The work of EPRS
The first five years: 2014 to 2018
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Briefing
Maart 2017

Europees Parlement: Wetenswaardigheden

Deze briefing, die door de Onderzoeksdienst van het Europees Parlement is opgesteld, bevat een overzicht van de belangrijkste wetenswaardigheden die te verwachten zijn voor de verkiezingsperiode 2014-2019 en verkiezingen worden ingehouden.

Op de zevenvijftigste verkiezing heeft u allereerste kennis van de politieke tradities.

De kiezers die in de verkiezingsperiode 2014-2019 meedogen met de acties van het Parlement.

De belangrijkste politieke partijen die in verkiezingen voor het Europees Parlement vertegenwoordigd zijn.

De acties die in de verkiezingsperiode 2014-2019 plaatsvonden.

De belangrijkste politieke partijen die in verkiezingen voor het Europees Parlement vertegenwoordigd zijn.

Europees Parlement, 2014-2019

Uitkomst van de verkiezingen

CVP: 751

Dit is een overzicht van de belangrijkste wetenswaarigheden die te verwachten zijn voor de verkiezingsperiode 2014-2019 en verkiezingen worden ingehouden.
The European Parliament’s Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) was established in November 2013, in order to provide Members of the European Parliament, and where appropriate, parliamentary committees, with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, and so assist them in their parliamentary work.

DG EPRS aims to provide a comprehensive range of products and services, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so empowering Members and committees through knowledge and contributing to the Parliament’s effectiveness and influence as an institution.

During the five years from January 2014 to December 2018, DG EPRS answered over 14,100 requests for substantive research and analysis from some 93 per cent of individual Members, it replied to over 2,400 such requests from other parliamentary clients, and it undertook targeted research work for 20 parliamentary committees. In parallel, over the same timeframe, EPRS also replied to over 96,000 reference requests from within the Parliament and over 260,000 citizens’ enquiries. It produced more than 4,800 publications - over 3,500 in both physical and digital form, and over 1,200 online only - so far eliciting 15 million page views electronically, including from around 9,000 unique users within the parliamentary community each year (and over 2,300 each month).

This report describes the work of EPRS during its first five years of full operation, from January 2014 to December 2018, with special emphasis on the most recent calendar year, 2018. During this sixty-month period:

- The Members’ Research Service of EPRS answered a total of 14,125 substantive, confidential requests for research and analysis from Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and their staff (or an average of 2,825 per year), in some cases with assistance from other EPRS services.

- The Members’ Research Service also replied to 2,473 such requests from other parliamentary clients - such as committee secretariats and policy departments - for research and analysis (or an average of 495 per year).

- The number of Members using the Members’ Research Service rose throughout the period, with 93 per cent of Members having made requests for research or analysis by December 2018, and 67 per cent per cent doing so in the previous twelve months. In autumn 2014, by comparison, the figure was only 22 percent.
• The Members' Research Service issued 2,859 publications on EU policies, issues and legislation, for the use of Members generally, during the five-year period in question, with the number rising from 232 in 2014 to 606 in 2018.

• During the same five-year period, the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value published a further 660 papers in support of the work of parliamentary committees in scrutinising the executive and holding it to account, with the number rising from 69 publications in 2014 to 187 in 2018.

• Between 2014 and 2018, the Directorate for the Library answered 96,193 reference requests from within the Parliament and treated over 262,000 citizens’ enquiries.

• The Directorate for the Library lent over 79,000 books and e-books to parliamentary clients and provided in-house training to over 4,200 individuals.

• The Directorate for the Library supplied over 28,000 historic EP documents to members of the public, in response to over 3,200 requests, and processed over 1.8 kilometres of paper archives and over 100 GB of digital archives during these five years.

• Adding in Library publications and online only publications, there were a total of 4,852 EPRS publications during the five years from 2014 to 2018: 569 in 2014; 995 in 2015; 1,154 in 2016; 1,057 in 2017; and 1,077 in 2018. All of these publications can be accessed via the EPRS catalogue1 for the period in question.

• These EPRS publications and other material elicited over 7.3 million page views on the Parliament’s intranet in the five years from 2014 to 2018, as well as some 7.5 million page views on the internet.

• One hundred per cent of Members or their staff pro-actively accessed EPRS publications, sources or other material on the Parliament’s intranet during the five years in question.

• The EPRS held 169 events in the Library Reading Room - whether book launches, roundtables on policy issues or dialogues with partner organisations - attracting a total of over 10,000 participants, during the years 2014-18. In addition, EPRS organised 62 events for the Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA), attracting over 6,000 people.

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The Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) was established on 1 November 2013, following a decision of the European Parliament’s Bureau on 20 May 2013, and it became fully operational on 1 January 2014.

The creation of EPRS followed a detailed analysis, undertaken by a Joint Working Group of the Parliament’s Bureau and Budgets Committee, of the strengths and weaknesses of the various kinds of support given to Members in their parliamentary work. The working group identified areas both for potential savings and potential reinforcement over time. Among the latter, it recommended specifically that the provision of ‘independent scientific advice’ to Members and of analytical support in exercising scrutiny and oversight of the executive should both be enhanced. A detailed comparative study of the parliamentary research services and libraries in France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States identified the services available and best practice to be found elsewhere.

The overall purpose of establishing the new directorate-general was thus not only to reorganise certain existing services in a more coherent and efficient manner; but significantly to enhance the quality of those services and to develop new ones - so that the European Parliament would have at its disposal a world-class parliamentary research service, capable of providing Members and (where appropriate) committees with independent, objective and authoritative research on, and analysis of, policy issues relating to the European Union. It was also intended to increase the practical capacity of Members and committees to scrutinise and oversee the European Commission and other executive bodies during successive stages of the EU policy cycle.

To strengthen administrative support in these fields, the new directorate-general brought together, in the form of a single service, two previously separate entities - the Directorate for the Library (previously located in DG Presidency) and the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value (previously in DG Internal Policies) - and it added to them a new directorate, the Members’ Research Service, of a kind which the Parliament previously lacked on any scale. The latter offers closely-tailored briefing and personalised research for individual MEPs, and produces a wide range of (synoptic and more detailed) publications for Members and the institution as a whole. Together these three principal components now form a single service, designed to offer the kind of comprehensive research capability to be found, in whole or in part, in several other parliamentary democracies.

The basic philosophy of EPRS, as defined by the Bureau, reflects the following core principles:
to be independent, objective and authoritative in the work undertaken;

to provide a comprehensive service, backed by specialism in all policy fields;

to be client-oriented and responsive directly to the needs of Members;

to offer a single point-of-entry for Members and a rapid response to requests;

to ensure the clear, simple branding of all products and services; and

to complement written material with greater ‘in person’ briefing of Members.

In such a spirit, the directorate-general aims to provide a comprehensive range of products and services, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so in effect empowering both Members and committees through knowledge and contributing to the Parliament’s effectiveness and influence as an institution. In undertaking this work, the directorate-general also supports and promotes parliamentary outreach, sharing the main results of its research with the wider public, in order to enhance discussion of EU issues and broaden awareness of parliamentary work.

The administrative title of the directorate-general is the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS). The acronym ‘EPRS’ stands for ‘European Parliamentary Research Service’, a name which the directorate-general may use on its publications, webpages and other public material.

Organisationally, DG EPRS has comprised three directorates:

- Directorate A - Directorate for the Members’ Research Service;
- Directorate B - Directorate for the Library;
- Directorate C - Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value.

The three main components of EPRS work - i) research for Members individually and publications for Members collectively, ii) access to knowledge sources, and iii) support for parliamentary committees in scrutiny and oversight of the executive - have been reflected in this structure.

During the period covered by this report, the directorate-general was also underpinned by the work of three horizontal units - for Strategy and Coordination, for Resources, and for Linking the Levels.
MISSION

To empower Members through the provision of independent, objective, authoritative and timely research, analysis and information, which is responsive to their needs, in order to support their parliamentary work, on behalf of constituents and citizens, and to enrich the public debate on European issues.

VISION

We aim to be the active leader in setting the global standard in the provision of research, analysis and information to Members and parliamentary committees, to nourish informed political debate and evidence-based policy-making in the European Union.

CORE VALUES

Independence • Objectivity • Authoritativeness • Client orientation • Timeliness
The central task of Directorate A of DG EPRS, the Members’ Research Service, is to provide all Members of the European Parliament with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, EU-related policy issues, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work.

The Directorate is organised in five policy units, currently covering Economic Policies (EPOL), Structural Policies (SPOL), Citizens’ Policies (CPOL), Budgetary Policies (BPOL) and External Policies (XPOL), following the standard committee groupings used within the Parliament’s administration. The work of the five policy units is supported by a horizontal Publications Management and Editorial Unit (PMEU), which also serves the directorate-general as a whole.

The five policy units within the Members’ Research Service provide, inter alia, the following main services:

- the provision of in-house, specialist expertise in all areas of EU policy, based on the work of policy analysts and information specialists;

- responses to specific requests from individual Members for research, analysis and information in all policy fields covered by the European Union, notably by means of tailored, personalised briefing to Members, both in written form and through in-person meetings;

- a comprehensive range of pro-active, content-rich, easy-to-read publications (and other analysis and research) for Members collectively on all major EU policies and issues, including the automatic and systematic provision of analysis on EU legislative proposals at their successive stages of passage;

- the contribution of online content in all policy fields for use on the Parliament’s various external and internal websites.

The Members’ Research Service operates in accordance with detailed rules, which were adopted by the Parliament’s Bureau in June 2014 and can be accessed here. These identify its role in supporting Members individually and collectively, and specify who has the right of access to its services and on what basis.

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Policy specialism

A key part of the EPRS design was the creation, through the new Members’ Research Service, of a dedicated research capability for Members - responding to their requests for research and analysis - and the generation of a much wider and deeper range of in-depth analytical and briefing publications for all Members, across all major policy fields. Such objectives needed to be underpinned by the development and putting in place of a much higher degree of policy specialism among staff than was possible or available in the past.

The central aim of building a team of policy specialists within the Members’ Research Service, covering all EU policy areas in detail, has been realised since 2013, both through the reallocation and training of existing staff, and the recruitment of additional staff, as foreseen by the Bureau and budgetary authority. By the end of 2018, there were 73 policy analysts and 28 information specialists in the Members’ Research Service, working closely together to provide the most relevant service to Members. By comparison, in October 2013, when EPRS was created, the old Library had only 20 colleagues corresponding to what is now a policy-analyst role, most of whom were generalists. In addition to their specific policy responsibilities, some Members’ Research Service staff have also been assigned country-specific responsibilities for individual EU member states, in order to better engage in comparative analysis of policy within the Union.

A list of the 101 policy analysts and information specialists currently working in the Members’ Research Service of EPRS, divided by area of policy responsibility, can be found here.3

Tailored research for individual Members

As foreseen when EPRS was created, the Members’ Research Service has responded to an increasingly large number of personal requests for research or analysis from Members or their staff. All are handled on a strictly confidential basis, in accordance with the rules of the Members’ Research Service adopted by the Bureau in June 2014.

- There were a total of 14,125 substantive requests from Members or their staff for research or analysis during the five years in question: 1,660 requests in 2014; 2,995 in 2015; 3,441 in 2016; 3,334 in 2017; and 2,695 in 2018 - or an average of 2,825 per year.

- A further 2,473 requests for substantive research and analysis were received from other parliamentary clients - such as committee secretariats, policy departments and political groups - during the five years in question: 720 in 2014; 497 in 2015; 437 in 2016; 477 in 2017; and 342 in 2018 - or an average of 495 per year.

- The length of replies given to such research requests has characteristically been between one and 34 pages - five pages on average - representing a total of some 76,900 pages of individualised briefing material generated during this five-year period.

- Of the total of 16,598 research requests or analysis received in 2014-18, 88 per cent

(14,535 requests) were answered by the Members’ Research Service alone, and 12 per cent (2,063) with the support of other EPRS services.

- Certain comparative requests received from Members needed to be broken down into a total of 5,077 further sub-requests, sometimes requiring input from as many as 28 EPRS country experts. If sub-requests are added to the total, as they are in the reporting process of several other parliamentary research services, the total number of requests answered during 2014-18 goes up from 16,598 to 21,675.

- By the end of December 2018, a total of 93 per cent of Members or their offices had made requests for substantive research or analysis to the Members’ Research Service since July 2014, and 67 per cent had done so in the previous twelve months. The corresponding number of Members or their offices making requests in October 2014, soon after the last European Parliament elections, was 22 per cent, and by June 2015, it had risen to 66 per cent.

- The total number of unique clients making requests through the Members’ Hotline rose from just over 1,000 in 2014 to 3,788 over the five-year period 2014-2018.

- The requests received in 2014-18 concerned all EU policy areas, with an emphasis on economic policies (28 per cent) and external policies (22 per cent). Citizens’ policies accounted for 18 per cent of requests, structural policies for 15 per cent, and budgetary policies for three per cent. Other requests, mainly of a horizontal or more complex kind, accounted for 14 per cent.

- Over three-quarters of enquiries were submitted electronically, through an enquiry management system, with the rest received by email, over the telephone or at the info-desk in the Library Reading Room.

- Around 53 per cent of requests were answered on the same or the following day, and 82 per cent were answered within less than a week.

- The Members’ Research Service has been actively developing the option of in-person briefing of Members or their staff on any topic, as part of its client-oriented approach.

Publications for all Members

The Members’ Research Service has generated an increasing number of publications, all aimed at being clear, accessible and easy to read.

- The Members’ Research Service produced a total of 3,591 publications (including online only publications) during the 60 months from January 2014 to December 2018 - 411 publications in 2014; 746 publications in 2015; 877 publications in 2016; 771 publications in 2017; and 786 publications in 2018.

- The publications generated by the Members’ Research Service seek to cover all policy areas, issues and legislation within the EU. Among topics addressed in 2018 were the future of Europe, eurozone reform, migration, security, the financing of the Union,
neighbourhood policy, international trade, UK departure from the Union, nuclear weapons, cyber-security and the growing use of disinformation.

- Of the total 3,591 publications, 80 per cent (2,859) were available in both printed and digital forms, and 20 per cent (732) were available only online.

- A clickable PDF list of the Members’ Research Service publications produced between January 2014 and December 2018 can be accessed here\(^4\).

- All such physical publications can be found on the Parliament’s Think Tank internet website, at [www.europarl.eu/thinktank](http://www.europarl.eu/thinktank), as well as on the EPRS intranet website at [www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu](http://www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu), on the EPRS blog at [www.epthinktank.eu](http://www.epthinktank.eu), and on the new EPRS App, available at Google Play and the App Store. Online-only publications are available on the EPRS intranet and blog.

- Early on, the presentation of EPRS’s publications was standardised in an attractive new format offered in the following categories, based on length: ‘At a glance’ notes, providing a one- to two-page summary of a topic; Briefings, offering a more detailed overview of a policy, issue or piece of legislation (up to 12 pages); and In-depth Analyses and Studies, giving a much more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the same (up to, and more than, 36 pages, respectively).

- There has also been a strong emphasis on the enhanced use of infographics and statistics in all EPRS publications, to offer a concentrated visual presentation of useful figures and other information on any subject.

- A ‘Graphics Warehouse’, making available many of the infographics used in EPRS publications for download is now available on the EPRS intranet\(^5\), featuring over 1,300 charts, tables and other graphics. A parallel ‘Map Warehouse’ carries over 200 maps and is available here\(^6\), whilst a ‘Statistics Warehouse’ gives easy access to a wide range of EU and international data and can be found here\(^7\).

Throughout the period 2014-18, the Members’ Research Service was engaged in the continued development and launch of new products and services for Members, both individually and collectively. The development of coordinated ‘series’ of publications has been an important part of that process, and it is being further promoted and refined.

Among the series of MRS publications so far launched are:

(i) In-depth Analyses on all major EU policy areas (129 published so far);

(ii) Briefings on ‘EU Legislation in Progress’, which systematically track and analyse the passage of all major legislative proposals, at the successive stages of the law-making process

(544 published so far) - a series recently complemented by Briefings on ‘International Agreements in Progress’ (14 published so far);

(iii) Briefings on ‘How the EU Budget is spent’, analysing specific spending programmes under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) (41 published so far);

(iv) Briefings on ‘Understanding…’ certain key concepts or issues in EU or international politics, and the debates around them (39 published so far);

(v) A series of annual publications on various aspects of the Union, including an Economic and Budgetary Outlook, a Demographic Outlook, a Peace and Security Survey, and Ten Issues to Watch;

(vi) At-a-glance ‘plenary notes’ on up-coming EP session business, matched up ‘session round-ups’ reporting on the outcome of each plenary (562 published so far);

(vii) ‘Topical Digests’, giving access to selected EPRS publications in various policy areas (83 published so far).

Other innovative products and services

The Members’ Research Service has been very actively involved in the development of the Parliament’s online EU ‘Legislative Train Schedule’, launched on the institution’s website in 2016. Updated monthly by EPRS, this innovative visual tool uses images of trains, carriages and railway sidings to track the detailed progress - from departure to arrival - of every significant legislative proposal being put forward by the current European Commission during its five-year term from 2014 to 2019. So far, the application contains more than 600 carriages, representing over 1,200 pages of analysis.

In November 2018, the Members’ Research Service put online a comprehensive set of short notes on the practical benefits of EU policy for individual citizens. Known as the EU delivery scorecard project, this material is available at a dedicated website - What Europe does for me - and encompasses some 1,800 pages of material, available in multiple languages, detailing EU impact at national, regional and local levels, as well as what Europe does for a wide variety of social or citizens’ groups. So far there have been more than 5.0 million page-views of this website.

Active efforts have also been made to offer Members (and their staff) greater accessibility to publications when they are outside the EP premises. As part of this process, an experiment started in 2015 with the podcasting of some EPRS publications, notably ‘plenary podcasts’ on major up-coming items of plenary business, ‘policy podcasts’ on various longer-term issues, and science and technology podcasts, looking at the potential implications of developments of changes in those fields. By December 2018, a total of 223

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8 https://what-europe-does-for-me.eu/
9 https://www.youtube.com/c/EuropeanParliamentaryResearchService
10 https://www.youtube.com/c/EuropeanParliamentaryResearchService
11 https://www.youtube.com/c/EuropeanParliamentaryResearchService
podcasts had been published, all carried on the Parliament’s website, EPRS intranet and various social media outlets.

A similar experiment is being undertaken with the use of ‘animated infographics’ to better illustrate issues in a user-friendly way. These are regularly updated visual and interactive guides, providing information on complex issues such as trade flows, the circular economy, robotics, and migration and asylum. The policy issues are presented in an interactive and visually appealing way. Each animated infographic is a mini-website, where users themselves control the depth of analysis that they access, with the material being updated regularly. All EPRS animated info-graphics can be accessed here12.

A new series of ‘video briefings’ is also being introduced, with EPRS policy analysts presenting policy issues - such as the operation of nuclear weapons or the circular economy - to camera. EPRS video briefings to date can be accessed here13.

In return for 60 staff (or vacant posts) made available to the Members’ Research Service under the Parliament’s resource-sharing agreements with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and European Committee of the Regions (CoR) of February 2014, the Members’ Research Service delivers targeted research work for members of the two Advisory Committees. Around 200 such pieces of work were generated between 2015 and 2018, as foreseen in those agreements. In addition, EPRS routinely notifies the advisory committees of relevant publications in advance of their plenary sessions and other events.

In undertaking all its work, the Members’ Research Service works very closely not only with the two other directorates within EPRS, but with other services within the Parliament’s administration. For example, joint publications, events and/or training sessions have been undertaken with the Directorates General for Internal Policies (IPOL), External Policies (EXPO), Presidency (PRES) and Communication (COMM) during the period in question.

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13 [https://www.youtube.com/c/EuropeanParliamentaryResearchService](https://www.youtube.com/c/EuropeanParliamentaryResearchService)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPRS KEY STATISTICS 2014-2018</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>16 598</strong> replies to confidential research requests (14125 from MEPs)</td>
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<td><strong>10 702</strong> participants attending 169 events in the Library Reading Room</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>93 %</strong> of MEPs made research requests (697)</td>
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<td><strong>262 000</strong> replies to citizens’ enquiries</td>
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<td><strong>EPRS KEY STATISTICS 2018</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3,037</strong> replies to confidential research requests (2,695 from MEPs)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>17,728</strong> reference requests to the Library</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1,077</strong> EPRS publications, including 264 online-only publications</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30,724</strong> books and e-book lent by the Library</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3,913</strong> participants attending 60 events in the Library Reading Room</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.25 million</strong> page-views on the internet</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>18,494</strong> copies of EPRS publications made available at 184 events</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>0.94 million</strong> page-views on the EP’s intranet</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>67%</strong> of MEPs made research requests (506)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>29</strong> visits from national parliamentary research services to EPRS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>33%</strong> of MEPs interacting with EPRS on social media (250)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>96%</strong> of MEPs using EPRS products and services in 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30,373</strong> replies to citizens’ enquiries</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30%</strong> MEPs visited for briefings (226)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30</strong> presentations of findings to parliamentary committees</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30%</strong> of MEPs’ offices attended info-sessions (229)</td>
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The most visible role of Directorate B of DG EPRS, the **Directorate for the Library**, is to operate the Library Reading Rooms in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg, housing the European Parliament’s physical collections, which it acquires and manages. Such a classic library function has existed within the Parliament since 1953. However, today, the Library also provides digital and online access for Members and staff to a very wide and growing range of knowledge sources, including many subscription-based journals, databases, and news and other information sources.

In parallel, the Library Directorate manages and provides access to the Parliament’s ever-expanding Historical Archives and it answers a very large number of citizens’ enquiries. Until November 2016, it also dealt with public access to parliamentary documents and other transparency issues. A specialist unit dealing with comparative law was created in September 2015. The Directorate for the Library is currently organised in four units.

**On-site and Online Library Services**

The **On-site and Online Library Services Unit (LIBS)** operates the Library Reading Rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg, and provides physical and online access for Members and staff to around 90,000 books and 95,000 e-books, as well as nearly 32,000 journals, databases, and news and information sources, whilst also providing training in the use of such sources.

The purpose of locating library services within DG EPRS is to bring them closer to the analytical and research work now undertaken by the directorate-general as a whole, and to realise certain synergies with the Members’ Research Service in particular. Although fewer staff now work in the core library function than before - 28 today, compared with 75 in 2013 - its output has risen in both relative and absolute terms over the last five years. (The majority of the library staff moved over to the new Members’ Research Service, where they are now responding to research requests from Members and generating general publications for the Parliament as a whole).

There has been consistently **very active use of library services** by the parliamentary community throughout the years 2014-18, witnessed in the high number of reference requests and use of databases, as shown in the statistics below. This has been matched by increasing use of the Library Reading Room as a centre for discussion - hosting a high number of EPRS policy roundtables and book launches - as well as intensified training of staff in use of information sources.

Continuous efforts are being made to provide Members and staff with easier access to a
wide span of state-of-the-art digital reference materials chosen to meet the needs of the parliamentary community. EPRS is pursuing a new ‘Open Digital Library’ concept, endorsed by the Parliament’s Bureau in April 2017, in order to upgrade and develop the Library’s digital capabilities and make its services more easily accessible to clients, at all times, on a wide range of devices and outside the EP premises.

The EPRS intranet site has long provided Members and EP staff with access to over 90 digital subscriptions, notably to European and national news services (such as Agence Europe, AFP, DPA, Reuters and Financial Times) and databases and other information and research tools (such as Factiva, Nexis and Oxford Analytica). This is in addition to over 300 physical subscriptions to newspapers, magazines, journals and yearbooks.

These services have recently been complemented by collective subscriptions by the Library to innovative applications that offer everyone in the parliamentary community direct access to newspapers and journals on their personal mobile devices. The new ‘PressReader’ App gives such access to over 7,000 newspapers and magazines from around the world, whilst the parallel ‘BrowZine’ App allows clients to read articles from an ever-broadening range of academic journals (currently also over 7,000 in number).

- The Library responded to 96,193 reference requests (and other comparable requests) from parliamentary clients over the five years 2014-18 (17,728 in 2018).

- A total of 4,900 parliamentary clients used electronic newswires, news agencies and external databases in 2014, rising to 5,100 in 2018. These EPRS services received almost 187 million hits in the five years 2014-18.

- A total of 79,750 books and e-books were borrowed from the Library during the five-year period in question. The number rose from 9,500 in 2014 to 30,724 in 2018 (12,639 print books and 18,085 e-books). The number of e-books available for loan increased from 2,000 in 2014 to 95,969 in 2018.

- In July 2014, the Library opened a small new Members’ Reading Room14 on the ground floor of the Altiero Spinelli Building, connected to the Astrid Lulling lounge, to complement the existing reading rooms in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg. In September 2017, the reading room in Strasbourg moved to a more visible location in the Winston Churchill Building, where it provides a range of newspapers, magazines and EP publications.

- The provision of training support to Members, their offices and wider parliamentary staff, notably in the use of databases and other information sources, has been actively developed over the last four years. A total of over 4,200 individuals (765 in 2018) participated in over 720 training sessions during the period 2014-18. By December 2018, staff from 430 Members’ offices had attended info-sessions of this kind in the Library.

Since 2014, the Library Reading Room and other Library facilities in Brussels have been

used much more actively for the holding of seminars and roundtables on policy issues, as well as for book launches and other events. The 169 events held by EPRS between January 2014 and December 2018 attracted over 10,700 participants. They included joint discussions, open to all Members and staff, with partner organisations, such as the European University Institute (EUI), EUISS, OECD, IMF and World Bank, as well as briefing sessions and exchange of best practice with other parliamentary research services and libraries in EU member states and worldwide.

Topics covered at EPRS events in the Library Reading Room so far have included demographic change, global trends, the international economy, economic governance, regional conflicts, security and defence, migration, education, better law-making, budgetary politics, institutional change, democracy-financing, and European and US elections. Members of the European Parliament have spoken on 117 occasions at these EPRS events.

The Library Reading Room also served as the setting for 90 events organised by individual Members of the European Parliament themselves during the five years in question (21 in 2018).

The Library’s online project, ‘100 Books on Europe to Remember’, was successfully launched in 2014, helping to ensure that texts important in the shaping or understanding of post-war European integration are readily available and not forgotten. In addition to a summary of each book and biographical details of its author(s), access is given to the full text of the book, where possible. A major event, involving the then President of the Parliament and several living authors, was organised in the Library Reading Room in Brussels in March 2015, whilst an exhibition of the 100 Books was held in Strasbourg in October 2016, organised by the Historical Library. Since 2017, the ‘100 Books’ have been on physical display in the Brussels Library Reading Room, alongside a parallel display of books written by current and former MEPs.

**Comparative Law Library**

During the years 2014-18, increasing emphasis has been placed on the improved presentation and accessibility of library material generally, with particular attention to strengthening capacity in the field of comparative law, an area of special interest to a supranational legislature. Reflecting this, a small Comparative Law Library Unit (COLL) was created in September 2015, to serve as a centre of knowledge and expertise for the Parliament on the law of the European Union, its member states and comparable democratic jurisdictions internationally.

The unit is responsible for building up and maintaining an extensive reference collection of legislation, case law and legal doctrine, as well as engaging in research and analysis in the field of comparative law. The unit hosts a major annual conference in the Library Reading Room and publishes studies on different comparative law subjects, starting with issues concerning constitutional courts. Close cooperation has been established with the Parliament’s Legal Service and relevant external partners, notably the Academy of European Law (ERA) in Trier and the US Law Library of Congress, for this purpose.
Historical Archives

The Historical Archives Unit (ARCH), based in Luxembourg, manages and preserves the Parliament’s official public documents and other archival material dating back to 1952 and now running to around five million items. It assists researchers on the history of the Parliament and European integration, and publishes historical studies based on the archives. It works closely with the EU Historical Archives and the new Alcide de Gasperi Centre for the History of European Integration at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, in promoting the use of the Parliament’s archives and study of its history as an institution. The unit also manages the Historical Library in Luxembourg.

During the years 2014-18, the Historical Archives processed over 100 GB of electronic files and 1,830 linear meters of paper files, whilst also digitising over 145,000 audio tapes. In parallel, some 660 linear metres were prepared for, and transferred to, the EU Historical Archives. The unit also answered some 3,200 individual requests for historical documents and other information, supplying over 28,000 documents.

In 2018, the unit processed 60 GB of electronic files and 387 linear meters of paper files, and digitised 45,500 audio tapes. Some 88 linear meters of paper files were organised and transferred to the Historical Archives of the European Union. The unit answered 558 requests for documents, supplying in response 3,588 documents and 186 GB of files. The Historical Library continued the development of collections of historical books about the European Union and European Parliament. In addition to the building of a collection of rare and precious books, the Historical Library also started a Sakharov Collection of books written by winners of the Parliament’s human rights’ prize.

The Historical Archives welcome submission of the papers of individual Members of the European Parliament, past and present, and since the creation of EPRS there has been a more active effort to seek to secure such papers as an important component of the history of the institution. During the years 2014-18, it received papers from 16 current or former Members for archiving.

Since 2014, the Historical Archives have also systematised their publications into two series - the European Parliament History Series15 and the European Union History Series16 - with greater emphasis on issues of continuing political interest. In the five years 2014-18, the unit published ten studies - including two volumes on the history of the budgetary powers of the Parliament and a study on the history of the common electoral system and the 1976 European Elections Act - as well as 48 blog posts, 24 articles and eight briefings.

The unit is now working on a major, multi-part history of the European Parliament. This project involves researching and publishing an analysis of the role of the Parliament as a political institution, starting with the period since the first direct elections in June 1979. An initial set of three studies on the EP during its first two elected parliamentary terms (1979-89) is being published in 2018-19, tracing and analysing the character, composition and culture of the directly-elected Parliament; the Parliament’s role in the institutional and

constitutional development of the (then) Communities; and its specific contribution to the completion of the European single market.

The unit also organises exhibitions to mark anniversaries and other important occasions. During the period 2014-18, exhibitions were held on Altiero Spinelli, Emilio Colombo, the Sakharov Prize, successive European election campaigns, the EP in Luxembourg, the history of the ACP and the Development Committee, and the ‘100 Books on Europe to Remember’ project. In 2017, the unit put a travelling exhibition - ‘Ever Closer Union: The Legacy of the Rome Treaties’ - on display in the Parliament’s premises in both Brussels and Strasbourg, to mark the 60th anniversary of the signing of those treaties.

In parallel, round-table discussions, involving authors and historical experts, were held on 25 years of democratic change in Central and Eastern Europe, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the development of a common European electoral system since 1976, the Parliament’s first hemicycle in Luxembourg, and early forms of European cooperation. In 2017, the unit organised an EP History Roundtable which looked at the character and culture of the first two directly-elected European Parliaments (1979-89) and the role they played in the institutional and policy development of the (then) Communities. In 2018, six events were organised, including round-table discussions on the Lisbon Treaty and the development of the role of the ECSC Common Assembly (1952-1958) in the establishment of a common market for coal and steel in Europe.

Continued efforts are being made to mainstream the Historical Archives more actively in the daily life of the Parliament, based on easier online access to documents and their use to provide a more systematic history of the institutional development of the Parliament over time. A programme of gathering ‘oral histories’ from former Members began in November 2017 and is on-going.

A new website for the Historical Archives came online in 2015, backed by a new intranet site with useful information and practical advice for Members and staff in the same year. A multi-annual project to digitise the Parliament’s archives is being undertaken, in an attempt, over time, to make the Parliament’s archives since 1952 the most easily accessible of those of any EU institution.

The annual reports of the Parliament’s Historical Archives provide a detailed account of their activities over the years since 2014, and can be found here. The annual report of the Historical Archives for 2018 will follow.

Citizens’ enquiries

The Citizens’ Enquiries Unit (AskEP), also based in Luxembourg, answers information requests from members of the general public addressed to the institution or its President on both the Parliament and EU issues more widely.

The 2014-19 Parliament has witnessed a significant increase in the volume of requests.

from the general public, mainly as a result of seemingly coordinated ‘write-in’ campaigns on topical issues. As a matter of course, the unit replies to correspondence in the official language in which the citizen has sent their letter or email.

In 2018, the unit treated over **8,900 individual enquiries** and about **21,500 campaign enquiries**. By comparison, in 2014, the unit received over 8,000 individual letters or emails from members of the public, and 2,500 enquiries as part of organised campaigns. Over the five-year period, there was a total of **45,100 individual enquiries** and **217,300 campaign enquiries**, with the latter figure peaking in 2016.

In 2018, 42 per cent of citizens’ individual enquiries related to aspects of internal policy, 28 per cent to institutional matters, six per cent to external issues, and 24 per cent to other questions. Forty per cent of such enquiries were treated by the unit within three days and 68 per cent within ten days.

In parallel, intensive efforts have been made to promote **greater diffusion and use** of the work of the Citizens’ Enquiries Unit within the Parliament itself. Since May 2015, the unit has been making available ‘model answers’ for Members (and their staff) on the **EPRS intranet**¹⁹, in order to facilitate MEPs’ written communication with constituents and other citizens. Currently, around 164 such replies are available, covering a wide range of issues, and they have been used by over 350 Members or their offices so far.

A total of 80 publicly-available **‘EP answers’** to frequently asked questions is available on the **Parliament’s website**²⁰ and on the **EPRS blog**²¹.

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¹⁹ https://askepnet.in.ep.europa.eu/modans/
²¹ https://epthinktank.eu/category/blog/ep-answers/
The third directorate within EPRS, Directorate C, the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value, works to strengthen the European Parliament’s capacity to exercise effective scrutiny and oversight over the executive at EU level, at successive stages of the legislative and policy cycles, as well as contributing to the quality of law-making itself. It does this by providing timely and targeted support to parliamentary committees in their work in these fields, including by supporting the identification, quantification and justification of parliamentary initiatives. The directorate works very closely with the Directorates-General for Internal Policies (IPOL) and External Policies (EXPO) within the parliament’s administration for this purpose.

The Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value is organised in six units dealing with various aspects of ex-ante or ex-post evaluation of EU legislation and policies as well as undertaking foresight work, whether in the fields of science and technology or wider global trends.

- Over the five-year period from January 2014 to December 2018, the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value produced 660 publications of various kinds (69 in 2014; 106 in 2015; 144 in 2016; 154 in 2017; and 187 in 2018). Work was undertaken at the request of 20 parliamentary committees, with findings presented orally in full committee or to coordinators on over 90 occasions.

The increasingly high priority attached to the involvement of the Parliament throughout the legislative and policy cycles and to enhanced scrutiny and oversight of the executive have been reflected in a general strengthening of support to parliamentary committees (and the institution as a whole) through the services of the directorate. Existing work in the fields of impact assessment and European added value is being further developed, so that committees are better placed to analyse legislative options available to the EU institutions, on an ex-ante basis, and to review outcomes on the part of those institutions, on an ex-post basis.

**Ex-ante evaluation**

The European Added Value Unit (EAVA) analyses the potential benefit of future action by the European Union through Cost of Non-Europe Reports in policy areas where greater efficiency or a collective public good could be realised through common action at European level; it provides European Added Value Assessments to underpin legislative initiative reports put forward by parliamentary committees; and it seeks to identify and evaluate the added value of existing EU policies in practice.
• In 2014, the European Added Value Unit produced four Cost of Non-Europe Reports and four other publications. Among topics covered were five sectoral dimensions of the EU single market, as well as transport and tourism.

• In 2015, the unit produced four Cost of Non-Europe Reports - which were on water legislation, volunteering, passenger rights and Banking Union - and two European Added Value Assessments - on EP electoral law and corporate tax policies in the EU.

• In 2016, the unit produced seven Cost of Non-Europe Reports - on various aspects of Schengen, the single market, the European Research Area, Banking Union, organised crime and corruption, and the sharing economy - as well as five European Added Value Assessments, which were on an EU mechanism for the rule and law and fundamental rights, cross-border recognition of adoptions, protection of vulnerable adults, limitation periods for traffic accidents, and the coordination of corporate tax policies in the EU.

• In 2017, the unit produced two Cost of Non-Europe Reports - on trade barriers and procedural rights and detention conditions in the criminal justice system - and two European Added Value Assessments - on cross-border restitution of works of art and cultural goods, and a statute for social- and solidarity-based enterprises. In parallel, eight ‘European Added Value in Action’ briefings were produced, covering a broad range of topics from roaming charges to air pollution.

• In 2018, the unit produced three Cost of Non-Europe Reports - on equality and the fight against racism and xenophobia, on the fight against terrorism, and on asylum policy - and six European Added Value Assessments - on odometer manipulation in motor vehicles, liability rules and insurance for connected and autonomous vehicles, a pan-European pension product, the European Citizens’ Initiative, humanitarian visas, and expedited settlement of commercial disputes. In parallel, seven ‘European Added Value in Action’ briefings were produced, covering a broad range of topics, from free movement of goods, capital and people, to EU cohesion policy and the fight against climate change. The unit also produced four other publications, covering the retrofitting of smart tachographs, EU administrative law, shell companies, and citizenship by investment (CBI) and residency by investment (RBI) schemes.

• During the five-year period in question, work was undertaken by the European Added Value Unit for twelve parliamentary committees: the Employment and Social Affairs Committee; the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee; the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee; the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee; the Constitutional Affairs Committee; the Culture and Education Committee; the Transport and Tourism Committee; the Legal Affairs Committee; the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs; the Committee on International Trade; the Industry, Research and Energy Committee; and the Special Committee on Financial Crimes, Tax Evasion and Tax Avoidance.

The work undertaken by the European Added Value Unit between 2012 and 2014, before the last European elections, in identifying the potential added value of new EU-level initiatives and on the cost of non-Europe in various sectors was brought together in a
major horizontal publication, entitled *Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe, 2014-19*.22

The first edition of this text, published in March 2014, suggested that the cumulative potential GDP gain of EP-supported policy initiatives, over a ten-year period, could be in the region of 800 billion euro. Subsequent editions - published in July 2014, April 2015 and December 2017, drawing on continuing EPRS research and other new sources - progressively raised this figure up to 1,750 billion euro. The number of policy areas covered widened from 25 to 34 over the four editions. The ‘Mapping’ exercise attracted substantial positive attention in media, academic and policy-making circles, over its successive editions, and proved especially valuable in the run-up to the 2014 European Parliament elections, in the discussion about future priorities for the in-coming European Commission.

A similar analysis has been undertaken in advance of the 2019 European elections. The resulting text, Europe’s two trillion euro dividend: *Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe, 2019-2024*, continues this process, now covering 50 policy areas, and bringing the total potential GDP gain to approximately 2.2 trillion euro.

The Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit (IMPA) analyses the quality of impact assessments (IAs) produced by the European Commission - in the form of *Initial Appraisals* of these documents, which are routinely supplied to parliamentary committees in advance of their consideration of new legislative proposals - and it then offers the committees a range of follow-up services, including more detailed appraisals of Commission impact assessments, substitute or complementary impact assessments, and impact assessments on parliamentary amendments.

- In 2014, the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit produced 31 *Initial Appraisals* of Commission impact assessments, two detailed appraisals, three substitute or complementary impact assessments, and one impact assessment on amendments. In 2015, the unit produced 13 *Initial Appraisals* and one impact assessment on four amendments. In 2016, the unit produced 36 *Initial Appraisals* and one impact assessment on seven amendments. In 2017, the unit produced 42 *Initial Appraisals*, two impact assessments on 10 amendments, and one substitute impact assessment. In 2018, the Unit produced 64 *Initial Appraisals*, one detailed appraisal and one ad hoc impact assessment.

- Compendia of all *Initial Appraisals* carried out since such work started - from July 2013 to June 2014, from July 2014 to December 2015, from January to December 2016, from January to December 2017, and from January to December 2018 - are available online.

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Work was undertaken by the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit for the following **sixteen parliamentary committees**: the Foreign Affairs Committee; International Trade Committee; the Industry, Research and Energy Committee; the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee; the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee; the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee; the Employment and Social Affairs Committee; the Fisheries Committee; the Legal Affairs Committee; the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs; the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee; the Transport and Tourism Committee; the Culture and Education Committee; the Budgets Committee; the Development Committee; and the Regional Development Committee.

Among **topics covered** were the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), novel foods, air quality, equal treatment, consumer product safety, money market funds, waste management, aviation strategy, capital markets union, European criminal records, energy union, capital requirements and banking reform package, digital single market, mobility package, social security coordination, legal aid, sales of goods, data protection, EU public administration, and protection of workers from exposure to carcinogens or mutagens.

**Ex-post evaluation**

EPRS support to parliamentary committees in the field of **ex-post evaluation** is provided by the **Ex-Post Evaluation Unit (EVAL)**, whose work has greatly strengthened and deepened the practical capacity of the Parliament to analyse implementation issues, by providing important new products and services to committees. Launched in 2014, these include short **Implementation Appraisals**, longer **European Implementation Assessments**, and a series of horizontal ‘rolling check-lists’ of various kinds.

The unit provides, inter alia, the following products and services:

- A **central information and support service** on all work being done by the European Parliament, European Commission and other bodies on the implementation and effectiveness of EU law and policies in practice, and on all those phases of the EU policy cycle downstream of the adoption of EU law;

- Horizontal ‘**rolling check-lists**’ to provide key reference material, in easily accessible form, to assist parliamentary committees in deciding what type of scrutiny of the European Commission to engage in, and when and how best to undertake it. Such check-lists, often running to several hundreds of pages, are currently produced on review clauses in EU legislation and international agreements, on evaluation work undertaken by the Commission, on requests made by the European Parliament to the Commission, and on the special reports of the European Court of Auditors. From July 2014 to December 2018, 17 rolling check-lists were produced by the unit (three in 2018);

- Short (four- to twelve-page) **Implementation Appraisals** of the operation of existing EU legislation in practice, whenever a new proposal to update such legislation is foreseen in the Commission’s Annual Work Programme. These appraisals are delivered to the
relevant parliamentary committee in advance of the latter’s consideration of the new proposal in question. From July 2014 to December 2018, 91 Implementation Appraisals were produced for 15 parliamentary committees (15 in 2018);

- Much longer and more detailed European Implementation Assessments on how specific existing EU laws or policies operate in practice, drafted each time a parliamentary committee decides to undertake an own-initiative Implementation Report on an existing EU policy or law, providing a detailed analysis of the experience to date. From July 2014 to December 2018, 46 European Implementation Assessments were produced for 12 parliamentary committees (15 in 2018); and

- Any other analyses or studies on implementation issues as required, among which there were 16 other ex-post evaluations (six in 2018) and 14 Implementation in Action briefings (five in 2018).

**European Council oversight**

The European Council Oversight Unit (ECOS) monitors and analyses the delivery of the European Council (of EU Heads of state or government), in respect of the commitments made in the conclusions of its summit meetings, as well as of its various responsibilities either in law or on the basis of intergovernmental agreements.

The unit maintains and publishes a Rolling Check-List of European Council Conclusions (or policy pronouncements) by subject area, tracing their evolution since 2010 and assessing their degree of implementation. This check-list is updated four times a year, and is now in its fourteenth edition.

The unit also provides briefing notes in advance of, and following, each European Council meeting, providing respectively an analysis of the outlook for, and the outcome of, these regular summit discussions. In addition to such routine briefings, the unit also analyses the operation of the European Council as a political institution and assesses its activities in a wide range of specific policy areas.

From July 2014, when it became operational, to December 2018, the European Council Oversight Unit produced 109 publications of various kinds, 25 of which were published in 2018. It also held a series of seminars on the operation of the European Council - for example, on the European Council and crisis management, on the European Council and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), on the role of the Heads of State or Government in shaping the future of Europe, on agenda-setting at EU summits, and on ‘What makes it to the European Council agenda and why?’.

**Foresight**

The Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA) undertakes science and technology options assessment and analyses emerging policy issues and trends in these fields. It undertakes a broad range of forward-looking studies, workshops and other activities, at the request of the EP Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) of 25 Members of the European Parliament, nominated by nine parliamentary committees, and it provides the
secretariat of the latter body. In 2014, the in-coming STOA Panel endorsed a ‘STOA strategy for the future’, calling notably for the work and output of the STOA process, backed by greater in-house research, to focus more on issues related to scientific foresight, operate through somewhat shorter projects, and be made more widely available than in the past, throughout the 2014-19 parliamentary term.

The Scientific Foresight Unit produced a total of 94 publications in the five years from January 2014 to December 2018 - nine publications in 2014, 18 in 2015, 10 in 2016, 24 in 2017, and 33 in 2018. These can all be found on a clickable PDF list29 or on the dedicated STOA website30.

Among the topics covered in major research projects so far undertaken and/or managed by the unit since 2014 have been e-democracy, 3D-printing, assistive technologies, waste management, should we fear AI, understanding algorithms, the ethics of robotics, the collaborative economy, precision agriculture, learning and teaching technologies, and mass surveillance. In parallel, a new series of shorter publications on the policy implications of technological change - such as ‘What if your shopping were delivered by drones?’, ‘What if the energy grid needed cars?’, ‘What if technology helped society become more inclusive?’ or ‘What if we could design better technologies through dialogue?’ - has broken new ground and proved highly popular.

The unit also organised 62 STOA events in 2014-18, attracting over 6,000 participants. (These are in addition to the EPRS-wide events referred to earlier in this report). Among them have been five highly successful STOA annual lectures with leading international scientists and other experts. Since 2014, the popular MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme has brought together 78 Members and 78 scientists to exchange views and experience, and build closer links between the worlds of academia and public policy.

A new European Science-Media Hub (ESMH) - was established by the budgetary authority in 2018, with its administration assigned to EPRS, operating under the political responsibility of the STOA Panel, and with the objective of fostering a more effective dialogue between MEPs, the scientific community and journalists. The ESMH became operational in 2018 and started promoting discussion, networking, training and exchange of information in relation to new scientific or technological developments.

The Scientific Foresight Unit launched ESMH activities in 2018 by setting up a small administrative team, developing relevant products (website and press review), engaging external actors (with media and technology tools) and generally bringing stakeholders together (with a kick-off event, journalist training and a seminar on disinformation in elections).

The STOA panel held the rotating presidency of the European Parliamentary Technology Assessment (EPTA) network of similar parliamentary bodies from across Europe in 2018. As such, it hosted the annual EPTA Directors’ meeting in the spring, in parallel to a major event bringing together MEPs and European Research Council (ERC) grantees, as well as the

annual EPTA Conference in December, followed the same day by the STOA annual lecture.

The STOA annual reports for the years 2014 to 2018, reviewing the activities of the EP Panel for the Future of Science and Technology and the research carried out by the Scientific Foresight Unit, are available here31.

Finally, a Global Trends Unit (TREN) seeks to identify, track and analyse medium- and long-term global trends - especially changes in the international economic, social and political environments - which may affect the European Union in the years to come. It keeps Members informed about such trends and their potential policy implications, by publishing briefings and organising seminars. These publications include a regular Global Trendometer32, which analyses changes of potential importance to the Union.

The unit also supports the Parliament’s participation in the administrative-level dialogue with other EU institutions on global trends - known as ESPAS (European Strategy and Policy Analysis System) - and facilitates contact more widely with outside organisations, notably think tanks and universities, working in the foresight field. Each autumn, the unit co-organises - together with the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), the in-house think tank of the European Commission - the annual ESPAS conference. The cycle of four ESPAS conferences in 2015-2018 focused on global trends to 2030, in preparation for the five-yearly ESPAS Global Trends Report published in spring 201932.

The five activity reports for EP work in the fields of Impact Assessment and European Added Value covering the period in question are available online - for June 2012 to June 201433, July 2014 to December 201534, January to December 201635, January to December 201736, and January to December 201837.

A clickable PDF list of all publications of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value from January 2014 to December 2018 is available here38.

All such physical publications can be found on the Parliament’s Think Tank internet website, at www.europarl.eu/thinktank, as well as on the EPRS intranet website at www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu, on the EPRS blog at www.epthinktank.eu, and on the new EPRS App, available at Google Play and the App Store. Online-only publications are available on the EPRS intranet and blog.

32 https://espas.secure.europarl.europa.eu/orbis/node/1362
The development of a series of cross-cutting EPRS-wide services played an important part in the successful launch of the new directorate-general in November 2013, and it helps account for the rapid build-up of its services over the last five years. These cross cutting services include notably the:

- provision of a Members’ Hotline to give all Members and their staff rapid access to all relevant EPRS products and services;
- pursuit of a conscious ‘client needs’ approach to all the activities undertaken by EPRS, underpinned by a dedicated team at the centre of the organisation; and
- progressive widening and deepening of the EPRS presence on various electronic platforms.

Members’ Hotline

A new Members’ Hotline was established immediately on the creation of EPRS, to provide a single point-of-entry for all Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and their staff to the products and services of both the Members’ Research Service and the Library.

The Members’ Hotline operates online, through the EPRS intranet site - where there is an online enquiry form39 - and an email address for enquiries - eprs@europarl.europa.eu; by telephone, on EP internal extension number 88100 and on 00 322 284 8100 from outside the Parliament; in person, at the information desks in the Library reading rooms; and by fax, on EP extension 44990. The aim is to provide an initial response to all enquiries within three hours.

To underpin the Members’ Hotline concept, the EPRS has significantly strengthened its internal enquiry management system (EMS), to allow a better and quicker treatment of the requests submitted by Members and their staff. On-going comparative analysis is undertaken of the operation of such enquiry management systems in all major parliamentary research services and libraries worldwide, in order to import new, state-of-the-art features into the Parliament’s own system, as they become available.

Client needs

The developing breadth, depth and availability of EPRS services have been drawn

actively to the attention of Members. At the beginning of the new parliamentary term, a ‘welcome desk’ and a personalised welcome pack facilitated this process. In parallel, a small, dedicated Client Needs Team was established, on a permanent basis, to increase knowledge of EPRS products and services among Members and their staff. It explains in detail the various kinds of support which the EPRS can offer to potential clients through briefing visits or presentations of various kinds, provided individually or in groups.

Between June 2014 and December 2018, 681 Members or their offices (91 per cent) received briefing visits or presentations on an individual or collective basis about EPRS products and services. Most recently, 229 Members or their offices (30 per cent) received such briefing in the course of 2018.

By the end of 2018, over 748 Members (99 per cent) were pro-actively accessing sources available on the EPRS intranet, including newswires and other topical material, whilst 234 Members or their offices (some 31 per cent) were subscribing to automatic alerts on new EPRS publications, as soon as they are published. Guidance on how to set-up alerts on EPRS publications is available here.

The Client Needs Team has also ensured the distribution of over 70,000 relevant EPRS publications at over 680 parliamentary meetings of various kinds, notably hearings, conferences, seminars and debates organised by EP bodies, individual Members and/or political groups. Some 20,000 publications were distributed at 190 such meetings in 2018. At some of these events, EPRS policy analysts have also been invited to present their papers in the discussion.

Electronic presence

The availability of EPRS products has been enhanced by a significant improvement in both intranet and internet capabilities, and the directorate-general is now rolling out a range of services for mobile use and multi-media communication, and is increasing the targeted diffusion of EPRS output through social media.

Use of the EPRS intranet site

- A new EPRS intranet site, incorporating a range of new or enhanced features, was launched in May 2014. During the period to December 2018, it received some 7.3 million page views.

- The great majority of the ‘Europarl’ community uses the EPRS intranet at some point in the year. There was an average of around 9,000 unique users of the EPRS intranet, in each of the five years 2014 to 2018, with over 2,300 using it in an average month.

- 100 per cent of Members or their staff pro-actively accessed EPRS material or sources on the Parliament’s intranet during the five years from January 2014 to December 2018.

- Overall, the EPRS intranet site elicited over 1.3 million ‘page views’ in 2014, 1.8 million

page views in 2015, 1.6 million page views in 2016, 1.6 million page views in 2016, 1.6 million page views in 2017, and 948,000 page views in 2018. The decline in use in 2018 appears to be a result of the growing popularity of the new, parallel EPRS App, as well as a more frequent consultation of EPRS publications and services on the internet pages of the European Parliament (see below).

- The various EPRS electronic platforms carried a total of 569 (new) publications in 2014 - 306 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 263 online only. The figures for 2015 were 995 (new) publications, 705 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 290 online only. The figures for 2016 were 1,154 (new) publications, 906 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 248 online only. The figures for 2017 were 1,057 (new) publications, 843 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 214 online only. The figures for 2018 were 1,077 (new) publications, 813 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 264 online only.

- In total, EPRS thus produced over 4,800 publications during the five years in question, over 3,500 of which were available in both physical and digital form, and over 1,200 online only.

- New Graphics and Map Warehouses were created on the EPRS intranet site and on the EPRS blog, in order to make the (so far) nearly 1,500 downloadable charts, tables, maps and other infographics used in EPRS publications more easily available for use by Members and staff in their own publications.

Use of the EP ‘Think Tank’ internet site and EPRS blog

- The Parliament’s updated internet site for the public came on stream in August 2014: coordinated by the EPRS and known as ‘Think Tank’, it features all EPRS publications, as well as other relevant EP publications. In the last four months of 2014, it registered a total 150,600 page views (or an average of 37,600 per month), with a total of 65,300 visitors. In 2015, the Think Tank elicited over 600,000 page views (or an average of 50,000 per month), reaching a total of 235,000 visitors. The comparable figures for 2016 were 873,000 page views (or an average of 72,750 per month), reaching a total of 325,955 visitors. The figures for 2017 were 1,146,000 page views (or an average of 95,500 per month), reaching a total of over 1,027,000 visitors. The figures for 2018 were 1,600,000 page views (or an average of 133,000 per month), reaching a total of over 1,199,000 visitors.

- In addition, some 250,000 users visited the EPRS blog during 2014. The latter published more than 500 posts, receiving some 550,000 page views. In 2015, the respective figures were 370,000 unique users, 470 posts and 750,000 page views. In 2016, the respective figures were 330,000 users, 509 posts and 660,000 page views. The numbers for 2017 were 295,000 unique users, 514 posts and 609,000 page views. The numbers for 2018 were 329,000 unique users, 477 posts and 664,000 page views. One linked set of publications by the Members’ Research Service - on the Hearings of the Commissioners-designate - was viewed 125,000 times in autumn 2014.
• EPRS is also increasingly present on social media, where its LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest accounts elicit growing interest. For instance, followers of EPRS on Twitter rose from 2,000 in January 2014 to nearly 21,500, including over 250 MEPs, by December 2018. The EPRS’ page on YouTube offers podcasts, videos of selected EPRS events, and video presentations of certain publications. By December 2018, 382 Members had so far have used EPRS material in their social media communications.

All EPRS’s physical publications can be found on the Parliament’s Think Tank internet website, at www.europarl.eu/thinktank, as well as on the EPRS intranet website at www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu, on the EPRS blog at www.epthinktank.eu, and on the new EPRS App, available at Google Play and the App Store. Online-only publications are available on the EPRS intranet and blog.

*Horizontal support - Resources, Strategy and Coordination*

The provision of these EPRS-wide services - and indeed of all the activities of the three directorates detailed above - were underpinned by the contribution of two horizontal units, respectively for resources, and for strategy and coordination, throughout the period 2014-18.

The Resources Unit (RESU) is responsible for the efficient management of the directorate-general’s human, financial and information-technology resources, with three services reflecting each of those activities. The unit is also in charge of local property management and security issues. It works very closely with other directorates-general within the Parliament’s administration on a wide range of issues, including on joint training projects. (The Resources Unit was upgraded into a directorate by decision of the Parliament’s Bureau in April 2019, to establish consistency in the handling of resource issues across the administration).

The Resources Unit successfully undertook the recruitment of new staff throughout the four years in question. The number of staff within the directorate-general rose from 214 persons (on its creation) in November 2013 to 327 persons in December 2015, and has remained broadly stable since. In December 2018, EPRS had 314 staff.

The rapid increase in staff during the first two years of the directorate-general’s existence was mainly a result of: (i) the cooperation agreements signed between the European Parliament and the two Advisory Committees in February 2014 (see above), whereby 60 of the latter’s staff (or posts) were transferred to EPRS; and (ii) and the recruitment of 40 contractual researchers through an open competition, following a reallocation of internal EP spending priorities by the budgetary authority. These changes were achieved in a budgetarily neutral way for the Parliament.

The Resources Unit has also ensured the harmonisation of procurement and financial procedures across the new directorate-general, with a focus on securing optimal value for money. The team verified a total of almost 4,400 files (from operational units) in the five years under consideration.
Efficient financial management has been facilitated by the fact that, starting in 2015, much of the budgetary allocation for the directorate-general was regrouped, for sake of clarity, into a single line in the European Parliament’s annual budget (line 3210). On a like-for-like basis, the total budget assigned to the DG EPRS on various lines was €9.03 million in 2014, €9.28 million in 2015, €9.0 million in 2016, €8.5 million in 2017, and €9.3 million in 2018.

DG EPRS essentially undertakes two distinct types of spending. The first category relates to the purchase of general library services, subscriptions, databases, and archival support of various kinds, as well as information technology (IT) support for the whole directorate-general - this amounted to €6.37 million in 2018, or 68 per cent of the total EPRS budget of €9.3 million. The second category relates mainly to the purchase, where necessary, of externally-commissioned research or expertise, notably in the fields of ex-ante impact assessment, ex-post evaluation, European added value, and science and technology options assessment. It also covers the holding of seminars and cooperation with partner organisations, and the purchase of services to improve the technical quality of EPRS publications and other output. Since 2018, the latter category includes the operation of the new European Science-Media Hub. This second category amounted to €3.0 million in 2018, or 32 per cent of the total EPRS budget of €9.3 million.

The Strategy and Coordination Unit (SACU) coordinates the overall provision of EPRS services to Members, including through the central Members’ Hotline and Client Needs Team. It communicates the directorate-general’s activities to internal and external audiences, including by coordinating the EPRS intranet and blog, and the Parliament’s Think Tank internet web-pages.

The unit oversees outreach, liaison and dialogue by all parts of the directorate-general with national parliamentary research services and libraries. From 2015 to 2018, there were 118 visits to, or from, such services of national parliaments, including the German Bundestag, British House of Commons, French and Italian Senates, Belgian and Dutch Houses of Representatives, Hungarian National Assembly, Danish Folketing, Estonian Riigikogu, Latvian Saeima, and Greek Vouli ton Ellinon. There were also visits from the US Congressional Research Service (CRS), Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and Government Accountability Office (GAO), and the parliaments of Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Georgia, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Moldova, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Korea and Ukraine, as well as the Pan-African Parliament.

The unit also facilitates relations with think tanks, universities, research departments of international organisations, and other relevant bodies and networks, such as the European University Institute, EUISS, OECD, IMF and World Bank, with whom joint conferences, roundtables or other events have been organised.

EPRS has taken very seriously its commitment to eco-friendly administration, contributing more than proportionately to the attainment of the environmental goals set down in the multi-annual EMAS objectives agreed for the Parliament’s administration as a whole. This is witnessed in EPRS’ much lower than average CO₂ consumption per capita on staff missions, its early introduction of network printers in its offices, with a consequent fall in use of administrative paper, and its pioneering reduction in the use of ‘cantines’ (trunks)
to move material between the Parliament’s various places of work.

In order to keep track of, and to further guarantee, the best possible service to its clients, DG EPRS monitors a number of ‘Key Result Indicators’, namely: (i) providing a comprehensive range of products and services, covering all policy areas, in the fields of research, analysis and knowledge sources; (ii) ensuring that its products and services constantly improve and are supported by appropriate quality standards; (iii) being client-oriented; and (iv) being timely in all its work.

In addition, in January 2017 DG EPRS introduced an overall 'lead indicator' of performance which currently monitors the 'hours of attention by different user groups for its products and services', on the basis of 10 sub-indicators, which together feed into a single composite index. This composite index rose by 9 per cent in 2018 (compared to 2016), from 100 to 109.

Overall, during its first five full years of operation, from 2014 to 2018, DG EPRS has developed an increasingly sophisticated range of products and services designed to support the European Parliament, as the only directly-elected institution within the EU system, in fulfilling its key legislative and oversight roles on behalf of the citizen. The new directorate-general has already made substantial progress, witnessed in the depth, breadth, quality and use of EPRS products and services, described in detail in this report.

Aspiring to reach, and indeed set, the highest global standards as a parliamentary research service and in-house think tank - for Members, committees and the institution a whole - EPRS will continue to seek ways to underpin and enhance the work of the Parliament, helping to empower it through knowledge as an effective and influential EU institution, as we move into the new 2019-24 parliamentary term.

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