<sup>7</sup> Both sets of buildings will have the same value on 16 September 2022, the date when the exchange will take effect.

6.2.4 Table: Expenditure and surface for each building (CoR and EESC together)

Item		Building	Area above ground (m²)	Type of contract	Lease payment 2023 (EUR)
2001 (Annual lease payments)	Office space	JDE	22 026	Option exercised in November 2018	7 670 755
		BVS	18 281	Option exercised in December 2019	6 429 055
		REM	2 324	Option exercised in December 2019	274 876
		VMA	11 094	Emphyteusis with option to buy	3 254 530
	Non-office space	JDE	14 353	Option exercised in November 2018	4 998 563
		BVS	2 285	Option exercised in December 2019	803 588
		REM	0	Option exercised in December 2019	0
		VMA	5 216	Emphyteusis with option to buy	1 530 163
	Total item		75 579		24 961 529
	2000 (Rent)	Office space	B100	5 827	Rent
Non-office space		B100	0	0	
Total item		5 827	1 608 488		
GRAND TOTALS			81 406		26 570 017

Share of office space in total space (%)	73,2 %
Share of non-office space in total space (%)	26,8 %
Workplaces to be accommodated	1 485
Office space / workplaces (m <sup>2</sup> )	40,1

## **7. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN REGARDING DECISIONS WHICH ARE IRREGULAR OR CONTRARY TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SOUND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DURING 2022**

### **Financial Regulation, Article 92 (3): Rules applicable to authorising officers**

*An authorising officer by delegation or sub-delegation who receives a binding instruction which he or she considers to be irregular or contrary to the principle of sound financial management, in particular because the instruction cannot be carried out with the resources allocated to him or her, shall inform the authority from which he or she received the delegation or subdelegation about that fact in writing. If the instruction is confirmed in writing and that confirmation is received in good time and is sufficiently clear, in that it refers explicitly to the points which the authorising officer by delegation or subdelegation has challenged, the authorising officer by delegation or subdelegation shall not be held liable. He or she shall carry out the instruction, unless it is manifestly illegal or constitutes a breach of the relevant safety standards.*

*The same procedure shall apply in cases where an authorising officer considers that a decision, which is his or her responsibility to take, is irregular or contrary to the principle of sound financial management or where an authorising officer learns, in the course of acting on a binding instruction, that the circumstances of the case could give rise to such a situation.*

*Any instructions confirmed in the circumstances referred to in this paragraph shall be recorded by the authorising officer by delegation responsible and mentioned in his or her annual activity report.*

### **7.1 ARTICLE 92 (3) INSTRUCTIONS RECEIVED IN 2022**

The delegating authority has not issued any such instructions in 2022.



## 8. WAIVING OF RECOVERY OF AMOUNTS RECEIVABLE INVOLVING EUR 60 000 OR MORE IN 2022

### **Financial Regulation, Article 101 (2): Rules on waive recovery**

*The authorising officer responsible may waive recovery of all or part of an established amount receivable only in the following cases:*

*(a) where the foreseeable cost of recovery would exceed the amount to be recovered and the waiver would not harm the image of the Union;*

*(b) where the amount receivable cannot be recovered in view of its age, of delay in the dispatch of the debit note in the terms defined in Article 98(2), of the insolvency of the debtor, or of any other insolvency proceedings;*

*(c) where recovery is inconsistent with the principle of proportionality.*

*Where the authorising officer responsible plans to waive or partially waive recovery of an established amount receivable, he or she shall ensure that the waiver is in order and is in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality. The decision to waive recovery shall be substantiated. The authorising officer may delegate the power to take that decision.*

### **Financial Regulation, Art. 101 (5): Report on the waivers granted**

*Each Union institution shall send to the European Parliament and to the Council each year a report on the waivers granted by it pursuant to paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this Article. Information on waivers below EUR 60 000 shall be provided as a total amount. In the case of the Commission, that report shall be annexed to the summary of the annual activity reports referred to in Article 74(9).*

## 8.1 WAIVING OF RECOVERY OF AMOUNTS RECEIVABLE INVOLVING EUR 60 000 OR MORE IN 2022

The European Economic and Social Committee made no waivers of recovery of amounts receivable involving EUR 60 000 or more in 2022.

## 9. REPORT ON CONTRACTS AND NEGOTIATED PROCEDURES 2022

### Article 74 of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046

#### Powers and duties of the authorising officer

10. *The authorising officer by delegation shall, for each financial year, record contracts concluded by negotiated procedures in accordance with points (a) to (f) of point 11.1 and point 39 of Annex I. If the proportion of negotiated procedures in relation to the number of contracts awarded by the same authorising officer by delegation increases significantly in relation to earlier years or if that proportion is distinctly higher than the average recorded for the Union institution, the authorising officer responsible shall report to the Union institution setting out any measures taken to reverse that trend. Each Union institution shall send a report on negotiated procedures to the European Parliament and to the Council. In the case of the Commission, that report shall be annexed to the summary of the annual activity reports referred to in paragraph 9 of this Article.*

### ANNEX I of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046

#### CHAPTER 1 'COMMON PROVISIONS'

#### SECTION 1

##### Framework contracts and publicity

3. **Advertising of procedures for contracts with a value below the thresholds referred to in Article 175(1) of this Regulation or for contracts outside the scope of Directive 2014/24/EU**

- 3.3. *Contract award information shall contain the name of the contractor, the amount legally committed and the subject matter of the contract and, in the case of direct contracts and specific contracts, it shall comply with Article 38(3).*

*The contracting authority shall publish a list of contracts on its website no later than 30 June of the following financial year for:*

- (a) contracts below the thresholds referred to in Article 175(1);*
- (b) contracts awarded in accordance with **point (h) and points (j) to (m) of the second subparagraph of point 11.1;***
- (c) modifications of contracts as set out in point (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 172(3);*
- (d) modifications of contracts as set out **in points (a) and (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 172(3)** where the value of the modification is below the thresholds referred to in Article 175(1);*
- (e) specific contracts under a framework contract.*

*For the purposes of **point (e) of the second subparagraph**, the published information may be aggregated per contractor for specific contracts under the same framework contract.*

## SECTION 2

### Procurement procedures

#### 11. Use of a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice

*11.1. Where the contracting authority uses the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice, it shall comply with the arrangements on negotiation set out in **Article 164(4)** and in **point 6.5**.*

*The contracting authority may use the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice, regardless of the estimated value of the contract, in the following cases:*

- (a) where no tenders, or no suitable tender, or no request to participate or no suitable request to participate as provided for in **point 11.2** have been submitted in response to an open procedure or restricted procedure after that procedure has been completed, provided that the original procurement documents are not substantially altered;*
- (b) where the works, supplies or services can only be provided by a single economic operator under the conditions set out in **point 11.3** and for any of the following reasons:*
  - (i) the aim of the procurement is the creation or acquisition of a unique work of art or an artistic performance;*
  - (ii) competition is absent for technical reasons;*
  - (iii) the protection of exclusive rights, including intellectual property rights, must be ensured;*
- (c) in so far as is strictly necessary where, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by unforeseeable events, it is impossible to comply with the time limits laid down in **points 24, 26 and 41** and where the justification of such extreme urgency is not attributable to the contracting authority;*
- (d) where a service contract follows a design contest and is to be awarded to the winner or to one of the winners; in the latter case, all winners shall be invited to participate in the negotiations;*
- (e) for new services or works consisting in the repetition of similar services or works entrusted to the economic operator to which the same contracting authority awarded an original contract, provided that those services or works are in conformity with a basic project for which the original contract was awarded after publication of a contract notice, subject to the conditions set out in **point 11.4**;*

*(f) for supply contracts:*

*(i) for additional deliveries which are intended either as a partial replacement of supplies or installations or as the extension of existing supplies or installations, where a change of supplier would oblige the contracting authority to acquire supplies having different technical characteristics which would result in incompatibility or disproportionate technical difficulties in operation and maintenance; when Union institutions award contracts on their own account, the duration of such contracts shall not exceed three years;*

*(ii) where the products are manufactured purely for the purpose of research, experimentation, study or development; however, such contracts shall not include quantity production to establish commercial viability or to recover research and development costs;*

*(iii) for supplies quoted and purchased on a commodity market;*

*(iv) for purchases of supplies on particularly advantageous terms, from either an economic operator which is definitively winding up its business activities, or the liquidators in an insolvency procedure, an arrangement with creditors, or a similar procedure under national law;*

#### **9.1 REPORT ON NEGOTIATED PROCEDURES ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 74 'POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE AUTHORISING OFFICER' OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION**

During 2022, the EESC organised **no** negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice (**Point 11.1 (a) to (f) of the Annex I of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046**).

CONTRACTOR	SUBJECT	AMOUNT IN EUR	TYPE OF CONTRACT	LEGAL BASIS FR 2018 ANNEX I
—	—	—	—	—

## 9.2 EX-POST PUBLICITY OF SIGNED CONTRACTS IN 2022, ACCORDING TO POINT 3.3 OF ANNEX I OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION

According to **point 3.3 of Annex I of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046**, the European Economic and Social Committee publishes each year on its website, by 30 June at the latest, lists of contracts awarded/signed the previous financial year:

- A list of middle and low value contracts awarded with a value higher than the EUR 15 000.00 and below the EUR 139 000.00 thresholds for services and supplies (thresholds referred to in **Article 175(1) FR**).
- A list of specific contracts, aggregated per contractor, signed in respect of Framework Contracts.
- A list of contracts awarded in accordance with point (h) and points (j) to (m) of the second subparagraph of point 11.1 (negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice).

EESC Website: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/work-with-us/public-procurement/awarded-contracts>

## 10. AVERAGE PAYMENT TIMES – PAYMENT DELAY SUSPENSION

**Article 116 of the Financial Regulation 2018/1046****Time limits for payments**

1. *Payments shall be made within:*
  - (a) 90 calendar days for contribution agreements, contracts and grant agreements involving technical services or actions which are particularly complex to evaluate and for which payment depends on the approval of a report or a certificate;
  - (b) 60 calendar days for all other contribution agreements, contracts and grant agreements for which payment depends on the approval of a report or a certificate;
  - (c) 30 calendar days for all other contribution agreements, contracts and grant agreements.

2. *The time allowed for making payments shall be understood to include validation, authorisation and the payment of expenditure.*

*It shall begin to run from the date on which a payment request is received.*

3. *A payment request shall be registered by the authorised department of the authorising officer responsible as soon as possible and is deemed to be received on the date it is registered.*

*The date of payment is deemed to be the date on which the Union institution's account is debited.*

*A payment request shall include the following essential elements:*

- (a) *the creditor's identification;*
- (b) *the amount;*
- (c) *the currency;*
- (d) *the date.*

*Where at least one essential element is missing, the payment request shall be rejected.*

*The creditor shall be informed in writing of a rejection and the reasons for it as soon as possible and in any case within 30 calendar days from the date on which the payment request was received.*

4. *The authorising officer responsible may suspend the time limit for payment where:*
  - (a) *the amount of the payment request is not due; or*
  - (b) *the appropriate supporting documents have not been produced.*

*If information comes to the notice of the authorising officer responsible which puts in doubt the eligibility of expenditure in a payment request, he or she may suspend the time limit for payment for the purpose of verifying, including by means of on-the-spot-checks, that the*

*expenditure is eligible. The remaining time allowed for payment shall begin to run from the date on which the requested information or revised documents are received or the necessary further verification, including on-the-spot checks, is carried out.*

*The creditors concerned shall be informed in writing of the reasons for a suspension.*

5. *Except in the case of Member States, the EIB and the EIF, on the expiry of the time limits laid down in paragraph 1, the creditor shall be entitled to interest in accordance with the following conditions:*

*(a) the interest rates shall be those referred to in Article 99(2);*

*(b) the interest shall be payable for the period elapsing from the calendar day following expiry of the time limit for payment laid down in paragraph 1 up to the day of payment.*

*However, in the event that the interest calculated in accordance with the first subparagraph is lower than or equal to EUR 200, it shall be paid to the creditor only on a request submitted within two months of receiving late payment.*

6. *Each Union institution shall submit to the European Parliament and Council a report on the compliance with and the suspension of the time limits laid down in paragraphs 1 to 4 of this Article. The report of the Commission shall be annexed to the summary of the annual activity reports referred to in Article 74(9).*

### 10.1 FIGURES ON AVERAGE PAYMENT TIMES – PAYMENT DELAY SUSPENSION IN 2022

#### Payment times

	All payments 2022			Payments within time limit 2022			Late payments 2022		
Maximum payment time (days)	Number of payments	%	Average payment time (days)	Number of payments	%	Average payment time (days)	Number of payments	%	Average payment time (days)
30	13 744	100.00	18.32	12 321	89.65	14.91	1 423	10.35	47.84
60	19	100.00	31.37	18	94.74	29.61	1	5.26	63.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 763</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>18.34</b>	<b>12 339</b>	<b>89.65</b>	<b>14.93</b>	<b>1 424</b>	<b>10.35</b>	<b>47.85</b>

#### Suspensions

Average payment suspension (days)	Number of suspended payments	% of total number	Total number of payments
30	282	2.05%	13 763

#### Late Interest paid in 2022

Description	Amount (EUR)
Interest on late payment of charges	6 774.39



## 11. FOLLOW-UP TO OBSERVATIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT'S 2020 AND 2021 FINAL DISCHARGE RESOLUTIONS

### Financial Regulation, Art. 262: Follow-up measures

1. *In accordance with Article 319 TFEU and Article 106a of the Euratom Treaty, Union institutions and Union bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71 of this Regulation shall take all appropriate steps to act on the observations accompanying the European Parliament's discharge decision and on the comments accompanying the recommendation for discharge adopted by the Council.*
2. *At the request of the European Parliament or of the Council, Union institutions and Union bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71 shall report on the measures taken in the light of those observations and comments, and, in particular, on the instructions they have given to any of their departments which are responsible for budget implementation ... The reports from Union institutions and Union bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71 shall also be transmitted to the Court of Auditors.*

### 11.1 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION OF 18 OCTOBER 2022 WITH OBSERVATIONS FORMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DECISION ON DISCHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020, SECTION VI – EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (2021/2111(DEC))

*The European Parliament [...],*

#### *Budgetary and financial management*

1. *Reiterates its observations with regard to the 'IT co-financing allowance for members' that provides a yearly IT allowance of EUR 3 000 to each member (EUR 5 000 in 2020 under the one time increase related to the measures introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic); asks the European Economic and Social Committee (the 'Committee') to reconsider the amount of the IT allowance as well as its nature, with the aim of switching from a flat-rate allowance to a payment based on actual and justified costs;*

This flat-rate allowance of EUR 3 000 per year represents a monthly amount of EUR 250, which is far below the amount of comparable allowances paid in other institutions and is only paid to "actively participating" members who have attended at least 50 % of the meetings to which they have been invited.

Given that remote working arrangements are now part of the everyday working culture of the EU institutions, it is important to ensure that members are properly equipped with appropriate technological equipment (laptop, internet connection, printer, mobile device etc.) in order to

allow attendance at any meeting in which they cannot participate in person.

A flat-rate allowance is deemed to be more economical and more efficient than if the EESC were to provide members with the required individual technological infrastructure.

In the exceptional context of the COVID-19 pandemic, for co-financing of IT needs, the EESC Bureau decided on 28 April 2020 on a one-time increase in the IT co-financing allowance for members to increase the amount payable to "qualifying" members by EUR 1 000, for each of the two annual instalments in 2020. The rationale for this decision was to safeguard business continuity by helping ensure members had efficient and stable electronic means to enable them to communicate and attend meetings. As a result of the decision, members who had attended at least 50 % of the meetings to which they had been invited were entitled to receive EUR 2 500 (instead of 1 500) in April 2020 and in October 2020.

- 2. *Recalls that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee's bureau adopted a temporary decision allowing Committee members to claim the usual subsistence allowance for having participated in Committee meetings remotely in order to compensate members for the time spent in the performance of their duties and for the related administrative costs in cases where the member was prevented from travelling to Brussels; is aware that a structural proposal for a specific allowance for remote attendance of meetings was later submitted to and adopted by the Council in June 2021; acknowledges that any new remuneration practices require approval by means of a decision from the Council and, thus, reiterates the call on the Committee to propose fair and proportionate remuneration for members to which the Council can agree;***

The Council adopted on 16 May 2023 a structural decision granting an allowance for remote attendance at meetings. This decision (2023/1013) entered into force the day following its publication in the Official Journal (OJ L 136, 24.5.2023) and replaces the current temporary decision related to COVID-19. The amount of the remote allowance is set at EUR 145, as was already the case in the temporary decision. In parallel, the Council has also initiated an interinstitutional benchmarking exercise to allow for a future comprehensive revision of the overall framework of reimbursements. The European Commission has started to compile a comparative analysis of the reimbursement arrangements in peer organisations. This exercise is currently ongoing without prejudice to the newly adopted decision of 16 May.

The EESC supports the initiative to develop this comparative analysis and to ensure proportionate reimbursement and fairness across peer EU institutions, as the amount of the daily allowance for attendance at EESC meetings has not been changed or indexed since 2013, unlike in other institutions (European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions). This has resulted in a situation of institutional imbalance. The European Parliament has in the past called for the daily allowance for EESC members to be equal to that received by members of the European Parliament<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> See for example, the resolution of 5 May 2010 (OJ L 252, p. 94)  
[EUR-Lex - JOL\\_2010\\_252\\_R\\_0093\\_01 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

The European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions have the autonomy to index/increase the rate of daily allowance that they grant to their members, whereas it is only the Council that has the competence to amend the rate of the daily allowance for the EESC.

***Internal management, performance, internal control***

3. ***Understands the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the activity of the Union institutions, including the tight deadlines for adopting new legislation and, thus, for the consultative committees to deliver their opinions; recalls that the Committee adopted, prior to the approval of its amended procedure, 13 position papers in response to referrals to ensure an effective and timely contribution to the Union response to the COVID-19 pandemic; is aware that the Committee monitors its compliance with the institutional deadlines set for its opinions and that ad hoc measures have been adopted following an internal audit report from 2019; urges the Committee to report on those measures and other possible actions in that regard; recalls its recommendations made in previous discharge resolutions to enhance the interinstitutional cooperation and consequently the impact of the Committee's work; further recalls its recommendation for the Committee to carry out a qualitative impact assessment of its opinions; acknowledges the importance of maintaining the Committee as a strong consultative body, enabling dialogue between social partners, in particular employers, employees and representatives of various other interests;***

The EESC's contacts with its institutional counterparts are of outmost importance to the Committee, as they are key to delivering the messages contained in EESC opinions in a targeted way. The EESC is constantly improving the follow-up to opinions with its institutional counterparts, but also reinforcing additional activities that engage civil society. There are continued interinstitutional exchanges between the services concerned which can, for example, help anticipate work or prevent delays by making sure deadlines are aligned with EESC plenary sessions.

Regarding the qualitative impact assessment of its opinions, a pilot project on the reinforced follow-up of EESC opinions was launched in July 2022, with the aim of strengthening the follow-up to opinions in all institutions for selected opinions (up to five opinions per section/CCMI per year), to increase their qualitative impact assessment at the end of 2023.

Further to this, the Committee has also established a Working Group on the Format of Opinions to improve the overall impact of its opinions and to better adapt these to the needs of the receiving institutions.

2021 data also demonstrates the strengthening of the EESC's involvement in the legislative cycle. The Report on the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Parliament (EP) and the European Economic and Social Committee 2021 highlights the doubling of the number of meetings with EP counterparts in the preparation of EESC opinions compared to 2020. In addition to bilateral meetings on ongoing files, which have been a routine component of the work of the EESC over the course of 2021, members on both sides have also taken part in various events.

4. *Reiterates its concern regarding the fact that the Committee's Decision No 078/21 does not provide guidance regarding situations in which the Committee's legal service should be consulted and calls on the Committee to make such consultation compulsory for at least all decisions which entail legal risk for the Committee; recalls that its legal service must be provided with sufficient resources and the requisite mandate to perform its tasks successfully in the interest of the Committee, bearing in mind its cross-cutting role and insufficient size;*

EESC Decision No 078/21 A of 25 March 2021 lays down the procedure for consulting the EESC Legal Service. The decision was drafted by the Legal Service: requests for legal opinions are left at the discretion of requesting services. In practice, the Legal Service is systematically consulted by individual services when the files/decisions entail legal risks for the Committee.

Against the background of a general staff reduction of 7.7 % (from 727 to 671 posts) from 2013 to 2023, for the same period the number of posts in the Legal Service increased from four to six, currently complemented by two additional contractual agents (equivalent to one AD and one AST).

The findings of the recent audit on HR mapping as regards workload assessment also point towards an adequate staffing of the Legal Service to perform its tasks.

#### ***Human resources, equality and staff well-being***

5. *Welcomes the action plan for recruitment and retention of staff devised by the Committee's directorate for human resources and finances, approved in October 2021, and the future revision of the Committee's mobility policy; calls on the Committee to ensure the necessary involvement of staff representatives in the implementation of the action plan and in the review of the mobility policy respectively; welcomes the Committee's participation in the interinstitutional working group established to tackle the problems arising from a limited pool of candidates and the lack of reserve lists of laureates from open competitions;*

As part of its integrated HR strategy adopted in 2022, the EESC is currently reviewing its mobility policy together with the methodology for the identification and management of sensitive posts. Following long-standing practice, the package will be presented to staff representatives for their opinion and comments. The aim is to put in place an effective mobility policy which will allow the EESC to implement mobility as an important measure for favouring the development and retention of internal talent, whilst also taking full account of the specific constraints of the institution and in particular its small size.

6. *Takes note that the Committee's establishment plan has suffered a reduction of 7,98 % compared to 2013 figures (exceeding the 5 % target established by the Commission), which has an evident negative impact on the workload/resources ratio and therefore on the well-being of staff; welcomes the decision to request an external audit to compare the human resources available relative to the workload, including the Committee's attractiveness as an employer and the alignment between the evolution of activities and the resources*

*available; asks the Committee to ensure consistency between that audit and the action plan for recruitment and retention of staff; believes that that audit should include a specific analysis of the situations that Parliament has previously signalled (such as managers in ad interim or double posts ‘in the interest of the service’ and positions occupied after the expiration of the mobility deadline) and any other human resource decision affecting the allocation of staff; calls on the Committee to inform Parliament about the outcome and the measures adopted to follow up the recommendations to be drawn from that audit;*

In light of the constraints on its staffing and in order to explore the possibility of ensuring a more efficient allocation of limited resources, the EESC requested an audit from an external independent contractor in order to map human resources against the workload of its activities. This external audit was finalised in March 2023. The findings confirmed the heavy workload in many different services across the Committee in light of the current constraints on human resources as a result of the reduction of the establishment plan since 2013.

A three-step process was agreed by the EESC Bureau as regards the follow-up measures:

1. In-depth review and assessment of the validity of each of the recommendations in light of the latest state of play regarding HR staffing;
2. Prioritisation of all accepted recommendations based on their expected return on investment;
3. Based on these steps, establishment of a detailed action plan (including timeline and output indicators to measure the successful implementation) to be endorsed by the Bureau.

The action plan for recruitment and retention of staff devised by the Committee's directorate for Human Resources and Finance (as approved in October 2021) is regularly reviewed and updated in view of developments in the field of human resources and the labour market situation. The EESC confirms that the regular review and ongoing implementation of the plan will be closely linked with the external HR audit findings and recommendations.

7. *Notes that a new decision on teleworking and flexitime, adopted in April 2022, has been prepared jointly with the Committee of the Regions to establish modern, flexible and output-driven working conditions for staff; welcomes the preparation of the new diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan; supports that both actions included the involvement of the Committee's equal opportunities officer and built on the lessons learnt and improvements introduced during the COVID-19 crisis;*

No follow-up needed.

8. *Notes the ongoing consideration on new measures to promote women's access to management posts, such as intermediate management responsibilities below head of unit level and the practical implementation of gender budgeting; encourages the Committee to continue to endeavour to implement Parliament's recommendations in order to enhance gender mainstreaming internally;*

No follow-up needed.

9. *Welcomes the decision to revise the rules on short-term traineeships (that are compulsory for the completion of studies) and to offer adequate remuneration and further allowances for expenses such as travel and mobility;*

No follow-up needed.

10. *Takes note of the judgment of the General Court of 23 February 2022<sup>9</sup> on the case of possible harassment reported in 2018 by which the General Court annuls Decision No 293/19 of the Committee of 5 December 2019 that imposed the minimal possible penalty consisting of a written warning, dismisses the action as to the remainder, and orders the Committee to pay the costs; expects an internal reflection following that judgment, in particular on the procedural violations found by the General Court in relation to the internal inquiry, such as the one related to the right of defence;*

Following the entry into force of the revised decision on whistleblowing on 15 December 2021 (Decision 297/21A), as well as of the revised decision on procedures for preventing and dealing with psychological and sexual harassment at work (Decision 090/22A) adopted on 31 March 2022, the renewed ethical legal framework will be completed with a revised decision laying down general implementing provisions on disciplinary procedures and administrative enquiries. The new decision provides an update and comprehensive codification of the rules in place and also takes into account the best practices of other institutions.

The Legal Service, Data Protection Officer, Staff Committee and EU Staff Regulations Committee have all been consulted and given their approval to the draft text. The draft decision has currently been submitted to the EESC president for signature.

Moreover, in June 2021 the EESC signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Commission's investigation and disciplinary office (IDOC), which allows for a further professionalisation of administrative enquiries through their externalisation to IDOC. The revision of the EESC decision laying down general implementing provisions on disciplinary procedures and administrative enquiries takes full account of this SLA.

11. *Points out that out of the six requests for assistance related to possible cases of harassment that were received in 2020, one is still open; notes that for that request for assistance, the internal administrative inquiry was completed in December 2021, that preliminary hearings were held with the person concerned and with the victim in February and March 2022 respectively, and that an additional administrative inquiry was requested by the appointing authority in May 2022 to better clarify the situation before taking its final decision; notes that a decision has not yet been taken; reiterates that the lapse of time has a negative impact on both the victims and on the reputation of the institution involved and,*

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<sup>9</sup> Judgment of the General Court (Fourth Chamber) of 23 February 2022, *OA v European Economic and Social Committee*, T-671/20, ECLI:EU:T:2022:82.



*thus, urges the Committee to address that request without further delay and to report to the budgetary authority on the handling of that case;*

The final decision was adopted on 31 January 2023. The subsequent reply to the request for assistance – which is a separate decision – to inform the complainant about the outcome of the procedure was notified on 5 May 2023. It is important to underline in this matter that the EESC is fully bound by the applicable legal framework for such procedures. In the case at hand, the procedure is governed both by the Staff Regulations and by the EESC implementing provisions on disciplinary proceedings and administrative enquiries adopted in 2005. The EESC also formally notified the opening of the case to OLAF in January 2021 in order to provide it with the opportunity to open its own investigation, should that be considered necessary. OLAF did not follow-up on the case.

***12. Notes the conclusion of the settlement agreements with the two victims of moral harassment in December 2020 and March 2021 respectively; takes note that the last pending point for the full implementation of both settlement agreements depends on an upcoming change to the organisation chart in agreement with the Committee of the Regions and planned for implementation on 1 October 2022; calls on the Committee to apply specific procedures when dealing with harassment cases so that all victims are treated equally; urges the Committee to promptly report to the budgetary authority on the effective enforcement of this point; once again expresses its regret with regard to the long lapse of time with respect to the Committee's enforcement of those settlement agreements as legally required;***

The Committee would like to stress that, in the context of OLAF case OC/2018/0666/A, the victims were all treated equally and under the same procedural rules laid down by the EU Staff Regulations. The particular terms of the settlement agreement with one of the victims required that an agreement be reached with the Committee of the Regions, which was a parameter that was accepted in due knowledge by the victim when the settlement agreement was being drawn up.

Following the signature of a new administrative Cooperation Agreement between the EESC and the CoR in October 2021, the new organisation chart of the Joint Services entered into force on 1 October 2022, and includes in particular the establishment of a Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology.

With this reorganisation and in full agreement with the victim concerned, the last pending point related to the legal settlements following the OLAF case is now also implemented. The EESC has fully addressed the consequences of past events for victims who are or who were members of EESC staff, taking into account both their suffering and the moral and legal obligation to find fair and balanced compensation within the limits of the Staff Regulations and the Financial Regulation.

***13. Regrets that the conclusion of the settlement agreement with one of the victims of serious misconduct only took place in April 2022; also regrets that the implementation of the measures agreed in March 2021 between the other victim of serious misconduct, a former Committee member, and the Committee president was delayed until after the decision by***

*Parliament to postpone the discharge; welcomes nevertheless the public statement by the Committee president, published on the Committee's website, reiterating her sincere apologies to all those concerned for the true suffering caused by those wrongdoings; reiterates its concern that the Committee's secretary-general still refuses to admit the internal shortcomings and responsibilities, leading to a breach of duty of care towards the staff of the Committee;*

The administration has since the beginning acted in full respect of the administrative and legal provision in place and of the duty of care (in terms of prevention, protection etc.)

It has always worked in full cooperation with the authorities in charge of investigating the case in question, including OLAF, as the latter has duly recognised. It will continue to do so fully depending on the development of the file (in particular with regard to Belgian legal procedure), also with consideration for the fact that the EESC is a civil party in the ongoing legal proceedings.

As already stated in previous replies in connection with the harassment case, the Committee's then president and the newly appointed secretary-general jointly launched an inquiry, in January 2019, to examine the alleged facts and to establish the extent to which the appropriate procedures, based on the Staff Regulations, had been followed at the EESC when handling the relevant allegations. At the request of OLAF, which took over the responsibility for the entire file, the EESC suspended the internal inquiry and informed OLAF of this by letter dated 8 May 2019. OLAF's report on case OC/2018/0666/A.1 does not establish any shortcomings in the implementation of procedures.

On 1 September 2021, the General Court also delivered a judgement in case T-377/20, which rejected the claimant's request and validated *de facto* and *de jure* the handling of the case by the Committee's administration and political bodies. The judgment confirmed that the procedures had been correctly implemented during this case and by extension endorsed the rules and procedures established by the EESC. This was subsequently fully confirmed in the appeal before the Court of Justice on 6 October 2022 (case C-673/21).

The EESC considers that the complaints have been handled with due regard for the welfare of officials and for the legal and administrative procedures in place.

All possible support (both in terms of legal assistance and in the workplace) was granted in 2020 in full confidentiality, as provided for by the rules and requested by some of the victims. This was followed by exhaustive in-depth negotiations on individual settlements, within the constraints of the applicable legal framework, and in order to establish fair and balanced compensation for the moral, career, and financial damage incurred by the victims. Settlements have been reached and implemented with all victims.

***14. Notes the Committee's monthly updates and the follow-up to the observations made by Parliament in the first 2020 discharge resolution<sup>10</sup>; recalls that the OLAF report on case***

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<sup>10</sup> OJ L 258, 5.10.2022, p. 109.



*OC/2018/0666/A.1 only concerns the behaviour of the perpetrator towards the victims and that the judgment delivered by the General Court on 1 September 2022<sup>11</sup> simply examines the validity of the decision by the Committee's bureau of 9 June 2020, disproving the Committee's statements in the follow-up to the first 2020 discharge resolution that complaints have been handled with due regard for the welfare of officials; points out that the slow handling of the case by the Committee's administration and particularly the shortcomings in the implementation of internal procedures have therefore in no way been examined or validated; observes with concern that a serious breach of the Committee's duty of care towards the members of its staff persisted for too long; is deeply concerned that its unambiguous calls for accountability have been consistently ignored for many years and reiterates, therefore, its call for an external investigation specifically on the action, or lack thereof, of the administrative hierarchy of the Committee with a focus on the responsibility of the administrative hierarchy in the handling of harassment complaints and ensuring the well-being of staff;*

The commitments already expressed on several occasions by the previous president and by the EESC as an institution to support and implement the zero-tolerance policy remain fully valid.

Under the provisions already in place, the Committee was in a position to actively address the harassment case, to cooperate with OLAF and to impose sanctions on the member concerned under the Bureau decision of 9 June 2020. The EESC has nonetheless continued its work to revise its ethical framework and the decisions related to it (the new whistleblower decision for instance entered into force in December 2021, the revised decision on harassment entered into force in March 2022, and finally, the revised decision on administrative enquiries and disciplinary proceedings has currently been submitted to the EESC president for final signature).

The EESC is a civil party in the ongoing legal proceedings initiated by the national authorities against the perpetrator before the Belgian competent courts. Opening an external investigation in parallel to this process would interfere with the proceedings in the event that conclusions were reached (irrespective of their outcome) before the Belgian court case had been concluded.

Settlements have been reached and implemented with all victims. Reopening the whole case through an external investigation (again, irrespective of its outcome) lacks a legal basis and would not allow to capitalise on the serious and substantial efforts delivered in order to properly handle all consequences of the case at hand.

The procedure before the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) was completed and the Committee will claim back all the recoverable costs (EUR 25 317.6) as decided by the Court.

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<sup>11</sup> Judgment of the General Court (Eight Chamber) of 1 September 2021, *KN v European Economic and Social Committee*, T-377/20, ECLI:EU:T:2021:528.

The legal procedure before the Belgium criminal court in which the EESC is also a civil party is ongoing. The possibility to claim back from the alleged perpetrator part of the amount spent depends on the outcome of this procedure.

- 15. *Reiterates its concern that it is not yet possible to quantify the total final cost of that case, estimated at approximately EUR 150 000 for the time being, because it depends on the outcome of the legal procedure currently ongoing before the Belgium criminal court, in which the Committee is also a civil party; asks the Committee to promptly report the conclusion of the legal procedure and the total final cost to the budgetary authority; reiterates its request that the Committee claims from the perpetrator the amounts compensated to the victims by the Committee;***

The procedure before the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) was completed and the Committee will claim back all the recoverable costs (EUR 25 317.6) as decided by the Court.

The legal procedure before the Belgium criminal court in which the EESC is also a civil party is ongoing. The possibility to claim back from the alleged perpetrator part of the amount spent depends on the outcome of this procedure.

#### ***Ethical framework and transparency***

- 16. *Notes that the measures delivered by the joint working group entrusted with the revision of the Committee's ethical framework resulted in an ethics action plan adopted in January 2021; welcomes that a number of actions have been fully implemented such as, inter alia, the revision of the decisions on whistleblowing and on harassment (adopted in December 2021 and March 2022 respectively), the service-level agreement with the Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission to professionalise administrative inquiries, the mandatory training on ethics for all staff, the setting up and training of a new team of ethics counsellors, the ongoing renewal of the network of confidential counsellors, and the new guide for staff 'Respect at work at the EESC' (published in May 2022); notes that the joint working group also conducted preparatory work for the ongoing revision of the decision on disciplinary procedures and administrative inquiries; asks the Committee to regularly monitor, by means of ad hoc surveys, that staff have adequate awareness of the ethics framework; regrets that the revision of the decisions mentioned were extremely delayed with the one on harassment being adopted only after Parliament's decision to postpone the 2020 discharge, showing a lack of willingness to act; expresses concern that no specific procedure for harassment involving a Committee member and an official (within the definition of Decision 090/22 A) is in place with the consequence that no uniform procedures for dealing with cases of harassment is applied, leading to victims being treated differently; reiterates once again that the fact the Staff Regulations cannot be imposed on a member of the Committee cannot be used as an excuse for inaction; calls on the Committee to immediately provide for a specific procedure that will grant everyone proper and long due protection against harassment;***

As far as members are concerned, the rules in place are set out in the Rules of Procedure and

in the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct includes in part III a paragraph 11(1) which clarifies that "Any person, member or employee, can submit a complaint to the ethical committee concerning the behaviour of a member."

In the event a complaint is made, it will be examined for eligibility, and potentially investigated further, by the ethical committee. If a violation of the Code of Conduct is established, the EESC president is to adopt all appropriate sanctions as laid down by the Code. Any member of staff having submitted a complaint to the ethical committee may ask the administration to be assigned the status of whistleblower, thus enjoying the same protection regime.

As regards staff, the powers of the Appointing Authority (AIPN) are strictly defined by the administrative and regulatory framework in place (EU Staff Regulations), including as regards initiating inquiries.

Staff members may also submit a complaint to their hierarchy in accordance with the procedures laid down in the decision on the prevention of harassment and the decision on whistleblowing, and enjoy all the associated protection measures. The recipients of the complaint are to promptly inform the EESC president, unless the president is concerned by the complaint, in which case they are to promptly submit the matter to the ethical committee.

Furthermore and in order to mitigate this different legal basis for staff members and members of the EESC, Decision 090/22A explicitly provides in its Article 2(5) that "*without prejudice to the procedure laid down in part III of the Code of Conduct for members of the European Economic and Social Committee, this Decision shall apply by analogy to instances of alleged conflict at work or harassment also involving members of the EESC, delegates of consultative commissions, alternates or experts*" [emphasis added].

The EESC confirms that the renewed and strengthened ethical framework in place to support the zero-tolerance policy grants everyone full protection against harassment.

- 17. Notes the entry into force in January 2021 of the strengthened code of conduct for Committee members which provides greater clarity and imposes more severe sanctions in the event of any breach of the rules; welcomes that the action plan on ethics includes measures targeting members, including the publication of the information brochure 'Respect and dignity at the EESC' and the revision of the training on ethics for members to be aligned with the new code of conduct; notes that the Committee will analyse Parliament's request for this training to be made mandatory within the upcoming revision of the members' statute by the Committee's quaestors; welcomes that the revised version of the Committee's rules of procedure aligns with the new code of conduct and includes the possibility for individual membership to exceptionally cease by expulsion in case of breach of ethical standards, duties and obligations;*

No follow-up needed.

***18. Notes that the Committee's internal audit service issued an internal audit report on ethics and integrity in early 2020; asks the Committee for a summary of the recommendations made by the internal auditor and the actions to implement them;***

The internal audit on ethics and integrity built on a report issued by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) regarding the scope for improvement of the ethical frameworks in the main EU institutions. The objective of the EESC audit was to provide reasonable assurance as to the validity of the EESC's ethical framework, in relation to both members and staff. The audit focused on the implementation of the regulatory framework relating to gifts and entertainment, outside activities and assignments, conflicts of interest, post-EU employment, anti-harassment and whistleblowing, including its transposition into internal EESC rules.

The report was issued in March 2021 along with an agreed action plan. It concluded that many of the elements required in an EU body such as the EESC were in place but that an integrated approach was still missing, and a strong focus was put on the need to keep the framework fully up-to-date. The swift adoption of a new Code of Conduct for members and a dedicated action plan on the ethical framework confirmed the capacity of the EESC to act quickly and with determination.

A full evaluation of the implementation of the agreed audit action plan will be carried out in the near future. This evaluation will take account of other developments such as the implementation of the ethical framework action plan, which, for instance, included new rules on whistleblowing that entered into force in December 2021.

The EESC is also closely following the European Commission's initiative on the establishment of an interinstitutional EU Ethics Body, and has already expressed its interest in joining this project.

***19. Objects to the rejection by the Committee of the use of the Transparency Register on the grounds that the Committee is a consultative body; urges the Committee to join the Transparency Register with a view to improving the transparency of its interactions with external interest representatives;***

At its 21 March 2023 meeting, the EESC Bureau approved the decision to participate from 1 June 2023 in the EU Transparency Register, in line with the following three measures:

1. the recommendation that Committee office-holding members, in their official capacities, meet only with interest representatives that have registered with the Transparency Register;
2. the online publication of meetings of office-holding members with interest representatives;
3. the introduction of a voluntary legislative "footprint".

***20. Requests that all internal procedures and decisions, including the ones on ethics, be published in a specific column of the Committee's website;***

All information is readily available on the EESC's intranet site, and a one-stop-shop page

dedicated to ethics has been created.

The procedures related to members included in the EESC Code of Conduct are available on the EESC's external website.

- 21. *Notes that, in response to Parliament's request, the Committee has taken into account the recommendations of the European Ombudsman in her report in the case SI/2/2017/NF 'Revolving doors – Implementation of Article 16 of the EU Staff Regulations in a range of EU institutions, bodies and agencies' to revise its decision on outside activities and assignments; calls on the Committee to report on the adoption of the final decision;***

On 21 June 2022, the EESC adopted a decision revising its internal rules on staff outside activities and assignments (Decision No 141/22 A). Through this decision the EESC has implemented all main recommendations contained in the European Ombudsman's report on the publication of information on former senior staff to enforce the one-year lobbying and advocacy ban (case SI/2/2017/NF).

#### ***Inter-institutional cooperation***

- 22. *Takes note of the ongoing negotiations with the Commission and the Council aiming to strengthen institutional and administrative relations; supports the Committee in its commitment to implement the recommendation from the Conference on the Future of Europe to enhance the institutional role of the Committee and empower it as facilitator and guarantor of participatory democracy activities such as structured dialogue with civil society organisations and citizens' panels;***

No follow-up needed.

- 23. *Stresses the Committee's crucial role in representing and engaging with social partners and civil society organisations from the Member States in the Union decision-making process; takes note of the Committee's efforts to disseminate its opinions and activities as part of the fulfilment of its mission and recalls Parliament's recommendations in previous discharge resolutions on the subject; calls for the cooperation agreement between the Committee and the Parliament to be made binding, in particular calling for close and timely cooperation between the respective rapporteurs of the two institutions, for the Committee's opinions to be shared with the relevant committees of the Parliament during the report drafting phase and for the Committee's rapporteurs to be systematically invited to the presentation of those reports; recommends that the Committee carries out a more quantitative and qualitative impact analysis of its opinions; urges, therefore, the Committee to reinforce the staff working in the areas of legislative work and interinstitutional relations;***

The European Economic and Social Committee welcomes the proposal to further increase cooperation with the Parliament on the basis of the 2014 agreement.

The Committee agrees on the importance of close and timely cooperation between rapporteurs. In this context, the EESC has also initiated a pilot project aimed at identifying

the relevant stakeholders in the European institutions at the earliest possible stage and establishing contacts with them.

The Committee supports the idea of systematically inviting EESC rapporteurs to the parliamentary committees. In 2022, the Committee relaunched the policy dialogue provided for in the cooperation agreement. It resulted in an exchange of views between the EESC president and parliamentary committee chairs at the part-session in February 2023. As a follow-up, in April 2023 the Committee transmitted to the Parliament's conference of committee chairs a list of policy proposals that it considers to be eligible for enhanced cooperation according to the cooperation agreement.

Regarding the request for quantitative analysis, the Committee is currently examining an enhanced recourse to legislative amendments which would facilitate the measuring of the Committee's direct impact on law-making.

Finally, the EESC also takes note of the call by the EP to reinforce the staff working in the areas of legislative work and interinstitutional relations, in order to increase the impact of its work. However, the potential allocation of resources will be assessed against the findings and recommendations of the recently-completed external audit, the latest state-of-play in terms of available resources across the institution and the related constraints, as well as the priorities set by the political authorities.

See also the answer to observation 3.

### ***COVID-19 pandemic***

***24. Observes that, in order to benefit from the lessons learnt in the pandemic, an recovery action plan for the Committee was set-up in 2021 aiming to help members of staff to move forward towards a post-pandemic way of working; asks the Committee to report to the budgetary authority on the key steps of the recovery action plan and its implementation.***

The EESC's recovery action plan for the administration was adopted in 2021 and revised in 2022 to take account of evolving needs. The eight actions and the progress achieved to date (May 2023) for each are outlined below.

- **A1: Adopt a long-term, resource-efficient business process management approach across all directorates.** A structured approach to business process management (BPM) is being gradually introduced across the house. In parallel, a new practice for IT projects is being trialled, whereby such requests involve a mandatory business analysis and process-mapping phase to ensure their full efficiency.
- **A2: Structure and share operational and procedural knowledge across the house, based on a robust, integrated knowledge management system.** Research and tests are being conducted in order to identify the needs and solutions for an effective knowledge management system which will allow operational knowledge to be stored, managed and shared effectively.
- **A3: Set up and maintain a register of cross-departmental/inter-institutional working groups, so as to share knowledge of cross-cutting work and identify**



**synergies.** An online register of working groups was set up in 2023, and all directorates have been invited to contribute to and help maintain the information.

- **A4: Define and implement a harmonised paper-poor policy across all directorates, harnessing the potential of electronic workflows.** A report outlining the state of play as regards paperless and electronic workflows in the EESC administration was approved in 2023.
- **A5: Seek to optimise the digital workplace and use of collaborative working tools through an ongoing user-driven approach, based on real needs.** A digital workplace network was set up already in 2021, in cooperation with the European Committee of the Regions, to share best practices and empower users to make the best of the collaborative working tools available. These good practices are shared with staff through a website which was opened to staff in March 2023.
- **A6: Adopt a structured, business-oriented approach for managing Agora and related user-needs and priorities.** An Agora user group (Agora is the EESC's IT system for managing meeting-related and other core operational data) was set up in 2022, which gives business users the possibility to prioritise, discuss and follow up change requests.
- **A7: Define and implement the hybrid working policy, taking into account teleworking and office working needs and building on lessons learned.** The EESC has already implemented a new teleworking and working conditions decision in April 2022, as a pilot project, to draw lessons from the pandemic. In parallel, a joint Task Force has been established with the Committee of Regions to analyse different options for the New Ways of Working, including further rationalisation of the use of office space.
- **A8: Seek practical opportunities to enhance the impact and outreach of Committee work through digital channels.** A first report will be drafted in 2023 on the use and possible applications of speech-to-text technologies within the EESC in order to increase the accessibility of Committee work.

**11.2 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION OF 10 MAY 2023 WITH OBSERVATIONS FORMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DECISION ON DISCHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021, SECTION VI – EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (2022/2086(DEC))**

***The European Parliament [...],***

- 1. Notes that the budget of the Committee falls under MFF heading 7, ‘European public administration’, which amounted to a total of EUR 10,7 billion in 2021 (representing 5,9 % of Union spending); observes that the budget of the Committee represented 1,2 % of the total Union spending on administration;***

No follow-up needed.

- 2. Notes that the Court in its Annual Report for the financial year 2021 increased its sample of transactions under ‘Administration’ from 48 in 2020 to 60 in 2021;***

No follow-up needed.

- 3. Notes that the Court mentions that the work carried out over many years indicates that MFF heading 7 concerns overall low-risk spending; notes, however, that the annual report on the implementation of the budget for the 2021 financial year does not provide any relevant information on the Committee and invites the Court to include in its next annual reports comprehensive data regarding the completion of all requirements necessary for a consistent discharge procedure.***

No follow-up needed.

- 4. Notes with satisfaction that in the annual Report for the financial year 2021, the Court did not identify any specific issues concerning the Committee;***

The EESC is particularly satisfied with the analysis of the Court insofar as it confirms the sound management of the Committee's budgetary resources.

***Budgetary and financial management***

- 5. Notes that the final budget of the Committee for 2021 was EUR 145 024 938, representing a slight increase of 1,7 % compared to EUR 142 539 393 in 2020 and EUR 138 502 768 in 2019; notes that the most important budget lines in 2021, making up about 80 % of the overall budget, were those for remuneration and allowances, followed by members’ travel and subsistence allowance, lease payments, interpreters and fitting-out of premises;***

No follow-up needed.



6. *Observes with concern the low budget implementation of 90,8 %, compared to 91,8 % in 2020 and far from the pre-pandemic levels in 2019 and 2018 respectively of 98,1 % and 98,7 %); notes that the uncommitted appropriations returned to the Union budget are the highest in the last four years and amount to EUR 13 336 920, compared to EUR 11 677 200 and EUR 2 579 332 respectively in 2020 and in 2019 and EUR 1 819 462 in 2018; notes that this decrease is considered by the Committee to be a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic; observes, however, that in the economic outturn account, the overall expenses slightly increased in 2021, by 5 % compared to 2020, which the Committee explains was due to an increase in activity compared to the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic; points out that the two indicators appear to be pointing in opposite directions;*

The overall implementation rate of the EESC's budgetary commitments was above 98 % in 2018 and 2019. In 2020 and 2021, as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related impact on activities, the implementation rate decreased to 91.81 % and 90.80 % respectively. This trend was reversed in 2022, when the execution rate rose again to 96.12 %. The budgetary implementation rate is calculated in relation to the budget provided and is therefore calculated in relative terms.

The increase in overall expenses by 5 % compared to 2020 is based on real spending as included in the general annual accounts. Therefore, the increase in expenses in the general annual accounts shows higher spending in 2021 compared to the spending in the previous year due to a slight increase in activity, which as such is not visible in the budgetary implementation rate.

7. *Underlines the low payment rate at 31 December 2021 of 78 %, a decrease from 83,2 % and 92,5 % respectively in 2020 and 2019; appreciates that the average payment time in 2021 decreased to 19,94 days which is an improvement compared to 2020 (28,44 days) and 2019 (30,12 days); observes, however, that electronic invoices as a share of all invoices only reached 68 % in 2021, compared to 67 % in 2020 and still lower than 79 % in 2019;*

No follow-up needed.

8. *Remarks that an unprecedented surplus of EUR 13 163 207 was carried over from 2021 to 2022, much higher than in 2020 and 2019 when respectively EUR 8 722 448 and EUR 8 614 946 were carried over;*

The unprecedented surplus amount (appropriations for payments) carried over from 2020 to 2021 for an amount of EUR 13 163 207 is the result of the fact that at the end of 2020 high leftovers materialised as a direct consequence of the continuing health crisis and the related travel restrictions, which impacted members' activities and the organisation of in-person meetings. To address these leftovers, the EESC initiated transfers, especially towards the end of the year, resulting in a total transfer amount around five times higher than usual (EUR 10 378 352). The services which mainly benefited from these transfers (for buildings and IT-related projects) were thus not able to absorb the appropriations before the end of the year 2020 and they had to be committed to be carried over for payments in the year 2021, which explains the higher amount.

9. *Notes that, in 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the activities of the Committee, so that for certain lines there was a reduction in the use of appropriations (members' travel costs and allowances, interpretations, staff missions and organisation of events and hearings including the catering related to those events) while for others the health crisis required additional expenditure (technical support for remote or hybrid meetings, including simultaneous interpretation, reinforcement of IT facilities to cope with increased teleworking and additional equipment needed by the Committee's medical service); observes that the leftover appropriations were used to address the backlog in IT and buildings, acknowledged in previous discharge exercises;*

No follow-up needed.

10. *Remarks that the amount of transfer in 2021 was EUR 5 323 400, meaning that the transfer in 2021 and that in 2020 of EUR 10 378 352 were between 2,5 and 5 times higher than the transfers in the years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (EUR 3 119 041 and EUR 1 981 731 in 2019 and 2018 respectively); remarks that transfers were initiated earlier in the year but, despite the efforts made, not all leftovers could be absorbed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

No follow-up needed.

11. *Observes that, in 2021, the Committee continued its activities to improve the cost-effectiveness of its administrative circuits, achieving full paperless financial workflows and using qualified electronic signatures for contracts and amendments; notes that savings have been achieved mainly through the synergies resulting from the cooperation agreement between the Committee and the European Committee of the Regions (the 'CoR'), renewed in 2021, notably in the areas of infrastructure (the overall estimated savings made on rent, maintenance, consumables and staff amount to over EUR 12 million), IT, security and meeting services;*

No follow-up needed.

12. *Is aware that tender procedures concerning the Committee are organised either by its own services or on behalf of the Committee by the joint services shared by the Committee and the CoR; observes that, in 2021, there were only 13 procurement procedures where the Committee was either the sole contracting authority or a participating contracting authority together with the CoR, out of which two were cancelled due to a lack of offers, two in the field of building works ran as open procedures with the Committee as a participating contracting authority, and the remaining ran via negotiated procedure, seven for middle and low value contracts and two without prior publication of a contract notice as foreseen by the Financial Regulation;*

No follow-up needed.

13. *Underlines that, between April and June 2021, several meetings of the budget committee of the Council discussed the proposal by the Committee for a specific allowance for remote*

*attendance of Committee meetings; notes that the proposal by the CAF, supported by the Committee's quaestors and approved by the Council, sets the allowance for remote participation at EUR 145, which is half the allowance stipulated in Article 2(1) of Council Decision 2013/471/EU<sup>12</sup>, applicable as per 1 July 2021 and limited to the period where there are travel difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; notes that the reimbursement requires a check of attendance at the meeting or event for each participant via a variety of methods such as signature lists, electronic connection reports, screen shots or other reports showing interventions made, and that only based on that information can a reimbursement take place; highlights that in the event of remote attendance, only the reduced allowance is paid and that no other reimbursements (such as for travel costs or travel allowances) are made after the check of attendance and a check that no other third-party contribution was received; considers nevertheless that allowance, albeit reduced, difficult to understand in terms of public opinion as it could lead to reputational damage for the Committee; considers further that since the sanitary measures and measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic have been lifted, the allowance for remote attendance of meetings is no longer necessary;*

At the request of the EESC, on 28 June 2021 the Council adopted a specific allowance for remote attendance at meetings (OJ L 230, 30.06.2021), which is limited to the period where travel difficulties linked to COVID-19 or related restrictive measures compromise the possibility to organise or attend EESC meetings physically. This Council decision (2021/1072) established the allowance at a rate of EUR 145 (half the normal daily allowance of EUR 290). Every six months the EESC submitted an evaluation report on the application of the decision and on the continued existence of travel difficulties and other restrictive measures that adversely affected the possibility to organise or attend EESC meetings physically.

While restrictive measures related to COVID-19 have now almost disappeared, the health crisis has had a long-lasting impact on travel, with reduced possibilities in terms of flights and/or connections for many destinations. Moreover, to some extent, remote attendance has proven to be a valuable tool to enable attendance at EESC meetings, also permitting an equal treatment of participants. Although physical attendance is deemed as the optimal method of attendance for the majority of meetings, experience has shown that a hybrid format is an effective way of running meetings where physical presence is not indispensable (based on criteria such as, inter alia, confidentiality of proceedings or voting procedures). In addition to being cost-effective for the EU budget, the possibility for remote attendance at EESC meetings also further contributes to EU goals on reducing the carbon footprint. The report submitted in December 2022 to the Council therefore contained a request to the Council to consider establishing a decision on a structural allowance for remote attendance at certain EESC meetings.

The Council agreed at its meeting on 16 May 2023 to set up such a structural allowance for remote participation, and entered into force on the day after its publication in the Official

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<sup>12</sup> Council Decision 2013/471/EU of 23 September 2013 on the granting of daily allowances to and the reimbursement of travelling expenses of members of the European Economic and Social Committee and their alternates (OJ L 253, 25.9.2013, p. 22).

Journal (OJ L 136, 24.5.2023).

The time spent by members in preparing for and attending an online meeting is the same as the time spent preparing for and attending an in-person meeting. As a reminder, EESC members do not receive a salary but are reimbursed for their costs and compensated for the time spent working for the Committee.

It should also be noted that the allowance for remote attendance (like the daily allowance for in-person attendance) at meetings is paid only after confirmation of duly authorised attendance at a duly authorised meeting, and secondly it is only granted when specifically requested by the member.

Finally, it should also be pointed out that the allowance for remote attendance is not granted per meeting, but per meeting day in the same way as for the "normal" daily allowance. Thus, if a member attends two or more meetings by remote means in any given day, they are able to claim one allowance payment for remote attendance for that whole day.

***Internal management, performance and internal control***

***14. Notes that 2021 was another year where the Committee was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which a series of decisions were taken to enable the Committee's main bodies to continue to function despite the limitation imposed by safety and security concerns; observes that such decisions concerned format of meetings, building access requirements, event management and other health and safety measures, including physical distancing and the carrying out of meetings in remote format, which later became hybrid format, including hybrid voting and use of electronic workflows;***

No follow-up needed.

***15. Acknowledges the new management plan adopted by the Committee in 2021, defining the strategy of its secretariat-general and the five core values and five key strategic objectives that will steer its work over the next five years and establishing the annual strategic objectives directly linked to the management plan that, for 2021, include 33 objectives designed for all parts of its administration;***

No follow-up needed.

***16. Points out the role of the CAF that prepares all decisions of a financial or budgetary nature for the Committee's bureau and is organised with ad hoc subgroups targeting ad hoc subjects more efficiently, each composed of three members, one from each group represented in the Committee;***

No follow-up needed.

***17. Welcomes the Committee's integrated business analysis programme, aiming to capture and map all underlying business processes having an influence on the spending forecasting for budget lines, which is expected to help identify potential root causes of variances between***

*the spending forecasting and the final costs of activities, leading to further improvement of the sound and efficient management of available human and financial resources to support the political activities of the members of the Committee;*

No follow-up needed.

- 18. *Is concerned by the scarce resources available for the Committee's internal audit service (IAS) whose staffing level has a direct impact on the volume and quality of the work carried out and therefore on the assurance that the IAS can provide on the risk and control environment; understands that, as of November 2021, an assistant from outside the IAS is contributing to the work of the three members of staff currently deployed to the IAS, but believes that such temporary additional allocation does not ensure compliance with the international standards governing the minimum endowment of an internal audit function; expresses its support of the Committee's proposal to convert the assistant post already existing within the IAS to an administrator post in order to strengthen the internal audit in the short term; calls on the Committee and on the CoR to optimise the coordination of their respective internal audit services when implementing the cooperation agreement between the Committee and the CoR;***

The EESC's internal audit service (IAS) was reinforced in May this year with an additional administrator post following the conversion of the service's AST post in the context of the 2023 budgetary procedure.

The cooperation between the internal audit services of the EESC and the CoR, as defined in the EESC-CoR Cooperation Agreement, works smoothly, with regular contacts and coordination between the internal auditors in all aspects relating to auditing of the Joint Services.

Since the entry into force of the new Cooperation Agreement on 1 November 2022, public procurement in the areas covered by the agreement has been centralised in the Public Procurement Unit (MPGF) within the Joint Services. The positioning of this unit directly under the two secretaries-general has the potential to facilitate internal audit activities in the Joint Services.

- 19. *Acknowledges that the Committee took steps to implement the internal control standards with regard to assessing sensitive functions by adopting a detailed policy in December 2020 that includes the definition of sensitive posts and the methodology to be used for assessing the risks associated with all posts; notes that a Committee-wide assessment was concluded in 2021; remarks, however, that the findings of the IAS revealed room for improvement; observes that the internal audit on salary payments in 2018, the undue allowance payment detected by the Court in 2019 and the further internal audit on verification in 2020 indicated a need for a closer examination of controls in the management of statutory rights; asks the Committee to inform Parliament about the punctual follow-up to audit findings;***

The EESC is currently in the process of implementing the policy on sensitive posts following the audit finding from the Court of Auditors in 2019, which led already to the definition of

sensitive posts and the start of an assessment of the risks associated with all posts. As part of this exercise, an updated list of 36 sensitive posts has been published on the EESC's intranet site. On 20 February 2023, colleagues occupying these sensitive posts received a formal communication in view of the implementation of mitigating measures to reduce the risks assessed in 2022. Moreover, a revision of the methodology and an update of the current decision on mobility are scheduled to be completed in 2023.

Starting from January 2022, regular ex-post controls are conducted on salaries. These controls involve sampling checks on all components of salary payments, including the financial implications associated with the settlement of statutory rights.

Furthermore, the Court of Auditors reported that the two outstanding issues related to ex-post control of salaries and high rejection rates for commitments, payments, recovery orders and procurement procedures were resolved and closed.

An audit on statutory rights was performed in 2021 and all agreed actions have subsequently been implemented. This audit was closed in early 2023.

Concerning the audit on verification (relating to financial operations), the Internal Audit Service found the implementation of the agreed actions to be satisfactory and also closed this audit in May 2023.

- 20. *Observes that key activity and performance indicators are an effective management tool and notes their interpretation in the COVID-19 pandemic scenario, hence the weighted importance acknowledged with respect to trends in communication, physical meetings, workplace relations, copy shop productivity and interpretation;***

No follow-up needed.

- 21. *Notes that the Committee pursues its mission through opinions, which refer to legislative proposals made by the Commission (referrals), and own-initiative opinions, which call on the Union institutions to take action, and that the Committee's positions can be highlighted in resolutions or included in evaluation and information reports;***

No follow-up needed.

- 22. *Observes that, in 2021, the Committee adopted 200 opinions (compared to 131 in 2020 and 127 in 2019) out of which 151 opinions were based on referrals, 28 were own-initiative opinions and 12 were exploratory opinions (opinions based on referrals amounted to 65 and 59 in 2020 and 2019 respectively); welcomes the decision to launch a pilot project on reinforced follow-up of opinions issued, aiming to strengthen the monitoring of the actions undertaken by the institutions in question on a selected list of opinions of political or strategic importance in relation to the work programme of the sections of the Committee and the Committee's contribution to the annual work programme of the Commission, to be carried out between September 2022 and April 2023; understands that such reinforced follow-up includes a reinforced role for the Committee's rapporteur in relation to the***



*different actors in the legislative process, including presence at Parliament committee meetings and outreach-oriented tailor-made communication;*

The EESC welcomes the EP's draft AFCO report on Parliamentarism, European citizenship and democracy (2023/2017), which calls on the EP, the Council and the Commission to improve cooperation modalities with the CoR and the EESC, such as inviting the rapporteurs of the EESC to participate in consideration of draft reports at EP committees where applicable. Furthermore, the EESC should be involved in establishing a structure with representatives of youth civil society.

23. *Observes that the relevant Report on the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee shows, in 2021, a doubling of the number of meetings with Parliament counterparts in the preparation of the Committee's opinions compared to 2020 which confirms the Committee's presence in the legislative cycle and calls on the Committee to ensure that its opinions are shared with the members of the relevant committees of Parliament, in line with the cooperation agreement between Parliament, on the one hand, and the Committee and the CoR, on the other hand; notes that, in addition to bilateral meetings on ongoing files, members of both Parliament and the Committee took part in various events, conferences and meetings and that 156 meetings were held with Parliament counterparts, 538 meetings with Commission counterparts and 139 meetings with Council and Member States counterparts;*

No follow-up needed.

24. *Notes the wide participation and positive feedback with regard to the bimonthly webinars of the European circular economy community (EU Circular Talks), and to the EU Organic Awards representing the first example of Union-wide organic awards, jointly organised by the Commission, the Committee, the CoR, the European Voice of Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives and the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming (IFOAM - Organics Europe); observes that, in 2021, some high-level conferences were organised with positive attendance results, such as the civil society conference on the Geopolitics of the Green Deal, the high-level public conference on Energy poverty at the crossroads of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Green Deal, and the high level conference on Youth Policy in the Western Balkans; appreciates the importance of the Committee in ensuring the social aspect of the green transition;*

No follow-up needed.

25. *Notes that the Committee, through the work of its ad-hoc group on the Conference on the Future of Europe, directly organised or supported the roll-out of 75 events, 33 at national level and 42 at central level, and that 60 % of those 75 events produced reports on the Conference platform with those 45 events alone gathering more than 7 600 participants; notes that the Committee also encoded 60 new ideas on the Conference platform and launched a vast communication campaign on social media and that many of those ideas fed into the 325 final proposals adopted in May 2022;*

No follow-up needed.

***Human resources, equality and staff well-being***

26. *Notes that, in 2021, despite the limitations imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee managed to guarantee safe working conditions; points out the actions carried out by its medical service, including continuously updating public health rules for the premises and keeping staff informed via in-person and on-line psycho-social support continuously offered to the staff and up-to-date scientific medical information provided to members, staff, and the administration, together with active participation in the Commission's vaccination campaign; underlines the synergies established with Parliament with regard to COVID-19 testing;*

No follow-up needed.

27. *Remarks that the Committee reports that there were 699 members of staff employed on 31 December 2021, compared to 702 in both 2020 and 2019; notes that, in 2021, the number of posts in the Committee's establishment plan increased from 668 to 699, which was foreseen in 2020; points out that the occupation rate for budget posts was 94,3 % in 2021, slightly lower than the occupation rate in 2020, 2019 and 2018, which were 95,5 %, 96 % and 96,6 % respectively, and observes that the recruitment of 74 new members of staff were finalised in 2021, compared to 58 and 57 in 2020 and 2019 respectively;*

No follow-up needed.

28. *Observes that a large number of temporary and contract agents were employed in 2021 (107 temporary agents and 46 contract agents out of a total of 699 staff, compared to 93 and 81 temporary agents in 2020 and 2019 respectively, and to 47 and 43 contract agents in 2020 and 2019 respectively); expresses concern that this situation entails the risk of considerable loss of knowledge and expertise for the Committee when those temporary employment contracts come to an end; invites the Committee to further deepen its administrative cooperation with the CoR via the joint services arrangement to enhance the synergic effects of pooling staff;*

The figure indicating a total of 107 temporary agents disregards the fact that a number these agents were recruited under Article 2(c) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants (CEOS), as provided for in the EESC establishment plan, with contracts concluded to support the Groups and the President's Office for an indefinite period of time, thus fully mitigating the risk of knowledge and expertise loss. In 2021, out of the overall figure of 107 temporary agents only 72 were recruited under Article 2(b) of the CEOS with contracts of a limited duration. Such temporary agents are only recruited when it is not possible to find suitable officials or laureates of open competitions for a given vacant post, and the EESC continuously strives to increase its attractiveness in order to recruit officials rather than temporary agents wherever possible. Following the measures undertaken in line with its recruitment and retention action plan, in 2023 the EESC was able to initiate a first decrease in the overall number of such temporary agents.



As far as contract agents are concerned, the same distinction needs to be made with contract agents recruited under indefinite duration contracts as provided for by Article 3(a) of the Staff Regulations, as only 24 contract agents out of the total of 46 have contracts of limited duration. Such contract agents are recruited in the event of temporary needs faced by the services.

The EESC fully takes note of the call for further synergies via pooling staff with the Committee of the Regions and underlines that the most recent EESC-CoR administrative Cooperation Agreement entails the creation of a new unit to streamline public procurement and financial management in the Joint Services. Moreover, the reception and mail services of the two Committees were centralised in the Joint Services to optimise their provision, and further synergies are being looked into.

- 29. Notes that, in terms of the establishment plan, the cut in human resources appears to have had an impact on the Committee that exceeds the 5 % target established by the Commission (staff reductions of 7,98 % compared to 2013 figures); is aware that the additional priorities taken on board in recent years and those still to come have resulted in the Committee's request for additional resources in the context of the 2023 budget preparation (three additional administrator posts);***

The effective allocation of resources in the context of tight constraints due to the stable staffing requirement remains one of the main challenges for the EESC's HR policy.

With a view to undertaking an in-depth reflection on the optimisation of the workforce in the light of evolving priorities, the EESC requested in the second half of 2022 an audit from an external contractor in order to map human resources against the workload of its activities and to advise on how the EESC could further improve its image as an attractive employer. This external audit was finalised in March 2023. The findings confirmed the heavy workload in many different services across the Committee in light of the current constraints on human resources as a result of the reduction of the establishment plan since 2013.

The EESC is in the process of analysing the findings with a view to possibly adapting the HR strategy. At the same time, the second phase of the implementation of the most recent EESC-CoR Cooperation Agreement is due to be confirmed in 2023. It may result in further changes to the Joint Services' organisation chart, with the corresponding reassignment of staff.

Two additional administrator posts were granted on the basis of the 2023 budget request and will be available as of the second half of 2023 to start the much-needed reinforcement of the services, while a request for an additional administrator post (refused in 2023) was also made in the 2024 budget request.

- 30. Appreciates that to speed up the recruitment process for management positions, the Committee's directorate for human resources and finance has taken measures to raise awareness among the group presidents and heads of group secretariats on the need to plan selections and recruitment ahead in order to avoid, in the interest of the service, extended periods of ad interim positions and managers having double posts, and instructions have***

*been given to the staff dealing with recruitment, accompanied by a proactive policy in publishing vacant posts; notes that the directorate for human resources and finance devised a detailed action plan for recruitment and the retention of staff, which was approved by the Committee's management board in October 2021, structured around forward planning, raising attractiveness and talent retention;*

No follow-up needed.

31. *Notes the majority of the Committee's staff is composed of women (448 out of 699), in both the assistant category and the administrator category; welcomes the well-balanced gender representation in middle and senior management functions with 52 % women and 48 % men in such positions, compared to 46 % women and 54 % men in 2020 and 48 % women and 52 % men in 2019; appreciates the action of the Committee's equal opportunities officer in shaping the upcoming diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan and is aware that the CAF is looking into the practical implementation of gender budgeting in public institutions, based on information given by external speakers, including the chair of Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, which will be brought forward via an in-depth analysis of the ways in which this tool could help to address gender equality;*

No follow-up needed.

32. *Underlines that, while the staff come from all Member States, given that Member States are not proportionally represented, the Committee's geographical balance is not satisfactory; observes that managers from the 13 Member States that joined the Union after 2004 made up 19 % in 2021 (same level as 2019), compared to 15 % in 2020, while the distribution of administrators per grade shows that 65 % of administrators from those Member States are currently in grades AD 8 – AD 10, making them eligible to apply for a management position; calls on the Committee to continue to take action, to make greater efforts and to commit itself to reach a balanced geographical distribution of nationals from all Member States within its staff, with a particular focus on the management level, taking into consideration the representation of Member States that joined the Union after 2004;*

Whilst the EESC will continue to strive to achieve appropriate geographical balance, it cannot commit itself to reaching the target – in light of the obligation to recruit based on merits, the lack of control over the initial pool of applicants for a given vacancy, and the very small size of the institution (where especially in management positions the change of nationality resulting from one single recruitment has a disproportionate impact on the overall statistics).

Difficulties in filling vacancies still persist in light of the very limited number of available EPSO reserve lists, especially for specific profiles (e.g. communication, finance etc.). This often leads to the recruitment of temporary staff. Since such difficulties are faced by all institutions, the pool of candidates is even more limited. Under these circumstances, the balancing of geographical distribution becomes more difficult than ever. However, the EESC actively participates in the interinstitutional working group dealing with geographical balance issues in order to find solutions. Notwithstanding the above limitations, the selection panels

are to the extent possible constituted respecting the geographical and gender balance requirements.

As regards management positions, the EESC's share of managers from EU-13 Member States has further improved and now stands at 23 % (May 2023).

33. *Observes that the measures adopted in order to tackle limitations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, included the provision of a laptop and a headset to all staff members, , the provision of ergonomic chairs on duly justified medical grounds, the provision, in 2020, of a limited lump sum to cover extraordinary costs incurred during the mandatory teleworking period and upon individual request, the provision, in 2021, of the possibility of an additional screen if essential for medical reasons, and, as per April 2021 onwards during a period of six months, a temporary monthly allowance of EUR 20 to members of staff and trainees to cover additional costs of a varying nature;*

No follow-up needed.

34. *Urges the Committee to adopt an updated diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan; expects that such strategy and action plan will take stock of the lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic, offer flexible tools to match diverse needs among different staff groups and promote diversity and inclusion but also work-life balance and equal opportunities for its staff; asks the Committee to inform Parliament about progress in that regard;*

The EESC is currently in the process of approving its new diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan for the period 2023-2027. Consultations on the draft are underway with the Committee's Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities (COPEC). Before its final approval by the secretary-general, the strategy will also be submitted to the Staff Committee.

The strategy is fully in line with the objectives and values of the EESC management plan and the EESC's integrated HR strategy adopted in 2022. It comprises a set of measures of a general nature, but is also targeted towards potentially disadvantaged groups such as LGBTQI+ staff and persons with disabilities, taking into consideration persons from various generations and ethnic origins, etc.

35. *Notes that, in 2021, the Committee assessed its action plan for equal opportunities and diversity in order to launch the drawing up of an upscaled diversity and inclusion strategy; observes that online events were organised on the occasion of the International Day against Homophobia and that the Committee took part in the conference of the Inter-Institutional Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities and in various interinstitutional networks in the field of diversity and equal opportunities; encourages the Committee to continue endorsing bottom-up initiatives that contribute to making the Committee a more inclusive workplace; asks the Committee to include, in the upcoming diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan on, specific actions on recruiting and on-boarding of candidates with disabilities and to pay similar attention to accessibility and mobility when carrying out building renovation;*

In its new diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan, the EESC commits to implementing 11 concrete measures in favour of persons with disabilities, aiming to recruit more staff with disabilities and to improve the working conditions of such persons.

Among other actions, the Committee has associated itself to the Positive Action Plan run by the European Parliament (EP), which is a specific programme to promote the recruitment of people with disabilities. In the framework of this cooperation, the EP has shared the list of the candidates who have passed Positive Action tests. The Committee is currently working on practical steps to promote Positive Action among its services, as well as on devising a procedure for the recruitment of such candidates. The EESC expects to make the first such recruitment(s) by the end of 2023.

When renovating the main entrance halls of the Committee's buildings in recent years, a special focus was put on accessibility and mobility.

36. *Notes that the working conditions in place provide for a high degree of flexibility and that, while forward planning is required, time recording is no longer obligatory; observes that, as the Committee opted for an exemption from working time registration in 2020 and 2021, adaptation of the schedule to individual needs is possible, as long as service needs are fulfilled and work-life balance in difficult circumstances is facilitated;*

No follow-up needed.

37. *Observes that the change in working conditions following the COVID-19 pandemic had an influence on the uptake rate of non-standard working time arrangements and that, as from spring 2020, the requests for non-standard working time arrangements have steadily declined; remarks that in 2021, and for the first time since 2016, the percentage of staff requiring a suitable non-standard working time arrangement fell below 20 % (18,88 % in 2021 compared to 23,93 % and 32,19 % in 2020 and 2019 respectively); points out that the decrease in applications between 2020 and 2021 mainly concerns women, with around one in five applying for a non-standard working pattern in 2021, while the figure for men remains stable (32 men in 2020 compared to 31 men in 2021); observes that while there was a significant increase in the number of men using flexible working patterns in 2019, the proportion between men and women remained approximately the same in 2020 and 2021 with approximately one fifth of applications being made by men;*

No follow-up needed.

38. *Notes that during 2021 and in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking remained the norm but that, as from 14 June 2021, staff could gradually return to the office one day per week on a voluntary basis, while respecting the precautionary measures in place in the premises; notes that teleworking from abroad was possible for all staff during a limited time period and under specific conditions, such as for particularly difficult family situations with compelling medical or social reasons; welcomes that the right to disconnect, already enshrined in the previous decision concerning the teleworking scheme, is now explicitly mentioned in the Committee's revised decision on working conditions that*

*entered into force on 1 April 2022; encourages the Committee to explore the long-term teleworking solutions in the post-pandemic environment.*

The revised decision on working conditions which entered into force on 1 April 2022 was conceived as a pilot project for six months to be subsequently evaluated by a joint evaluation committee composed of representatives of the administration and the staff representation of both Committees. A thorough statistical analysis of the impact of the new decision was carried out and staff were requested to give their opinion via a dedicated survey at the end of 2022. Analysis of this is being currently finalised. Overall, the results are very positive; the vast majority of colleagues (90 %) are satisfied with the current arrangements of working in the office and remote working. In the coming weeks, a new social dialogue will be set up to fine-tune the permanent working conditions decision, if necessary.

- 39. Welcomes the launching of a survey in March 2021, coordinated by the Committee and the CoR, to assess the experience of all members of staff of the long period of teleworking and to identify possible guidelines for the future; understands that more than 71 % of staff, including managers, gave their feedback, which was largely positive in respect of the limitations that were imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and provided indications that were taken into account for the preparation of the revised decision on working conditions, which was drafted in 2021 and after extensive social dialogue entered into force on 1 April 2022, as a pilot project for six months;**

No follow-up needed.

- 40. Regrets that, also in 2021, the Committee was not able to provide data on cases of burnout within the staff of the Committee; respects the data protection limitations, but reminds the Committee of the importance of anonymised statistical data for managerial decisions within an organisation while also expressing the need to safeguard staff well-being; reiterates that awareness-raising actions, good practices in relation to workload management, communication and conflict solving, as well as return-to-work policy, should be taken into account;**

The EESC stresses that its services are bound by data protection rules, which prohibit the Committee from identifying the reason for sickness absences. Medical practitioners are also bound by the duty of protecting the medical secrets of their patients, and thus never disclose the reasons for sickness certificates.

The medical service closely follows long-term absences (via a part-time return-to-work doctor) to ensure that colleagues, irrespective of the underlying reasons for their absence, get all possible help to make their way back to work.

- 41. Notes that, in 2021, the Committee prepared and discussed a revised decision on procedures for preventing and dealing with psychological and sexual harassment at work (Decision 090/22A) which was only adopted in March 2022; observes that this is part of a wider action plan on ethics adopted in January 2021, based on the recommendations of a joint working group comprised of staff and administration representatives; reiterates its regret regarding**

*the slow adoption of that new decision, which unfortunately does not include a specific procedure for harassment involving a Member and an official (within the definition of Decision 090/22 A) with the consequence that no uniform procedures for dealing with cases of harassment is applied, leading to victims being treated differently; calls on the Committee to immediately provide for a specific procedure that will grant everyone proper and long due protection against harassment; believes that only a zero tolerance policy on harassment will prevent the Committee from future allegations of harassment and serious misconduct;*

As far as members are concerned, the rules in place are set out in the Rules of Procedure and in the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct includes in part III a paragraph 11(1) which clarifies that "Any person, member or employee, can submit a complaint to the ethical committee concerning the behaviour of a member."

In the event a complaint is made, it will be examined for eligibility, and potentially investigated further, by the ethical committee. If a violation of the Code of Conduct is established, the EESC president is to adopt all appropriate sanctions as laid down by the Code. Any member of staff having submitted a complaint to the ethical committee may ask the administration to be assigned the status of whistleblower, thus enjoying the same protection regime.

As regards staff, the powers of the Appointing Authority (AIPN) are strictly defined by the administrative and regulatory framework in place (EU Staff Regulations), including as regards initiating inquiries.

Staff members may also submit a complaint to their hierarchy in accordance with the procedures laid down in the decision on the prevention of harassment and the decision on whistleblowing, and enjoy all the associated protection measures. The recipients of the complaint are to promptly inform the EESC president, unless the president is concerned by the complaint, in which case they are to promptly submit the matter to the ethical committee.

In order to mitigate this different legal basis for staff members and members of the EESC, Decision 090/22A explicitly provides in its Article 2(5) that *"without prejudice to the procedure laid down in part III of the Code of Conduct for members of the European Economic and Social Committee, this Decision shall apply by analogy to instances of alleged conflict at work or harassment also involving members of the EESC, delegates of consultative commissions, alternates or experts".[emphasis added]*

Following the entry into force of the revised decision on whistleblowing on 15 December 2021 (Decision 297/21A), as well as of the revised decision on procedures for preventing and dealing with psychological and sexual harassment at work (Decision 090/22A) adopted on 31 March 2022, the renewed ethical legal framework will be completed with a revised decision laying down general implementing provisions on disciplinary procedures and administrative enquiries. The new decision provides an update and comprehensive codification of the rules in place and also takes into account the best practices of other institutions.



Moreover, in June 2021 the EESC signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Commission's investigation and disciplinary office (IDOC), which allows for a further professionalisation of administrative enquiries through their externalisation to IDOC. The revision of the EESC decision laying down general implementing provisions on disciplinary procedures and administrative enquiries takes full account of this SLA.

The renewed and strengthened ethical framework in place applies a zero-tolerance policy and grants everyone full protection against harassment.

- 42. Notes that, in 2021, the Committee hosted 52 trainees for a five month term, 4 trainees for a three month term and 2 trainees who were on grants awarded by external public bodies; notes that the trainees with a term of five months received a monthly grant and allowances while the shorter term trainees were not entitled to any financial contribution; welcomes that, following also the call from Parliament during the 2020 discharge procedure, an internal reflection is ongoing to ensure that all trainees receive a decent remuneration and that a new framework clarifying the rights and obligations of trainees has been drafted, is currently undergoing consultation with the Committee's legal service and its staff committee and is expected to be in place for the next traineeship session starting in March 2023;*

All EESC trainees receive an appropriate remuneration: the overall legal framework for trainees at the EESC has been revised in consultation with the respective EESC services. This revision of the legal basis also took into account the new flexible working conditions, in addition to clarifying trainees' rights and obligations. The draft decision will be submitted for adoption to the EESC Assembly in July 2023.

- 43. Reiterates its call on the Committee to integrate the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in its internal management strategy in terms of business continuity and crisis management, IT responsiveness, resilience of the organisation, duty of care towards its staff, effective communication and flexible working processes, in order to develop a result-oriented management style that can encourage a healthy work-life balance;*

The EESC's recovery action plan for the administration was adopted in 2021 and revised in 2022 to take account of evolving needs. The eight actions and the progress achieved to date (May 2023) for each are outlined below.

- **A1: Adopt a long-term, resource-efficient business process management approach across all directorates.** A structured approach to business process management (BPM) is being gradually introduced across the house. In parallel, a new practice for IT projects is being trialled, whereby such requests involve a mandatory business analysis and process-mapping phase to ensure their full efficiency.
- **A2: Structure and share operational and procedural knowledge across the house, based on a robust, integrated knowledge management system.** Research and tests are being conducted in order to identify the needs and solutions for an effective knowledge management system which will allow operational knowledge to be stored, managed and shared effectively.

- **A3: Set up and maintain a register of cross-departmental/inter-institutional working groups, so as to share knowledge of cross-cutting work and identify synergies.** An online register of working groups was set up in 2023, and all directorates have been invited to contribute to and help maintain the information.
- **A4: Define and implement a harmonised paper-poor policy across all directorates, harnessing the potential of electronic workflows.** A report outlining the state of play as regards paperless and electronic workflows in the EESC administration was approved in 2023.
- **A5: Seek to optimise the digital workplace and use of collaborative working tools through an ongoing user-driven approach, based on real needs.** A digital workplace network was set up already in 2021, in cooperation with the European Committee of the Regions, to share best practices and empower users to make the best of the collaborative working tools available. These good practices are shared with staff through a website which was opened to staff in March 2023.
- **A6: Adopt a structured, business-oriented approach for managing Agora and related user-needs and priorities.** An Agora user group (Agora is the EESC's IT system for managing meeting-related and other core operational data) was set up in 2022, which gives business users the possibility to prioritise, discuss and follow up change requests.
- **A7: Define and implement the hybrid working policy, taking into account teleworking and office working needs and building on lessons learned.** The EESC has already implemented a new teleworking and working conditions decision in April 2022, as a pilot project, to draw lessons from the pandemic. In parallel, a joint Task Force has been established with the Committee of Regions to analyse different options for the New Ways of Working, including further rationalisation of the use of office space.
- **A8: Seek practical opportunities to enhance the impact and outreach of Committee work through digital channels.** A first report will be drafted in 2023 on the use and possible applications of speech-to-text technologies within the EESC in order to increase the accessibility of Committee work.

#### *Ethical framework and transparency*

*44. Welcomes the update of the Committee's code of conduct in January 2021 with strengthened sanctions and with a broader scope, establishing a more efficient mechanism to handle infringements by members, and is aware of the revision of its rules of procedure that followed in March 2022; appreciates the adoption, in January 2021, of a detailed action plan on ethics based on the recommendations of a joint working group comprised of staff and administration representatives;*

No follow-up needed.

*45. Underlines the importance of the internal audit on ethics and integrity aiming to provide reasonable assurance as to the consistent alignment of, and adherence to, shared ethical values, principles and norms for upholding and prioritising public interest over private interests; reiterates the call to consider also an external audit on ethics and transparency;*

The objective of the internal audit on ethics and integrity was indeed to provide reasonable assurance as to the validity of the EESC's ethical framework, in relation to both members and staff. Based on a similar audit performed by the ECA in relation to the main EU institutions, this audit focused on the implementation of the regulatory framework relating to gifts and



entertainment, outside activities and assignments, conflicts of interest, post-EU employment, anti-harassment and whistleblowing, including its transposition into internal EESC rules.

The report was issued in March 2021 along with an agreed action plan. It concluded that many of the elements required in an EU body such as the EESC were in place but that an integrated approach was still missing. Whilst the EESC was considered to have a solid basis to build on, a strong focus was needed on keeping the ethical framework up-to-date. The swift adoption of a new Code of Conduct for members and of the EESC ethical framework action plan had shown that the EESC had the capacity to act quickly and with determination when needed.

A full evaluation of the implementation of the agreed action plan will be carried out in the near future. This evaluation will take account of other developments such as the implementation of the EESC ethical framework action plan of January 2021, as well as the new rules on whistleblowing (2021), on harassment (2022) and on disciplinary procedures, which will enter into force in 2023.

- 46. *Observes that, following the entry into force of the Committee's revised decision on whistleblowing on 15 December 2021 (Decision 297/21A), as well as of the revised decision on procedures for preventing and dealing with psychological and sexual harassment at work (Decision 090/22A), adopted on 31 March 2022, the renewed ethical legal framework will be completed with a revised decision laying down general implementing provisions on disciplinary procedures and administrative enquiries; encourages the Committee to ensure that such process entails consultation with its legal service and data protection officer and dialogue with its staff committee and the Union's Staff Regulations Committee;***

See the second part of the reply to observation 41.

The Legal Service, Data Protection Officer, Staff Committee and EU Staff Regulations Committee have all been consulted and have given their approval to the draft text.

- 47. *Notes that the settlement agreements related to European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) case OC/2018/0666/A1 have finally been fully implemented with respect to all staff members concerned; regrets the slow reaction by the Committee in concluding and implementing the settlements; notes that, as regards the former Committee member identified by OLAF as a victim of serious misconduct, following talks in March 2021 an agreement was found with regard to the ways to remedy the issue, centred on the strengthening the Committee's code of conduct, strengthening the ethical framework, giving priority to finding fair settlements and providing public apologies to victims;***

No follow-up needed.

- 48. *Welcomes that, on 13 April 2022, the Committee's President made a public statement, published on the Committee's website, addressing her official apology on behalf of the Committee to all the victims, both members of staff and the former member, identified in OLAF case OC/2018/0666/A1; reiterates its concern that the Committee's secretary-***

***general still refuses to admit the internal shortcomings and responsibilities, leading to a breach of duty of care towards the staff of the Committee;***

The administration has since the beginning acted in full respect of the administrative and legal provisions in place and of the duty of care (in terms of prevention, protection etc.)

It has always worked in full cooperation with the authorities in charge of investigating the case in question, including OLAF, as the latter has duly recognised. It will continue to do so fully depending on the development of the file (in particular with regard to Belgian legal procedure), also with consideration for the fact that the EESC is a civil party in the ongoing legal proceedings.

As already stated in previous replies in connection with the harassment case, the Committee's then president and the newly appointed secretary-general jointly launched an inquiry, in January 2019, to examine the alleged facts and to establish the extent to which the appropriate procedures, based on the Staff Regulations, had been followed at the EESC when handling the relevant allegations. At the request of OLAF, which took over the responsibility for the entire file, the EESC suspended the internal inquiry and informed OLAF of this by letter dated 8 May 2019. OLAF's report on case OC/2018/0666/A.1 does not establish any shortcomings in the implementation of procedures.

On 1 September 2021, the General Court also delivered a judgement in case T-377/20, which rejected the claimant's request and validated *de facto* and *de jure* the handling of the case by the Committee's administration and political bodies. The judgment confirmed that the procedures had been correctly implemented during this case and by extension endorsed the rules and procedures established by the EESC. This was subsequently fully confirmed in the appeal before the Court of Justice on 6 October 2022 (case C-673/21).

The EESC considers that the complaints have been handled with due regard for the welfare of officials and for the legal and administrative procedures in place.

All possible support (both in terms of legal assistance and in the workplace) was granted in 2020 in full confidentiality, as provided for by the rules and requested by some of the victims. This was followed by exhaustive in-depth negotiations on individual settlements, within the constraints of the applicable legal framework, and in order to establish fair and balanced compensation for the moral, career, and financial damage incurred by the victims. Settlements have been reached and implemented with all victims.

***49. Underlines that, on 6 October 2022, by its ruling in case C-673/21<sup>13</sup>, the Court of Justice confirmed the legality of the measures taken by the decision of 9 June 2020 of the Committee's bureau;***

No follow-up needed.

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<sup>13</sup> Judgment of the Court of Justice of 6 October 2022, *KN v European Economic and Social Committee*, C-673/21, ECLI:EU:C:2022:759.

- 50. *Observes that the Committee is a civil party in an ongoing legal case initiated by the national authorities against a former member accused of perpetrating misconduct that is currently before a Belgian court pending a competent decision; asks the Committee to inform Parliament about the development of that case in a timely manner;***

The procedure before the national court is still ongoing.

- 51. *Deeply regrets that Parliament's unambiguous calls for an external and independent investigation specifically to review the Committee's procedures with respect to human resources and the effectiveness thereof, with a focus on identifying the responsibilities of the administrative hierarchy in addressing harassment claims and ensuring the well-being of staff, are still being ignored; urges the Committee to take all necessary measures to efficiently prevent potential cases of harassment in the future; believes that it is essential to guarantee the well-being of staff and to effectively and swiftly prevent further cases, such as the one that has already occurred;***

The commitments already expressed on several occasions by the previous president and by the EESC as an institution to support and implement the zero-tolerance policy remain fully valid.

Under the provisions already in place, the Committee was in a position to actively address the harassment case, to cooperate with OLAF and to impose sanctions on the member concerned under the Bureau decision of 9 June 2020. The EESC has nonetheless continued its work to revise its ethical framework and the decisions related to it (the new whistleblower decision, for instance, entered into force in December 2021, the revised decision on harassment entered into force in March 2022 and finally, the revised decision on administrative enquiries and disciplinary proceedings has currently been submitted to the EESC president for final signature).

The EESC is a civil party in the ongoing legal proceedings initiated by the national authorities against the perpetrator before the Belgian competent courts. Opening an external investigation in parallel to this process would interfere with the proceedings in the event that conclusions were reached (irrespective of their outcome) before the Belgian court case had been concluded.

Settlements have been reached and implemented with all victims. Reopening the whole case through an external investigation (again, irrespective of its outcome) lacks a legal basis and would not allow to capitalise on the serious and substantial efforts delivered in order to properly handle all consequences of the case at hand.

The procedure before the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) was completed and the Committee will claim back all the recoverable costs (EUR 25 317.6) as decided by the Court.

The legal procedure before the Belgium criminal court in which the EESC is also a civil party is ongoing. The possibility to claim back from the alleged perpetrator part of the amount spent

depends on the outcome of this procedure.

- 52. Points out that, in 2021, OLAF investigated two cases involving the Committee of which one, opened in 2019 and involving a member of the Committee, was closed in 2022 as OLAF did not establish any evidence of fraud or irregularity affecting the financial or other interests of the Union, and the other, also concerning a member, was closed by OLAF in 2021 as the European Public Prosecutor Office (EPPO) had initiated a parallel criminal law investigation over the same facts; remarks that another case from 2020, also involving a member, was closed by OLAF in 2022 as the member concerned passed away in the meantime;**

No follow-up needed.

- 53. Remarks that to date one case, reported to Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control by the Committee in 2020, is still open for which the appointing authority of the Committee intended to take its final decision by the end of 2022; notes that, based on the comments made at the initial hearing of both parties, a complementary enquiry to further investigate several points and to hear additional witnesses was launched and completed before the summer break in 2022; deeply regrets that this internal investigation has so far already taken two years without any final conclusion, seriously hampering the lives of the persons involved and blocking its potential transfer to OLAF; asks the Committee to deliver its final decision as soon as possible and inform the Parliament about the outcome;**

The final decision was adopted on 31 January 2023. The subsequent reply to the request for assistance – which is a separate decision – to inform the complainant about the outcome of the procedure was notified on 5 May 2023. It is important to underline in this matter that the EESC is fully bound by the applicable legal framework for such procedures. In the case at hand, the procedure is governed both by the Staff Regulations and by the EESC implementing provisions on disciplinary proceedings and administrative enquiries adopted in 2005. The EESC also formally notified the opening of the case to OLAF in January 2021 in order to provide it with the opportunity to open its own investigation, should that be considered necessary. OLAF did not follow up on the case.

- 54. Appreciates the Committee's willingness to cooperate with the investigative bodies of the Union (OLAF and EPPO); notes that a service-level agreement relating to the conduct of internal administrative enquiries was signed with the investigation and disciplinary office of the Commission in 2021o;**

No follow-up needed.

- 55. Welcomes that the Committee's revised code of conduct introduced in January 2021 contains specific provisions on the declaration of financial interests and on conflicts of interest; remarks that a new provision was integrated in the code according to which members, delegates of the its consultative commission on industrial change, alternates and experts must submit a declaration of their financial interests to the president of the Committee upon taking up their duties, which must be resubmitted on an annual basis on**

*1 January and, in case of any change during a member's term of office, at the earliest possible but in any event within two months; points out that the revised code of conduct entails specific provisions on revolving doors and foresees that, for a period of two years after ceasing to hold office, a former member shall not lobby present members or staff on matters for which they are holding important positions or writing reports; asks for the periodic publication and update on its official website of the information about the state of compliance for both financial declarations and derogations to the cooling-off period;*

Every year, two months before the deadline of 1 January, the administration sends a message to all members, alternates and CCMI delegates asking them to return their updated financial declarations. This message is followed by several reminders, and the updated financial declarations are published on the members' pages, accessible to the general public.

In this context, the EESC commits to periodically (once a year) publish and update on its official website information about the state of compliance with financial declarations. It will implement this request as rapidly as possible by publishing the information in the downloads section of the [Transparency measures](#) page.

As regards the cooling-off period, members are duly informed of the provisions of the Code of Conduction in this regard, and no derogation from this rule is currently provided for.

- 56. Notes with satisfaction that training on ethics became mandatory for all members of staff in 2021 and that it includes additional, more specific training dedicated to managers; observes that training for members of the Committee on ethics has been revised to align with the new code of conduct and to cover the full range of ethical issues; appreciates the setting up of a new team of ethics counsellors to provide the best possible advice to colleagues who consult them on ethical questions, including on the Committee's internal rules on the protection of whistle-blowers against negative action and their right to stay anonymous, and to support them during the process, and that information on ethics counsellors is disseminated to all newcomers; underlines that a new guide for staff at the Committee on respect at work was published in May 2022 and that the Committee is also in the process of establishing a new charter of values of the staff at the Committee;*

No follow-up needed.

- 57. Strongly encourages the Committee to further explore its participation to the Interinstitutional Transparency Register through the assessment process launched, to that aim, in 2022;*

At its 21 March 2023 meeting, the EESC Bureau approved the decision to participate from 1 June 2023 in the EU Transparency Register, in line with the following three measures:

1. the recommendation that Committee office-holding members, in their official capacities, meet only with interest representatives that have registered with the Transparency Register;
2. the online publication of meetings of office-holding members with interest representatives;

3. the introduction of a voluntary legislative "footprint".

**58. *Is concerned that the Committee has so far not adopted any anti-fraud strategy; calls on the Committee to launch an internal fraud risk analysis and to coordinate with other competent services of the Commission with a view to considering the adoption of an adequate internal anti-fraud strategy;***

While the EESC already has various single measures and tools in place relating to an anti-fraud strategy, a global framework is still missing. The EESC is therefore currently proceeding with an inventory on the areas which are relevant for a risk assessment such as: policies and procedures, efficiency and effectiveness of existing internal controls, staff training, cooperation with other bodies etc.

The inventory will:

- list the measures already in place ("What exists already in this area?")
- assess whether the measures in place function correctly ("To which extent it is effective?")
- contain an action plan ("What needs to be developed, by whom and by when?")

This will provide a coherent and comprehensive framework for all anti-fraud measures at the EESC.

The above approach has also been discussed at service level with OLAF, thereby duly taking into account the request of the EP to coordinate with other competent services.

In relation to the reimbursement of travel costs and allowances to members, the administration has in place a robust framework for financial management and control that includes a range of preventive, detective and corrective control activities and policies. These control activities and policies, which include ex-ante verification of all transactions by a functionally independent service prior to authorisation, have been established to mitigate any fraud or error-related risk in the reimbursement process. The relevant administrative staff have benefited from antifraud-related training, and procedures are in place to follow up on any suspected error, irregularity or instance of (suspected) fraud.

**59. *Calls for an end to the use of external companies that, according to Yale University's ranking<sup>14</sup>, continue to operate in Russia;***

No follow-up needed.

#### ***Digitalisation, cybersecurity and data protection***

**60. *Remarks that the Committee made efforts to support the recovery process following the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular to benefit more from the increased digitalisation, and***

<sup>14</sup> <https://som.yale.edu/story/2022/over-1000-companies-have-curtailed-operations-russia-some-remain>



*that actions in the areas of digitalisation and cybersecurity continued to be guided by the Committee's digital strategy;*

No follow-up needed.

- 61. Notes that the initial IT budget for 2021 was EUR 5 400 000 compared to EUR 4 700 000 in 2020, thus an increase of EUR 700 000 (15 %); observes that as a result of transfers of unused appropriations amounting to EUR 1 900 000 in order to further address the backlog in IT which was acknowledged in previous discharge exercises, the final amount of appropriations for IT in 2021 was EUR 7 300 000 compared to EUR 7 500 000 in 2020;*

No follow-up needed.

- 62. Notes that the new administrative cooperation agreement with the CoR, which entered into force on 1 November 2021, fosters the exchange of good digital practices to drive its IT and digital services forward;*

No follow-up needed.

- 63. Notes the increased number of cyber-threats to the IT infrastructure and online communication channels of the Committee and notes that the Committee has paid increasing attention to strengthening the IT system configuration, identifying vulnerabilities in cooperation with the Computer Emergency Response Team for the EU Institutions, bodies and agencies (CERT-EU), raising the cybersecurity awareness of members and staff and adopting an advanced computer-network authentication protocol; calls on the Committee to keep paying a high level of attention to cybersecurity matters, especially because the number of serious cyber-attacks increased considerably in recent years, making the Union institutions attractive targets for potential attackers; encourages the Committee to carry out regular risk assessments of its IT infrastructure and to ensure regular audits and tests of its cyber defences;*

The below preventive actions are scheduled to be implemented throughout 2023:

- Fast vulnerability and patch management,
- Secure management of privileged accounts,
- Vulnerability assessments for web applications and penetration tests,
- Raising user awareness through false-phishing exercises.

To date, there have been no cybersecurity incidents in 2023. Close cooperation with CERT-EU continues.

- 64. Notes that the Committee is using open-source technology and that, in 2021, a growing number of open-source libraries and frameworks were used in the Committee's information systems; underlines that the Committee's digital strategy foresees the migration from the current on-premises email application to one hosted in the cloud as part of the development of a hybrid cloud environment;*

No follow-up needed.

- 65. Remarks that the majority of the Committee's technical systems are hosted internally and managed by internal staff, while for the outsourced systems control and ownership is retained and ensured at contractual level and complemented by organisational and technical measures, including data protection impact and risk assessment exercises that follow sector-wide best practices;*

No follow-up needed.

***Buildings and security***

- 66. Recalls that, following the exercise of the purchase options on the JDE building in 2018 and on the BvS and REM buildings in 2019, both the Committee and the CoR became owners of those buildings; notes that the buildings on Trèves 74 (TR74) and on Belliard 68 (B68-72) are under a long-term finance lease; notes that, on 10 May 2021, the budgetary authority approved the take-over of the rental contract, as per September 2021, by the Committee and the CoR of the former European External Action Service (EEAS) building on Belliard 100 (B100), and that the TR74 and B68-72 buildings were transferred to the Commission in September 2022 as part of an exchange of the VanMaerlant building (VMA);*

No follow-up needed.

- 67. Is aware that the exchange of buildings resulted in a significant reduction of office space for the Committee and the CoR, a loss of approximately 10 000 m<sup>2</sup>; notes that an administrative agreement with the EEAS was signed for the takeover of the rental contract for the B100 building from 1 September 2021 to partially compensate for that reduction of office space and that, following that agreement, the final result is the reduction of office space of approximately 5 000 m<sup>2</sup> compared to the situation at the beginning of 2021;*

No follow-up needed.

- 68. Acknowledges that the leading component of the building strategy of geographical concentration was pursued with the exchange of the TR74 and B68 buildings for the VMA building; understands that the building exchange carried out requires additional intervention to provide a fitting working environment for the new tenants, and that refurbishment and renovation works were approved in June 2021, with a view to allowing a more flexible layout of office spaces so that they can be easily adapted to new forms of work, in addition to further limit energy and water consumption, to be financed via a mopping-up transfer;*

No follow-up needed.

- 69. Notes that for the important refurbishment works carried out in 2021 in cooperation with the CoR, the corresponding budget line 'Fitting-out of premises' was allocated*



*EUR 4 925 895 in 2021, compared to EUR 1 121 655 and EUR 594 061 in 2020 and 2019 respectively;*

No follow-up needed.

#### ***Environment and sustainability***

*70. Welcomes the positive environmental accomplishments in 2021, as regards electricity, water and paper consumption (reductions of 2,1 %, 14,3 % and 55 % respectively compared to 2020); notes the installation of solar panels on two of the buildings of the Committee and the CoR and understands that further analysis is being carried out with the aim of extending the solar panel installation, likely in 2023;*

No follow-up needed.

*71. Highlights that 69,6 % of the Committee staff use eco-friendly means of transport; notes the mobility policy in place, promoting the use of sustainable travel modes for commuting, that includes a financial contribution to public transport tickets and a monthly contribution for cyclists; notes that service bicycles are available as well as chargers for electric service cars;*

No follow-up needed.

*72. Welcomes the innovative initiative on low emission missions launched in October 2021, aiming to encourage staff going on missions to opt for less-polluting means of transport (train, bus, etc.) and meaning that the travel agency proposes travel options in ascending order of CO2 emissions generated;*

No follow-up needed.

#### ***Interinstitutional cooperation***

*73. Believes that administrative cooperation and research of synergies with other institutions represent an important management tool for a small institution like the Committee;*

No follow-up needed.

*74. Is aware of the cooperation with the CoR via the joint services where some 460 members of staff (of which approximately 290 belong to the Committee) and more than EUR 55 million yearly (of which more than EUR 30 million comes from the Committee) are pooled together by both committees; acknowledges that the current administrative cooperation agreement between the Committee and the CoR, that entered into force on 1 November 2021 with a duration of five years, has reinforced the governance of the cooperation and the control mechanisms and is a renewed expression of the will to efficiently share resources and create synergies; notes that the current administrative cooperation agreement includes the creation of a directorate for innovation and information technology and, within the already existing joint services, the establishment of*

*a centralised public procurement and financial management unit and a procurement expert group;*

No follow-up needed.

- 75. Observes that the Committee outsources a certain number of services to other institutions, in particular to the Commission, via service level agreements with different services of that institution (the Paymaster Office and the Directorates-General for Budget, for Human Resources and for Digitalisation) for the provision of key software tools; notes that specific ad-hoc agreements have been concluded with Parliament and the Commission to deal with some aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic; observes that the Committee also benefits from participation in interinstitutional tender procedures led by the Commission or by Parliament in the areas of IT, corporate travel, insurance, transport, leasing of vehicles, and audio-visual equipment;*

No follow-up needed.

- 76. Notes that negotiations with a view to reviewing the cooperation protocol with the Commission started in 2021;*

The revised Protocol on Cooperation between the European Commission and the Committee was signed on 27 October 2022. In the protocol, the two parties renew their commitment to work closely together in contributing to the European political agenda. The protocol enhances, inter alia, the role of the Committee in the pre-legislative domain. The European Commission envisages asking the Committee more systematically for "exploratory opinions" on jointly identified topics.

### **Communication**

- 77. Notes that, in 2021, the budget assigned for communication was around EUR 1,5 million, and it was mainly dedicated to online activities aimed at specific target groups (civil society organisations and Union institutions), including press and media relations, organising events and outreach activities, and enhancing online communication and visits to the Committee;**

No follow-up needed.

- 78. Observes that, in the second semester of 2021, the Committee started working on its external communication strategy aiming to improve the quality, outreach and impact of its communication; notes that the Committee's communication commission decided, as an overarching priority, to improve image, impact and governance and to better integrate communication into legislative work; observes that, to this end, the Committee streamlined its communication during and around the plenaries to make sure that each opinion is communicated to the right audience, with the most appropriate tools available and at the most appropriate time; encourages the Committee to adopt a comprehensive communication framework integrating the lessons learnt from the two COVID-19 years in order to be prepared against possible future disruptive events and to ensure business continuity;**

No follow-up needed.

- 79. Notes with satisfaction that the Committee is member of the social media working group of the Interinstitutional Online Communication Committee, and that it has been involved in discussions on the pilot phase of two social media platforms, EU Voice and EU Video, that contribute to the Union's strategy for data and digital sovereignty; observes that the two platforms are part of decentralised, free and open-source social media networks that connect users in a privacy-oriented and advertising-free environment;**

No follow-up needed.

- 80. Reiterates its call to the Committee to increase its communication efforts to strengthen the link with citizens by endorsing greater transparency in its operations, by intensifying the use of digital technologies and by pursuing a communication strategy that allows the correct perception and understanding of the Committee's role and of the way it fits into the Union's vision.**

On 26 October 2022, the Committee adopted its new communication strategy for the period 2022-2027, which addresses the matters identified by the European Parliament. The communication strategy aims to strengthen the profile of the Committee through more consistent communication aligned to its role and provides for reinforced investment into digital technologies.

## **12. RESULTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CLOSED EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF) CASES IN 2022**

### **Financial Regulation, Article 74 (9): Powers and duties of the authorising officer**

*The authorising officer by delegation shall report to his or her Union institution on the performance of his or her duties in the form of an annual activity report containing financial and management information, including the results of controls, ...*

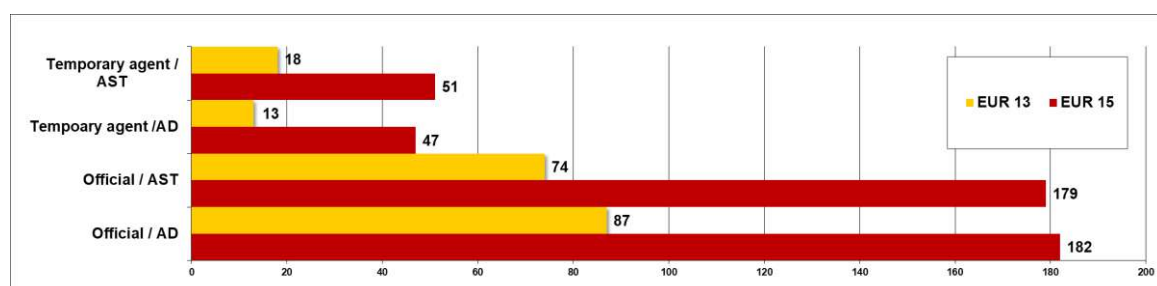
### **12.1 THE RESULTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CLOSED EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF) CASES, WHERE THE EESC OR ANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WORKING FOR THE COMMITTEE WERE THE SUBJECT OF THE INVESTIGATION**

In 2022, OLAF closed two cases, which concerned two EESC members and concluded respectively that there was no evidence of fraud, and no findings. During the same year, OLAF also closed two other cases concerning potential financial fraud from two EESC members and transmitted them to the European Public Prosecutor's Office for examination.

### 13. DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF BY NATIONALITY, FUNCTION GROUP, TYPE OF CONTRACT AND GENDER ON 1 MARCH 2023

#### 13.1 Nationality

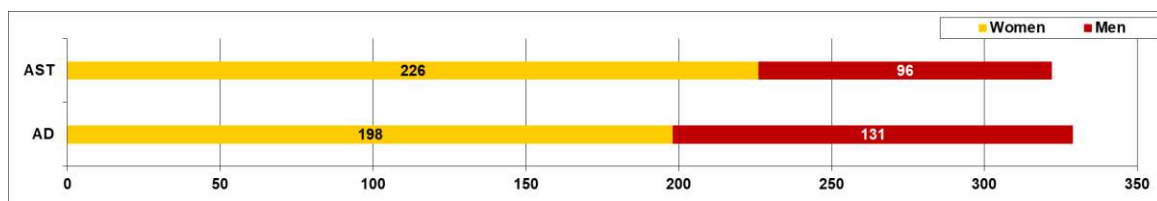
	Officials		Temporary agents		Contract agents		Seconded national experts and special advisers		TOTAL
	AD	AST	AD	AST	AD	AST	SNE	SA	
Austria	8	1	3	1		1			14
Belgium	27	73	6	11		12			129
Bulgaria	7	9	2	2					20
Croatia	7	3		1					11
Cyprus		1	1						2
Czech Republic	7	5	2						14
Denmark	10	4	1						15
Estonia	8	3							11
Finland	8	7	1		1				17
France	12	20	9	9	1	4		1	56
Germany	23	7	1	3					34
Greece	13	8	4	4	1	3	2		35
Hungary	9	10		1					20
Ireland	7	3	6	2					18
Italy	33	18	9	9	1	8	1		79
Latvia	4	3							7
Lithuania	7	6		1					14
Luxembourg		1							1
Malta	8	2		1					11
Netherlands	6	2		1					9
Poland	9	8	4	2	2	1	1		27
Portugal	12	10		5		3	1		31
Romania	9	8	4	7	1	2			31
Slovakia	7	9		3					19
Slovenia	5	7							12
Spain	12	18	3	5	1	4	1		44
Sweden	7	3	2	1	1				14
United Kingdom	4	4	2						10
	269	253	60	69	9	38	6	1	705
	Offic.AD	Offic./AST	TA/AD	TA/AST	CA/IV	CAI-II-III	SNE	SA	
EUR 15	182	179	47	51	6	35	5	1	506
EUR 13	87	74	13	18	3	3	1		199



## 13.2 Gender

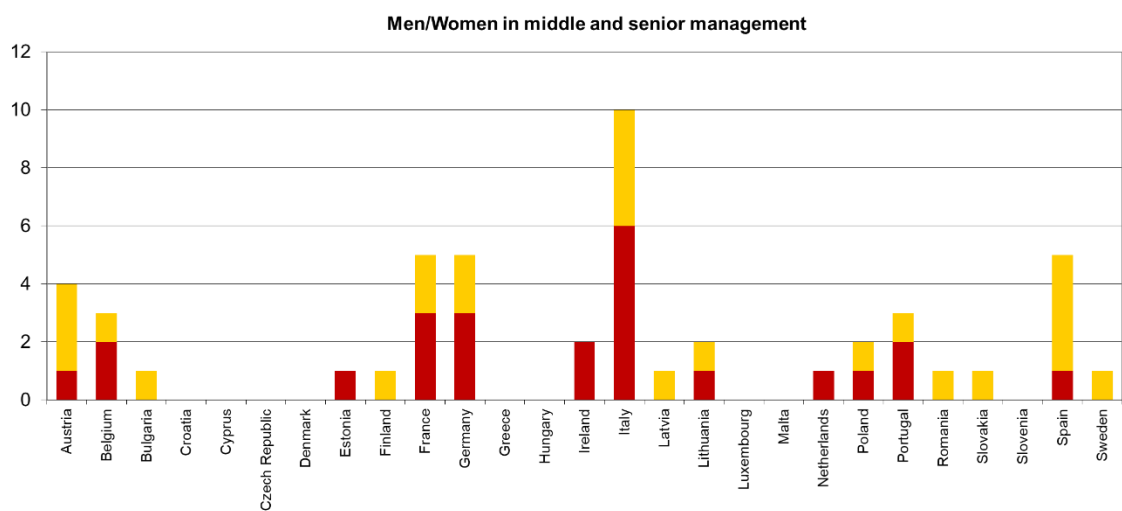
	Officials		Temporary agents		Contract agents		Seconded national experts and special advisors		TOTAL	FS/FT/TP	
	AD	AST	AD	AST	AD	AST	SNE	SA		AD	AST
Women	155	172	43	54	8	23	3	1	459	198	226
Men	114	81	17	15	1	15	3		246	131	96
	269	253	60	69	9	38	6	1	705	329	322

## Officials and temporary agents / gender



## 13.3 Middle and senior management functions

	Men	Women
Austria	1	3
Belgium	2	1
Bulgaria		1
Croatia		
Cyprus		
Czech Republic		
Denmark		
Estonia	1	
Finland		1
France	3	2
Germany	3	2
Greece		
Hungary		
Ireland	2	
Italy	6	4
Latvia		1
Lithuania	1	1
Luxembourg		
Malta		
Netherlands	1	
Poland	1	1
Portugal	2	1
Romania		1
Slovakia		1
Slovenia		
Spain	1	4
Sweden		1
United Kingdom		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Share</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>51%</b>



## 14. Occupation of posts by grade actually filled on 31 December 2022

Occupation of budget posts

Ratio - temporary agents on posts / total number of posts

Ratio - temporary agents on perm. posts / number of perm. posts

EESC occupation of posts in Joint Services

95.07%

17.19%

12.58%

64.12%

## EESC Posts

BUDGET				Officials				Temporary Agents				Vacant posts			
	SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD
HC			1	HC			0	HC			0	HC			0
16			1	16			0	16			0	16			0
15			5	15			4	15			0	15			0
14			20	14			17	14			1	14			2
13			20	13			19	13			1	13			0
12			54	12			44	12			3	12			3
11		4	31	11		2	26	11		0	0	11		2	1
10		4	53	10		1	53	10		0	3	10		0	3
9		32	57	9		28	48	9		0	3	9		1	1
8		33	24	8		22	20	8		2	3	8		1	0
7		42	26	7		33	20	7		1	7	7		2	1
6	0	52	19	6	0	49	11	6	0	2	2	6	0	0	0
5	0	57	26	5	0	59	7	5	0	2	31	5	0	0	2
4	0	28		4	2	22		4	0	3		4	0	4	
3	13	29		3	5	11		3	0	9		3	3	3	
2	17	4		2	11	2		2	4	4		2	1	0	
1	12	5		1	3	2		1	10	24		1	3	0	
42 290 337				21 231 269				14 47 54				7 13 13			
669				521				115				33			

## Permanent posts

BUDGET				Officials				Temporary Agents				Vacant posts			
	SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD
HC			0	HC			0	HC			0	HC			0
16			1	16			0	16			0	16			0
15			5	15			3	15			0	15			0
14			19	14			17	14			0	14			2
13			17	13			19	13			0	13			0
12			52	12			44	12			0	12			2
11		4	29	11		2	26	11		0	0	11		2	1
10		4	50	10		1	53	10		0	0	10		0	3
9		32	53	9		28	48	9		0	1	9		1	1
8		30	24	8		22	20	8		0	0	8		1	0
7		39	22	7		33	20	7		0	2	7		2	1
6	0	50	17	6	0	47	11	6	0	0	1	6	0	0	0
5	0	55	25	5	0	59	7	5	0	0	29	5	0	0	2
4	0	26		4	2	22		4	0	0		4	0	4	
3	13	26		3	5	11		3	0	6		3	3	3	
2	14	4		2	11	2		2	2	4		2	0	0	
1	12	5		1	3	2		1	10	24		1	3	0	
39 275 314				21 229 268				12 34 33				6 13 12			
628				518				79				31			



## Temporary posts

BUDGET				Officials				Temporary Agents				Vacant posts			
	SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD		SC	AST	AD
HC			1	HC			0	HC			0	HC			0
16			0	16			0	16			0	16			0
15			0	15			1	15			0	15			0
14			1	14			0	14			1	14			0
13			3	13			0	13			1	13			0
12			2	12			0	12			3	12			1
11		0	2	11		0	0	11		0	0	11		0	0
10		0	3	10		0	0	10		0	3	10		0	0
9		0	4	9		0	0	9		0	2	9		0	0
8		3	0	8		0	0	8		2	3	8		0	0
7		3	4	7		0	0	7		1	5	7		0	0
6	0	2	2	6	0	2	0	6	0	2	1	6	0	0	0
5	0	2	1	5	0	0	0	5	0	2	2	5	0	0	0
4	0	2		4	0	0		4	0	3		4	0	0	
3	0	3		3	0	0		3	0	3		3	0	0	
2	3	0		2	0	0		2	2	0		2	1	0	
1	0	0		1	0	0		1	0	0		1	0	0	
	3	15	23		0	2	1		2	13	21		1	0	1
	41				3				36				2		

## **15. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF MEMBERS' EXPENDITURE CONCERNING ITEM 1004**

### **15.1 COUNCIL DECISION No 2013/471/EU OF 23 SEPTEMBER 2013**

This report has been drawn up in accordance with Article 9 of Council Decision No 2013/471/EU of 23 September 2013 on the granting of daily allowances and the reimbursement of travel expenses to members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and to their alternates.

#### **Article 9 of the Council decision states:**

*The Committee shall, by 30 April of each year, submit to the European Parliament and to the Council a detailed report on the reimbursement of travelling expenses and allowances paid to beneficiaries in the preceding year. That report shall detail the number of beneficiaries, the number of journeys, the destinations, the travel class and the travel costs incurred and reimbursed, as well as the allowances paid.*

In order to ensure business continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, the EESC organised meetings mainly in 'hybrid format', particularly in the first half of the year, allowing beneficiaries to attend either in person or remotely through electronic means. No travel costs or travel allowances were reimbursed for remote attendance at meetings: beneficiaries were eligible to claim a remote attendance allowance of EUR 145 per day.

For the benefit of this report:

- any reference to amounts granted for the daily allowance may mean either the allowance for physical attendance, the allowance for remote attendance, or a combination of both;
- the meeting location for instances of remote attendance at hybrid meetings is taken to be the place where the meeting was held.

### **15.2 EVALUATION REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF COUNCIL DECISION No 2013/471/EU IN 2022**

#### **Number of beneficiaries**

In total, the EESC reimbursed 393 beneficiaries (either members or their alternates) during 2022.

### Number of journeys and destinations

The number of journeys carried out by beneficiaries and reimbursed by the EESC in 2022 is as follows:

Destination	Number of journeys
Brussels	6,790
Within EU (but outside Brussels)	1,271
Outside EU	146

### Travel modes

The rules on the reimbursement of travel expenses of EESC members and their alternates are set out in Council Decision 2013/471 and supplemented by detailed implementing provisions, adopted by the Bureau of the EESC. These implementing provisions are closely aligned with those of other institutions such as the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions, and set out that reimbursements are made on the basis of expenses actually incurred.

The monetary amount of reimbursements made for the various forms of travel costs were:

Method of transport	Amount reimbursed (EUR)
Aeroplane	6,050,865
Train	241,550
Car	622,895

As regards air travel, reimbursements were made for any economy class ticket (5% economy and 2% "low cost" in 2022) or a business class ticket (93% in 2022) up to a D-class fare (discounted business class). The majority of business-class tickets were issued in D-class or lower Z-class, P-class and I-class. The price of such business-class tickets may be lower than the price of a fully flexible economy class ticket.

### Travel costs and travel allowances, and the daily allowance

The following tables and annexes<sup>15</sup> present information on travel costs and travel allowances, and the daily allowance, in a progressively detailed manner. Aggregated information is provided for meetings that took place in Brussels. More detailed information is presented for meetings that took place within the EU (but outside Brussels) and in-depth information is provided for meetings outside the EU.

The following table shows the total amounts of travel costs and travel allowances paid:

<sup>15</sup> Detailed tables are included in Annexes 1 – 3.

Destination	Travel costs and travel allowances (EUR)	No of journeys	Average cost per journey (EUR)
<b>Brussels</b>	8,269,305	6,790	1,218
<b>Within EU</b> (but outside Brussels)	1,421,082	1,271	1,118
<b>Outside EU</b>	405,259	146	2,776

The following table shows the total amounts of daily allowances paid:

Destination	Daily allowances <sup>16</sup> (EUR)	No of meeting days
<b>Brussels</b>	5,037,535	19,222
<b>Within EU</b> (but outside Brussels)	658,862	2,186
<b>Outside EU</b>	103,607	344

The following table shows the total travel costs and travel allowances, and daily allowances paid:

Destination	Travel costs and travel allowances		Daily allowance		TOTAL (EUR) <sup>17</sup>
	Number of journeys	Cost (EUR)	Number of meeting days	Cost (EUR)	
<b>Brussels</b>	6,790	8,269,305	19,222	5,037,535	13,306,840
<b>Within EU</b> (but outside Brussels)	1,271	1,421,082	2,186	658,862	2,079,944
<b>Outside EU</b>	146	405,259	344	103,607	508,866
<b>TOTAL</b>	8,207	10,095,646	21,752	5,800,004	15,895,650

The following table<sup>18</sup> shows the total travel costs and travel allowances, and daily allowance, broken down by destination - within the EU but outside Brussels:

Destination	Travel costs and travel allowances		Daily allowance		TOTAL (EUR)
	Number of journeys <sup>19</sup>	Cost (EUR)	Number of meeting days	Cost (EUR)	
<b>Within EU</b> (but outside Brussels)	1,271	1,421,082	2,186	658,862	2,079,944
<b>Austria</b>	7	4,919	12	3,190	8,109
<b>Belgium</b>	4	5,736	10	2,755	8,491

<sup>16</sup> Including daily allowances for days in between meetings in order to save travel costs, in accordance with Article 2(2) of the Council Decision.

<sup>17</sup> The costs have been rounded up or down to facilitate readability and this may therefore lead to minor differences in the totals.

<sup>18</sup> A detailed table is included in annex 1 to show travel costs and travel allowances, and the daily allowance, for missions within Europe but outside Brussels, and where four or more EESC members participated.

<sup>19</sup> This report refers to the number of journeys for which beneficiaries had requested reimbursement. A mission to a country may include one or more journeys depending on the itinerary and the manner of the reimbursement request.

Destination	Travel costs and travel allowances		Daily allowance		TOTAL (EUR)
	Number of journeys <sup>19</sup>	Cost (EUR)	Number of meeting days	Cost (EUR)	
Croatia	42	41,423	73	20,880	62,303
Cyprus	2	1,676	4	1,160	2,836
Czech Republic	247	294,634	417	126,705	421,339
Denmark	2	4,084	7	2,465	6,549
Estonia	2	548	2	580	1,128
Finland	9	9,334	14	3,915	13,249
France	354	354,405	608	181,245	535,650
Germany	26	26,026	30	9,280	35,306
Greece	21	28,030	32	12,121	40,151
Hungary	20	27,211	42	12,760	39,971
Italy	48	57,274	72	23,345	80,619
Ireland	29	33,990	51	16,240	50,230
Latvia	33	38,811	54	14,790	53,601
Lithuania	0 <sup>20</sup>	19	10	2,175	2,194
Luxembourg	5	2,471	5	1,450	3,921
Malta	52	66,847	126	34,365	101,212
Netherlands	5	1,570	6	1,595	3,165
Poland	219	276,037	332	103,601	379,638
Portugal	23	28,836	41	13,485	42,321
Romania	5	4,593	10	3,190	7,783
Slovakia	24	15,256	40	11,890	27,146
Slovenia	9	7,100	12	3,770	10,870
Spain	44	45,095	105	31,175	76,270
Sweden	39	45,157	71	20,735	65,892

The following table<sup>21</sup> shows the total travel costs and travel allowances, and daily allowance, broken down by destination (outside the EU):

Destination	Travel costs and travel allowances		Daily allowance		TOTAL (EUR)
	Number of journeys <sup>22</sup>	Cost (EUR)	Number of meeting days	Cost (EUR)	
Outside EU	146	405,259	344	103,607	508,866
Albania	3	2,904	5	1,450	4,354
Argentina	7	45,489	28	8,120	53,609
Armenia	5	9,038	8	2,320	11,358
Australia	1	8,095	6	1,672	9,767

<sup>20</sup> Note that no members requested reimbursement for travel to these meetings in Lithuania. The EUR 19 figure refers to the cancellation cost of a flight.

<sup>21</sup> A detailed table is included in annex 2 to show the reimbursement of travel costs and travel allowances, and of the daily allowance, to EESC members for missions outside the European Union. Annex 3 also provides information about the purpose of the meetings attended by EESC members outside the European Union.

<sup>22</sup> This report refers to the number of journeys for which beneficiaries had requested reimbursement. A mission to a country may include one or more journeys depending on the itinerary and the manner of the reimbursement request.

Destination	Travel costs and travel allowances		Daily allowance		TOTAL (EUR)
	Number of journeys <sup>22</sup>	Cost (EUR)	Number of meeting days	Cost (EUR)	
Barbados	3	17,860	6	1,740	19,600
Bosnia and Herzegovina	11	15,951	14	4,640	20,591
Canada	1	3,972	7	2,030	6,002
Chile	7	51,649	21	6,090	57,739
Côte d'Ivoire	3	14,173	9	2,610	16,783
Egypt	13	28,339	42	13,050	41,389
Georgia	3	6,473	3	870	7,343
Guatemala	1	7,110	2	580	7,690
Israel	1	2,886	1	290	3,176
Kenya	1	5,252	3	870	6,122
Lebanon	1	2,507	1	290	2,797
Moldova	5	3,013	8	2,320	5,333
Morocco	19	40,620	38	13,340	53,960
Mozambique	3	19,709	15	4,640	24,349
Norway	6	11,666	12	4,060	15,726
Serbia	8	8,430	8	2,320	10,750
South Korea	4	16,252	6	1,740	17,992
Switzerland	10	16,639	43	11,165	27,804
Turkey	1	2,194	2	580	2,774
United Kingdom	15	11,531	20	5,800	17,331
United States	11	36,245	28	8,410	44,655
Vietnam	3	17,262	8	2,610	19,872

### 15.3 DETAILED ANNEXES SHOWING THE REIMBURSEMENT TO EESC MEMBERS FOR MISSIONS AND THE MEETINGS ATTENDED BY EESC MEMBERS AND THEIR ALTERNATES

**ANNEX 1** Table showing the reimbursement of travel costs and travel allowances, and of the daily allowance, to EESC members<sup>23</sup> for missions<sup>24</sup> where four or more EESC members participated\*, within the European Union (but outside Brussels)

Country	Number of missions per country	Date	City	Mission duration (days)	Number of participants*	Travel costs and travel allowances €	of which aeroplane costs €	Daily allowances €	Total costs per mission €
Bulgaria	1	26-Sep	Sofia	1	7	3,555	2,380	1,885	5,440
Croatia	1	24-Nov	Zagreb	2	32	37,699	24,919	17,110	54,809
Czech Republic	10	27-Apr	Prague	2	47	41,544	23,339	24,215	65,759
		22-Jul	Prague	1	8	8,083	3,876	4,930	13,013
		01-Sep	Prague	2	4	5,064	3,641	2,320	7,384
		07-Sep	Prague	2	5	7,294	4,997	2,610	9,904
		16-Sep	Prague	1	10	11,258	4,862	3,770	15,028
		10-Oct	Ostrava	2	42	41,833	21,509	23,055	64,888
		11-Oct	Ostrava	2	47	60,090	29,401	27,260	87,350
		11-Oct	Prague	1	66	82,226	48,261	19,550	101,776
		28-Nov	Prague	3	8	10,992	6,838	6,960	17,952
		06-Dec	Prague	2	4	2,054	1,462	2,320	4,374
Finland	1	02-Jun	Helsinki	2	6	8,549	4,963	3,480	12,029
France	13	21-Jan	Strasbourg	1	4	3,445	505	1,160	4,605
		01-Mar	Paris	2	85	71,667	37,669	42,920	114,587
		11-Mar	Strasbourg	2	10	9,980	4,135	6,380	16,360
		14-Mar	Paris	2	60	59,022	28,177	33,350	92,372
		25-Mar	Strasbourg	2	5	4,072	545	2,900	6,972
		05-Apr	Paris	1	15	7,204	1,582	4,060	11,264
		08-Apr	Strasbourg	2	8	8,890	3,993	4,640	13,530
		29-Apr	Strasbourg	2	7	5,878	1,819	3,770	9,648
		05-May	Strasbourg	2	14	17,396	7,066	8,120	25,516
		09-May	Strasbourg	1	9	9,614	5,567	2,900	12,514
		08-Sep	Rouen	2	10	9,236	5,070	6,090	15,326
		15-Sep	Paris	2	27	23,395	10,222	11,745	35,140
		29-Nov	Paris	1	68	71,857	38,524	19,720	91,577
Germany	1	04-Nov	Frankfurt	1	10	12,672	7,143	2,900	15,572

<sup>23</sup> As alternates are not permitted to represent the EESC during activities outside Brussels, this table includes information relating to members only.

<sup>24</sup> A mission includes one or several meeting days in the same city or in different cities in the same country.

Country	Number of missions per country	Date	City	Mission duration (days)	Number of participants*	Travel costs and travel allowances €	of which aeroplane costs €	Daily allowances €	Total costs per mission €
Greece	2	05-May	Athens	2	6	9,270	5,605	4,060	13,330
		07-Sep	Crete	1	7	7,643	3,890	2,320	9,963
Hungary	1	15-Sep	Debrecen	2	18	23,024	13,449	10,440	33,464
Ireland	1	09-Jun	Tullamore	2	23	30,959	16,896	13,050	44,009
Italy	2	09-May	Rome	2	10	9,627	5,846	6,090	15,717
		17-Oct	Rome	1	19	23,752	13,526	6,380	30,132
Latvia	1	06-Jul	Riga	1	44	35,362	25,009	11,890	47,252
Malta	2	29-Sep	Valletta	1	5	1,538	1,074	1,160	2,698
		01-Dec	Valletta	2	70	65,268	38,465	31,755	97,023
Poland	5	27-Jun	Katowice	3	4	6,634	4,528	3,480	10,114
		06-Jul	Gdansk	3	49	70,877	42,561	32,770	103,647
		18-Jul	Kraków	2	103	142,604	81,294	35,451	178,054
		12-Oct	Sopot	3	23	26,360	14,043	17,980	44,340
		22-Nov	Kraków	2	8	11,196	7,898	3,915	15,111
Portugal	2	23-Jun	Lisbon	2	12	16,756	12,091	7,830	24,586
		06-Oct	Lisbon	2	6	9,868	6,412	3,770	13,638
Romania	1	09-Nov	Bucharest	2	4	4,483	2,653	2,610	7,093
Slovakia	1	06-Jul	Bratislava	2	12	12,134	5,842	6,090	18,224
Slovenia	1	17-Nov	Ljubljana	2	5	6,389	3,739	3,190	9,579
Spain	3	04-Apr	Tarragona	2	10	11,663	6,589	5,800	17,463
		23-May	Madrid	3	12	6,745	3,389	8,700	15,445
		16-Nov	Barcelona	3	10	6,745	3,389	8,700	15,445
Sweden	3	13-Oct	Stockholm	2	4	4,451	2,634	2,610	7,061
		14-Nov	Stockholm	1	4	6,707	3,861	1,160	7,867
		14-Nov	Stockholm	2	27	24,917	13,925	13,340	38,257
TOTAL:						1,209,543	671,073	534,661	1,744,204

\* Including both physical and remote attendance



**ANNEX 2 Table showing the reimbursement of travel costs and travel allowances, and of the daily allowance, to EESC members<sup>25</sup> for missions<sup>26</sup> outside the European Union**

Country	Number of missions per country	Date	City	Mission duration (days)	Number of participants*	Travel costs and travel allowances €	of which aeroplane costs €	Daily allowances €	Total costs per mission €
Albania	1	27-Sep	Tirana	2	3	2,904	1,401	1,450	<b>4,354</b>
Argentina	2	11-Apr	Buenos Aires	4	3	19,607	16,755	3,480	<b>23,087</b>
		05-Dec	Buenos Aires	4	4	25,881	22,063	4,640	<b>30,521</b>
Armenia	1	31-Aug	Yerevan	2	4	9,038	5,462	2,320	<b>11,358</b>
Australia	1	17-Nov	Melbourne	6	1	8,095	6,366	1,672	<b>9,767</b>
Barbados	1	03-May	Bridgetown	2	3	17,860	14,664	1,740	<b>19,600</b>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	24-May	Sarajevo	2	11	15,951	9,175	4,640	<b>20,591</b>
Canada	1	09-Dec	Montreal	7	1	3,972	3,154	2,030	<b>6,002</b>
Chile	1	21-Nov	Santiago	3	7	51,649	44,575	6,090	<b>57,739</b>
Côte d'Ivoire	1	04-May	Abidjan	3	3	14,173	11,208	2,610	<b>16,783</b>
Egypt	2	11-Oct	Cairo	3	4	9,054	5,729	4,640	<b>13,694</b>
		12-Nov	Sharm el-Sheikh	5	6	19,284	10,353	8,410	<b>27,694</b>
Georgia	1	28-Jun	Tbilisi	1	3	6,473	4,711	870	<b>7,343</b>
Guatemala	1	29-Nov	Guatemala city	2	1	7,110	6,119	580	<b>7,690</b>
Israel	1	28-Dec	Jerusalem	1	1	2,886	1,713	290	<b>3,176</b>
Kenya	1	06-Dec	Nairobi	3	1	5,252	4,595	870	<b>6,122</b>
Lebanon	1	22-Dec	Beirut	1	1	2,507	1,851	290	<b>2,797</b>
Moldova	2	02-Jun	Chisinau	2	1	765	582	580	<b>1,345</b>
		09-Nov	Chisinau	2	3	2,248	1,702	1,740	<b>3,988</b>
Morocco	3	30-May	Marrakesh	1	2	3,580	2,755	580	<b>4,160</b>
		31-May	Marrakesh	2	17	35,201	23,621	12,470	<b>47,671</b>
		17-Oct	Rabat	1	1	1,840	1,318	290	<b>2,130</b>
Mozambique	1	29-Oct	Maputo	5	3	19,709	17,336	4,640	<b>24,349</b>
Norway	1	10-May	Bergen	2	6	11,666	8,053	4,060	<b>15,726</b>
Serbia	2	21-Mar	Belgrade	1	1	1,740	1,016	290	<b>2,030</b>
		29-Nov	Belgrade	1	7	6,690	3,244	2,030	<b>8,720</b>
South Korea	1	13-Sep	Seoul	2	3	16,252	13,631	1,740	<b>17,992</b>
Switzerland	3	13-Jun	Geneva	3	4	1,574	1,062	1,595	<b>3,169</b>
		27-Sep	Geneva	4	8	9,907	5,756	6,380	<b>16,287</b>
		18-Oct	Geneva	4	4	5,157	2,891	3,190	<b>8,347</b>
Turkey	1	24-Sep	Istanbul	2	1	2,194	1,635	580	<b>2,774</b>
United Kingdom	4	17-Oct	London, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast	5	3	9,271	4,745	4,350	<b>13,621</b>
		01-Nov	Belfast	1	1	255	0	290	<b>545</b>
		07-Nov	London	2	1	822	206	580	<b>1,402</b>
		15-Dec	Hatfield	2	1	1,182	490	580	<b>1,762</b>
United States	1	26-Jun	Washington D.C., New York	5	6	36,245	26,458	8,410	<b>44,655</b>
Vietnam	1	18-Oct	Hanoi	3	3	17,262	14,580	2,610	<b>19,872</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>						<b>405,259</b>	<b>300,978</b>	<b>103,607</b>	<b>508,866</b>

\* Including both physical and remote attendance

<sup>25</sup> As alternates are not permitted to represent the EESC during activities outside Brussels, this table includes information relating to members only.

<sup>26</sup> A mission includes one or several meeting days in the same city or in different cities in the same country.

**ANNEX 3 Table showing meetings attended by EESC members outside of the European Union**

Country (City)	Meeting title	Purpose of meeting
Albania (Tirana)	Tirana Connectivity Forum 2022	Presentation of EESC opinions on the Western Balkans at the Forum.
Argentina (Buenos Aires)	EUROLAT - The Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly	Participation in the EUROLAT Parliamentary Assembly (Argentina).
Argentina (Buenos Aires)	High level exploratory mission	Invitation by the Argentinean Economic and Social Committee - joint event on trade, climate change and food security. Meetings with civil society organisations.
Armenia (Yerevan)	EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform - inaugural meeting	First meeting of the EU-Armenia Civil Society platform foreseen in the EU-Armenia Association Agreement.
Australia (Melbourne)	Participating in the 5th ITUC World Congress	The ITUC world congress brings together over 300 national trade unions every four years to set the global agenda for trade unions. There was participation in the Congress and in several side events.
Barbados (Bridgetown)	6th Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Consultative Committee	The Cariforum Consultative Committee meets every year in the framework of the implementation of the EU-Cariforum Economic Partnership agreement. It is composed of EESC members and other representatives of civil society and from the Cariforum side from representatives of the civil society from Cariforum countries.
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo)	Western Balkans Follow-up Committee 2 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Participation in the meeting of the EESC Western Balkans Committee and organisation of hearings with civil society as well as meetings with relevant authorities.
Canada (Montreal)	EESC participation in the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15)	The EESC participated for the first time in the United Nations Biodiversity Conference. The aim of the EESC participation was to advocate for an ambitious agreement to protect our planet and for strong civil society engagement in biodiversity conservation and restoration, a key element for the implementation of already existing but never delivered policies.

Country (City)	Meeting title	Purpose of meeting
Chile (Santiago)	9th EU-Chile Joint Consultative Committee	Meeting of the EU-Chile Joint Consultative Committee which takes place in alternate years in the EU or in Chile. Discussions on trade relations, recovery after Covid and the modernisation of the EU-Chile agreement. Additional meetings were held with government representatives.
Côte d'Ivoire (Abidjan)	Exploratory Mission to Ivory Coast - ACP-EU Follow-up Committee	Mission requested by the Ivory Coast civil society and Ivory Coast Economic and Social Council to assist them in organising a monitoring body to follow the Economic Partnership agreement with the EU.
Egypt (Cairo)	Euromed Summit preparation	An exploratory mission to Egypt to discuss current challenges experienced by Egyptian civil society and explore the possibility for the organisation of the EESC-Euromed Summit in Egypt.
Egypt (Sharm el-Sheikh)	EESC participation in the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 27)	Participation in the annual United Nations Conference on Climate Change. The six-member delegation plus a youth delegate engaged in meaningful conversations, bilateral meetings and side events calling on the EU institutions and Governments to step up climate ambition, following science and scientific information, and placing a particular focus on the role of organised civil society to accelerate climate action.
Georgia (Tbilisi)	EU-Georgia civil society platform	Meeting of the EU-Georgia platform, as foreseen in the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.
Guatemala (Guatemala City)	Regional Labour Conference	Speaker at the conference - EU experience in implementing ILO conventions and the role of civil society in the EU-central America agreement.
Israel (Jerusalem)	Fourth Jerusalem Leaders Summit - Strengthening Israel's Partnership with Europe and the US	Participation to present the EESC opinion on key European challenges.
Kenya (Nairobi)	African Union ECOSOC - 4th Permanent General Assembly	Participation in the inauguration of the African Union ECOSOC - 4th Permanent General Assembly
Lebanon (Beirut)	28th Arab Economic Forum	Participation in the 28th Arab Economic Forum, as well as meetings with the

Country (City)	Meeting title	Purpose of meeting
		Lebanese Economic and Social Council, with Women Business organisations and with organisations representing LGBT rights.
Moldova (Chisinau)	International Summer Conference on "Cross-border interdisciplinarity and cooperation"	Presenting the work of the EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform.
Moldova (Chisinau)	EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform - 10th meeting	Meeting of the EU-Moldova Civil society platform, as foreseen in the EU-Moldova Association Agreement.
Morocco (Marrakesh)	Official meeting with the President of the ESC of Morocco pre-Euromed Summit	This meeting was a bilateral meeting in the framework of the EESC Euromed Summit, co-organised with the Moroccan economic and social Council.
Morocco (Marrakesh)	Euromed Summit 2022 (Marrakesh)	The Euromed Summit is organised every year by the EESC and involves representatives of trade unions, employers, NGOs from all Euromed countries.
Morocco (Rabat)	UCESA General Assembly and in the UCESA Executive Bureau	Participation in the General Assembly of the African Economic and Social Councils.
Mozambique (Maputo)	ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly	Participation in the EU-ACP Parliamentary Assembly and organisation of meetings with civil society.
Norway (Bergen)	30th meeting of the European Economic Area Consultative Committee in Bergen	Participation in meeting of the European Economic Area Consultative Committee composed of the EU and EEA civil society representatives.
Serbia (Belgrade)	Your Europe, Your Say (YESY) 2022 virtual or physical visits to schools	YEYS is the EESC's annual youth event, bringing together delegations from secondary schools from all EU Member States and Candidate Countries. In the build up to the main event, information sessions are organised which involve an EESC member's visit to the selected school per country in order to familiarise the participating students and teachers with the event and present the EESC's role and function.
Serbia (Belgrade)	EU-Serbia Joint Consultative Committee 2	The EU-Serbia Joint Consultative Committee is set up by the Decision N°1 of the EU -Serbia Stabilisation Council from 21 October 2013. It is composed of

Country (City)	Meeting title	Purpose of meeting
		representatives of the EU and Serbian civil society and meets in alternate years in Brussels and in Serbia.
South Korea (Seoul)	EU DAG under the EU-Korea FTA – Joint meetings DAG-to-DAG meeting + Workshop + Civil Society Forum	Joint meeting of the EU and Korean Domestic Advisory Groups as foreseen in the EU-Korea FTA.
Switzerland (Geneva)	International Trade Follow-up Committee Meeting - WTO Ministerial Conference	Participation as civil society experts in the WTO Ministerial conference.
Switzerland (Geneva)	WTO Public forum in Geneva - International Trade Follow-up Committee Meeting	Participation in the Forum and organisation of workshop on resilience of supply chains.
Switzerland (Geneva)	UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation on Tax Matters, Geneva	Since 2019 the EESC cooperates with the UN Tax Committee (UNTC), in order to analyse topics of mutual interests. Delegation participated as an observer in all bi-annual sessions of the UNTC.
Turkey (Istanbul)	Symposium on War, Refugees, Migrants, and Labour, organised by the Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions KESK.	The objective of the Symposium on War, Refugees, Migrants, and Labour was to discuss various issues concerning the refugees and migrants, e.g. the conditions that create refugees and migrants, the problems migrants and refugees face in access to fundamental human rights and participation in the labour market, the effect of the migrant and refugee population on public services and the working conditions of public employees.
United Kingdom (London, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast)	Mission to the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland)	This was an exploratory mission in order to draft an Information Report and meetings were held with more than 60 civil society organisations across the UK.
United Kingdom (Belfast)	Bilateral meeting between rapporteur and advisor for mission debriefing and preparation of Information Report	This was a meeting between the rapporteur and the advisor to prepare the Information Report. As both parties live on the island of Ireland, Belfast represented the most economic and efficient meeting place.
United Kingdom (London)	2nd EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly	Participation in the meeting of the EU-UK Parliamentary assembly to present the conclusions of the missions to the 4 UK devolved nations and the work of the

Country (City)	Meeting title	Purpose of meeting
		EU Domestic Advisory Group under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
United Kingdom (Hatfield)	Workshop on 'Cooperatives for Sustainable Development' (organised by the University of Hertfordshire)	The objective of the workshop was to explore how social economy enterprises contribute to sustainable development. The EESC speaker presented EESC Opinions on the social economy, and reflected on how worker cooperatives and social enterprises are already innovating to implement the objectives of sustainable development.
United States (Washington D.C., New York)	Transatlantic Relations Follow-up Committee - Mission to North America	The mission aimed to meet with US employers, trade unions and other civil society organisations principally to discuss: the EU-US trade and technology council, the Summit for democracy. Meetings were organised with the UN and agencies in New York on issues related to SDG, gender equality and labour rights.
Vietnam (Hanoi)	EU DAG under the EU-Vietnam FTA – Joint meetings DAG-to-DAG meeting + Workshop + Civil Society Forum	Meeting of the Civil Society Forum as foreseen in the EU-Vietnam FTA. The Forum is composed of EESC and other civil society organisations from the EU side and Vietnamese civil society organisations.

