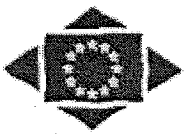

Committee of the Regions

2009

Annual Activity Report

EN

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INTRODUCTION – MAIN ASPECTS OF THE REPORT

This annual report of the authorising officer by delegation (the Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions) provides a description of the activities of the institution, while focusing on two specific areas: the management of the general secretariat of the Committee of the Regions and the implementation of the 2009 budget. The report is established on the basis of the Financial Regulation (art. 60.4 and 60.7), the internal rules on the implementation of the budget and the Charter of tasks and responsibilities of the Committee's authorising officer by delegation. As required by the above provisions, the annual report covers the activities of the institution (the objectives and main achievements of the year under review), as well as the budget execution within the parameters of the control environment established by the authorising officer by delegation. Finally, the report contains a declaration, signed by the authorising officer by delegation, on application of the principle of sound management and the legality and regularity of financial transactions in 2009.

Thus, Part 1 of the report presents the main achievements and activities of the institution in 2009. It starts with a brief summary of principal activities. Activities described in this part are mainly presented compared against the objectives set up in the 2009 Management Plan, which is a tool used to identify and prioritise goals and objectives and serves as a basis to evaluate final results and achievements.

In Part 2, the report of the authorising officer by delegation summarises the use of the budgetary resources made available to the institution. This chapter together with the accounts that are attached to the report gives a complete overview of the 2009 budget outturn. It should be pointed out that appropriations in 2009 amounted to 76.5 million euros (a 7.4% increase vis-à-vis the previous year) and that the budget execution of commitments at the end of the year reached a very satisfactory level of 98.2%.

Part 3 reports on internal management and control systems. It outlines the characteristics of the CoR risk environment & financial circuits, and gives a detailed description of internal control systems, including verification (ex-ante and ex-post), internal control standards, financial exceptions, planning and reporting, and the action taken on the comments and recommendations of the various supervisory bodies. With regard to the latter, the report makes reference to the follow-up given to recommendations made in connection with the budgetary discharge, the reports of the Court of Auditors, as well as the internal audits.

Part 4 contains comments made by the authorising officer by delegation on the management system he has put in place. It is followed in part 5 by the declaration by the authorising officer by delegation, which is a statement relating to sound financial management and the regularity and legality of the management of resources. The declaration does not contain any reserve, as does none of the declarations of the authorising officers by sub-delegation.

1. POLICY RESULTS

1.1 The Committee of the Regions in 2009

The Committee's mission consists first and foremost of its involvement in the EU decision-making process and policy-orientation debates, as a consultative body, thus ensuring that the concerns and interests of local and regional authorities are effectively taken on board in the framing and implementation of EU law and policies. Two main instruments contribute to this objective: the adoption of the CoR Opinions, and the structured co-operation with the other institutions and associations of local and regional authorities. The Committee's activities and actions, as well as the annual work programme of its Commissions, are defined on the basis of the overall political strategy of the CoR, set out in the resolution on the political priorities.

The second year of Presidency of Mr. Luc Van den Brande (EPP) was marked by the efforts to step up the Committee's work on the concept of multilevel governance and to strengthen both the CoR's political role and institutional standing. The President has also been a leading supporter of the enhancement of the Covenant of Mayors initiative, further development of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly and the establishment of the European Entrepreneurial Region Awards.

With its mission statement, adopted on its 15th anniversary, the CoR has entered a new and necessary phase to enable it to meet the challenges and responsibilities conferred upon it by the Treaty of Lisbon, and vital for "building Europe in partnership". The Treaty increased the competences of CoR in 4 ways:

- New approach in the areas of subsidiarity (which now involves also the regional and local level and which the CoR can now defend before the Court of Justice in case of infringement of this principle), territorial cohesion and impact assessment;
- Extension and deepening of the areas / domains for which the consultation of the CoR becomes obligatory, as well as the obligation also for the European Parliament to consult the CoR;
- With regard to services of general interest the Lisbon Treaty created a new legal basis and emphasized the essential role of national, regional and local authorities in providing such services;
- the right for the CoR to defend its prerogatives before the Court of Justice;

At the five plenary sessions held in 2009, 59 opinions were adopted. The Committee received requests from the Czech and Swedish presidencies for specific opinions to be used over the course of their presidencies. Particularly important opinions in 2009 concerned: White Paper on Multilevel Governance, The European Economic Recovery Plan and the role of local and regional authorities, the EU strategy for the Danube area, the role of local and regional authorities within the Eastern

Partnership, the adaptation to Climate Change, the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and on the future of the Lisbon Strategy post 2010.

In 2009 the CoR and its members represented the local and regional level of government throughout Europe in a large number of activities. The main events organised by the CoR in 2009 included:

- the European Summit of Regions and Cities, held in Prague on 5-6 March. The financial crisis, Lisbon Strategy and the cohesion policy were the main topics debated by approximately 600 local and regional representatives who attended the event. The Summit's final conclusions, which were endorsed by several main European associations, underlined that a stronger and more democratic Europe needs not only the support of all layers of government but also, and most importantly, the participation of citizens. In this aspect the direct involvement of local authorities was deemed crucial.

- A major event organised by the CoR together with the European Commission in 2009, along with the seminars organised by the CoR's Commissions, was again the Open Days/European Week of Regions and Cities, held from 5 to 8 October 2009 under the theme "Global challenges, European responses". The debate focused on regional responses to the economic crisis and to climate change. The event has attracted some 6 000 participants in Brussels and 25 000 more in 230 local events in 32 countries, becoming one of the biggest European Union events in the Brussels calendar. Organised by a variety of local actors, such as public administrations, chambers of commerce, Europe Direct centres, universities and others, the local events were an opportunity to (i) highlight good local practice in European policies, (ii) exchange ideas and solutions for sustainable economic growth, and (iii) raise public awareness on the major challenges Europe is facing.

During the 2009 Open Days the pilot project of the European Entrepreneurial Region scheme (EER) was launched, which aims to pick out those regions that demonstrate a strategic vision in business policy and to encourage them, as part of the implementation of Europe's "Small Business Act" to be dynamic, environmentally-friendly and enterprising.

The Committee of the Regions' Lisbon Monitoring Platform (LMP) continued its growth expanding from 65 EU local and regional authorities in 2006 to 112 participating regions and cities in 2009. The findings of the LMP contributed to the production of an annual report on the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy on the ground. This report, based on annual monitoring exercises, contributed to (i) the development of the CoR Consultation of European Regions and Cities on "a New Strategy for Sustainable Growth – A New Lisbon Strategy after 2010" and (ii) to the drafting of the CoR Own Initiative Opinion on the same topic.

The Territorial Dialogue for Sustainable Growth and Jobs is an annual conference co-organised by the Committee of the Regions and the incumbent EU Presidency. This format gives CoR members the

opportunity to discuss implementation of the European strategy for growth and jobs with high-level EU representatives. The 2009 conference, with the participation of Commissioner Tajani and representatives of the EP, the Council, and the local and regional authorities, was organised in February 2009 with the aim to discuss the ways to address the economic and financial crisis as well as the perspectives for a new European Strategy for the future (Europe 2020).

Further efforts were undertaken to develop the principle of subsidiarity. On 08 May 2009, a Subsidiarity Conference was organised by the Committee of Regions in partnership with the Region of Lombardy. It focused on (i) the challenge of multilevel governance in Europe for European democracy, (ii) the implementation of Community policies and (iii) the need for coordinated action to improve subsidiarity monitoring by national and regional parliaments. In 2009 eight of the conceptual meetings called Ateliers were held to develop further the concept of multi-level governance. In this cycle of Ateliers, the discussions focused on development of possible strengthened multilevel governance structures for the future European Union, and the European Macro-regional strategies. Furthermore the CoR has launched a European wide debate on governance, with the publication of its first White Paper on multilevel governance – a political initiative that reflects the CoR's institutional maturity and advocates the recognition of local and regional authorities as full political partners rather than as executive intermediaries.

The Subsidiarity Monitoring Network (SMN) which was created in order to facilitate the exchange of information between local and regional authorities of the European Union and to give feedback to the various policy documents and proposals from the European Commission, has grown to 107 members. Further contacts were established with some targeted national parliaments (15) adding to the close cooperation with regional parliaments, and the members of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies.

In order to further facilitate the systematic discussion between the European Commission and the associations of local and regional authorities the 7th structured dialogue was organised in 2009. It focused on presenting the guidelines of the EC actions. Particular attention was given to the extent on which the problems and needs of the local and regional authorities have been taken into account at the European level. On 2 December 2009 the Committee of the Regions (CoR) in partnership with the European Commission, organised the first Assises of Decentralised Cooperation for Development. The aim of this meeting was to ensure that local and regional authorities are fully integrated into EU development cooperation policies and to promote exchange between different levels of government.

During 2009 the CoR has continued to support the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The EGTC is a legal EU instrument, enabling regional and local authorities from different member states to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality. The aim of these groupings is to organise and manage cross-border, trans-national or interregional cooperation measures. In 2009 the 9th EGTC set-up "Duero-Douro" was launched, the study "EGTC State of Play and Prospects" was published and a fast-track report on "EGTC Developments on the Ground" was started. The CoR organised a conference in March "Perspectives on cross-border cooperation in Europe" with a special focus on the EGTC.

The growing institutional role of the CoR has been further strengthened in 2009. An official meeting with President Topolanek at the opening of the 2009 European Spring Summit was organised to submit the CoR recommendations on the Lisbon agenda in particular. The CoR was invited to attend the European Summit of Heads of State or Government on the Eastern Partnership on 7 May 2009 in Prague and to the ministerial meeting dealing with regional policy in Mariánské Lázně.

In order to manage and coordinate the above processes the CoR Bureau held 5 ordinary meetings and two external meetings in Plzeň (Czech Republic) and Uppsala (Sweden). In the extraordinary Bureau meetings particular attention was given to the programmes of respectively the Czech and Swedish presidencies.

In February 2009 Gerhard Stahl was reappointed as the Secretary General of the CoR for the second five-year term. The Committee appears to have adapted well to its rapid growth and the changes which took place since the enlargement in 2004. The difficulties arising from the change of organisation chart and the implementation of the cooperation agreement with the EESC seem to have been overcome to a large extent. Issues in the area of recruitment and job rotation, as identified in the 2009 risk analysis, could be mitigated in a satisfactory way. Ten new civil servant posts were integrated in the CoR in 2009. In order to further improve the quality of the Secretariat General the Common Assessment Framework has been launched.

In view of the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty an amending budget has been established. At the request of the Budgetary Authority it had not yet been integrated into existing budget. With the Treaty coming into force on 01 December 2009, its implementation is foreseen as from 2010 on.

Human Resources of the Committee of the Regions in 2009 (*)

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	291	211	502
Contractual agents		43	43
Interim personnel		2	2
External contractual staff		16	16
Seconded national experts	5		5
Other outside personnel (specify)*	1		1
Total	**297**	**272**	**569** (**)

*Medical Doctor

(*) These figures correspond to the 2009 Establishment Plan.

(**) The difference between the totals contained in this table, and the addition of the totals of the tables accompanying the description of each service's activity is explained by the fact that the private offices of the President and the Secretary General do not make separate contributions to this Activity Report and therefore do not provide any staff tables. The table includes CoR personnel working in the Joint Services.

1.2 Political Group Secretariats

Members of the Committee of the Regions have gathered together as political groups at the number of four: PPE, PSE, ALDE and EA (for details see below). Each group is supported by a secretariat.
Every secretariat serves its respective group and facilitates the participation of its members in the work of the CoR. Main objectives, around which the work of the groups was organised, were specified in the Management Plan 2008

1.2.1 Group of the European People's Party (EPP)

The EPP Group consists of 123 full members and 114 alternate members.

1.2.1.1 General information

The EPP Secretariat is staffed with 5 Administrators and 4 Administrative Assistants. Under the authority of the Secretary General of the Group, the four AD staff are responsible for the support of EPP members' work in the 6 CoR Commissions, working groups, ad-hoc commissions, CoR Bureau, and Plenary, and jointly organise the ordinary and extraordinary group meetings and seminars, with the support of three AST staff members. In addition, the Press and Communications division which executes all activities linked to the political and information activities financed by the members' budget line and assures communication of the group's activities, is composed of one AST and one AD staff.

The key objectives and areas of activity around which work is organised, as set in the Management Plan 2009 include:
Objective 1 MP 2009: Strengthening the role of the CoR as a political body in the EU
Objective 2 MP 2009: Reinforcing the role of the EPP - political motor of the CoR
Objective 3 MP 2009: Promoting and improving visibility of CoR's and Members' work
Objective 4 MP 2009: Strengthening co-operation with other institutions and EPP Party
Objective 5 MP 2009: Contributing to the running performance of the Administration

1.2.1.2 Specific policy achievements in 2009: operational objectives and actions

Meetings of the EPP/CoR Group and of the CoR (MP 2009 Objectives 1, 2,4,5)

As planned in 2009, under the presidency of Isidoro Gottardo, the EPP Group held regular meetings prior to the CoR Bureau, Plenary Sessions and CoR Commission and Working Group meetings so as to prepare the work and coordinate the position of the EPP. In addition it organised the following extraordinary meetings and activities:

- An extraordinary meeting in Brussels on 23 January 2009 to discuss EPP priorities for the year, the CoR's mission statement, the Prague Summit objectives, and the involvement of local and regional authorities in the European Elections.

- An extraordinary meeting "Building YOUR Europe! EPP manifesto for the European Elections 2009", hosted by Isidoro Gottardo in Trieste, Italy (16 May 2009), to debate the role of the regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process. As an outcome the EPP-CoR Resolution "Regions and cities in the front line to fight the economic and financial crisis and climate change" fed into the EPP Congress in Warsaw.
- A seminar in the context of "Open Days" (Brussels, 6 October 2009) dealing with "City Diplomacy: A Tool for Building Measures of Confidence". The initiative led by CoR rapporteur on the matter Eleni Loucaides, concluded that local and regional authorities are the best placed to ensure stability in Europe.
- An extraordinary seminar in Murcia, Spain on "The challenge of regional development: towards a stronger economy" (18 December 2009). This meeting, hosted by Ramon-Luis Valcarcel Siso, President of the Region, aimed at deepening the understanding of the role that European cohesion policy plays in stimulating growth, economic development and social inclusion at local and regional level. The resulting declaration warns against the risk of renationalising cohesion policy and possible attempts to bypass the regional and local political role in it.
- A Group meeting was held with Mats Odell, Swedish Minister for Local Government and Financial Markets on "The Swedish Presidency of the EU in line with the EPP priorities" (Brussels 17 June 2009).

EPP CoR members also took active part in CoR seminars, both as speakers or chairing sessions. They also participated in other key political debates, such as those with the Commissioners and Council Presidencies during the CoR plenary sessions.

Political meetings attended by EPP/CoR members (MP 2009 Objectives 1, 2,4)

- Isidoro Gottardo participated in several events representing the Group in the CoR including the EPP Group in the European Parliament's Bureau meeting in Venice on 19-20 November, and the 11th Summit of EPP Presidents in Brussels on 16-17 November 2009. Mr. Gottardo also took part in the meetings with MEP Commission Chairs, parties belonging to the EPP family, and other group presidents.
- Several EPP/CoR members took active part in numerous meetings of the EPP Party Bureau and Working Groups, notably those on European Affairs, Economic and Social Policy, and Agriculture.
- A delegation of EPP/CoR members took part in the European People's Party Statutory Congress in Bonn on 9-10 December 2009, and in the European People's Party European Elections Congress in Warsaw on 29-30 April 2009.
- Other members represented the Group on different occasions, notably Kay Twitchen (EPP/UK) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (7 to 18 December 2009), Helmut Jahn (EPP/DE) at the Green Week event on the topic of "Disaster Management in the Face of Climate Change" (24 June 2009 in Brussels), Konstantinos Tatsis (EPP/EL) at a conference organised by the Czech Presidency on "Tourism Industry: Employment and Labour Market

Challenges" (Prague, 10-11 June 2009), Rolf Harlinghausen (EPP/D) at the Maltese Association of Local Councils' meeting of 21 February 2009, Constantin Ostaficiuc (EPP/RO) at the historic visit to Ledra Steet in Cyprus linked up to a Conference of Political Group Presidents (20 February 2009) and Keith Walters (EPP/UK) at the Maltese Association of Local Councils' meeting on Education and Lifelong learning (25 April 2009) and in the meeting of the Association of Romanian Local Authorities (9 February 2009).

- Several EPP rapporteurs met their counterparts in the European Parliament throughout the year.

Other activities (MP 2009 Objective 3)

- The 4th edition of the annual Summer University (Brussels; 14-15 April 2009) gave another fifty journalists the opportunity to meet with EU representatives and exchange opinions on the topics that matter to them. The event was dedicated to the European Year of Creativity and Innovation and the role of local and regional authorities in the financial crisis.
- "Think.Act.Change: 60 second film competition for young Europeans", in cooperation with the EPP, to challenge young people to shoot a 1-minute film on the topic of creating a better environment. The chosen topic of climate change, one of the biggest challenges for Europe, reflects the need for everyone to play their role and begin to make a change at home. The top three film-makers won €1750 and a trip to Brussels to see their films screened at a special ceremony in the European Parliament on 5 October 2009. The winning films were also screened during the Green Week in 23-26 June and in Copenhagen by the European Commission's DG Environment.
- The second edition of the Study Visit took place on 2-4 December 2009 and was the opportunity for students of European Studies and Political Science to meet in Brussels to debate topics of key relevance to them. Thirty selected students from the 600 European applicants participated in the Committee of the Regions Plenary Session and discussed EPP-led opinions with CoR members, MEPs and representatives of the European Commission.

Publications and Internet (MP 2009 Objective 3)

- A special publication for the EPP/CoR Summer University for local and regional media was published in three languages EN, FR, DE.
- A targeted publication on Plenary Sessions at the Committee of the Regions was published (in EN only) for the EPP/CoR Study Visit 2009
- A publication on the overview of EPP/CoR activities in the 4th mandate was published (in EN, DE, FR, ES).
- As regards other publications, the secretariat issued 5 new editions of the "rEPPorter" newsletter and continued disseminating its monthly electronic newsletter. EPP members actively contributed to several magazines: Isidoro Gottardo, Luc Van den Brande, Lea Saukkonen, Rolf

Harlinghausen, Pauliina Haijanen, Eleni Loucaides, Susanna Haby, Helmut Jahn, Constance Hanniffy, Michael Schneider, Herwig Van Staa.

- The EPP/CoR secretariat contributed regular articles to the CoR newsletter and EPP publications.
- The EPP/CoR secretariat issued regular press releases before and after each important event related to the Group and updated its website with highlights of EPP/CoR activities and the work of EPP rapporteurs. The procedure to create a new EPP/CoR website was launched.
- The EPP/CoR secretariat published topical information - on a weekly basis, "Weekly News", for EPP members targeted according to the six CoR Commissions.
- The EPP/CoR secretariat updated and published its list of members before each plenary session.

Visitors' groups (MP 2009 Objective 3)

The EPP secretariat received a great number of visitors' groups throughout the year; the role and priorities of the EPP/CoR Group were explained and promoted. About 20 trainees (in different small delegations) invited by the Schuman Foundation of the EPP Group in the European Parliament came to visit the EPP Group in the CoR.

Human resources in 2009, EPP Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	5	4	9
Contractual agents			
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts			
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total			**9**

1.2.2 Party of European Socialists Group (PES)

As of 31 December 2008, the PES Group of the CoR had 122 full members (out of 318 members-26 appointments were pending) and 113 alternates. The PES Group secretariat comprised nine temporary agents, 5 administrators and 4 assistants.

1.2.2.1 Work of the Secretariat of the PES Group

Four administrators work under the guidance of the Secretary General of the Group, supporting PES members' work in the CoR Bureau, Plenary Sessions and 6 CoR commissions, various working groups and other CoR configurations. They are assisted in their tasks by four assistants. The Secretariat is also in charge of the organisation of the PES Group's ordinary and extraordinary

meetings. Moreover, it implements the Group's internal and external communication strategy, including activities financed by the CoR budget line earmarked for members' political and information activities.

1.2.2.2 Main aims

Main objectives of activity in 2009 were outlined in the Management Plan.

Objective 2009 No. 1: Strengthen political cohesion within the CoR's PES Group
Objective 2009 No. 2: Increase the coordination with other PES Groups (PES in the European Parliament, PES Women, ECOSY, national and regional parties)
Objective 2009 No. 3 Extend the role and political influence of the Committee of the Regions in the European Decision making process
Objective 2009 No. 4: Strengthen the CoR internal management and monitor the budgetary issues
Objective 2009 No. 5: Continue the integration within the Group of locally and regionally-elected representatives from the new Member States and forge links with those in the candidate and applicant countries
Objective 2009 No. 6: Raise profile and improve communications policy

1.2.2.3 Overview of tools

a) Meetings and events (MP 2009 Objectives 1,2,3,4,5)

Ordinary meetings and events

A PES Group Bureau meeting was held in conjunction with each ordinary plenary session, in advance of CoR Bureau meetings (11 February, 20 April, 16 June, 5 October and 2 December 2009). The aim of those meetings was to prepare for CoR Bureau and the PES Group meetings.

There were regular PES Group meetings before each CoR plenary session (12 February, 21 April, 17 June, 6 October and 3 December 2009). The main aim of PES Group meetings was to adopt common positions on key political issues and to prepare for plenary session debates and votes. Where permitted by the agenda, the President invited a guest of honour for an exchange of views.

Before each CoR commission meeting held in Brussels PES coordination meetings were held between 10 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. Since 2006, interpretation has been provided in the CoR's pivot languages. In the case of commission meetings held away from Brussels, a preparatory PES meeting was held whenever logistically possible.
Twenty-three opinions adopted by the CoR plenary session were drafted by PES Group rapporteurs.

Extraordinary meetings and other events

In addition to the Group meetings organised before plenary sessions, the PES Group also holds two extraordinary meetings each year: one in Brussels and the other away from Brussels, at the invitation

of a PES Group member. A seminar can also be organised each year allowing for the participation of up to one quarter of the members of the Group, and such seminars can take place either in or away from Brussels.

On 21-22 May, the PES Group held its annual seminar in Palma de Majorca, Spain, at the invitation of the President of the Government of the Balearic Islands **Francesc ANTICH I OLIVER**. It focused on cross-border healthcare provision, a theme of particular interest to local and regional authorities, especially those of cross-border regions, as they are the main healthcare providers.

Structured around two roundtables focusing on *challenges in cross-border health services* and *initiatives and solutions on the ground*, the seminar addressed a series of politically sensitive questions: the pertinence of a partial or full integration of healthcare provision at European level and the appropriate legal basis that would justify it; ways to address existing disparities and guarantee social cohesion, as well as the political repercussions of a rejection by the Council of Ministers of the European Commission's proposal for cross-border health provision.

The seminar was opened by PES Group President **Mercedes BRESSO**, President of the Piedmont Region (Italy), and key speakers included: **Marina GELI FABREGA,** Minister of Health of the Catalan Government, **Vicenç Thomàs MULET,** Minister for Health and Consumer Protection of the Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands, Socialist MEP **Bernard SOULAGE**, Vice-President of the Rhône-Alpes Region (France), and **Guillermo FERNANDEZ VARA**, President of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura (Spain).

The extraordinary meeting in Brussels – held on 23 September – was an excellent opportunity to exchange views with academics and key representatives of the PES political family, on the **priorities of regionally and locally elected PES members for the CoR's fifth term of office** (2010-2014). The timing of this meeting coincided with the start of a new legislature of the European Parliament and the upcoming appointment of a new European Commission. It was the changing landscape of the European institutions that had called for a debate on the role of the PES Group in the context of the priorities of the PES political family. Key issues discussed were the review of the EU budget, the revision of the Lisbon strategy and the future of cohesion policy, the response to the economic crisis, sustainable growth, climate change and the development of the EU as an area of freedom, security and justice.

The extraordinary PES Group meeting away from Brussels took place on 22-23 October 2009 in Malmö, Sweden, at the invitation of **Ilmar REEPALU**, Mayor of Malmö. In addition to the PES President, **Poul Nyrup RASMUSSEN**, President of the Party of European Socialists, and **Jo LEINEN**, President of the European Parliament's Committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, the debate was enriched with contributions by politicians and experts: **Anders YGEMAN**, Chair of the Committee on Environment and Agriculture of the Swedish Parliament, **Åsa WESTLUND**, Member of the European Parliament, **Michel DELEBARRE**, First Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions and Mayor of Dunkirk (France), **Rita OTTERVIK**, Mayor of Trondheim (Norway), **Alain MESTRE**, co-author of ETUC study on 'Climate Change and

Employment', and **Sonia CASTAÑEDA**, Head of the International Relations Department of the Spanish Foundation for Biodiversity. The conclusions of this meeting, reflecting the vision of the PES Group in the CoR about Smart Green Growth, were adopted by the Group on 3 December, at its ordinary meeting ahead of the CoR plenary session.

Following the success of PES conferences organised within the framework of the OPEN DAYS in 2007 and 2008, the PES Group repeated the exercise during the Open Days 2009. The PES Group organised a workshop focusing on 'Growth at all Costs? Bringing the local back into the economy'. The event came under the overall theme *Restoring Growth*, which addresses the question of how Europe's regions could become more inventive and innovating while addressing global and environmental challenges. The PES Group workshop focused on how to achieve these goals in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and food production in Europe. Key speakers were **Mercedes BRESSO**, President of the PES Group in the CoR, **René SOUCHON**, CoR rapporteur on Biodiversity, and **Olivier DE SCHUTTER**, special rapporteur of the United Nations on the right to food and Professor of the University of Louvain.

b) Activities – Participation of PES Group members in political meetings (MP 2009 Objectives 1,2,3,5)

Various forms of coordination and collaboration within the socialist family were stepped up: links with the PES, its parliamentary group and national parties were strengthened. The synergies to the PES joint political action were brought in the meetings with PES President Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, President of the parliamentary group Martin Schulz, President of PES Women Zita Gurmai, ECOSY President Petroula Nteledimou and Secretary General of FEPS Ernst STETTER.

The PES Group continues to play a full part in the activities of the Party of European Socialists: since the revision of the PES statutes at the Berlin Congress (2001), the President of the PES Group of the CoR has been a full member of the PES Presidency, and since the decision taken in Vienna in 2005 by the PES Council, the PES Group has been a full member of the PES Leaders' Conference.

In December 2009, a PES Group delegation, led by its President and 1st Vice-President, participated in the PES Congress which was held in Prague, (Czech Republic) on 7-8 December 2009. This Congress took stock of the European elections results and drew up a vision for social democracy in the 21st century. The PES Congress also issued a message for the climate change UN Conference in Copenhagen, urging the world governments not to miss the historic opportunity that COP15 offers and to agree on a legally binding Climate Change Deal to reduce global emissions by 30% until 2020. Finally, it launched a call for action to European Leaders to regulate finance now.

Activities with the PES parliamentary group continued in 2009 both at official and at informal level: the coordination of work was strengthened, in particular on policy areas with a territorial dimension. As regards work within CoR commissions, new contacts between the respective coordinators and the

rapporteurs working on the same dossier were established and encouraged. PES Group members participated as speakers in events organised by the PES/EP Group and vice versa.

PES Group members took also part in the different high level Groups set up by the PES on the main political priorities (i.e. Karl-Heinz KLÄR in the financial and economic network)

On 3 September, the Secretariat of the PES Group in the CoR organised an information meeting with the assistants of MEPs of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats (S&D) following the June 2009 European elections, with a view to explaining the PES Group's role within the CoR as well as its position in its European political family, the Party of European Socialists (PES). More concretely, it was explained how the PES Group and its secretariat can provide to the S&D Group both political and practical support, facilitating contacts with PES locally and regionally elected representatives, setting up joint initiatives and supporting exchange of expertise between PES and S&D Groups rapporteurs. The meeting was part of the PES Group's strategy to strengthen its relations with all S&D members of the European Parliament, with a view to a fruitful exchange during the EP's 7th term of office and was financed through the budget line for information and political activities.

On 15-16 April, Dave QUAYLE, PES Group Coordinator within the ECOS commission, represented the Group at an event organised in Porto (Portugal) by Elisa FERREIRA MEP and candidate of the Portuguese Socialist Party for the city's mayorship. The event focused on urban regeneration and Dave Quayle had the opportunity to contribute with best practices from Manchester (UK), a model city in this respect.

On 26 May, Michel DELEBARRE, CoR 1st Vice-President, opened the Annual General Assembly of SOLIDAR, the European network of NGOs working for social justice in Europe and worldwide. The theme of the event, *Together for Social Europe*, gave Michel Delebarre, PES Group Coordinator of the consultation responses on the 'New Social Europe' theme of the PES Manifesto, the opportunity to stress the need to put forward realistic proposals for a Europe that is currently experiencing multiple crises: financial, economic, employment and ultimately social.

The PES Group also participated with a stand organised by the secretariat at the European institutions' Open Doors 2009 Day (9 May). The aim was to inform citizens visiting the European Institutions of the work of the PES Group within the CoR and of its added value.

c) Publications and Internet (MP 2009 Objective 6)

The PES Group published a newsletter (echoES) before each plenary session in 2009. Both the layout and the content of the Newsletter have continued to be improved in order to make it more topical and more attractive. In December 20009, the Newsletter (numbering already 21 issues) was subject to a thorough evaluation and the possibility of an e-Newsletter is being explored.

A number of press releases were issued on important activities of the PES Group in the three working languages (DE-EN-FR). The Secretariat of the PES Group has worked closely with the CoR Press services for the production of CoR press releases related to PES Group rapporteurs.

PES Group members made contributions to the European Parliament's Regional Review (articles by Mercedes Bresso, Uno Aldegren, Claudette Baldacchino), the European Parliament Magazine (articles by Mercedes Bresso, Jean-Yves Le Drian), Social Europe (articles by Karl-Heinz Klär, Claudette Baldacchino and Mercedes Bresso), the SOLIDAR Publication on Social Europe (articles by Jean-Louis Destans, Anna Terron, Petr Osvald, Henk Kool), the FEPS publication on the New Left (article by Mercedes Bresso) and the review of the Greek Association of Municipalities and Communities (article by Mercedes Bresso).

The Secretariat of the PES Group created a new special website section on the PES Group photo competition, allowing for the submission of photos electronically.
The News section of the PES Group's website is regularly updated. Information on website updates, which has recently been formalised, has enabled members to be kept informed by e-mail regularly.

In November 2009, the PES Group issued a publication in the framework of the photo competition organised on the budget line for communication and in the form of a yearly Agenda (for 2010). The PES Group launched a photo competition on 'Europe's added value in our 'everyday lives' in February 2009. The agenda, which features the winning pictures as well as photos from the PES Group activities throughout the 4th CoR term of office, includes a short presentation of the PES Group and the way it works. This publication has been made available in the three working languages (DE-EN-FR).

Following the revision of the PES Group's internal Rules of Procedure at the December 2009 PES Group meeting, a revised version of the Rules has been issued.

d) Visitors' groups (MP 2009 Objective 6)

The PES Group welcomed 23 groups of visitors, which included 669 persons who were in their overwhelming majority locally and regionally elected representatives (from France, Slovenia, Denmark, Turkey, Romania, Italy, UK, Malta, Spain and Germany); They received presentations on the work and priorities of the PES Group and on how the group complements the overall work of the CoR.

Human resources in the PES Group Secretariat for 2009

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	4	4	8
Contractual agents			
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts			
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	**4**	**4**	**8**

1.2.3 Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe

This report highlights the main activities of the group in 2009, corresponding with Key Objectives 1 and 4 of the ALDE Management Plan 2008 - namely: " Contributing to development of a political identity for the CoR" and "Increasing the profile of the CoR" - over and beyond the normal participation of ALDE members in CoR meetings: Plenary sessions, Bureau meetings, Conference of Presidents, Commission meetings, and working groups, which are covered by Key Objectives 2 and 3 of the Management Plan ("Contributing to organisation of CoR work" and "Facilitating integration of members in work of CoR").

Key Objective 1: Contributing to development of a political identity for the CoR

30 March: Extraordinary group meeting in Galway, Ireland with 4 invited guest speakers: Mr Pat Cox, Ex President of the European Parliament and current President of the European Movement, Ms Marian Harkin, ALDE MEP from Ireland, Mr Donncha Foley, Development Manager, Galway Volunteer Centre and Brendan Holland, Chairman of the GLUAS Group.

21 April: Group meeting with 2 invited guest speakers on the theme: "The role of local and regional authorities in the Eastern Partnership": Dr. David Shahnazaryan, President of the Center for Political and Legal Studies "Concord", Armenia and Mr. David Usupashvili, Chairman of the Republican Party(member of ELDR), Georgia.

17 June: Group meeting with one invited guest speaker: Mr Guy Verhofstadt, former Belgian Prime Minister and new ALDE MEP (now leader of the ALDE Group in EP).

6 October: ALDE seminar during Open Days on "SME innovation in traditional industries"

3 December: Group meeting with 3 invited guest speakers on the theme "Croatia: towards membership of the EU": Mr Miljenko Doric, HNS, Croatia People´s party – liberal democrats, Member of the Croatian Parliament, Mr Davor Žmegač, HSLS - Croatian Social Liberal Party, City Mayor of Kutina and Mr Oriano Otočan, IDS-DDI, Istrian Democratic Assembly, Government member in charge of international collaboration and European integration, Region of Istria.

Key Objective 4: Raising the profile of the CoR

Other activities by ALDE Members:

6 February: ALDE President Flo CLUCAS addressed a Swedish Centerparty seminar on the Swedish island of Gotland on 6 February.

March: ALDE launched a new communication campaign "WHO IS BRUSSELS?" to illustrate to citizens who is really behind the EU decision-making.

6-8 May: The ALDE group co-organised and cofinanced a LYMEC seminar on Civil Rights and Liberties in the Information Age in Rome.

18 June: Flo Clucas at ELDR Leaders and Prime Ministers' meeting.

October: ALDE President Flo CLUCAS addressed a DG Regio seminar on Urban policy during the Open Days. Andras Szalay chaired another Open Days seminar on "Media education for all: A local approach"

26-30 October: ALDE 1st Vice President Gianmario SPACCA hosted an event about global citizenship bringing together young people from around the world in Ancona, Italy. The event was co-financed by the ALDE group. Kent Johansson also addressed the audience.

10 December: Flo Clucas at ELDR Leaders and Prime Ministers' meeting.

10 December: Biodiversity seminar in Brussels co-financed by ALDE group and chaired by Nicola BEER.

18 November: Lord Graham Tope and Alin Nica addressed the ELDR congress in Barcelona.

19 November: ALDE President Flo Clucas participated in the World Entrepreneurship Forum in Lyon.

Publications/Newspaper articles

- 3 issues of ALDE newsletter
- one ALDE magazine

Human Resources (ALDE group secretariat)

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	3	2	5
Contractual agents			
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts			
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	3	2	5

1.2.4 Union for Europe of the Nations - European Alliance (UEN-EA)

The UEN-EA group consists of 39 members and alternate members.

1.2.4.1 Key objectives and areas of activity around which work is organised

Objective 2009 nr. 1: Enhancing the Political Identity the UEN-EA group and of the CoR
Objective 2009 nr. 2: Organisation of Work Results indication: numbers of meetings / participation of members in CoR and its related work
Objective 2009 nr. 3: Integration of Members in the work of the CoR Indicators: level of activity and intervention of members
Objective 2009 nr. 4: Increasing the profile of the Institution Results indicator: Participation of members in meetings of European Parliament, speakers at high profile events etc

1.2.4.2 Operational Objectives and Actions

Meetings and events organised by the UEN-EA/CoR Group and its members (MP 2009 Objectives 1,2,3,4)

In 2009 the UEN-EA Group, under the presidency of Cllr Paul O'Donoghue, held its regular meetings alongside the CoR Bureau, plenary sessions and CoR commissions and organised the following extraordinary meetings and activities:

- On the 30th of March 2009 the UEN-EA group held its external meeting and seminar in Sneem, Co. Kerry, Ireland on the subject of "The Role Of Cultural And Heritage Tourism In The Economic Development Of Regions". ***The event was officially launched by "Ceann Comhairle" (Chairman of the Irish Parliament) John O'Donoghue T.D.***

- ***At the June Plenary 2009 the conclusions of the UEN-EA 4rd Annual Secondary Schools Competition were drawn, where 33 students and teachers visited the Committee of the Regions as part of the prize of their results achieved on the essay and multiple choice quiz.***

- UEN-EA Group members of the six commissions also met regularly for preparatory meetings in advance of CoR commission meetings.

During 2009 UEN-EA members were involved in either hosting or co-hosting CoR meetings:

UEN-EA member, and DEVE chairman Mr Jerzy Zająkała co-hosted a meeting and seminar of the DEVE commission in Torun, Poland in October 2009. The seminar "*Adaptation to climate change*" featured high-level speakers from Poland, including the country's environment minister Maciej Nowicki, MEP Ryszard Czarnecki and CoR members Jerzy Zająkała, chair of the DEVE commission, and Adam Banaszak, rapporteur for the CoR's opinion on forest policy.

Mr Krochmal, UEN-EA member co-hosted the ECOS Commission's external meeting and a seminar on "*Industrial change and restructuring ways to minimise the consequences of the economic crisis*" in Wrocław, Poland on 14-15 September 2009. Distinguished guests attended the meeting including the Secretary of State, Minister in the Chancellery of Prime Minister of Poland, Mr Michał Broni, and the Member of the Polish Central Bank Monetary Policy Council, Mr Marian Noga.

Opinions of UEN-EA members in 2009

The CoR adopted opinions of UEN-EA group members on topics such as: Agricultural product quality; European Globalisation Adjustment Fund ; Rail Freight Transport; Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS) directives; Own initiative opinion "Towards an EU Forest Policy with a particular focus on the 20/20/20 targets"

Political meetings attended by UEN-EA/CoR members (MP 2009 Objectives 1,4)

UEN-EA members participated in several conferences and/or seminars as speakers or moderators:

- Cllr Seamus Murray as the Rapporteur on the CAP 'health check' attending a presentation of the Commandeur Mérite Agricole award to Mr. Liam Aylward MEP by the French Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Barnier, which took place in Paris on 7th January 2009
- Mr Zająkała spoke in Brussels, on 26 January 2009 at the workshop of the European Economic and Social Committee on the subject of nuclear energy and public information in the light of the Aarhus Convention.
- Mr Krochmal spoke at the Annual Meeting of European Small Towns held in Rheine, Germany on the 1-3 April 2009
- Mr Stanisław Szwabski on behalf of the UEN-EA Group addressing the Forum on creativity and innovation, 21 April 2009, Brussels
- Mrs Coppola and Mr Zająkała participated in the 4th Subsidiarity Assizes in Milan hosted by Lombardy region, 9 May 2009
- Mr Zająkała chaired the meeting of the taskforce on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment and on the restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (RoHS).
- Mr Zająkała has participated at the Structured Dialogue organised by the CoR between Commissioner Borg and the local and regional associations on 29 June 2009, which

focused on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and latest developments in EU maritime policy.

- Mr Zajakala, spoke in Brussels, on 29 September 2009 at the conference on the Regional Fisheries Management, Making It Work For Fisheries And The Environment
- Mr Jerzy Zająkała took part of the debate on the issue of "regional and local responses to climate change", 7 October 2009
- Dr Silberg participated in the International Forum of the European Regions in Russia, 20 October 2009
- Mr Krochmal spoke at the "Restructuring Forum: Sectors' New Skills for New Jobs" held by the European Commission on the 7-8 December 2009
- Mr Zająkała as the President of DEVE Commission has participated in the high level EU Delegation to the Copenhagen Summit, 15-17 December 2009.

Other activities (MP 2009 Objective 1)

The UEN-EA launched a Primary Schools initiative in November aimed at informing young people on the EU and its institutions. This consisted of a 'art / painting competition' entitled My Market / My Region.

The UEN-EA group invited MEPs to all of the relevant events / seminars which were organised by the group. We continued the practice of ensuring cooperation and contact on specific topics between rapporteurs from EP and UEN-EA Group.

A declaration on the Special Olympics has been presented by the UEN-EA group and adopted by the Committee of the Regions Bureau meeting in Pilsen, Czech Republic.

Publications and Internet (MP 2009 Objective 4)

A special booklet was published to advertise the 4rd annual Secondary Schools Competition in January 2009.

Newsletters were published on 3 occasions over the year, generally just before each plenary session. Two special edition newsletters were also published.

UEN-EA members had numerous articles published in the European Parliament magazine and the Regional Review. Along with this our group is a regular contributor to the CoR's magazine.

2009 was a very successful year as regards printed press notably in Poland, Italy, Ireland and Estonia.

A booklet on "My Market, My Region" was published in December 2009

The website is updated on a weekly basis.

1.2.4.3 Structure of the UEN-EA Secretariat

Under the authority of the Secretary General of the Group, members of the UEN-EA team are responsible for the support of UEN-EA members' work in the 6 CoR Commissions, working groups, CoR Bureau, and Plenary, and jointly organise the ordinary and extraordinary group meetings and seminars. They are also involved in organising press activities, promotional events for members and ensuring that members can work efficiently and effectively within and on behalf of the CoR.

Human Resources

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	2	2	4
Contractual agents			
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts			
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	**2**	**2**	**4**

1.3 The Forward Studies Unit

1.3.1 Objectif de l'Unité

Conformément à l'organigramme du CdR, la Cellule de Prospective et de suivi des priorités horizontales a été installée le 1er février 2008.

Cette unité est chargée d'assurer la planification, la mise en œuvre et le suivi de quelques priorités horizontales identifiées en accord avec le Président du Comité des Régions ainsi que les lignes directrices et le suivi des relations interinstitutionnelles. La mission essentielle de la Cellule de Prospective consiste à fournir des avis et à proposer des initiatives stratégiques sur les questions prioritaires liées à l'agenda politique européen, à l'avenir des politiques européennes et aux questions interinstitutionnelles.

La mission de cette unité s'appuie sur une logique de projet fondée sur une liste d'actions prioritaires mais aussi sur une approche stratégique en amont du cycle politique contribuant aussi à l'identification d'options politiques à moyen et long terme.

1.3.2 Principales activités de l'Unité

L'année 2009, dans la continuité des activités développées en 2008, a permis de consolider structurellement et opérationnellement la Cellule.

Centrées sur la priorité stratégique du mandat, "la gouvernance à multi niveaux", les activités développées au cours de l'année 2009 s'inscrivent dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action de la Cellule 2008/2009.

Processus d'élaboration de la Déclaration de Mission du Comité des Régions

Après avoir développé en 2008 le cadre conceptuel et la feuille de route du processus d'élaboration et d'adoption de la Déclaration de Mission du Comité des Régions et mis en place le processus de consultation interne et externe, la Cellule a soutenu en 2009 les travaux du Comité de monitorage du Mission Statement jusqu'à son adoption lors de la célébration du quinzième anniversaire du Comité en session plénière le 21 avril 2009. Puis, en coopération avec la Direction de la Presse, de la Communication et du Protocole, la Cellule s'est chargée de garantir une diffusion interne et externe appropriée de la Déclaration de Mission du CdR. Enfin, elle a appuyé l'institution dans la définition des orientations stratégiques et des recommandations pour mettre en œuvre la Déclaration de Mission.

Processus d'élaboration du Livre blanc du Comité des Régions sur la Gouvernance à multi-niveaux, promotion et gestion de la consultation

Au cours de l'année 2009, la Cellule a appuyé les rapporteurs dans le processus d'élaboration du Livre blanc et a soutenu le processus politique de son adoption.
Suite à l'adoption du Livre blanc lors de la session plénière des 16 et 17 juin 2009, la Cellule a:

- organisé en partenariat avec le Collège d'Europe à Bruges, une Conférence de présentation du Livre blanc le 22 septembre 2009;
- mis en place un plan de diffusion et de promotion du Livre blanc;
- géré le processus de consultation sur le Livre blanc puis assuré son évaluation en élaborant le rapport de consultation;
- assuré le suivi interinstitutionnel du Livre blanc;
- mis en place le soutien d'une expertise externe en vue de l'élaboration d'un tableau de bord de la gouvernance à multi niveaux au sein de l'Union européenne.

Contribution à l'enquête Eurobaromètre Standard 70

La Cellule a développé, en coopération avec la DG COMM de la Commission européenne, le cadre conceptuel de l'enquête Eurobaromètre Standard 70 sur "Le rôle et l'influence des Autorités locales et régionales au sein de l'Union européenne"; (27.000 citoyens européens consultés), publiée en février 2009. Elle a développé l'élaboration des fiches nationales pour une lecture plus pointue des résultats

de cette enquête, puis en coopération avec la DPCC, a assuré une diffusion appropriée des résultats. Enfin elle a appuyé le processus de promotion de ses enseignements politiques.
La Cellule a aussi consolidé ses relations avec la DG COMM en vue d'une pérennisation de la dimension de gouvernance multi-niveaux au sein des différents formats des enquêtes Eurobaromètre.

Suivi du processus de mise en œuvre du Traité de Lisbonne et questions interinstitutionnelles

Au cours de cette année, la Cellule a élaboré des notes de suivi et d'analyse sur la transition institutionnelle et la mise en œuvre du Traité de Lisbonne, son impact sur l'équilibre institutionnel de l'Union et sur le fonctionnement du CdR. En appui aux activités de la Présidence et du Secrétaire Général, elle a délivré des analyses sur les synergies entre les Présidences de l'UE et le programme de travail du CdR, a rédigé plusieurs documents en vue des réunions du Bureau, a contribué à l'élaboration de plusieurs résolutions du CdR et enfin a assuré l'élaboration de discours et d'interventions du Président et du Secrétaire général.

Suivi des travaux du Groupe de réflexion sur l'avenir de l'Europe

Au cours de cette année, la Cellule a consolidé et intensifié les contacts avec le secrétariat du Conseil et les membres du Groupe des Sages en assurant la présentation et la promotion du Livre blanc sur la gouvernance à multi niveaux qui constitue sa première contribution aux travaux de ce Groupe. Dans ce cadre :

- le Livre blanc sur la gouvernance à multi-niveaux a fait l'objet d'une audition en juillet 2009 du Secrétaire général par le Groupe de réflexion "Horizon 2020 – 2030";
- Certains membres du Groupe des Sages ont contribué aux activités du CdR (Atelier sur la gouvernance à multi niveaux, Assises de la subsidiarité);
- M. Felipe Gonzalez, Président du Groupe des Sages, a participé à la Conférence sur la gouvernance à multi-niveaux à Bruges le 22 septembre 2009.

Dans ce contexte, la Cellule a par ailleurs engagé une approche prospective et stratégique du rôle et du champ d'action des autorités régionales et locales du CdR dans la gouvernance globale.

Organisation des "Assises de la subsidiarité"

La Cellule de Prospective a appuyé l'organisation des Quatrièmes Assises de la subsidiarité, le 8 mai à Milan, en partenariat avec la Région de Lombardie, qui ont offert l'opportunité de situer la subsidiarité dans une approche fonctionnelle en élargissant la vision purement institutionnelle et juridique de la subsidiarité et de la répartition des pouvoirs entre les différents niveaux de compétence mais aussi de démontrer la pertinence d'une bonne application du principe de subsidiarité pour le citoyen européen.

Consolidation de la coopération entre le Comité des Régions et le Congrès des Pouvoirs locaux et régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe sur le fondement du Memorandum of Understanding entre l'Union européenne et le Conseil de l'Europe

Dans ce cadre, la Cellule a assisté le Président et le Secrétaire général en vue de promouvoir la dimension pan européenne de la gouvernance à multi niveaux et la définition des priorités stratégiques de la coopération interinstitutionnelle.

Processus d'élaboration et de concrétisation de concepts stratégiques comme la "Région Européenne Entreprenante"

Dans ce cadre la Cellule a développé le concept, défini le cadre opérationnel et assuré le lancement de cette initiative dont la mise en œuvre est attendue en 2010.

Fonctionnement de la Commission Temporaire Ad Hoc sur le réexamen du cadre financier de l'Union européenne.

Pendant l'année 2009, la Cellule a assisté la Commission Temporaire Ad Hoc sur le réexamen du cadre financier de l'Union européenne mandatée par le Bureau pour élaborer un projet des Conclusions pour le Sommet de Prague et a assuré le suivi politique et institutionnel de l'avis sur la révision budgétaire ainsi que le monitorage du débat sur la révision du cadre budgétaire de l'Union européenne.

Mise en place des "Ateliers" du CdR

Huit Ateliers ont été organisés par la Cellule pendant l'année 2009: un cycle régulier de six Ateliers dont l'Open Days University sur le thème de la gouvernance à multi niveaux en appui au processus d'élaboration et de consultation du Livre blanc sur la gouvernance à multi niveaux.
En complément de ces activités, elle a installé un networking plus structuré avec les principaux centres de recherches, think tanks et organisateurs d'évènements sur la thématique de la gouvernance à multi niveaux et a lancé un site internet et intranet sur le sujet.

Activités de communication

En 2009, la Cellule s'est beaucoup investie, en coopération avec la Direction Communication, Presse et Protocole, dans les actions de communication et de promotion, notamment lors de la diffusion de la Déclaration de Mission du CdR et du Livre blanc du CdR sur la Gouvernance à multi niveaux ainsi qu'à l'occasion de la publication des Actes des Ateliers 2008 et 2009 et de la première édition des Cahiers du Comité des Régions.

Human resources of the Cellule de prospective in 2009

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	5	2	7
Contractual agents	1	1	2
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts	1		1
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	7	3	10

La structure de l'Unité se compose comme suit:

- 1 chef d'Unité chargé de la programmation et la coordination de l'Unité
- 5 administrateurs, 1 agent contractuel, 1 expert national détaché chargés des dossiers thématiques et des activités opérationnelles y afférent.
- 2 assistantes et 1 agent contractuel (jusqu'au 31 octobre 2009) chargés du soutien administratif et logistique

1.4 Directorate for Consultative Works

1.4.1 General Information

The Directorate supports the CoR's members in framing and implementing the CoR's institutional and political strategies. One of the key missions of this Directorate is to promote the effective involvement and contribution of the CoR in the EU decision-making process. In 2009, the Directorate's two vertical **Units DTC.1** and **DTC.2** were responsible for organising, coordinating, monitoring and facilitating the work of the **CONST, DEVE, COTER, RELEX, EDUC** and **ECOS Commissions**. They assisted the members in drawing up CoR's opinions, supporting the political process within the Bureau and the Plenary, organising Commissions', Working Groups' and Joint Consultative Committees' meetings as well as external conferences and seminars. **Unit D3 Networks and Subsidiarity** is responsible for ensuring better inclusion of the local and regional dimension within the CoR consultative work and through it within the EU decision-making process. To this aim, it managed the Lisbon Strategy Monitoring Platform, the diffusion of the European Grouping for territorial Cohesion (EGTC), the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network and the activities on decentralised cooperation for development. **Unit D4 Studies and legislative planning** ensures the management of referrals and legislative planning, the setting up of programming of actions to be executed within the EC's planning, political priorities and legislative planning with respect to the interinstitutional deadlines. It manages the commissions' internal and external studies and organises the annual thesis competition.

1.4.2 Specific Policy Achievements in 2009

1.4.2.1 Support the CoR Commissions (MP 2009 Objective 1)

In 2009, the main activities of Units DTC.1 and DTC.2 focused on achieving the following objectives:

- Providing support services to the Members of the CoR, in particular through the organisation and the administrative management of commission and working group meetings, external conferences and other events;
- Assisting Members in the elaboration and processing of opinions and all other documents presented to the relevant commissions, in particular by providing Rapporteurs with expert knowledge in the fields covered by the commissions through policy analysis and relevant briefings. This also includes support in the political process within Bureau and Plenary.

Unit DTC.1 was responsible for organising and coordinating the work of the Commissions for European Governance and the Area of Freedom and Justice (CONST), for Sustainable Development (DEVE) and for Territorial Cohesion Policy (COTER). It assisted the members in drawing up 28 draft opinions adopted in commissions meetings (and 31 opinions adopted in a Plenary session) (CONST:7/7[1], DEVE: 16/16, COTER: 8/5) and in organising 15 commission meetings (3 external), 2 workshops and 6 external seminars and conferences. Unit DTC 1 also produced about 38 background memos including policy analyses.

Unit DTC.2, which covered the Commissions for External Relations and Decentralised Cooperation (RELEX), for Culture, Education and Research (EDUC) and for Economic and Social Policy (ECOS) was involved in drawing up 26 draft opinions adopted in commissions meetings (and 27 opinions adopted in a Plenary session) (RELEX: 8/7, EDUC: 09/10, ECOS: 11/9). The Unit organised 13 commission meetings (3 external), 6 seminars and conferences outside Brussels, 3 meetings of working groups (1 external), 2 meetings of Joint consultative committee, 1 forum, and 1 conference. The Unit has prepared CoR participation in 5 Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms in Brussels and took part in 3 local election observer missions. Unit DTC 2 also produced about 32 background memos including policy analyses.

To support the Commissions' work, **Unit DTC.3** carried out four "targeted consultations" (Bio-waste, Youth, Urban mobility and Strategic Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Assessment directives). Analysis notes were also produced to support the preparation of RELEX opinions "One year after Lisbon: the Africa-EU partnership at work," "the EU, Africa and China: towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation" and "Local authorities: actors for development," and to investigate the possibility of applying the EGTC to the neighbourhood policy (Eastern Partnership) and Third Countries.

[1] First number indicates opinions adopted in commission meetings., the second one the number of draft opinions adopted in the Plenaries.

A CoR Consultation of European Regions and Cities on a new strategy for Sustainable Growth was also carried out (80 contributions from 23 Member States, results presented at the 2009 Open Days, forwarded to all EU institutions and informing the CoR Opinion on post-2010 Lisbon Strategy.) It also launched the online Survey "The European Economic Recovery Plan in Regions and Cities: One Year On" (74 contributions from 20 MS, results presented in January 2010) and managed incoming spontaneous contributions in the framework of the Subsiiarity Monioring Network's (SMN) "open consultation." On 2nd December 2009, it organised the First Assises on decentralised cooperation for development. The event gathered more than 350 participants (including Local and Regional Representatives (LRA) from the EU and developing countries.)

1.4.2.2 Implementation of the Bureau Recommendations to improve the quality of CoR Opinions (MP 2009 Objective 3)

UNIT DTC.3 provided analyses of legislative/policy documents with respect to their compliance with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles and the concept of better regulation. It also prepared the Bureau documents related to administrative burdens and Subsidiarity.

It managed and consolidated the EGTC expert group, which presented a survey on EGTC, organised a workshop on EGTC during the 2009 Open Days gathering more than 150 participants and promoted an active strategy of participation for stakeholders and public (EGTC portal and functional e-mail on top of bilateral meetings and consultations.) The study "EGTC State of Play and Prospects" was published in 2009 and a fast-track report on "EGTC Developments on the Ground" was started in 2009, to be concluded and presented to COTER commission in February 2010.

The results of the 2008 Lisbon Monitoring Platform report were presented in 2009. Workshops were organised on territorial innovation policies and the future of the Lisbon Strategy. 2 workshops were also organised during the 2009 Open Days on the outcome of the consultation on the future of the Lisbon Strategy and good practices in the field of sustainable energy. Communication was also improved via migration of the Lisbon monitoring Platform (LMP) website (CCP) and its update and the dissemination of publications (e.g. two issues of Lisbon Brief.)

1.4.2.3 Contribute to the improvement of the CoR basic internal functioning rules (MP 2009 Objective 4)

The DTC, on the basis of its daily dealing with the rules governing the internal procedures, contributed to all working groups and expert panels dedicated to improve the CoR's internal organisation. One of the most important activities was the participation in the internal group to revise the rules of procedures. Many of the proposed changes had been discussed in the light of the ongoing work of the commissions, in order to rule out problems that might have arisen throughout the years.

1.4.2.4 Plan the CoR institutional and political work and organise and manage an active strategy of promotion and institutional and political follow-up to CoR opinions (MP 2009 Objectives 2 and)

Studies and theses competition

Out of a 570.000 € budget, Unit DTC.4 has finished two and published one study started at the end of 2008. It also launched **two** open calls for tenders for the conclusion of two study contracts under the 2008 Annual Research Programme: "Mobility of young volunteers across Europe" and "Adaptation to climate Change: Policy instruments to climate change in big European cities and metropolitan areas" (189.000 €.) **Five** open calls for tenders for framework contracts as support to the Commissions' activities were launched, in addition to **one** open call for tenders for the study contract "External Expertise supporting the CoR in improving its political impact" (56.400 €) and **one** open call for tenders for the study contract "After Lisbon, the role of regional and local authorities in a new Strategy for Sustainable Growth and Better Jobs" (ca 90.000 €), **24** purchase orders (specific contracts deriving from the framework contracts) were concluded to support the Commissions' activities. Finally, it launched and completed the 2009 Theses Competition.

Several cross-sector measures concerning studies and the theses competition were put in place (e.g. implementation of effective timeframes for call for tenders, involvement of the Commissions' Secretariats in the tenders' opening and evaluation, rationalisation of the studies' award procedure, establishment of monitoring tools for contracts' implementation, reorganisation of the studies website, issuance of an amended version of the rules governing the theses competition and standardisation of studies' distribution to members and the public, in particular through internal procedures, events and conferences linked to studies.

Legislative planning and follow-up to the consultative activities

The CoR legislative planning is based upon the strategic planning and programming cycle of the European Commission - as discussed with the Council and the European Parliament – and, more concretely, on the Annual Policy Strategy decision (APS). The process is intended to frame the CoR's advisory activities in accordance with its political priorities and the interinstitutional agenda. In 2009, some 350 legislative procedures and non-legislative acts were dealt with by the planning department. In the planning context, referrals were also allocated to the commissions, managed and monitored both within the Committee and by the other institutions.

The different work programmes of the CoR commissions (annual and ongoing) were also prepared following the APS. The need for the CoR to ensure a proper input of its opinions has required regular contacts with the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council, both at administrative and political level. The DTC constantly assessed the stages at which an activity of the CoR would show best results. Activities have gone beyond the adoption of the opinions to include seminars, conferences, participation in high level debates, expert groups, direct meetings etc.

The DTC has also created a three-fold structure for following up to the CoR's consultative activities. First, at the Commission level, a permanent agenda item for all commission meetings demands that members report back on activities they have undertaken on behalf of the CoR. This agenda item also allows the chair to inform members about all activities where the CoR has taken an active part and has been given the opportunity to communicate opinions. Second, special follow-up documents have been

introduced, which collect all activities and impact analyses concerning one opinion and are sent to the Rapporteur. Third, records are produced on the impact of the CoR's actions and related activities (the Commission's document on following up to opinions was used as starting point,) and passed on to the Rapporteurs together with an impact assessment sheet prepared by the DTC to ensure that they are personally informed of their opinions' impact on the EU decision-making process. A database of all CoR opinions and resolutions was also developed. It includes factual information on each opinion, its key points and also describes the impact achieved by CoR activities on that specific issue. This database can be accessed through TOAD and will shortly be available on the website.

1.4.2.5 Secure and improve cooperation with EU, national, regional or local institutions / bodies (MP 2009 Objective 6)

The DTC undertook the organisation of the inaugural meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM.) On 2nd December 2009, the First Assises on decentralised cooperation for development were also organised. The event took place on the CoR premise and gathered more than 350 participants, including LRA representatives from EU and developing countries. The Assises represented a unique window of opportunity for local and regional authorities to emerge as credible actors of development cooperation.

A strong and close cooperation has been fostered with DG AIDCO and DEV of the European Commission. The terms of reference for the web portal, the Atlas and the stock exchange for decentralised cooperation have been jointly drafted and these online tools will be hosted by the CoR. The DTC also participated in the working group of the EU-Africa joint strategy and supported the organisation of the first EU-Africa meeting on the "Local dimension of the Joint Africa-EU strategy." A meeting between CoR president and UN-Habitat Director was prepared together with a draft memorandum of understanding with UN-Habitat. A Report on the "Consultation of European Regions and Cities on a New Strategy for Sustainable Growth" was published as well as two Lisbon Brief in June and November and two brochures ("Acting now, looking beyond 2010" and "Fourth Territorial dialogue for Growth and Jobs.")

Cooperation with EC's services was strengthened on impact assessment and better regulation, two fields where relations were also improved with the EP. Coordination and support to the participation of the CoR as an observer in the High Level Group on Administrative Burden Reduction was granted. In May, the second part of the *4th Assises de la Subsidiarité* was organised in Milan, which focused on the application of subsidiarity and best practices in European regions and cities. The Subsidiarity Monitoring Network was further enlarged, and contacts were established with some targeted national parliaments (15). This has contributed to even closer cooperation with regional parliaments members of the SMN and/or members of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies.

Finally, the DTC participated in the European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC) meetings and contributed to its 2010 work programme.

Particularly politically important opinions adopted in 2009:

CONST CdR 89/2009 final – White Paper on Multilevel Governance (adopted in June 2009)

CONST CdR 201/2009 final – Opinion on The Stockholm Programme: Challenges and Opportunities in view of a new multi-annual Programme on the EU Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (adopted in October 2009)

COTER CdR 274/2008 final – Opinion on The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (adopted in February 2009)

COTER CdR 103/2009 final – Opinion Green Paper Ten-T : A policy review towards a better integrated transeuropean transport network at the service of the common transport policy (adopted in October 2009)

DEVE CdR 22/2009 final – Opinion on New impetus for halting biodiversity loss (adopted in June 2009)

DEVE CdR 218/2009 final – Opinion on Green Paper – Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and A sustainable future for aquaculture (adopted in December 2009)

DEVE CdR 72/2009 final – Opinion on Adaptation to Climate Change. (adopted in October 2009)

ECOS CdR 12/2009 final – Opinion on The European Economic Recovery Plan and the role of local and regional authorities (adopted in April 2009)

EDUC CdR 253/2008 final – Opinion on The Green Paper on Migration & Mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems (adopted in February 2009)

EDUC CdR 96/2009 final – Opinion on the Communication from the Commission on An updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (adopted in October 2009)

EDUC CdR 133/2009 final – Own-initiative opinion on Regional perspectives in developing media literacy and media education in EU educational policy (adopted in December 2009)

RELEX CdR 149/2009 final – Own-initiative opinion on An EU strategy for the Danube area (adopted in October 2009)

RELEX CdR 312/2008 final – Opinion on Local authorities: actors for development (adopted in April 2009)

RELEX CdR 78/2009 final – Opinion on The Role of local and regional authorities within the Eastern Partnership (adopted in April 2009)

Human resources of the Directorate for Consultative Works in 2009

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	34	19	53
Contractual agents	1	3	4
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts	2		2
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	37	22	59

1.5 Directorate B - Registry and Services to Members

In 2009 the Directorate for Registry and Services to Members was responsible for providing optimal support for CoR members in the performance of their political duties, mainly the preparation and organisation of Plenary Sessions and Bureau meetings and the logistics for their political discussions and the adoption of their opinions and resolutions.

The Directorate for Registry and Services to Members contributed to the preparation and smooth running of all CoR meetings and notably to the success of the Prague Summit, the Open Days, 7 Bureau meetings and 5 Plenary Sessions (in total more than 2900 meetings and events). The directorate organised the activities of the Contact Group CoR-Congress of the Council of Europe, supported the work of the 8 interregional groups and rendered services to the national delegations, in particular in preparing the change of the CoR mandate in 2010. The coordination of CoR IT projects and the translation of documents was reinforced by the active networking with other services. One of the most important IT projects was the improvement of the members' portal giving electronic accessibility to documents related to CoR meetings. In order to strengthen the planning, management and monitoring of the most important budget lines linked to members' political activities the Directorate has established a new central financial service in the directorate.

In 2009 the Legal Service, which provides advice and opinions to CoR members and the other CoR services, had the important task to coordinate the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the CoR.

In 2009, the main activities of the Directorate for Registry and Services to the Members were carried out by three Units:

- Registry, Assistance to the Members and to National Delegations;
- Legal Service; and
- Internal Services.

1.5.1 Unit "Registry, Assistance to Members and to National Delegations"

The Unit "Registry, Assistance to Members and National Delegations" (hereafter "Registry") is responsible for organising the Plenary Sessions and preparing the Bureau meetings, for providing services to the CoR members and maintaining the contacts with the coordinators of the national delegations, the regional offices, associations and other European institutions. The responsibilities of the Unit also include the coordination of documents to be translated, the publication in the Official Journal of the acts adopted by the CoR, IT coordination, financial services to the Members and the management of the CoR's library. In 2009, the Unit has focused its efforts on achieving Objectives 1-4 of the Management Plan 2009. As the Financial Services Unit (Objective 5) was part of the Registry Unit until 1 October 2009, the achievements of this Unit will also be analysed below.

Objective 1 (MP 2009): To plan, organise and manage Bureau meetings and Plenary Sessions in accordance with CoR political priorities and in respect of the EU institutional calendar.

The Registry planned and coordinated Bureau meetings and Plenary Sessions, in close cooperation with the Joint Services and the services of the European Commission and the European Parliament (Action 1.1, 1.2, 1.4 and 1.5). During 2009, the Registry and the Internal Services Unit shared the responsibility of organising 7 Bureau meetings and 5 Plenary Sessions. In 2009 one Plenary Session was organised in the Charlemagne building of the European Commission and four at the headquarters of the European Parliament (of which two in the Parliament's hemicycle and two in the new Joszef Antall building). The Unit also made a considerable contribution to the organisation and success of the Prague Summit (5 - 6 March 2009) and the OPEN DAYS (5-8 October 2009).

Objective 2(MP 2009): To oversee the preparation, production and quality of the documents for the Bureau meetings and Plenary Sessions.

To fuel debates and contribute to the CoR's mission, the Registry Unit handled 380 documents which were translated and then sent, in all the official languages (except Irish), to the members of the CoR (Action 1.3 and 2.1). At the end of each Bureau meeting and Plenary Session, a follow-up to the main decisions of the Bureau (since the 91st Bureau), a summary of decisions and a set of minutes are drawn up. The Unit formally dispatched the opinions adopted at the various Plenary Sessions to the Community Institutions and also ensured that they reached the authorities concerned by the decisions. At the 5 Plenary Sessions held in 2009, 61 documents were adopted, of which 59 opinions and 2 reports.

A relatively new (since 2008) task of the Registry concerns the coordination of translation (Action 2.2). In the beginning of 2009 a filtering system for non-priority translation requests was introduced, which proved very effective during the year. A long consultation process about a deontology code concerning the translation – with the participation of the internal translation network - was carried out and resulted in the adoption of this code by the end of the year. The CoR Contact point was also responsible for several analyses and reports with regard to statistics and qualitative characteristics of

the translation input and output. All these actions were carried out in cooperation and coordination with the EESC Contact Point and the Directorate for Translation.

Objective 3(MP 2009): To render an efficient service to the Members with an expedient and correct flow of information concerning their rights and obligations and the working procedures of the Committee.

A large part of the Registry's assistance to Members (Action 3.1) involves managing and monitoring of all data concerning the 344 members and their alternates (AGORA database, Vade-Mecum, badges, etc.) especially with regard to resignations and nominations. The Registry maintains close and regular contacts with the Council, with the coordinators of the CoR national delegations, with the Permanent Representations and the national governments of the Member States in order to be able to keep the Members' data up to date.

During 2009, the Registry handled 155 cases of change of mandate, of which 80 resignations/losses of mandate/deaths and 75 nominations, while at the same time monitoring the enforcement of the Nice Treaty. The Registry was also responsible for issuing diplomatic passports, in accordance with the privileges and immunities of the European Communities, to the CoR members. In 2009, the Unit dealt with 47 of these requests.

The Registry Unit was also responsible for the development of the Vade-Mecum for Members (last issue in April 2009). During 2009 the lay-out and contents of the Vade-Mecum have been revised which resulted in the new Guide for Members which was first published and distributed in October 2009. Furthermore, the Unit developed and distributed to the CoR Members the calendar of meetings for 2010. Finally, the Registry ensured the publication of the documents adopted by the CoR in the Official journal.

Priority-setting and coordination of IT projects (Action 3.2) took place in various formats such as the Directors' meeting, the ICT Steering Committee and several User Groups. In addition a special working group on CoR websites and networks proposed recommendations as to how the CoR website should further develop and how the governance of websites and networks should be organised in the future.

In cooperation with the IT services and the Directorate of Consultative Works a number of improvements on the Members' Portal were realised. Since April 2009 all members and alternates get automatically a user name and password for the Portal, ending a policy where members had to explicitly request access to the Portal. As a result the sending of documents by international express mail service was phased out. Furthermore an online system for vote delegation and confirmation of presence was introduced. The full impact of these changes will fully materialise with the new mandate.

In the course of 2009 the library (Action 3.3) started implementing the library development plan which had been proposed in 2008. The first steps towards an electronic library have been set by

offering an electronic access to about 50 periodical subscriptions. In order to enhance its visibility and offer a supplementary service, the library also created a lounge area next to the cafeteria of the Jacques Delors building where 20 international newspapers are made available to Members and Staff.

Objective 4(MP 2009): To professionally assist the national delegations, the interregional groups, the contact group CoR-Council of Europe and other representatives of Europe's local and regional authorities.

Moreover, the Registry organised two meetings between the CoR President and the Presidents of national delegations. The Registry Unit is the main point of contact between the CoR administration and the coordinators of the national delegations (Action 4.2). In 2009, the Registry organised 11 meetings with the national coordinators, two of which were external. Key Bureau and Plenary Session items as well as procedural, organisational and logistical issues were discussed. In addition, at the request of coordinators, a meeting with the head of the President's Private Office was held. The Registry also followed national delegations' initiatives and consultations leading to the formal recognition of the position of national coordinators in the CoR's Rules of Procedure.

The Registry Unit was also responsible for managing data from regional or local representation offices in Brussels and for updating the list of offices published on the CoR website. The Registry organised 5 preparatory meetings, one before each Plenary Session, in order to inform the representatives of the regional offices in Brussels about the content, organisation and specific features of each session.

Cooperation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe took place in a number of different forms. The Presidents of CoR and Congress signed a renewed Cooperation Agreement in November 2009 at the occasion of their annual coordination meeting. The CoR-Congress Contact Group met in March and September 2009, focussing this year on the "Eastern Partnership" and on the fight against corruption at local and regional level. The cooperation on various issues of joint interest, such as election monitoring, also took place between CoR commissions and Congress committees.

The Registry Unit was also responsible for assisting the secretariats of the CoR's interregional groups, whose number rose to eight with the Bureau decisions approving the creation of the Danube and the North Sea - English Channel interregional groups in January 2009 (R/CdR 402/2008 pt 11) and the Automotive Crisis interregional group in April 2009 (R/CdR 40/2009 pt 10). The Registry ensured that meeting rooms and, if possible, interpretation were provided to interregional groups. Altogether interregional groups held 18 meetings in 2009 at the CoR premises. In addition, they organised seminars and conferences at the CoR.

Objective 5(MP 2009): To assist Members and other Services of the CoR in all financial matters in meeting related expenditure.

For the largest part of 2009, the Financial Service to Members was part of the Registry Unit. As of 1 October 2009, the service became an independent entity directly under the responsibility of the Director. In 2009, the financial service to members was responsible for the preparation of payments under 7 different budget lines: 1000 (salaries, allowances and payments), 1004 (travel costs, meeting allowances and associated expenditure), 105 (courses for Members), 1422 (experts and speakers), 2541 (observers), 2546 (reception and representation costs), 2604 (Official Journal).

As of 1 October 2009, the management of another 10 budget lines that were previously managed by the Internal Services Unit, was transferred to the Financial Service. These are: 1402 (interpreter services), 2000 (rent for meeting services), 2140 (technical equipment and services for meetings), 2160 (vehicles), 230 (stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables), 232 (legal costs and damages), 238 (other administrative expenditure), 2540 (miscellaneous expenditure on internal meetings), 2622 (documentation and library expenditure), 2624 (expenditure on archive resources).

All together, the Financial Service has prepared and completed approximately 5550 payments in 2009.

1.5.2 The Legal Service

The Legal Service has fulfilled the objectives set out for 2009 and has continued to advise members, management and staff of the CoR on a wide range of legal matters. The Legal Service has been consulted on more than 200 legal issues covering a large variety of questions, most of which were related to calls for tender and contracts and staff matters.

Furthermore, the Legal Service has revised parts of the internal legal framework as foreseen in the management plan for 2009, such as the Regulation on representation expenses of CoR Members. expenses. The Legal Service contributed also significantly to several other regulations (Rules of Procedure; administrative enquiries; harassment; etc.) or main documents (Guide to missions; Guide for Members; Guide for Newcomers; Cooperation Agreement between the Committees in the field of enquiries; etc.). The achievements of this Unit will be analysed below.

Objective 6(MP 2009): To avoid legal difficulties, complaints and litigious cases and, if not possible, to provide an appropriate solution.

As regards requests and appeals under Articles 24 and 90 of the Staff Regulations, the Legal Service has continued to give legal opinions - sometimes on very complex and detailed issues - and advise the Staff Unit and the AIPN (action 6.1).

One case, introduced several years ago, is still pending before the Belgian jurisdiction and several cases introduced before 2009 at the level of the Civil Service Tribunal were definitively closed in 2009. No more appeals were lodged in 2009 against the Committee: this very good result should also be considered as the consequence of the efforts of the Legal Service – despite a limited number of

people – to strive to avoid complaints, in particular by having synergy and regular contacts with the concerned Directorates (action 6.2).

In addition, the Legal Service has handled with the services concerned four complaints to the European Ombudsman of which two are still pending (action 6.2).

Objective 7(MP 2009): To foresee the implications of the Lisbon Treaty.

The main task for 2009 has been the revision of the Rules of Procedure of the CoR in which the Legal Service has played a significant role as coordinator, and as a commission's secretariat. In this regard, at the end of 2008, the Legal Service worked on the preparation of relevant documents for the meetings of the internal working group composed of representatives of the secretariats of the political groups and the different directorates. The internal working group finalised its work in 2009, which was submitted to the ad hoc commission for the revision of the Rules of Procedure constituted by the Bureau in October 2008. The ad hoc commission met four times in 2009 and has conducted its work transparently, inviting all the members of the Committee of the Regions, the political groups and coordinators of national delegations to contribute to this revision of the Rules of Procedure, meaning in practice that a lot of contributions were received and analysed by the Legal Service. The internal rules were adopted during the Plenary Session of December 2009 and were published in January 2010. The Legal Service has worked also on the updating of the internal publication consisting of a new version of the internal rules and its guide in all the official languages (action 7.1).

Objective 8(MP 2009): To strengthen synergies on legal issues and to improve visibility on legal matters.

The Legal Service has delivered legal advice on a significant number of files relating to calls for tenders and contracts for the both committees. It also has drafted certain standard documents and published them on the Intranet in both English and French (action 8.1).

Due to the leave of the Data Protection Officer, the Head of Unit of the Legal Service has replaced the former DPO. All the notifications received (flexitime time, partial time, etc.) – in accordance with Regulation 45/2001 – have been processed. Moreover, the DPO has given advice on various data protection related issues when consulted by different units and staff members (action 8.2).

1.5.3 Unit Internal Services

The role of this Unit is to provide all the technical, financial and logistical resources necessary for the organisation of meeting and other events in and outside Brussels as well as internal services (transportation of goods or persons, distribution of internal and external mails, taking charge of visitors at the main entrance hall). The unit management launched a reflexion in 2009 about performance indicators. Each sector has taken the opportunity of the simplification process in order to modernise the various workflows through new IT developments.

Objective 9(MP 2009): To provide all the technical, financial and logistical resources necessary for the organisation of meetings and other events in and outside Brussels (included interpretation services following the CoR linguistic policy)

In 2009 the CoR meetings service has developed its internal procedures to work more efficiently with its main stakeholders. Following an open information meeting organised in March 2009, new control measures were proposed and discussed to ensure efficient and timely treatment of requests. To further maximise service efficiency, written manuals of procedures were elaborated or updated for all three sectors of the meetings service – coordination, multimedia technicians and meetings ushers. The meetings service has strengthened its cooperation with our key partners in the European Parliament and European Commission's DG Interpretation. The EP, however, is currently not in a position to commit itself to a written cooperation agreement with the CoR (action 9.1)

In the technical area, both the EESC and the CoR have experienced problems in execution of the maintenance contract with the current supplier. In 4th quarter of 2009 a procedure for selection of the new supplier has been initiated and will continue in 2010 (action 9.2). A project to upgrade the conference rooms in JDE building has been put on hold in 2009 due to lack of resources and priority given to the maintenance contract (action 9.3). On the political agenda, the meetings service actively contributed to the success of statutory meetings including plenary sessions as well as other major events organised by the CoR in 2009 – notably the Prague Summit and the Open Days.

Some key figures:

- Number of meetings and events for 2009: 2913 - An increase of 5,7 % compared to 2008.
- Number of meetings and events with interpretation: 545
- Number of meetings outside the CoR headquarters: 90
- Budget 2009: 7 budgetary lines – 425 financial files – 59 engagements – 365 invoices for a total of 3.486.107 euros from which, for the Interpretation budget line (1402), there were 73 financial files - 9 engagements - 28 invoices for a total of 3.137.096.53 euros

Objective 10(MP 2009): To provide internal services (transportation of goods or persons, distribution of internal and external mails, taking charge of visitors)

Mail distribution: The service introduced in 2008 and 2009 a new circuit for distribution of documents and new working procedures. A pilot project on the distribution of mail has been started and evaluated (action 10.1).

Transport service: Two new drivers have been recruited and two new cars have been purchased. A rotational system will be introduced as from March 2010 (action 10.1).

Reception: interim resources were hired and the cooperation with EESC was reinforced.

Financial resources: The service is following the launching of new framework contracts for the leasing of cars, for fuel delivery and for uniforms, also taking into account the creation of a financial cell in the directorate (action 10.2).

Human resources of Directorate B in 2009

In line with the human resources policy of the CoR and the Statute, most recruitments in 2009 were contract agents (FG I). The Directorate welcomed six new agents. Two colleagues requested part time.

Due to the leave of the Data Protection Officer, the Head of Unit of the Legal Service has replaced the former DPO.

The introduction of flexitime in the various sectors might also be an opportunity to evaluate if internal processes should be revised.

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	14	30	44
Contractual agents		15	15
Interim personnel		1	1
External contractual staff			
Seconded National experts			
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	14	46	61

1.6 Directorate for Communication, Press and Protocol

Introduction

DCPP policy achievements in 2009 have been developed in the framework of CoR political objectives, the consultative work and activities of the Members and the CoR President.

Assessment of the year 2009

1.6.1 Relations with the Media (MP 2009 Objectives 2, 3, 4, 7)

The Directorate continued to develop relations with the Press in a variety of ways:

- 145 press releases were issued and 215 news 'highlights' posted on the CoR website. All the press releases were targeted: some at a wide audience, including the 1,500 European and national journalists based in Brussels, and other media across Europe. Others were, depending on the subject, specifically targeted at regional media (for example, the constituency of a

rapporteur) or the specialised press. This approach is reflected in the sharp reduction in the number of press releases compared to 2008, when each rapporteur, by definition, was given a press release. Communication activities have become more selective: while always offering each rapporteur the opportunity for press coverage, however not always through a press release – through encouraging them to meet with journalists, to take part in a TV or radio interview, or to author an article in the specialised press, among many options.

- 'Members press releases', written by rapporteurs for their local press, with the support of the CoR press team, were introduced and proved highly successful.
- The CoR database was further consolidated. By the end of 2009, it included the contact details for over 8.400 regional journalists.
- 383 regional journalists were invited to Brussels to report on the plenary sessions, meetings of the commissions and other events. These visits, and other coverage, resulted in over 400 articles in the CoR Press Book. (This figure is lower than the actual figure of published articles as a complete tally across Europe and world-wide media is not possible).
- 47 journalists and editors of the publications of European and national associations of regional and local authorities were invited to the CoR on the occasion of the 5th Forum on communication (20-22 April 2009).
- The most successful media event of the year was the 2009 OPEN DAYS, co-organised with DG REGIO for which the CoR invited 124 journalists. The more than 280 journalists that covered the event, generated over 500 media mentions in about 30 countries.
- The monthly e-newsletter has been further refined with a new layout and sections, reflecting the content produced for the territorial pages of the website, another new development for 2009. The e-newsletter is now published in nine linguistic versions (EN, FR, DE, ES, IT, PL, RO, EL, BE). It is tailored to the regional/local media and other stakeholders in the biggest Member States. In total, the e-newsletters are disseminated to approximately 8.300 readers every month. The DCPP continued to publish its printed newsletter, Regions & Cities of Europe, with five issues published in the course of the year and a print run of 25,000.

1.6.2 Audiovisual (MP 2009 Objectives 2, 3, 4)

In the audiovisual area, the Unit Media, Communications and Associations filmed all major events at the CoR, notably plenary sessions, structured dialogues and forums, and produced video reports for Europe by Satellite, which is used free-of-charge by TVs across the world and redistributed by the European Broadcasting Union through its own network.

All video reports produced by the CoR are freely available in Windows Media format on the CoR's website: http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/press/audiovisual.htm

The Photo library was reshuffled and streamlined. The technical specification for the new photo-library (integrated in "sharepoint" and the upcoming profile centre) were finalised.

Several bigger projects were implemented in the audiovisual area during 2009:

- Each plenary is now featured in at least one thematic video, based on the main theme of debate; all clips are fully edited, including intro and conclusion and subtitled in English.
- A TV studio was set up for the 2009 OPEN DAYS event, this time offering satellite transmissions and live reporting. It was used by broadcasters to produce talk-shows and interviews, while camera and video editing crews used it to assist visiting TV journalists in producing their reports on OPEN DAYS. Studio was used extensively (more than 90% of available time booked) and more than 20 live transmissions were produced).
- The Summit of Prague in March, attracted significant TV coverage which was assisted according to technical specifications previously set;
- A number of institutional products were produced (15th anniversary clip, Copenhagen Conference etc.)
- A video campaign for the "Covenant of Mayors" was launched, with messages from the CoR president and relevant rapporteurs. All videos are now available for viewing on the Covenant of Mayors website.
- "Business as usual" activities (plasma screens, image libraries) were streamlined, production times were reduced. Further efforts in this area are also in the pipeline.

1.6.3 Internet and Intranet (MP 2009 Objectives 2, 3, 4)

Internet

The CoR internet site underwent a period of transition in 2009, with the introduction of a new concept based on country-specific news (the so-called 'territorial pages' introduced first to highlight the European elections but then developed to cover news, views and interviews from CoR members from all 27 member states, as well as related news from regions, cities and local authorities in those countries, all from the European angle / perspective.

The first of several thematic sections was launched – on climate change, to reflect the CoR's work in the development of the Covenant of Mayors and its presence at the Copenhagen climate change talks in December.

An editorial board was also established to discuss these and other content-related changes.

Due to technical reasons related to the change of the website, detailed visitors statistics cannot be provided. The overview of website publications regarding Press Releases and Highlights is as follows:

Item	2006	2007	2008	2009
Press Releases	149	165	207	145
Highlights	181	236	245	215

Intranet

The intranet is increasingly successful with staff in the CoR, with more and more requests for updates being submitted to the web team. In order to increase the performance of the intranet a user survey has been launched.

1.6.4 Relations with associations of local and regional authorities (MP 2009 Objective 7, 6)

The follow-up of the co-operation with the European and national associations of local and regional authorities was also part of the activities undertaken by the Directorate.

The service responsible for the relations with the associations prepared and organised 3 meetings of the Secretaries Generals of the European associations and the Secretary General of the CoR. Moreover, the service organised and prepared the participation of the President of the CoR, the Secretary General and CoR Members to meetings and other events organised by European/ national associations.

Information stands were organised during five general assembly meetings of European associations in the framework of the 11 action plans with selected associations. At the request of the Rapporteurs, 21 consultations of stakeholders were organised during the elaboration of their opinion.

Concerning the Structured Dialogue meetings, there was one thematic session organised with Commissioner Joe Borg and a general "Structured dialogue" meeting on the Commission legislative and work programme for 2009 with the Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström. A detailed report on these meetings can be found as an interactive webpage on te CoR website.

1.6.5 OPEN DAYS 2009 (MP 2009 Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

With more that 6,000 participants from about 40 countries including all EU member states, candidate countries and Brazil, China, Japan, Russia, Ukraine and USA, the OPEN DAYS were jointly organised for the 7th time by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Directorate-General for Regional Policy of the European Commission (DG REGIO) as well as 213 regions and cities and about 50 enterprises, international organisations and banks. The event's opening session focused on the impact of the economic crisis on regions and cities. It was addressed by the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso and the Swedish Deputy Prime Minister Maud Olofsson. Coinciding for the first time with the CoR's plenary session and a meeting of the EP's Regional Development Committee, the event attracted about 280 journalists from 30 countries, a fact which led to more than 500 articles and featured on 'regional issues in European perspective' in regional newspapers and local TV channels. Again, the OPEN DAYS continued to be one of the biggest and influential events organised by the EU institutions in Brussels, a fact reflected by its nomination for the 'best event 2009' awards by the Brussels International Tourism and Conference agency.

Alongside the Brussels seminars and workshops, 228 "Europe in my Region/City" events took place in 32 European countries. Throughout October around 25,000 people from European, national, and regional public entities, financial and business representatives, NGOs, media, students and the general public attended these events. Organised by the regions and cities, partners of the OPEN DAYS 2009 and other European organisations, the local activities focused on 'restoring growth and innovation', 'territorial cooperation' and 'fighting climate change'

The OPEN DAYS 2009 website registered more than half a million visits between February and November. In addition, a limited number of paper publications, including proceedings of 160 pages with reports form all workshops, were produced and distributed.

1.6.6 'European Summit of Regions and Cities' in Prague (MP 2009 Objectives 1, 3, 4)

On 5 and 6 March 2009, the CoR organised together with the City of Prague the fourth 'European Summit of Regions and Cities' in the Czech capital. 600 elected representatives of the regional and local level sent a strong political message to the Heads of State of Government, that Europe's regions and cities matter in particular as regards the fight against the economic crisis and the implementation of European responses to it. The Summit was addressed by the Czech Prime Minister and then President of the Council of the EU, Mirek Topolánek, the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, Pavel Bém, the Lord Mayor of the Capital City of Prague, and President Luc van den Brande.

During the Summit, a major consultation among regions and cities of Europe on the future of the Lisbon Strategy was launched. President Barroso welcomed the initiative and highlighted the key role of local and regional authorities. Speakers used the Summit to underline that a stronger Europe would also need the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, an ambitious reform of the Community budget, a renewed Lisbon strategy after 2010, and a strong EU regional policy taking into account the economic crisis. Regarding this reform of EU cohesion policy post-2013, the Summit provided the political platform for a first high-level debate with then Regional Policy Commissioner Danuta Hübner on the results of the consultation on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.

Focusing on the upcoming European elections in June 2009, the Summit ended with a live TV debate between representatives from four European political parties. It underlined that a stronger and more democratic Europe needs not only the support of all layers of government but also, and most importantly, the participation of citizens. President Luc Van den Brande announced the start of a local and regional information campaign on the European elections and invited all regional and local elected politicians to engage in this campaign. The final Summit's conclusions, which were endorsed by several European associations, took on board the richness of the debates held.

1.6.7 CoR at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference(MP 2009 Objectives 1, 3, 4)

On 16 December, the CoR organised a 'side event' at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, which formed part of the events programme of the EU institutions. It brought together

200 decision makers from EU institutions and from European and US local authorities to demonstrate: (1) the commitment of regions and cities to achieve sustainable energy targets and adaptation to the effects of climate change; (2) how local authorities can mobilise citizens to adopt a 'green' lifestyle and to contribute to climate protection at individual level; (3) how EU and US towns and cities can work together to share best practices in the fight against climate change. Among the keynote speakers, there were the current and former Presidents of the Committee of the Regions Luc Van den Brande and Michel Delebarre, the President of the US Conference of Mayors, and other members of the CoR and European associations. The CoR co-operation on climate change will be followed up by an active involvement in the EU Covenant of Mayors and by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the US Conference of Mayors scheduled for 2010.

1.6.8 Forum events in 2009 (MP 2009 Objectives 1, 3, 4, 7)

In 2009, there were three 'Forum' events organised in conjunction with the CoR's Plenary Sessions in April, June and December. Attended by a total of approximately 1,000 participants, the events were accompanied by publications, exhibitions and press programmes.

In co-operation with and supported by the European Commission, DG Education and Culture, the CoR organised on 20 and 21 April a Forum on **'Europe's creative regions and cities'**. The event took place within the framework of the "2009 – the European Year of Innovation and Creativity" and was based on an active involvement of the CoR Members, who were invited by the President to nominate '100 young creative talents' from their constituencies, which more than 200 of them did. The opening session was addressed by President Luc Van den Brande, the then Commissioner Jan Figel and various academics and professionals with expertise in creative industries and regional innovation. Attended by 350 participants, the event was combined with an interactive exhibition, which helped the '100 young creative talents' from 24 countries to exchange experiences. The field trips to selected 'creative spots' in Brussels and Leuven were also organised with the aim of demonstrating the importance of innovation as a driver and promoter of economic development in the regions.

On 16 June 2009, the Committee of the Regions organised a Forum on the **'Regional and local dimension of the Eastern Partnership'** (EaP). Attended by about 200 participants from all over Europe, the event provided an opportunity to share experiences and to encourage local projects among representatives of EaP countries, businesses and non-government organisations, associations and EU institutions. During the event's opening, President Luc Van den Brande, the Permanent Representative of Poland to the EU, Jan Tombiński, Anders Henriksson, Representative of the Swedish Presidency and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and Janos Herman, Special Advisor on the EaP at the European Commission's Directorate-General for External Relations highlighted the political approach of the EaP involving the local and regional levels of government and administration. The latter aspect was deepened during a panel debate, while two workshops and interventions by CoR members, representatives from international organisations, academia and civil society in the afternoon elaborated on 'territorial co-operation and economic development' and 'institution-building and good governance'.

Based on several Opinions of the CoR as regards decentralised co-operation in the field of development policy, the first **'Assises of Decentralised Cooperation'** were co-organised by the CoR and the European Commission's DG for External Relations on 2 December. 300 representatives of local and regional authorities from the EU and developing countries used this opportunity for political dialogue with the EU institutions on co-operation for development. The event aimed to raise awareness of the effectiveness of development aid and the involvement of local and regional authorities into the development and co-operation process. The 'Assises' were developed by the DTC and structured around an opening session, four thematic roundtables and a final closing session focusing on: (1) Local and regional authorities for greater aid effectiveness; (2) Local and regional governance; (3) Access to energy for sustainable development; (4) Contribution of local and regional authorities towards the Millennium Development Goals: health services. The 'Assises' saw the launch of the 'Atlas of Decentralised Cooperation', an electronic tool that maps projects and aid contributions from local and regional authorities in the EU and their counterparts in developing countries.

1.6.9 "The Meeting Place of Europe's Regions and Cities" – conferences/exhibitions (MP 2009 Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

106 **conferences** organised in 2009 in CoR premises. The "Meeting Place" conferences usually are thematically focused events involving one or several regions or other organisations. The majority of organisers were from regional and local authorities (40%), followed by the associations and NGOs (25%) and private sector (15%). The CoR was actively represented in 46% of the conferences and interpretation services were provided for 44% of the events. For a significant number of these events, press releases were issued.

Seventeen **exhibitions** visited by 3,300 participants were organised in 2009. The majority of the requests came from regional offices located in Brussels, from members of the CoR and the European Parliament, Permanent Representations and Council Presidencies. Audiences visiting the exhibitions consist of elected regional and local representatives, politicians and national ministers, as well as of representatives of cultural associations and others.

1.6.10 Visitors (MP 2009 Objectives 5, 6)

The Committee of the Regions welcomed 16,895 visitors in 2009, divided into 607 groups and coming from 72 countries: 195 groups were composed of university students and pupils, 98 of politicians and 86 of officials. In 2009, most visitors' groups came from Germany (136), France (86), Italy (37) and the Netherlands (36). All group visits are evaluated through standardised forms given to the representatives of the groups in order to find out whether the visit and its organisation were appreciated and to generate suggestions or comments. In May 2009, the existing paper forms were amended and replaced by online forms (in English, French and German), which are sent by email to the group representatives. By online evaluation, the response rate went up from 24 to 34%. The online form distinguishes between organisation, arrival, infrastructure, speaker for which 1-5 points can be given.

1.6.11 Inter-institutional Open Doors Day in Brussels (MP 2009 Objective 2)

The 2009 edition of the inter-institutional Open Doors Day chose 'intercultural dialogue' as its main theme. More than 6,000 visitors were welcomed in the CoR premises. Grouped in six 'thematic villages', a total of 60 regions (54 in 2008) accepted an invitation to take part and exhibited with stands – including the presentation of brochures, regional specialities, music and dance. Stands were also provided by the political groups of the CoR.

1.6.12 Publications (MP 2009 Objectives 2, 8)

The Newsletter of the Committee of the Regions, *Regions and Cities of Europe* was edited in seven languages (EN, FR, DE, IT, ES, PL, NL), with a total of 124.000 copies.

For distribution to the general public, the CoR issued a new edition of the folder *"Keys Dates"*. A brochure highlighted the political priorities of the Committee of the Regions during the Swedish Presidency of the Union and another publication explained the political achievements of the CoR's President, Luc Van den Brande, during his mandate. The brochure *Building Europe in Partnership* settled out the CoR's views on major European policy issues that the European Institutions have to address in their upcoming five-year term of office.

Two publications presented reports on main events organised by the Committee of the Regions during the year: the Summit of *Regions and Cities for Europe,* held in Prague in March, and the *European Week of Regions and Cities - Open Days*, that took place in Brussels in October. Two brochures were dedicated to the structured dialogue sessions.

For the Lisbon Strategy, the CoR published *The consultation of European Regions and Cities on a New Strategy for Sustainable Growth*, a report summarising the contributions to the consultation launched in March in view of the 2010 Spring European Council. At the occasion of the CoR's participation to the UN Conference on climate change in December (COP 15), the brochure *Regions and cities on the road to Copenhagen,* presenting the CoR's point of view, was edited. In the institutional field, an *ad hoc* brochure explained the important CoR's opinion on *the White Paper on multi-level governance* and the first issue of the Review *The Cahiers of the CoR* was launched.

In 2009 the Committee of the Regions published ten *Studies* on different topics covered by its political activity.

Finally, the brochure *Communication tools for the members of the CoR* presented all the support tools and communication services available to CoR's members.

1.6.13 Financial management

In 2009 the Directorate managed 5 communication related budget lines (publication, promotion, publicity, periodicals, archives, etc) totalling EUR 1,922,262.00.

Important financial means were allocated to audio visual expenditure in accordance with the priorities set out in the framework of the communication strategy for the CoR for the year 2009. In particular, certain exceptional activities were carried out this year including the Prague Summit and the European Parliamentary elections in addition to the new edition of Open Days held between the 5 and 8 October 2009. The execution rate on all the budget lines came up to 98-100%.
Separately from this amount the directorate administratively managed budget line 264 for CoR members' political and information activities. The decision for the credit usage came from political groups. In 2009 all the political groups` and independent members were allocated the total of EUR 408 000.00. An amount of EUR 20 000 has been transferred from article 264 to budget line 1004.

The four political groups agreed to propose a joint action for an amount of EUR 20,500.00 - preparation of the briefcase/box containing all the tools needed for new CoR members' "first steps", with a view to the new five-year term of office. This communication "toolbox" will be distributed to all members attending the February 2010 inaugural session and subsequently to all other members, including alternates.

This commitment was increased by the allocations of political groups not used for their own projects. As a result, the amount of EUR 56,228.17 was allocated to this project. By the end of the year the execution rate reached 97% with the organisation of a total of 14 activities/events.

1.6.14 Optimisation of archives, transparency-access to documents and mail services

To ensure an optimal preservation and easy communication of COR Historical Archives, 1704548 pages have been digitized/migrated from 2006 to 2009 (66400 in 2009)including: former Presidents Archives, consultative and own-initiative work (opinions, etc.) and Committee's constituent bodies work.

To guarantee the preservation of born digital records, a prospective study for the implementation of an Electronic records Management System (ERMS) was launched by the end of 2009.

- 699 files were transferred from COR General Secretariat Departments to the Archives Department.
- 65 requests to access COR documents were placed within the framework of EU transparency policy.
- Official relations with member states, regional and local actors and associations, other European institutions, international organisations, and citizens have been reflected by the number of registered letters: 3.735 ingoing and 2.774 outgoing.
- 651 Administrative Decisions and Legal Acts have been registered.

Conclusion

All the above-mentioned developments and activities were made in order to better address the selected communication priorities in a comprehensive, integrated and local approach in the spirit of

"Communicating Europe : going local.". Work has consistently advanced towards the strategic objectives set in the Management Plan 2009, fulfilling the expected results and supported by a professional approach across the Directorate.

Human resources of the Directorate in 2009

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	15	24	39
Contractual agents	1	5	6
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts	1		1
Other outside personnel			
Total	**17**	**29**	**46**

1.7 Directorate for Administration and Finance

The Directorate for Administration and Finance is the administrative arm of the CoR's Secretariat General. It therefore serves the institution, its Members and also the staff of the Secretariat General. By dealing as effectively and efficiently as possible with administrative budgetary and staffing matters the directorate strives to contribute albeit indirectly to the political objectives of the institution.

The directorate's mission consists mainly of:

- preparing the budget for the institution and managing relations with the budgetary authority implementing the budget and preparing budget-related information for the Bureau and for the Discharge Authority, the Court of Auditors and the Commission;
- managing the institution's staff: recruitment, career development and career guidance, setting of statutory entitlements, remunerations, working conditions, vocational training, social initiatives etc.;
- preparing and monitoring the internal rules governing the administrative running of the Committee, and keeping them up to date;
- supervising and, if need be, drafting the necessary measures for keeping the institution in line with the provisions of the Financial Regulation and the internal control environment;
- reporting to the Court of Auditors and being responsible for the planning and reporting cycle, principally for drafting the CoR's Annual Activity Report and Management Plan;
- Managing the CoR verification cell, missions service, and the CoR's Infrastructure Liaison Office

The Directorate is made up of four units: General Administration, Personnel, Career Development & Training and Budget/Finance.

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 1:

Secure the effective and efficient use of the institution's budgetary resources [recurring objective]

1.7.1 The Budget and Management of Financial Resources Unit

1.7.1.1 The Budget service

Main actions were the establishment of the 2009 budget and the launching of the 2010 budget (action 1.2 of the 2009 Management Plan). As part of the budgetary procedure for 2009 and respecting the delegation decisions, meetings were held with managing services (Directors and Authorising officers by sub-delegation) to discuss the budget request details and previous year's budget execution. Close co-operation with the EESC was necessary, given the common management of the Joint Services, which employs a very significant number of the staff of the two committees and accounts for a considerable percentage of their respective financial resources.

The CoR 2009 initial Budget increased by 7.4% compared to 2008 and reached EUR 76.5 million. 10 new posts were obtained in the 2009 Budget.

As part of the budgetary procedure, analyses and reports were prepared to facilitate decisions, (action 1.3 of the 2009 Management Plan), among them:

- the reports and background notes requested by the Budgetary Authority, i.e. EP's Budgets Committee and the Budget Committee of the Council (also refers to the Action 1.4);
- several information campaigns were organized targeting the budgetary authority, financial actors, management, policy groups and members, with the aim of ensuring that the budgetary procedure went along smoothly (also refers to the Action 1.4).
- The 2010 Budget procedure was launched already at the end of 2008. It was continued throughout 2009 and resulted in:
- timely submission of the CoR Preliminary Draft Budget (PDB) 2010 to the Budgetary Authority in April 2009, foreseeing a 7.8% increase in CoR Budget and 10 new posts;
- adoption by the Council of the CoR draft Budget with a 2% increase and no new posts in July2009;
- the final CoR 2010 Budget has been adopted by Parliament in December 2009 with a 4.2% increase over the 2009 and a total of 4 new posts, thus bringing the 2010 Budget to € 79.7 million.

In the 2009 and 2010 budget processes bilateral meetings of the Budget Service with all Directorates were organized in a structured and targeted way. Budget requests of the concerned Directorates were discussed in a detailed manner during these meetings along with the budget execution of previous years.

During the year several improvements to the CoR's control environment were put forward, in particular the ones relating to the management information systems, budget demands and the proposal for detailed monitoring of main political lines. These initiatives are still to be accepted by the managing services.

The final commitment execution rate for the CoR for 2009 has increased compared to 2008 and has reached 98.2%. The payment execution rate has also increased compared to the previous year and has reached 90.7%. More detailed information on the use of budgetary resources follows in chapter 2 of this report.

Under action 1.3 of the Management Plan 2009, a new budget analytical-monitoring tool ("BudgetWatch"), which was developed by the budget service already in 2007, was further improved and resulted in version 2.0. It now provides even more comprehensive information on all CoR budget lines and sub-lines, including available appropriations, monthly developments of commitments and real payments made for the year (so called C1 credits).

In addition, it also contains the same type of information on all budgetary resources of the previous year which were committed but not consumed and therefore were carried over to the next year (so called C8 credits). Equally the information on C4, C5 and C9 credits has been included in the "BudgetWatch" from 2008 onwards.

Historical information (starting with the year 2006) on monthly developments in appropriations, commitments and real payments made in the past is equally available from the "BudgetWatch". All budget lines and sub-lines have their own worksheet. Updated files are circulated to all CoR management and financial actors on a monthly basis together with the monthly budgetary execution note. This tool has proved to be very helpful in providing management with information on budgetary execution at the points in time where it matters most. It allows managers in the spending Directorates to monitor in great detail the budget execution and, therefore, facilitates the efficiency of utilisation of budgetary resources and helps them to identify areas within budget execution that requires management's attention throughout the year.

Under action 1.1 of the Management Plan 2009, the medium term budget planning concept was developed and presented to the CFAA in 2009. The CFAA decided that, in order to maintain high flexibility and dynamics and in the light of the well functioning present budget system, a "status quo" should be maintained in this field.

1.7.1.2 The Accounting service

As of January 1, 2009, a new Accounting Officer has been appointed by the Secretary-General. In accordance with the Article 61 of the Financial Regulation and the Article 56 of the Implementing Rules, the new Accounting Officer has signed the trial balance transmitted by its predecessor without issuing any reserve. All actions announced in the annual management plan for the year 2009 have successfully been met:

- Action 1.7 'Implementation of payments & collection of revenue' & action 1.8 'preparing/presenting the accounts'
  - All deadlines, legal or internal, respected;
  - No remark raised by the Commission on the consolidation reporting package submitted;
  - No remark raised by the Court of Auditors on accounts 2008 in its Annual report;
  - 100% of payment orders validated by Authorising Officers by sub-delegation executed timely by the Accounting service;
  - Quarterly reports regarding the delays for handling invoices prepared and circulated timely.

- Action 1.9 'keeping the accounts'
  - Accounts kept & bank movements reconciled timely;
  - No error noticed in bank reconciliations carried out monthly;
  - Bank reconciliations documented properly.

- Action 1.10 'Treasury management'
  - Level of funds available for budget execution properly monitored;
  - No delay in payment execution resulting from absence of funds on the CoR bank account.

Besides this positive outcome in relation with the 'recurring' activities of the accounting service, a number of specific initiatives were also undertaken during 2009 with the aim of either improving the CoR control environment or respecting new legal obligations. Some of these initiatives have been completed in 2009, others will be followed up or further pursued in 2010:

- Accounting notes (5) have been circulated to simplify or clarify financial practices.
- The quarterly reports regarding the delays for handling invoices have been completely reviewed to facilitate the work of operational services.
- The banking service contract has been timely renewed and is now valid until 2012.
- The entry into force of the Payment Service Directive has been reflected in the payment practices of the CoR timely. This modification resulted in reduction in bank costs. This reduction has a recurrent nature.
- A consequence analysis as regards the potential implementation of the sub-modules ABAC Assets and ABAC contracts has been carried out in 2009.
- An internal procedure regarding the consultation by financial actors of the newly created Central Exclusion Database (FR Article 95) has been designed. The Legal Service as well as the team in charge of the Internal Control Standards have been consulted and their comments taken on board. The procedure has been implemented effectively early 2010. A notification to the European Data Protection Supervisor will be organised during the first quarter of 2010.
- The issue related to the impact of exchange rate variations on the level of indemnities of CoR Members has been analysed in mid 2009 and concrete proposals are to be presented to the CAFA in March 2010.
- A revision of the CoR implementing rules and the charters of the financial actors have been drafted during autumn of 2009 and are under discussion within the Directorate.

- A new methodology for monitoring the level of consumption of CoR contracts has been designed in cooperation with the team in charge of the Internal Control Standards. This procedure has been implemented as of January 1, 2010.
- The Accounting Officer participates as observer to the regular meeting of the Financial Unit Network of the Commission.

1.7.1.3 The Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs (the CFAA)

The CFAA of the CoR is composed of 8 CoR members (and 8 alternates). It is the CoR body to which all important financial or administrative decisions are submitted. The CFAA makes proposals to the CoR Bureau on financial and administrative matters.

The CFAA secretariat of the Budget and Finance Unit has organised all aspects of the CFAA-meetings, including preparatory meetings with the Political groups and with the Chairmen, documents, translation and interpretation.

The CFAA secretariat has been, as in previous years, deeply focused on creating added value to Members by writing CFAA-documents on budget (new or amended budgets and budget execution) and on discharge matters. It also instigates and co-ordinates the submission of documents prepared by other CoR services such as for example the documents in the field of Human Resources, notes on political external and extraordinary activities as well as budget notes covering member related budget lines (details provided by the managing and controlling service with the Directorate B).

The secretariat also writes the minutes of the meetings and prepares CFAA reports for submission to the CoR's Bureau.

The CFAA met 5 times in 2009, with an excellent attendance rate by its members.

CAFA meetings in 2009:
Friday 23 January
Tuesday 16 March
Monday 18 May
Friday 4 September
Monday 16 November

In addition to these ordinary meetings, the Budget and Finance Unit also organised on request of the CFAA chairman a study visit to the European Court of Auditors in Luxembourg 25 November 2009. The purpose of this visit was to provide the CFAA members the opportunity to learn from a practical example of implementation of the CAF-methodology.

1.7.1.4 The Payroll service

The contribution is structured around actions of the Management Plan 2009

Action 1.12: Salaries

The Payroll Service has carried out payments of salaries related to over 500 officials and contractual and temporary agents, respecting the deadlines, based upon information that to a large extent is instigated, managed and controlled by the personnel units. In total 13 payment runs have been carried out. The Payroll service also paid the seconded national experts, and the Doctor. In all cases, it also involves recovering revenue and income, mostly linked to EU taxes on salaries and to contributions to the social security scheme of the JSIS.

Action 1.13: Personal Insurance

The Payroll service also paid the insurance premiums linked to staff.

Action 1.14: Execution Reporting

The Payroll service contributes to the Committee's salary consumption predictions by providing monthly data. This allows the Budget Service and the Payroll service to assess, with input from the personnel units, full-year estimates of expenses, which in turn is used to manage and control recruitment and other staff related decisions within the personnel units as well as payments undertaken within the Payroll service.

The Payroll service has in 2009, as in previous years, continued to improve its management and control system even further. The focus was on implementing the accepted recommendations derived from ex-post controls, through:

- a better control procedure of staff debts;
- a control procedure and improved statistics on the inventory of inter-institutional debts or receivables linked to salaries;
- change requests on the NAP salary software;
- improvement of salary checklist; etc...

Other proposals made following the ex-post control to improve internal control on salary process level from a pro-active point of view with focus the process steps covering the tasks with the personnel units, notably the Unit for working conditions, rights and training, and the Budget and Finance Unit were;

- a memorandum of understanding including a procedure to agree on modalities for (a) setting a deadline for administrative decisions allowing for a timely update of Centurio that in turn is used when calculating salary payments, (b) sharing of information through a mailbox function and (c) how questions and answers in the salary process should be organised;

- a debt policy for the CoR ensuring an agreed CoR wide approach for establishment of debts, decision on recovery and recovery time as well as a structure for transparent involvement of all actors included in the process;

- a short questionnaire for evaluation of the internal control environment with respect to questions designed to identify needs for preventive, detective and corrective controls including safe guarding of asset measures.

1.7.2 General Administration Unit

1.7.2.1 Internal control standards

Reinforcing the control environment in the CoR has been one of the main objectives of the unit in Management Plan 2009. Chapter 3 of the Annual Activity Report 2010 gives an overview of the main accomplishments in the area of internal control during last year.

1.7.2.2 Verification service

Work of the Verification Service is reported on in Chapter 3

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 2:
Objective 2009 No 2: Establish a complete system for surveillance, evaluation, development and reporting (management)

1.7.2.3 Planning and Reporting

All the objectives set out in this area in the Management Plan 2009 have been met. The planning and reporting cycle was implemented with the establishment of 2009 Management Plan and Risk Analysis, followed by the midterm review and the Annual Report.

The Planning and Reporting Liaison Group was set up in 2009 to facilitate communication and improve the planning and reporting cycle in terms of the coherence and the quality of the documents. The group has met 4 times in 2009. In November the training for the members of the group on Risk Management was given by an expert from DG Budget.

1.7.2.4 Contract Register / Job Descriptions

The management of the CoR Contracts Register is also one of the main responsibilities of the Unit. The Register has been further developed in order to become a tool for financial actors and to ensure that all the requested documents and information are centrally registered.

In 2009, 207 contracts (framework and direct contracts) have been registered and specific contracts and order forms under a framework contract have also been monitored.

The update of the job descriptions regarding the CoR staff has been managed by the Unit. During 2009, 255 job descriptions have been handled on a daily basis. Moreover, the link between financial responsibilities (i.e. budget lines) and the job descriptions has been implemented and verified following the adoption of Decision on sub-delegation published on a quarterly basis.

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 3:
Objective 2010 No 3: Provide efficient and transparent framework for carrying out the horizontal administrative functions in competence of the Unit A4

1.7.2.5 Traineeship Office

The 2009 Management Plan objectives have been reached in this area. The traineeship office, with a budget of approximately EUR 247 000, managed 40 paid trainees in 2009 and 22 unpaid trainees. Two trainee trips were organised: in May to Malta and in November to Iceland. The new regulations for paid and unpaid trainees were drafted and approved by the Secretary General. The recruitment process has undergone further improvements in 2009, making stronger connection between the needs of the unit and the profile of the trainee.

1.7.2.6 Missions Service

The Missions Service has managed a budget of approximately EUR 430.000 in 2009. A total of 780 staff missions were accomplished. Delays of reimbursements in mission cost were significantly reduced and further improvements in this area are expected following introduction of a new internal IT tool.
A major change in functioning of the Mission Service has been managed as a consequence of contracting a new travel agency, American Express. The insurance conditions for the staff travelling on missions have also been reviewed and a new contract has been signed in the end of 2009.
The new Guide to Missions has been enhanced with the comments of Directorates, Internal Audit, Legal Service and Staff Committee. Its implementation is foreseen in the beginning of 2010 together with introduction of corporate credit cards for staff travelling on missions.

1.7.2.7 Infrastructure liaison

First steps in liaison and coordination have been taken in 2009. Over 240 removals or space allocations and numerous requests for non standard equipment have been validated. An infrastructure budget of EUR 50.000 has been used for CoR specific furniture needs i.e. non standard equipment or renewal of Political Groups Presidents furniture.
Solutions to some structural office space issues have been found in collaboration with the Infrastructure Unit. For some other questions, negotiations with the EESC are still ongoing.

Questions such as infrastructure governance, scarcity of office space and existence of formal and transparent rules on furniture and space allocation have been pointed out as key elements to discuss further in 2010.

1.7.2.8 Mobility

All the objectives set out in Management Plan 2009 were reached. The mobility plan was drafted and approved and the staff was informed about the mobility scheme. The budget was granted for 2010 mobility project and preparations to set up a ticket reimbursement scheme have started.

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 4:
Objective 2009 No 4: meeting recruitment requests (recurrent objective)

1.7.3 Recruitment Unit

Action 4.1 Follow-up of requests to recruit officials and temporary staff with a view to filling the 2009 establishment plan
This recurrent objective has been reached. 38 vacancy notices were published and 41 new officials (with and without a vacancy notice publication) have been appointed in 2009. Up to now all demands are satisfied and, with an occupation rate of 96.8%, this recurrent, ongoing objective is currently fully reached.

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 5:
Objective 2009 No. 5: modernisation of staff management systems (objective spread on several years)

Action 5.1 Digitalisation of personal files in connection with the adoption of SYSPER2 (objective spread on several years)
Digitalisation of personal files in connection with SYSPER2 is an ongoing action. As SYSPER2 has not been implemented yet in the CoR, there is no development on this matter for the time being.

Action 5.2 Adoption of SYSPER2
The introduction of SYSPER2 has been the object of working meetings between A2, A3, IT and the EC with a view to define the approach that should be taken to implement the software.

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 6:

Objective 2009 No. 6: reorganisation of the workflow and information flow within the recruitment service, in order to allow more flexibility (handover of files), better information flows and managerial control

Action 6.1 Training actions

The staff of the Recruitment service took part in various training actions throughout the year and organised also several internal training sessions related to the reshuffling of the workflow within the service.

Action 6.2 Progressive reshuffling of the workflow
The organisational and functional reshuffling of the Recruitment service (global management of recruitment files) was completed in February 2010. Two small teams responsible for the recruitment of officials and agents have been established. Each person is responsible for a holistic management of the recruitment files (grading, contract management, reimbursement of the travel expenses etc.).

Action 6.3 Adaptation of existing information systems allowing the instant and synoptic monitoring of the workflow and its output
A synoptic table of all recruitments has been established and systematically filled, allowing for a better information flow and for management and control purposes.

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 7:
Objective 2009 No. 7: meeting the needs in career development and career guidance

Periodical staff report – 2008 appraisal exercise
This action is fully completed. Main procedure was completed in early April 2009. The appraisal procedure was finalised in June 2009, after the appeal round.
Update of total of notation points for each staff member
This action was fully completed on 12/06/2009.
Start comprehensive evaluation of our current evaluation system, notably in the light of upcoming changes at the EC
Evaluation was completed on time. Short-term changes are implemented in the frame of the 2009 appraisal exercise. Mid-term, deeper changes are currently being elaborated with a view to a 2011 implementation.

Promotions 2009
The promotion procedure was completed in autumn 2009. The Appointing Authority signed individual decisions in October 2009.

Attestation 2008
This objective is fully reached, 20 officials were attested.
Identification of administrative and secretarial AST posts
This action was completed on 31/03/2009 in the framework of the 2008 attestation exercise.

Certification 2008
This action is fully completed, 2 officials were admitted to follow the training.
Appointment of two certified officials to a post in function group AD (01/03/2009 and 01/10/2009).

Organisation of the 2009 attestation exercise

The exercise was launched on 20/07/2009 and the draft list of the officials admitted was published on 17/12/2009.

Organisation of the 2009 certification exercise
The exercise was launched on 26/10/2009 and the draft list of the officials selected to take part in the training programme was published on 17/12/2009.

1.7.4 Working conditions, rights and training

Vocational Training (MP 2009, action 7.4)

The 2009 vocational training budget went up by 12% as compared to 2008. As in recent years, also in 2009 staff were given the opportunity to follow internal, inter-institutional and/or external training on a regular basis (language courses, general training, information technology, finance, etc), both on their own initiative and in response to specific requests from the various CoR departments.

Some statistical data are set out below:

- Overall number of training courses organised or authorised: 2057 (increase by 20% compared to 2008)
- Average number of training courses followed per member of staff: 3.88
- Overall number of days spent in training by staff: 5314.75 days
- Average number of days spent in training by staff members: 9.84 days
- Number of participants in language courses held in Brussels (spread over two six-monthly cycles and one intensive summer course cycle): 424
- Number of staff members who attended a language course abroad: 43

As a general remark, while the statistics on training are going up, and about 80% of staff attends some training action throughout the year, the popularity of language courses seems to be declining by ca. 25% (both training courses in Brussels and linguistic stays away), which is partly due to gradual saturation of the linguistic thresholds required for translation units. On the other hand, increased interest for training actions in general can be observed especially in the area of IT (245 training actions in 2008 as to 424 in 2009) and for short 1 or 2 days seminars, either organised internally or on an inter-institutional basis (680 in 2008 as to 1.000 in 2009). This shows a tendency to subscribe to more targeted courses aiming at enhancing knowledge in a specific field (finance, policies, drafting skills, etc.).

Focus on assistance provided to managers has also been increased. In this context, new initiatives for support for managerial staff have been launched such as start-up of coaching policy and the 360 degree feedback pilot project.

Apart from the operational activity, in 2009 the Vocational Training Department has also developed or restructured several trainings: financial courses, ethics and integrity courses, key competencies for secretarial staff, training cycle for newcomers, etc. These trainings were developed in cooperation

with several services across the institution (creating thus a network of internal trainers), fostering thus knowledge-sharing at the Committee.

Significant progress has also been made in the field of evaluation of training actions by introducing electronic evaluation forms via software which automatically summarize results of the surveys.

Furthermore, a revised list of compulsory and recommended trainings for certain categories of staff has been adopted, paving the way for a more comprehensive training policy.

Professional guidance (MP 2009, action 7.3)

Following the designation of a single contact point for mobility and professional guidance within the administration, several expressions of interest (27) have been gathered throughout 2009 and all the applicants have been invited for a professional guidance interview. The services offered in full confidentiality cover, *i.a.*:

- assessment of professional profile, work preferences, and abilities, using career guidance tools;
- guidance on drafting cv`s and motivation letters;
- analysis of the organigramme and job vademeca as to individual areas of interest;
- specific guidance on particular projects, like return to previous professional domain, advise on training possibilities;
- optional assessment of potential managerial qualities and advise on career planning;
- optional follow-up and assistance on specific mobility projects within the CoR/Joint Services.

During 2009, some of the applicants have successfully implemented a mobility project within the CoR (3 staff members) and there are some projects in the pipeline to be completed in 2010.

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 8

Objective 2009 No 8: improve working conditions

Working conditions

An increasing amount of individual decisions regarding staff members working conditions have been established: 79 decisions allowing part-time work (an increase of 17 % as compared to 2008), 25 decisions regarding personal leave (an increase of 4% as compared to 2008) and 77 decisions granting parental/family leave (an increase of 92% as compared to 2008). All these decisions in addition to the day-to-day management of sick leave, overtime etc. have resulted in more than 44.613 changes being encoded in the Centurio application which manages employees' personal data (an increase of 10 % compared to 2008).

The institutions' occupational health policy has been pursued. Actions undertaken in this respect (annual medical check ups, medical interventions, medical controls, interventions by social assistant, etc.) have generally increased at far higher rate then the institutions' overall staff increase.

Some horizontal innovations have been realised in 2009 in the working conditions area:

- after "concertation" with staff representatives and following the organisation of a test phase, a flexitime regulation was adopted in late 2009 and entered into force on January 1st 2010; the flexitime scheme is supported by an IT-module developed in Centurio allowing staff to register their hours and superiors to validate them on a regular basis. An evaluation of the flexitime scheme is foreseen by July 2010. (MP 2009, action 8.3)
- A new regulation on part-time work, introducing some new formulas, was adopted and implemented as from October 1st 2009. (not in MP 2009)

Progress was also made on a series of other horizontal actions, such as:

- shift work and stand by duties: preliminary work has been completed, in collaboration with EESC counterparts and other interested parties; consultation with staff representatives will start in early 2010. (MP 2009, action 8.2)
- teleworking: a first and limited test of the technical possibilities was realised in the framework of the Business Continuity Plan; the positive results of this technical test allows the workings on the introduction of teleworking to start as of early 2010. (MP 2009, action 8.4)
- harassment rules: preliminary work (including consultation of staff representatives) has been largely completed, thus allowing the introduction of a new set of harassment rules in 2010 in consultation with EESC counterparts. (MP 2009, action 8.1)
- rules on administrative enquiries and disciplinary proceedings: (MP 2009, action 10.3)

Social dialogue

A new framework for social dialogue within the institution was set up in July 2009, allowing for an improved and more structured social dialogue through the appointment of a single contact point for contacts between staff representatives and the administration on the one hand, and the organisation of regular meetings between the Administration and Staff committee representatives on the other. A new decision concerning the Staff Committee workings and a new financing convention were also adopted in 2009. (not in MP 2009)

Accomplishment of the Management Plan 2009 Objective 9

Objective 2009 No 9: consolidate newcomers policy and timely establishment of rights

Establishment of rights and obligations of staff

As in previous years, individual rights of staff members have been established within two months of entering into service. The few cases where files were not dealt with within this deadline are due to staff members not providing the necessary documentation in the required timeframe. Overall, 560 decisions were taken in 2009 in the area of individual rights service. (MP 2009, action 9.2)

Throughout 2009, a control of external activities of staff on leave on personal grounds was conducted and 25 decisions were adopted in this field. (not in MP 2009)

It may also be noted that negotiations with PMO regarding the conclusion of a Service Level Agreement on transfer of pension files have well advanced and should allow the conclusion of such an agreement in early are 2010. (MP 2009, action 9.3)

Development of an integrated induction policy

A Service Level Agreement has been concluded between CoR, EESC and the European Commission regarding a possibility for CoR staff to benefit from a wide range of services offered by the Commission's Welcome Office. Following its entry into force on 1 October 2009, the internal welcome sessions at CoR have been adapted accordingly. Furthermore, a practical guide has been developed and made available for newly recruited staff members. (MP 2009, action 9.1)

Human Resources 2009

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	18	46	64
Contractual agents		6	6
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts	1		1
Other outside personnel (specify)	1*		1
Total	20	52	72

* medical doctor

1.8 Internal Audit Service

The aim of the CoR internal audit is to advise the Authorising officer by delegation on risks by providing independent opinions on the quality of management and control systems and by issuing recommendations for improving operations so as to ensure their regularity and their compliance with the principle of sound financial management.

1.8.1 MP 2009 Objective 1: Give the Authorising officer by delegation assurance on managerial and control systems adequacy in the framework of his declaration for 2009 and for the preparation of 2010, with particular references to the area already audited

In 2009, the IAS finalised the contradictory procedure on the audit on the adequacy of budget planning systems. The results of this audit have been reported to the Committee for Administration and Financial Affairs (CAFA) during an *in camera* meeting held on 25/01/10. This audit covers the entire budget and a sample test was undertaken for more than 25% of the budget (see also chapter 3).

The audit on conformity of rights establishment has reached the stage of analysing the criteria related to the organisation and the allocation of resources. The analyses of operational procedures, internal communication, reporting, monitoring and supervision have also been started. An analysis of the execution based on a sample has yet to be performed. This audit covers 56% of the budget.

Regarding *ad hoc* advice, it should be noted that IAS delivered opinions on the implementation of the cooperation agreement for the verification of IT expenditures. It has also analysed the report on exceptions produced by Directorate for Finance & Administration, a call for tender on studies and archiving, and the declaration of "no conflict of interest" in the public procurement procedure. It also gave specific advice related to the implementation of audit recommendations. This concerned, amongst other things, training and skills, sub-delegations, management plan, risk analysis, filing systems, documentation of procedure, supervision and the exceptions procedure.

The results of these audits and *ad hoc* advice, described in chapter 3 of this present report, as well as the annual audit report, established in the framework of Financial Regulation art. 86.3, constitute a basis for the advice given to the Authorising officer in the framework of the AAR and its annual declaration.

1.8.2 MP 2009 Objective 2: Support the audited sectors in implementing audit recommendations within a period of 12 months.

The first follow-ups of performance of mission expenses and performance on studies and expert advice were achieved in 2009. The former concludes that, of the 38 recommendations, 21 were closed or will be closed after the approval of the new version of the mission guide. The latter concludes that, of the 14 recommendations, 12 were closed or will be closed after the approval of the new version of the vademecum of studies.

The contradictory procedure of the second follow-up of the audits on application of internal control standards and adequacy of financial circuits were being finalised at the end of 2009, after they had been submitted for approval one year before. The follow-up of the audit on application of internal control standards concluded that 44% of the recommendations were closed, 51% ongoing, and 5% still to be initiated. For the follow-up of the audit on adequacy of financial circuits, the situation is as follows: 43% of recommendations have been closed, whilst 40% are ongoing, and 17% have yet to be initiated.

The result indicator, which was defined as the number of recommendations implemented within 12 months, remains relatively low for internal control standards and financial circuits, even though they are in their second follow-up.

1.8.3 MP 2009 Objective 3: Establish an annual audit program focused on the main Institutions risks

As in previous years, the internal audit programme 2010 was defined on the basis of the risk analysis established by activity and updated by audit findings and materialisation of risks during execution.

1.8.4 MP 2009 Objective 4: Assess the quality of internal audit function

Due to the fact that it was decided that appropriations would not be allocated on the budget to IAS for its study on quality assessment, no action has been delivered.

Human resources of Internal Audit Service in 2009:

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	2	2	4
Contractual agents			
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts			
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	**2**	**2**	**4**

1.9 Directorate for Translation

1.9.1 Key mission and objectives set for 2009

Key mission

The Directorate for Translation is the operational arm of the CoR and the EESC in the area of translation. Its mission is to provide translation services, through its own staff and through outsourcing, with a high quality level of service and high annual productivity.

The creation and organisation of the Directorate for Translation, in the two Committees' joint services, was made official by the signing of the renewed EESC-CoR Cooperation Agreement, which came in effect at the beginning of 2008.

The high level of cooperation generates synergistic effects and, as a result, financial savings. It also means that the best use is made of translation services, whose level of activity is sustained and linked to the meetings schedules of the EESC and the CoR. It also makes it possible, on the one hand, to better cope with workload peaks through better categorisation and prioritisation of documents while, on the other hand, reducing translation deadlines by streamlining processes related to translation production.

Objectives set in Management Plan 2009

- To introduce the new governance structure set up in the new CoR-EESC cooperation agreement
- To guarantee high productivity and a high quality level of service for both Committees
- To draft a code of conduct concerning all translation-related issues
- To manage translation workload
- To improve the communication of the Directorate for Translation
- To improve working methods and optimise human and financial resources management
- To create synergies in the framework of interinstitutional cooperation in the field of translation

1.9.2 Specific achievements in 2009

The Directorate for Translation has achieved its main objectives for 2009, as set in the Management plan 2009, by continuing to provide quality translations on time and to implement the Translation Quality Guidelines.

The more specific achievements deriving from the main objectives set for 2009 are the following:

To introduce the new governance structure set up in the new CoR-EESC cooperation agreement (including improving working relations between own and joint services by liaison and coordination functions coming full on stream)

- The Directorate for Translation management team, though too small for such a relatively large directorate, is fully operational, and its tasks have been published in the new intranet pages.
- Working arrangements with CoR-EESC Registries have been defined and are fully operational.
- A one-week management seminar, with participation of the Heads of Unit, was organized in Apulia (Italy) at the end of June 2009.

To guarantee high productivity and a high quality level of service for both Committees

- Annual productivity per EU-15 non-pivot translator: 1 568 pages.
- Annual productivity per EU-10 non-pivot translator: 1 568 pages.
- Rate of direct translation: 94.4%.
- Rate of revision: 63.5%.
- Rate of respect of deadlines: 98.2%.
- Rate of outsourcing: 2.7%.
- Despite a 11% drop in the overall translation demand since December 2008, the workload per staff member is still above the targets set by the European institutions at 1 200 pages per year. The DT has coped with the consequences of the redeployment carried out in 2008, despite the increase of the workload per translator by 4% compared to 2007.

- Whilst the overall respect of deadlines is above the target level (98%), the figures for the pivot languages fall well below the target (86.8%), showing the extra pressure on these units which have far shorter deadlines in many cases.

The outsourcing budget was heavily used in January 2009, as several meetings were brought forward (requiring translations over the Christmas period, drawing on the 2009 budget). As a result, few resources were left for the rest of the year.

To draft a code of conduct concerning all translation-related issues

- The new categorisation of documents was introduced in January.
- The existing rules in the field of translation were reviewed by both Contact Points for Translation based on the compilation already made by the Directorate for Translation Planning service.
- All existing rules and procedures have been published on the new intranet pages.
- Consultations with all services were completed on the proposed Code of Conduct, including the new prioritisation of documents and adapted deadlines.

To manage translation workload (including examining the means to conciliate translation requests and translation capacity, in concert with the other Committee, and preparing in view of potential changes in the political framework (e.g. Lisbon Treaty; future enlargement)

- Translation demand decreased by 11% compared to 2008.
- The scarce outsourcing resources were used to iron out translation peaks. The lack of financial resources in the last quarter imposed a very restrictive outsourcing policy. The budget execution rate was 100%.
- Needs for new statistical reports have been defined. The main statistical reports have been created in the new Business Objects environment.
- Consultations were conducted on the proposed Code of Conduct, including the new prioritisation of documents and adapted deadlines.
- Better identifying of constraints in respect of translation deadlines deriving from internal rules was done via the Contact Points for Translation, through regular notes to the directors of both Committees and through raising the issue regularly in various meetings (Cooperation Committee, Directors' meetings, etc.).
- Preparation of future enlargements was done internally and at interinstitutional level (needs have been defined, costs of new language units have been established, and areas for interinstitutional cooperation have been identified). The Directorate for Translation received a high-level Icelandic delegation.
- Streamlining processes related to document production was done in several ways: Macros to simplify formatting of documents were developed (and will be launched in early 2010). A series of workshops aiming at streamlining translation assistants' tasks were organised.

To improve the communication of the Directorate for Translation

- The new intranet pages were published.
- The Directorate for Translation now publishes DixiT, its internal newsletter, five times a year.
- Developing regular information and feedback channels with Members was done by organising visits to the Directorate for Translation of various translation stakeholders. A folder on the services provided by the DT has been prepared.
- Improving communication with own services was mainly done by organising new training courses (presentations on search tools, courses for non-translation newcomers, etc.) and with the cooperation of the contact points for translation. It was also reinforced by the designation of a lead translator, responsible for communing with the requesting services, for each opinion.
- Improving internal communication was done in several ways: management meetings were organised with all units and services of the Directorate for Translation. All important messages are sent directly by the management to the whole staff of the directorate. Minutes of Heads of Unit meetings and translation statistics and key performance and activity indicators are systematically distributed to all staff of the directorate. Monthly open door mornings are held by the director and the deputy director.

To improve working methods and optimise human and financial resources management

- The Translation Quality Guidelines were updated.
- An active participation in language and thematic training actions was ensured to optimise translation capacity.
- A one-week Heads of Unit management seminar on change management and staff motivation was held. The resulting long list of operational conclusions is being implemented.
- Presentations of search tools made available to staff from both Committees were organised.
- A series of workshops were held to exchange best practices in the work of the translation assistants.
- Promoting the use of IT translation tools was done, *inter alia* by training nearly the whole staff of the directorate to search tools.
- Outsourcing deadlines were shortened by introducing a new procedure.

To create synergies in the framework of interinstitutional cooperation in the field of translation

- Active cooperation in ICTI and its bodies, including secretariat of Translation Section, was ensured. The directorate has assumed a leading role in the new ICTI governance, chairing several working groups (Workload Balancing, performance indicators, etc).
- Costs of internal and external translation were calculated and other performance indicators established.
- An active participation in relevant EPSO selection boards was ensured, as well as in discussions on changes to EPSO's selection methods.
- Active participation in language-specific cooperation was ensured.

- The directorate requested and obtained permission to become member of IAMLADP (The International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications).
- A seminar was held at the Committees, in the framework of IAMLADP, covering best practices in revision for European institutions and international bodies.
- A new scheme for staff exchanges and study visits for translation staff, translation assistants, translation support staff and translation managers was agreed and is to be implemented in 2010.

Directorate for Translation (CoR staff only)

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	169	37	206
Contractual agents	0	6	6
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff			
Seconded national experts			
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	**169**	**43**	**212**

1.10 Directorate for Logistics

All the main objectives and actions in the 2009 Management Plan were achieved for the Directorate for Logistics, subject to certain conditions and limitations already anticipated in the plan, except for the implementation of a central dispatching for security. This work was delayed due to the need to restart the study phase of the project with a new contractor. The new study is now at an advanced stage in accordance with the required level of quality.

Most notable developments for the Directorate in logistics were:

- The label of the Brussels Region for both Committees as an "eco-dynamic enterprise" was obtained. This means that the Committees are half way towards obtaining the EMAS-label.

- Studies, including an analysis of the market, have been conducted into the future needs in terms of additional meeting space for Plenary Sessions as well as for additional office space.

- The new version of the Members' portals has been implemented including the integration of relevant data of Ariane and Agora (consultation of opinions and automated notification of eventual absences of Members). In particular, abandoning sending of a paper version of draft opinions has made this system strategic and indispensable for Membership.

- The abandoning of sending paper versions of opinions has allowed the print-shop to redeploy some of its labour forces towards Communication, EMAS, security, the financial management of the print-shop and the catering service. The redeployment avoided the creation of new posts and contributed to an increase in the efficiency of the Directorate.

1.10.1 Security department / service

The main achievements in 2009 were:

- A contract has been awarded for a consultancy to conduct an analysis, prepare the specifications and to oversee the implementation (3 phases) of the forthcoming Central Dispatching project. The first phase has been completed and the call for tenders will be published in 2010.
- A new contract has been signed with G4S for the Security guards services, with effect from December 1st for a duration of four years.
- A new X-ray machine has been ordered for the unloading bay and the current machine will be deployed to VMA reception.
- There has been a redeployment of some security guards for greater efficiency and to improve the image of the service provided. This process is linked to a series of modifications to the security infrastructure, for example changes in the entrance halls of the B68 and JDE buildings.
- Contracts have been signed for two further modifications to the infrastructure; the connection of all external doors in the Committees' buildings to the current Dispatching, and centralised viewing of all CCTV cameras in the Committees in the current central dispatching.
- Fire drills and evacuation exercises were followed successfully in all Committee buildings. 30 officials were trained or received refresher courses as EPI and Evacuation Stewards.
- The security of events organised in Brussels as Open Days, receptions, cocktails, etc. were ensured effectively. The Security Service also provided security support abroad to extraordinary meetings in the Czech Republic and Finland.
- A new Temporary Agent has been engaged responsible for Health and Safety at Work. His duties will include the update of the evacuation procedure, first team response training, and signalisation of evacuation in our buildings.
- In terms of communication with the Members and staff, the service twice published guidelines to the Members of the Committees in their newsletter and provides direct assistance in case of problems such as loss or theft of personal belongings. Information is transmitted to Members and staff when there are events or demonstrations in the European Quarter that could have an impact. Finally, the service produced a report on the internal security policy to the Political Monitoring group of the EESC/CoR.

1.10.2 Programmation/gestion financière et contractuelle

Gestion financière

- Coordination des contributions de la DL à l'exercice de clôture du budget 2008.
- Suivi rigoureux du budget 2009, en collaboration rapprochée avec les gestionnaires en liaison avec la conclusion des contrats en cours d'année, basé plus particulièrement sur les plans de dépenses trimestriels par service. Mises à jour de l'exécution des dépenses de la DL au cours de l'année. Coordination et préparation des demandes de transferts de crédits, particulièrement aux autorités budgétaires.
- Coordination des aspects qui concernent la DL dans la procédure d'établissement des budgets 2010 des deux comités.
- Coordination de la préparation initiale des demandes de crédits pour l'exercice 2011.

Gestion des marchés et des contrats

- Gestion de 17 procédures de marché propres aux CESE/CDR, dont 14 ont été conclues pendant 2009 avec l'attribution de 12 contrats et 3 seront conclus en 2010. Les procédures les plus importantes ont été le nouveau contrat pour les services de gardiennage, le contrat des services courrier express nationaux et internationaux, le contrat avec un bureau d'études pour la réalisation de projets dans le domaine de bâtiment, l'assistance bureau d'étude pour la préparation du projet de sécurité "dispatching central", et le contrat pour la fourniture et installation de panneaux photovoltaïques. Parmi les procédures qui ont été lancées en 2009 et qui sont prévus d'être conclus en 2010 figurent des nouveaux contrats-cadre pour les services de nettoyage des bureaux et pour la location des imprimantes de production pour l'imprimerie.
- Implication dans la gestion de la part des CESE/CdR de plusieurs procédures interinstitutionnelles dont 4 ont été conclus en 2009, y compris le contrat-cadre avec la Commission européenne pour la fourniture de mobilier et le contrat pour les services de déménagement.

Général

- Coordination dans la DL des diverses exigences dans les domaines du planning et du reporting des activités.
- Coordination et suivi des informations et activités dans la DL au niveau de l'environnement de contrôle; entre autres le suivi des recommandations des auditeurs internes et externes, les vérifications ex-post et l'application des standards de contrôle interne (SCI) dans la DL.
- Développement d'un nouveau site intranet de l'unité.
- Communication de tout aspect de l'activité de l'unité avec les autres services de la DL, ainsi que les services les plus concernés des comités, particulièrement les services financiers et les services juridiques. Production des informations pour le Comité de coopération, le Groupe de monitorage politique et la réunion des secrétaires-généraux des CESE/CdR.

1.10.3 Service restauration

Activités administratives et spécifiques:

- gestion administrative et financière en liaison avec le contractant pour que les prestations répondent au mieux aux exigences de l'alimentation santé actuelle et aux besoins des différentes populations de consommateurs, Membres, personnel et visiteurs.
- cohérence de la gestion basée sur l'esprit et la politique des Comités ainsi que sur l'approche des Institutions voisines.
- contributions au développement d'EMAS ainsi qu'au Plan de Continuité
- Application et mise en place du nouveau contrat, entré en vigueur 1er décembre 2008: suite à l'appel d'offres interinstitutionnel par lot avec le Parlement Européen, comme chef de file.
- Gestion et Suivi des contrats cadres interinstitutionnels (et leurs avenants), la plupart avec la Commission Européenne-OIB- pour chef de file: pour les achats de matériel/fournitures et la maintenance/réparations des équipements.
- Participation des Comités à 2 nouveaux appels d'offres avec la Commission Européenne-OIB et OS2- pour chef de file: A.O "entretien et dépannage matériel de cuisine" et A.O "Cuisines professionnelles"
- Programmation et planning annuel des entretiens/ maintenance

Communication et coordination:

- Coopération interservices au sein de la Direction de la Logistique, en particulier avec l'unité infrastructures, par ex. pour la planification de travaux, ou pour l'examen des clauses du plan de nettoyage prévu dans le nouvel A.O "Nettoyage".
- Secrétariat du Comité de surveillance de la restauration
- Coopération interinstitutionnelle et échanges d'informations/données
- Création de la rubrique "Restauration" à l'occasion de la migration d'intranet vers "sharepoint"

1.10.4 Infrastructure

During 2009 the efficiency of the helpdesk and the quality of the technical maintenance of the building was increased. In the beginning of the year this improvement of efficiency of the helpdesk was not reflected in the KAPI because of an error in the calculation of the indicators. In the second half of the year one can note that more than 70% of the requests to the helpdesk are being solved within the set time. The number of request remains with around 2500 interventions at the same level as in 2008. In the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) exercise organised by the CoR, facilities management received the highest score of all the different activities which have been evaluated, which confirms our commitment to an increased quality of the service and maintenance.

A new framework contract has been signed with an engineering consultant in order to get technical assistance in the preparation of technical specifications for the renovation projects in those domains

where technical knowledge is not available within the unit. Technical specifications have been developed for the footbridge JDE/BvS, isolation of the 1st floor of TREV. Acoustical tests have been performed in TREV and thermal studies are being made for the BvS and REM building.

Several major projects were finalised in 2009: renovation of the lighting system in TREV, creation of a passage between B68 and TREV, refurbishment of the JDE entrance hall, waterproofing of the TREV building.

To get a better management of the available offices software has been developed which monitors the use of space within the buildings of the Committees. This software examines also the distribution of space between the Committees.

An examination of future needs in terms of additional meeting space for the Plenary Sessions of the Committees as well as for additional office space has been undertaken. An analysis of the market has resulted in the identification of potential solutions.

In the frame of EMAS a major step forward has been made with the environmental analysis of our buildings. The Brussels region has also awarded the Committees with an "Ecodynamic Enterprise" label, with the maximum three stars label, putting the Committees in the top category in terms of environmental performance.
Also a major effort was made to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings. This effort resulted in a 10% decrease of the energy related costs during the last years.

Replacement of old, non-ergonomic, depreciated furniture continued in 2009. This furniture, along with broken and unusable furniture, was removed from the inventory and given to Oxfam. Apart from preparations for plenary sessions, the removal services have effected more than 350 internal moves following reorganisation within the own and joined services.

The Infrastructure unit is continuing to work together with the other institutions in the interinstitutional working group ILISWG. This cooperation resulted this year in an interinstitutional agreement on a measurement code for the buildings based on the German standards.
The unit is also taking part in a number of interinstitutional calls for tender and new framework contracts were signed for buildings insurance, supply of furniture, removal and electricity supply.

An important aspect of the unit's activity is the provision of information to, and communication with, the Members and staff of the Committees. In this context, the unit has continued to assure and improve the quality of the "facilities helpdesk" service and the Intranet site of the unit is updated regularly. Several reports have been produced during 2009 for the EESC/CoR Co-operation Committee, the regular bilateral meetings of the two Secretaries-General and the Political Monitoring Group, especially in the areas of buildings planning, office availability and maintenance of installations in the buildings.

1.10.5 IT service

The main achievements, grouped according to field of activity are listed as follows:

1.10.5.1 Information Systems

During 2009, the information systems service managed a portfolio of 44 applications. The development of each major application is managed by a user group and is coordinated by the IT

liaison officers. The most important results were:

Administrative applications

- Modernising the financial workflow for Members by the development of a new application for reimbursements (modern design, better integration with other systems and reduced risk). The new application will be deployed in March 2010;
- Planning for the introduction of Sysper2, the Commission's HR application;
- Continuous improvement of the existing HR tool. Particular attention was paid to business continuity planning for the payroll;
- Flexitime for all staff supported by the development of a flexitime module. A technical solution for tele-working was also prepared (see under IT Infrastructure);
- Improved user autonomy for report creation (extra training, user manual on intranet).

Operational Applications (Agora)

- Users can create a Meeting Request in another Committee's conference room. Also improved management of facilities (e.g. order forms) and use of "events" to regroup meetings and produce annual calendars;
- The financial units have a "Budget Forecasting Tool" integrated in Agora (cost centres, budget forecasts, real costs, early encoding & regularisation meetings);
- Members and Staff have access to the same information about ongoing work thanks to the harmonisation of all the reports from the registry, consultative works and groups;
- Reporting:: improved user autonomy & support for complex reports

Production Chain (Ariane, ArianeX, Translation Workbench Wizard, Document Management, search engines, Com Docs, Email Expedition macro…)

- Support for translation management policy – new versions of Ariane to support the new document categories and the single point of contact for all requests including modifications;
- Support for the coordination of the translation – use of Business Objects allows the coordination to prepare their own management reports;
- Support for new working methods – implementation of user requests and development of a new version of the Translation Workbench Wizard with less steps and integration of Euramis;
- Ongoing follow-up of long-standing issues;
- New versions of "Com Docs" (application for receiving document from the Commission), the "Email Expedition" macro (e-mail to Members) and RED (Transparency);

- Provided technical advice for the CoR study on archiving.

Web and communication Applications (Members' Portal, Common Consultative Platform, Common Web Platform, Hermes)

- Members' portal (Communication with the Members)
  - Access for a wider public (Calendars for Alternate Members, CoR "National Coordinators" and "Meeting Organisers"; New role: "Accessibility");
  - Clearer follow-up of ongoing work for both Committees using the new web reports;
  - New "Vote Delegation" module for the CoR;
  - Enhanced usability and reliability thanks to the new technical architecture for the site.
- Common Consultative Platforms (Communication with the political partners)
  - "Go live" for the CoR platforms – Lisbon Monitoring Platform and the European Grouping on Territorial Cooperation Platform. Development of the "Decentralised Cooperation" platform in collaboration with the Commission. Continuous improvement of the Subsidiarity Platform;
- Common Web Platforms and Hermes (Communication with staff and the general public)
  - Implementation of the "Common Web Platform". This new infrastructure allows both Committees to build Web sites and modernise their Intranet sites;
  - Preparation of a user manual for Hermes.

1.10.5.2 IT infrastructure

Keeping the system running is of course the most important challenge for the IT infrastructure service. The overall success of this activity can be seen in the improvement of IT availability from 99.94% in 2008 to 99.97% in 2009. In addition, the following projects were carried out in the context of the 5 year development plan for IT Infrastructure:

Disaster Recovery to Support Business Continuity

In the area of disaster recovery, a solution was developed to copy e-mails and their archive continuously to the Standby Data Centre and to use this copy in case of disaster in the main Data Centre. A new standby database technology was implemented. Access to the telephony network and mail relay servers was balanced over two buildings in a redundant setup. A redundant setup was implemented for Outlook Web Access, the web servers and DNS. Disaster recovery tests were performed for the reporting environment, the major applications such as Ariane and Agora, the file servers, the e-mail system and the telephone system.

A contingency plan was set up for IT Infrastructure and incorporated in the overall contingency planning of the Committees. There was an exchange of best practice with the other Institutions as regards IT contingency planning.

IT Infrastructure to Support Key Initiatives

Portal environments were implemented for the first time in the context of the Common Consultative Platform. The environments used for reporting were migrated to a web-based environment. Difficult

licensing issues were resolved. A remote access infrastructure was installed (used for the COR Prague summit, later for Business Continuity testing, and could be used in the future to enable tele-working).

Support was also provided at technical level for the Central Security Dispatching project. In preparation for transporting security data on the voice/data network, all the backbone switches were upgraded. A study was carried out to measure the traffic levels on the inter-building links and to assess the need to upgrade these links from 1Gbps to 10Gbps.

Projects to develop the capacity and availability of the IT Infrastructure

A new backup solution based on a Virtual Tape Library was deployed. New firewalls were installed in the main Data Centre in a cluster configuration. New mail relay appliances were installed in both Data Centres. The possibility to access internal e-mails using a mobile phone via Outlook Mobile Access was implemented. A design was developed for a PKI Infrastructure in the context of secure internal e-mail. Reverse proxies were introduced to enable access to the intranets from the Internet.

The consolidation effort of servers on virtual machines has been pursued, leading to a total of 62 virtual machines by the end of 2009. This has also important consequences for reducing energy consumption and is thus an important contribution to the EMAS initiative.

In the area of capacity upgrade, the Storage Area Network was extended, and the capacity of the internet connections was increased for both the internal network and for Vnet (the WiFi network in the JDE & VMA buildings). A WiFi controller was also added to improve performance.

In the area of telephony, the conditions for the upgrade of the call manager software were successfully negotiated with the system integrator.

In the area of security, a solution for the distribution of patches on the workstations was implemented, critical auditing at system level was implemented, and IS017799-based reporting implemented at the level of the firewalls. Vulnerability testing took place at the level of the internet accesses.

1.10.5.3 User Support Services:

User support – support for ±3,900 user accounts, ±1,800 PC's, over 60 different types of software, and an average of ±2,200 support requests per month. Following on from incident management significant progress was made with "problem management", especially in the area of e-mail.

Relations with users – notably the arrangements for new users, information for existing users, and the ongoing collection of user feedback. Feedback regarding the IT Intranet site was very positive. The points raised by the users in the 2008 user satisfaction survey, and the ongoing user feedback collected during 2009, have all been taken into account. Particular attention was paid to informing users about EMAS issues (e.g. switching off their PC in the evening and choosing the most appropriate printing options). This was carried out in close cooperation with the EMAS team.

Logistics – stock, consumables, inventory management, and support for special events such as plenary sessions and "Open Days". Due to the increase in work load, a separate sector for IT logistics was setup (an internal redeployment of one official from Data Centre to User Support Services).

Projects – amongst major projects carried out during 2009:

- Equipment replacement programme: replacement of ±450 desktop PC's in line with the 4 year replacement cycle;
- Development of a printer SLA for network printers. This allowed to identify several weaknesses in the current procedure which were remedied without delay;

Implementation of IT User Policies – The "user accounts" policy was successfully implemented during 2009. Each Committee adopted a printer policy.

1.10.6 Printing/Distribution - Assessment and main achievements in 2009

1.10.6.1 General information

The copy service produced 12.82 million copies for the CoR. This figure represents the amount of work carried out on the basis of 88.708 jobs which can be broken down as such:

Ariane CoR	24.068 jobs
Individual requests CoR	11.222 jobs

Concerning the Copy Shop KAPI, in order to have a more accurate view, a new indicator will be introduced in 2010 representing the number of jobs processed with data available starting on April 2009.

The mailing room ensured 65.167 mails for the CoR comprising of Committees working and official administrative documents, publications, invitations, etc. For comparison, the respective figures in 2008 were 63.579 mails for the CoR

Distribution assumed responsibility for preparing dossiers for all CoR meetings and conferences. The CoR requested 23.246 dossiers for 89 meetings. A significant proportion was produced in 22 languages. For comparison, the respective figures in 2008 were 29,202 dossiers for the CoR

The Print shop realized 1.038 set ups for the CoR (1,108 in 2008) and 1.687.075 sheets were printed (1,692,246 in 2008).

1.10.6.2 Specific dossiers

Call for tenders "Copyshop" was launched with the publication of the contract notice on 31/10/2009 and an estimated signature of the new contract June 2010.

For national and international postal services, the Committees used the interinstitutional OIB contract with the Belgian Post. Operational implementation started on 02/2009

Operational implementation of contract with company DHL started on 02/2009 to cover express mail.

Launching of the call for tenders "Maintenance of offset technical equipment" was suspended.

The Lyreco contract was used for the purchase of paper and consumables.

Collaboration with the CoR prepress services was assured by close contact and weekly meetings.

Directorate for Logistics (CoR staff only)

Type	AD	AST	Total
Officials and temporary staff	6	24	30
Contractual agents		6	6
Interim personnel			
External contractual staff		16	16
Seconded national experts			
Other outside personnel (specify)			
Total	**6**	**46**	**52**

2. USE OF BUDGETARY RESOURCES

2.1 General points

Whereas the original approved budget for 2009 was € 76.5 million, an amending budget was approved by the Budgetary Authority in November by which the CoR (some other EU institutions also contributed) has contributed € 0.5 millions to the European Economy Recovery Fund. As a result € 0.5 million was transferred from the CoR budget line 129 "Provisional appropriations" to the said Fund. Overall, out of the approved budget of € 76.0 millions, € 74.6 million or 98.2% were committed by the end of the year whilst € 68.9 million or 90.7% were paid.

2.1.1 Use of appropriations

Commitments

The overall percentage committed from the budget for the year 2009 was 98.2%, which is slightly better than in the previous years. For comparison the final commitment execution rate was 97.9% in 2008 and 96.3% in 2007.

By the end of December 2009 the commitment rate for Title 1 "Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution" was 97.9% and 99.0 % for Title 2 "Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure".

There were some € 1.4 million or 1.8% of all C1 credits left uncommitted at the end of the year. In monetary terms, this is an improvement compared to the results of the year 2008, when altogether € 2.4 million or 3.3% were eventually left uncommitted in C1 credits.

Payments

The overall execution rate for payments at the end of December 2009 was 90.7%. This is the first time in the CoR history since its budgetary autonomy in 2000, that the payment execution rate by the end of the year exceeds the 90% mark. Most of the improvement came from the Title I – Expenditure for the Members of the Institution and Staff. The final payment execution rate at the end of the budget cycle will be higher, as part of the expenditure related to 2009 has been carried forward to C8 credits of 2010 and will be paid in 2010. The actual execution rate for 2009 will only be known by the end of 2010 when the final execution rate of C8 credits of 2010 will be determined. Ideally, the final payment execution rate for 2009 budget appropriations should be close to the level of 2009 commitments (i.e. 98.2%) by the end of 2010.

Title 1: Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution

In this title, most of the payments relates to staff remunerations. For budgetary posts 1200, 1204 and 129, the total budget amounts to € 40.2 million. A total € of 39.2 million or 97.3% has been paid as at

31 December 2009. This is a notable improvement compared to 2008, when a final payment execution rate for Chapter 12 was 95.2%.

By 31 December 2009, the amount of € 6.4 million or 97.5% has been paid from the budgetary post 1004 (Members travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure). This is approximately the same level as achieved in the previous year (97.8%).

Title 2: Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure

In total, 78.6% of the Title 2 budget has been paid at the end of December, principally due to the 91.7% payment execution rate of chapter 20 "Buildings and associated costs". All other chapters of Title 2 show considerably lower payment execution rates ranging between 47% and 67%.

Although the 2009 payment execution rate for Title 2 has increased slightly compared to previous year (78.6% in 2009 versus 78.2% in 2008), it still lags considerably behind the one of Title 1, were the payment execution rates of 95.2% in 2009 and 92.2% in 2008 were recorded.

2009 in comparison with 2008 and 2007

The following table gives a comparative overview of execution rates for commitments and payments on 31 December for the years 2009, 2008 and 2007.

Outturn as at 31 December

	2009			2008			2007		
	Budget 000 EUR	Commitments	Payments	Budget 000 EUR	Commitments	Payments	Budget 000 EUR	Commitments	Payments
T1	55,325	97.9%	95.2%	51,976	97.8%	92.2%	48,793	95.8%	90.5%
T2	20,627	99.0%	78.6%	19,228	98.1%	78.2%	18,306	97.6%	80.5%
Total	**75,952**	**98.2%**	**90.7%**	**71,204**	**97.9%**	**88.4%**	**67,099**	**96.3%**	**87.8%**

Title 1: Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution

The execution rate for commitments for Title 1 as of 31 December 2009 is slightly higher than the equivalent rate in 2008 and notably higher than one in 2007. The final payment execution rate for Title 1 in 2009 is much better than the one of 2008 and 2007.

Title 2: Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure

The execution rate for commitments as at 31 December 2009 is also higher than the equivalent rates in 2008 and 2007. However, the 2009 payment execution rate for Title 2 is lower than that of 2007 but slightly higher than in 2008.

Taken as a whole, positive developments have been observed in the overall budget execution for the year as the payment execution rate in 2009 was higher than that at the end of 2008 and higher than in 2007 (90.7% in 2009; 88.4% in 2008 and 87.8% in 2007). As already mentioned, this is the first time in the CoR history since its budgetary autonomy in 2000, that the payment execution rate by the end of the year exceeds the 90% mark.

2.2 Detailed analysis of 2009 outturn

2.2.1 2009 appropriations (C1 credits)

The table below gives a breakdown of the total 2009 budget after transfers and final outturn by budget lines

Chapter / Post	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
10	**Members of the institution**	**6,703,384**	**6,695,384**	**99.9%**	**6,503,727**	**97.0%**
1000	Salaries, allowances and payments	92,540	92,540	100.0%	82,059	88.7%
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	6,582,844	6,582,844	100.0%	6,419,244	97.5%
105	Courses for Members of the institution	28,000	20,000	71.4%	2,424	8.7%
12	**Officials and temporary staff**	**40,297,094**	**39,226,904**	**97.3%**	**39,226,904**	**97.3%**
1200	Remuneration and allowances	39,462,836	38,554,863	97.7%	38,554,863	97.7%
1202	Paid overtime	83,620	65,642	78.5%	65,642	78.5%
1204	Entitlements in connection with entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	625,612	606,399	96.9%	606,399	96.9%
129	Provisional appropriation	125,026	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
14	**Other staff and outside services**	**7,040,588**	**6,996,748**	**99.4%**	**6,167,082**	**87.6%**
1400	Other staff	2,146,099	2,108,735	98.3%	2,051,068	95.6%
1402	Interpreter services	3,692,329	3,692,329	100.0%	3,137,097	85.0%
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	461,000	454,524	98.6%	434,038	94.2%
1408	Entitlements in connection with entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	0	0	NA	0	NA
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service	210,000	210,000	100.0%	173,069	82.4%
1422	Expert advice connected with consultative work	531,160	531,160	100.0%	371,811	70.0%
16	**Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution**	**1,239,500**	**1,198,493**	**96.7%**	**727,995**	**58.7%**
1610	Miscellaneous expenditure on recruitment	55,000	55,000	100.0%	36,708	66.7%
1612	Further training, retraining and information for staff	340,000	340,000	100.0%	192,352	56.6%
162	Staff mission costs	470,000	429,000	91.3%	375,173	79.8%
1630	Social welfare	2,500	2,500	100.0%	1,746	69.8%
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	25,000	24,993	100.0%	21,160	84.6%
1634	Medical service	58,000	58,000	100.0%	30,145	52.0%
1638	Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries	289,000	289,000	100.0%	70,710	24.5%
20	**Buildings and associated costs**	**12,630,775**	**12,568,228**	**99.5%**	**11,580,174**	**91.7%**
2000	Rent	1,370,580	1,361,088	99.3%	1,321,436	96.4%
2001	Annual lease payments	7,580,435	7,546,458	99.6%	7,276,566	96.0%
2007	Fitting-out of premises	92,584	77,354	83.5%	0	0.0%

2008	Other expenditure on buildings	76,459	76,459	100.0%	12,060	15.8%
2022	Cleaning and maintenance	1,693,257	1,691,740	99.9%	1,293,888	76.4%
2024	Energy consumption	465,263	464,931	99.9%	343,530	73.8%
2026	Security and surveillance of buildings	1,266,439	1,264,439	99.8%	1,251,839	98.8%
2028	Insurance	85,758	85,758	100.0%	80,855	94.3%
21	**Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance**	**3,804,702**	**3,714,926**	**97.6%**	**2,491,335**	**65.5%**
2100	Purchase, service and maintenance of equipment and software; related work	1,317,440	1,317,056	100.0%	729,344	55.4%
2102	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems	1,495,544	1,495,307	100.0%	1,078,166	72.1%
2103	Telecommunications	167,920	167,920	100.0%	167,920	100.0%
212	Furniture	142,934	142,853	99.9%	34,318	24.0%
214	Technical equipment and installations	608,243	525,824	86.4%	417,796	68.7%
216	Vehicles	72,621	65,965	90.8%	63,793	87.8%
23	**Current administrative expenditure**	**686,316**	**656,588**	**95.7%**	**347,160**	**50.6%**
230	Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	155,564	152,892	98.3%	87,402	56.2%
231	Financial charges	20,000	20,000	100.0%	15,962	79.8%
232	Legal costs and damages	30,000	30,000	100.0%	1,750	5.8%
236	Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	389,000	385,274	99.0%	186,845	48.0%
238	Other administrative expenditure	91,752	68,421	74.6%	55,201	60.2%
25	**Meetings and conferences**	**764,740**	**750,501**	**98.1%**	**508,394**	**66.5%**
2540	Miscellaneous expenditure on internal meetings	134,300	134,000	99.8%	83,806	62.4%
2541	Observers	6,940	6,940	100.0%	3,838	55.3%
2542	Meetings, congresses and conferences	429,500	423,061	98.5%	333,913	77.7%
2546	Entertainment and representation expenses	194,000	186,500	96.1%	86,837	44.8%
26	**Expertise and information**	**2,784,621**	**2,769,981**	**99.5%**	**1,320,220**	**47.4%**
2600	Expenditure on publishing, dissemination of information and participation in public events	545,000	544,898	100.0%	339,151	62.2%
2602	General publications	801,000	798,221	99.7%	505,288	63.1%
2604	Official Journal	230,000	230,000	100.0%	113,880	49.5%
2620	External studies	566,500	564,316	99.6%	49,097	8.7%
2622	Documentation and library expenditure	139,331	139,028	99.8%	106,361	76.3%
2624	Expenditure on archive resources	114,790	114,790	100.0%	50,083	43.6%
264	Expenditure on publishing, dissemination of information and participation in public events: information and communication activities	388,000	378,728	97.6%	156,360	40.3%
Total Budget:		**75,951,720**	**74,577,753**	**98.2%**	**68,872,991**	**90.7%**

The unused payment appropriations are mainly due to the following items:

Item 1000 "Salaries, allowances and payments":

The low payment execution rate for insurance results from the payment scheme in place with the insurance company. During the year covered, only advances are paid. The balance is paid (using

carried forward credit) in 2010 year when the final computation is available and the invoice received from the insurance company.

Item 105 "Courses for Members of the institution":

This items includes the contribution of the Committee to the cost of training of the Members (linguistic and others). 3 requests were financed in 2009 for a total of 2.424 € (compared to 2,762 € in 2008 and 197 € in 2007). 15 additional requests are expected to be received in the course of 2010. Given the low payment execution rate, an amount of 10,500 € of credits was transferred to other budgetary posts in the course of 2009.

Item 1202 "Overtime":

The spending of this item is by nature difficult to predict. In 2009, the final consumption was lower than expected.

Item 1402 "Interpreter services"

Low payment execution rate for the C1 credits of this budget line is due to the fact that a substantial portion of the appropriations is carried forward to C8 credits of 2010, and are expected to be paid out during that year as some of the bills from the Commission and Council are arriving either late in the year or even at the beginning of the next year.

Item 1420 "Supplementary services for the translation service"

Lower than average payment execution rate for the C1 credits of this budget line is due to the fact that a substantial portion of the appropriations is carried forward to C8 credits of 2010, and are expected to be paid out during that year.

Item 1422 "Expert advice connected with consultative work":

This budget line is sub-divided into two categories:

Guest speakers:
The planned activities of the Commissions and Political groups originally budgeted for 2009 requiring the invitation of guest speakers were not fully carried out. Furthermore it is important to note that, although this category of participants is entitled to travel in business class like our members, most of them actually travel with low cost air tickets, resulting in savings.

Experts:
In this case it is difficult to forecast the expenditure at the time the budget is prepared, since it all depends upon the number of opinions the Committee has to prepare and the number of meetings the rapporteur and the expert need to prepare the opinion. Actual expenditure needed proved to be lower than expected.

Items of chapter 16 "Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution":

Lower than average payment execution rate for the C1 credits for most of the items of this budgetary chapter is due to the fact that a substantial portion of the appropriations are carried forward to C8 credits of 2010, and are expected to be paid out during that year.

Items of chapter 20 "Buildings and associated costs":

Lower than average payment execution rate for the C1 credits for some of the items of this budgetary chapter is due to the fact that a substantial portion of the appropriations are carried forward to C8 credits of 2010, and are expected to be paid out during that year.

Items of chapter 21 "Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance":

Lower than average payment execution rate for the C1 credits for most of the items of this budgetary chapter is due to the fact thata substantial portion of the appropriations is carried over to C8 credits of 2009, and are expected to be paid out during that year. Some contracts have been concluded from the middle of the year n till the middle of the year n+1, which results in utilisation of part of the funds in year n (C1 credits) and the other part in the year n+1 (C8 credits).

Items of chapter 23 "Current administrative expenditure"

Lower than average payment execution rate for the C1 credits for some of the items of this budgetary chapter is due to the fact that a substantial portion of the appropriations are carried forward to C8 credits of 2010, and are expected to be paid out during that year.

Items of chapter 25 "Meetings and conferences"

Lower than average payment execution rate for the C1 credits for some of the items of this budgetary chapter is due to the fact that a substantial portion of the appropriations are carried forward to C8 credits of 2010, and are expected to be paid out during that year.

Items of chapter 26 "Expertise and information"

Lower than average payment execution rate for the C1 credits for some of the items of this budgetary chapter, and in particular the item 2620 "External studies" is due to the fact that a substantial portion of the appropriations are carried forward to C8 credits of 2010, and are expected to be paid out during that year.

2.2.2 Appropriations carried forward from 2008 to 2009 (C8 credits)

The appropriations committed in 2008 but not yet paid out by the end of the year were carried forward and converted into C8 credits of 2009 at the beginning of this year. In total, € 5.9 million – or 8.4% of the CoR's 2008 budget - were committed but not paid in 2008 and were transferred into C8 credits in 2009. This amount is slightly higher in monetary terms, but slightly lower in percentage terms than in the previous year, where € 5.7 million or 8.5% of the CoR's 2007 budget had been carried forward to 2008.

However, it is significantly less than C8 credits carried over from 2006 to the 2007 budget (€ 9.2 million, 14.6%) and those carried over from 2005 to the 2006 budget (€ 7.6 million, 12.8%).

The following table gives details on of the carried-over appropriations from 2008 to 2009 (C8) as at 31 December (€ and %).

Chapter / Post	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
10	**Members of the institution**	**169,203**	**169,203**	**100.0%**	**119,788**	**70.8%**
1000	Salaries, allowances and payments	5,714	5,714	100.0%	1,591	27.8%
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	136,252	136,252	100.0%	108,652	79.7%
105	Courses for Members of the institution	27,238	27,238	100.0%	9,545	35.0%
12	**Officials and temporary staff**	**0**	**0**	**NA**	**0**	**NA**
1200	Remuneration and allowances	0	0	NA	0	NA
1202	Paid overtime	0	0	NA	0	NA
1204	Entitlements in connection with entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	0	0	NA	0	NA
129	Provisional appropriation	0	0	NA	0	NA
14	**Other staff and outside services**	**1,279,873**	**1,254,223**	**98.0%**	**1,095,470**	**85.6%**
1400	Other staff	83,835	58,281	69.5%	47,388	56.5%
1402	Interpreter services	956,411	956,411	100.0%	942,616	98.6%
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	29,272	29,272	100.0%	2,026	6.9%
1408	Entitlements in connection with entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	0	0	NA	0	NA
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service	48,424	48,328	99.8%	48,328	99.8%
1422	Expert advice connected with consultative work	161,932	161,932	100.0%	55,111	34.0%
16	**Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution**	**611,704**	**574,750**	**94.0%**	**469,115**	**76.7%**
1610	Miscellaneous expenditure on recruitment	15,539	8,070	51.9%	8,070	51.9%
1612	Further training, retraining and information for staff	135,983	124,162	91.3%	124,162	91.3%
162	Staff mission costs	172,194	172,194	100.0%	66,993	38.9%
1630	Social welfare	2,009	57	2.8%	57	2.8%
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	2,644	2,644	100.0%	2,366	89.5%
1634	Medical service	22,766	22,766	100.0%	22,610	99.3%
1638	Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries	260,569	244,857	94.0%	244,857	94.0%
20	**Buildings and associated costs**	**1,219,490**	**1,206,603**	**98.9%**	**1,137,850**	**93.3%**
2000	Rent	16,467	16,467	100.0%	10,384	63.1%
2001	Annual lease payments	8,500	5,796	68.2%	5,796	68.2%
2007	Fitting-out of premises	418,000	411,552	98.5%	411,552	98.5%
2008	Other expenditure on buildings	6,450	3,800	58.9%	3,800	58.9%
2022	Cleaning and maintenance	530,623	529,540	99.8%	478,824	90.2%
2024	Energy consumption	224,834	224,834	100.0%	221,488	98.5%
2026	Security and surveillance of buildings	13,597	13,597	100.0%	5,202	38.3%
2028	Insurance	1,018	1,018	100.0%	805	79.1%
21	**Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance**	**1,205,415**	**1,149,849**	**95.4%**	**1,135,975**	**94.2%**
2100	Purchase, service and maintenance of equipment and software; related work	584,613	577,904	98.9%	577,904	98.9%
2102	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems	420,261	386,459	92.0%	386,459	92.0%
2103	Telecommunications	8,955	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
212	Furniture	37,406	37,406	100.0%	37,406	100.0%
214	Technical equipment and installations	146,772	140,673	95.8%	132,543	90.3%

216	Vehicles	7,408	7,408	100.0%	1,664	22.5%
23	**Current administrative expenditure**	**162,785**	**139,490**	**85.7%**	**127,314**	**78.2%**
230	Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	22,103	22,103	100.0%	22,103	100.0%
231	Financial charges	18,658	18,658	100.0%	14,632	78.4%
232	Legal costs and damages	19,281	19,281	100.0%	11,141	57.8%
236	Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	91,768	69,632	75.9%	69,632	75.9%
238	Other administrative expenditure	10,976	9,816	89.4%	9,807	89.3%
25	**Meetings and conferences**	**218,496**	**216,129**	**98.9%**	**165,567**	**75.8%**
2540	Miscellaneous expenditure on internal meetings	23,470	23,470	100.0%	17,612	75.0%
2541	Observers	26,859	26,859	100.0%	0	0.0%
2542	Meetings, congresses and conferences	68,287	65,919	96.5%	65,919	96.5%
2546	Entertainment and representation expenses	99,880	99,880	100.0%	82,036	82.1%
26	**Expertise and information**	**1,081,064**	**1,014,581**	**93.9%**	**888,143**	**82.2%**
2600	Expenditure on publishing, dissemination of information and participation in public events	157,576	141,850	90.0%	120,087	76.2%
2602	General publications	216,354	167,473	77.4%	152,525	70.5%
2604	Official Journal	147,867	147,867	100.0%	112,429	76.0%
2620	External studies	355,291	355,291	100.0%	355,280	100.0%
2622	Documentation and library expenditure	20,513	18,636	90.9%	16,338	79.6%
2624	Expenditure on archive resources	0.2	0.2	100.0%	0	0.0%
264	Expenditure on publishing, dissemination of information and participation in public events: information and communication activities	183,463	183,463	100.0%	131,484	71.7%
Total Budget:		**5,948,031**	**5,724,828**	**96.2%**	**5,139,223**	**86.4%**

3. INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS. AUDIT AND FOLLOW-UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY FINANCIAL CONTROL BODIES

3.1 Inherent nature and characteristics of the CoR risk environment.

The Annual Management Plan describes the actions which the CoR implements in order to reach its political objectives. All budget lines are tied to actions.

The establishment of the Annual Management Plan is accompanied by a Risk Assessment exercise for each action.

Based on that managers are required to manage their risks and report at the moment of the midterm review whether risks have materialised and which corrective measures have been put in place.

The final results of actions are reported on in the Annual Activity Report. Since the CoR is a political body without an operational budget, its risks are predominantly tied to its administrative expenditure and mainly concern the area of non-respect of the regulatory environment.

In early 2009 a risk analysis was performed by the managers according to an accepted general methodology. They were obliged to propose corrective measures if a combination of medium or high risk and high impact was associated to an action planned for 2009. Such risks, as well as the mitigating measures, have been identified in: (i) the area of financial management, due to the perceived complexity of procurement procedures, (ii) the operational matters such as coordination of activities among Directorates, (iii) the organisational matters such as insufficient training. As part of effective risk management it was later examined in the Midterm Review exercise whether these risks have materialised (see also point 3.5.6).

3.2 Financial Execution

The CoR applies a coherent budget planning, budget execution and budget monitoring system.

The Management Plan instructions for 2009 required that every budget line be linked to an action defined in the Management Plan. In this way, expenditure is tied to planned objectives and actions. Budget requests are examined, in two consecutive rounds, by the administration and the requesting service. Thereafter the draft budget is discussed in Committee for Administration and Financial Affairs (CAFA) and finally approved by the Bureau and the Plenary Session before being transmitted to the Budgetary Authority.

All financial circuits in the CoR are established respecting the following compulsory principles and rules:

- Segregation of duties of initiation and verification of an operation
- Qualified central verification service
- Sufficient skills and competences of the actors (delegations are only given if the necessary obligatory trainings have been followed)

Expenditure is executed by authorising officers delegated to that function by the AOD. Individual nominations are made by updating the general decision which guarantees full coherence of delegations given and ABAC accesses granted (for more details on security modules see below). Finally commitments and payments are verified *ex ante* by a central independent verification service for all transactions under the responsibility of the CoR Authorising Officer by Delegation with the exception of certain IT expenses in the Directorate of Logistics which follow the rules laid down in the Cooperation Agreement with the EESC.

Overall budget consumption is monitored – and reported on to management - by a special budget monitoring tool which allows detecting at an early stage possible over- and under-spending. The implementation of the tool has allowed for increased commitment and payment rates and a reduced annual amount carried over in C8.

The security modules for ABAC and Centurio (HR software) are managed centrally by the Directorate for Administration and Finance. In 2009 further improvements of the control environment in this area took place:

- the procedures for granting and removing access for both modules were made more precise and error-proof;
- a new IT tool was developed which automatically removes access to Centurio if the user changes his function or leaves the CoR;
- monthly check by IT service on ABAC rights was introduced. It is complemented by the regular reports from DG Budget on the users in the CoR;
- a global decision on ABAC was introduced as a method of granting delegations which allows to avoid any mistakes and have a clear overview at any given moment;

3.3 Budget execution as of 31 December 2009

Whereas the original approved budget for 2009 was 76.5 million EUR, an amending budget was approved by the Budgetary Authority in November by which the CoR (together with other EU institutions) has contributed € 500,000 to the European Economy Recovery Fund. As a result € 500,000 was transferred from the CoR budget line 129 "Provisional appropriations" to the said Fund. Out of the approved budget of 76.0 million EUR, 74.6 million EUR or 98.2% were committed by the end of the year whilst 68.9 million EUR or 90.7% were paid.

3.4 Payments

The overall execution rate for payments at the end of December 2009 was 90.7%. This is the first time in the CoR history since its budgetary autonomy in 2000, that the payment execution rate at the end of the year exceeds the 90% mark. The real execution rate for 2009 will only be known by the end of 2010 when the final execution rate of C8 credits of 2010 will be determined. Tentatively, the final payment execution rate for 2009 budget appropriations should be close to the level of 2009 commitments (i.e. 98.2%) by the end of 2010.

For detailed information on the budget please refer to Chapter 2.

3.5 Internal Control Environment

3.5.1 Internal Control Standards

The Internal Control Standards have seen a successful implementation in the CoR. A full report on this matter was submitted to the Secretary General on July 7, 2009. The analysis of the actual state of implementation revealed that the CoR achieved a sound management and control system within its services. This was also confirmed by external stakeholders.

Based on this satisfactory state of implementation it was agreed by the AOD to pass to the next stage of implementation of the ICS by application of the reformed model, the initial 24 standards regrouped as 16 in 2010.

3.5.2 Reporting on the effectiveness of the implementation of the ICS

During 2009, emphasis has been put on the composition of the ICS working group whose role is to monitor the implementation of ICS requirements and audit recommendations, to update and discuss further objectives and to fix deadlines for the establishment of identified actions. The presence of Directors or Deputy Directors at the ICS working group meetings is considered essential as the working group takes decisions affecting the whole CoR's administration. Three meetings of the working group have taken place in 2009 (March, September and November).

The actions identified as priorities at the beginning of the year were accomplished in the areas of:

- ICS 1 Ethics and integrity: development of a comprehensive cycle of trainings on ethics;

- ICS 3 Staff competence: identification of trainings by category of staff and adoption of a list of mandatory trainings for various staff members e.g. newcomers, financial actors, secretaries, translators;

- ICS 6 Delegation: improvement of procedures in order to ensure the deactivation of access to ABAC and Centurio in the event of a staff member changing his/her function;

- ICS 7 to ICS 11: improvement of the planning and reporting cycle by the establishment of a Planning and Reporting Liaison Group and exchanging of information and good practices with the EC specialists on this matter;

- ICS 17 Supervision. Ex post controls: an ex-post verification exercise at managerial level was carried out in 2009 like the ones performed in the last two years;

- ICS 19 Continuity of operations: improvement of the procedure on the establishment of the "hand-over" file by introducing, in the departure workflow, the obligation for all staff members leaving their post to prepare a briefing file for their successor. A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) has also been established in 2009 to ensure that the CoR will remain able to perform its critical and essential functions in the event of crises, disasters and operational disruptions to its normal activities. The BCP Working Group was set up and it is meant to be a permanent platform for further development and maintenance of the plan;

- ICS 23 Annual review of internal control: under the aegis of the Secretary General, an institutional wide self assessment exercise has taken place based on the CAF-model.

Even though important steps were made, efforts are still needed in the area of other standards. These actions should be completed in 2010: e.g. adoption of the revised charters for the financial actors, finalisation of the documentation of procedures and implementation of a more formal operational verification.

In order to increase awareness on the importance and usefulness of the ICS, a training module has been also developed in 2009 by the GAU in cooperation with the Working conditions, rights and training Unit. The training is meant to offer some notions about the definition and concept of the internal control, the actors involved in the process and its implementation at the CoR. The training is mandatory for all the financial actors of the Committee and is recommended to each newcomer in the institution. Four training sessions have taken place in 2009 (2 in French and 2 in English).

3.5.3 Ex–ante verification

Every budgetary or legal commitment is subject to verification ex ante within the CoR. Mandatory and non mandatory training is available to all financial agents. The verification service has a counselling role and is in a permanent dialogue with financial actors with a view to constantly improving financial management. The scope of activities of the Verification Service has increased in 2009. The cell is now responsible for carrying out verification of all the files for both Committees in the areas of infrastructure and restaurant, and only for the CoR the files initiated by the translation service, medical service and library. A significant increase in the number of files was also due to the allocation of the verification of the Members' travel expenditures. The CoR verifying officers were also appointed by the EESC as verifying officers, and in this capacity, preceded to the verification of 1306 transactions for the EESC budget.

The verification service has been reinforced in 2009 with extra staff in order to cater for the verification of the Members missions. As a consequence the number of transactions submitted for approval to the verification service rose by 34% to 10,934 in 2009 compared to 2008. At the same time the percentage of files for which the verification service requested modifications fell from an average of 9,21 % to 7,12 % in 2009. The types of errors detected by the verification service are mainly errors in the application of the internal rules as well as the formal errors. These errors existed particularly in the area of missions e.g. not completed checklists. Only in more exceptional cases the errors concerned non-respect of the Financial Regulation and its Implementing Rules. Almost all transactions thus corrected could hence be validated.

In addition to the above-mentioned transactions, the verification service used a sampling method for the verification of the 7,686 salaries paid in 2009. In total, the verifying agents carried out the verification of 18,620 transactions.

In parallel to this increase, the files were verified within the five days and the monthly reports were sent to the authorising officer with the main issues and findings.

3.5.4 Ex-post verification

In the framework of the implementation of the internal control standard n°17 an ex-post verification exercise has been carried out by the CoR at the management level, in a similar way to the ones performed in 2008 and 2007. The purpose is to enable the management to implement corrective measures in their own services.

A total of 205 files have been reviewed in 2009. On the basis of the contributions it can be concluded that no major problems exist. However, the checklists and reports contained some remarks which are under examination regarding their potential to improve the administrative functioning of the CoR.

3.5.5 Midterm review

The CoR monitors every year in June the extent to which the implementation of the Management Plan is on track. Although not a formal control instrument per se, it is a useful monitoring instrument for management.

The 2009 midterm review highlighted that the majority of the activities were on track and that a few risks had materialised, such as the delays in delivery of feedback on the CoR opinions from the European Commission. This confirmed that the setting of objectives of the Management Plan was realistic, since it took into account the existing resources and it was based on a clear assessment of the accompanying risks.

The main challenges mentioned in the midterm review of the Management Plan 2009 included lack of support of the other institutions for the CoR and a need to further strengthen the Committee's IT policy.

3.5.6 Financial exceptions

An exception occurs when circumstances force services not to respect a rule, regulation or procedure which has a financial impact. There are two types of exceptions, namely basic exceptions (internal rules/regulation) and derogations (from the Financial Regulation).

An overview of the situation during the period 2005-2009 is shown in the following table:

Exception/Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Basic Exception	1	38	62	101	81
Derogation	6	2	68	52	66
Total	7	40	130	153	147

Most basic exceptions relate to late authorisations for some reimbursements (40 cases).

The added value of registering financial exceptions lies in transparency and analysis for feedback. The latter means that an analysis is realised in order to:

- Provide adequate training, coaching, experience-sharing and supervision of financial agents;
- Improve procedures and strengthen internal controls.

The more detailed breakdown of the number of derogations is presented below

Nature of the Derogations

Nature	Number of reports	%	Most often...(but not always)
Budgetary Commitment before legal commitment Art. 77.1;	8	5%	Derogation
Budgetary Commitment signed on paper but not validated in Abac	6	4%	Derogation
Time limits not respected for payment	28	19%	Derogation
Annuality principle	16	11%	Derogation
Procurement procedures	9	6%	Derogations and basic exceptions

Nature of the Financial Exceptions

Nature			Most often...(but not always)
Individual presence Members, Experts, Speakers	40	27%	Basic Exceptions
Authorisation after event (language courses for Members)	2	1%	Basic Exceptions
Language courses regulation (for staff)	1	1%	Basic Exceptions
IA signature not compliant with the decision appointing financial agents	1	1%	Basic Exceptions
Travel expenses of job applicants	1	1%	Basic Exceptions
Members' representation expenses	28	19%	Basic Exceptions
Staff mission expenses	7	5%	Basic Exceptions
TOTAL	147	100%	

3.5.7 Follow-up of former IAS audits

A systematic follow-up of each of the internal audit recommendations is undertaken by the Internal Audit Service within 12 months after its completion. Implementation of each internal audit recommendation is verified by the IAS and additional advice could be given in order to improve their effectiveness. These results are gathered in an audit follow-up report addressed to the Secretary General.

The action plans from 2009 relate to four audits: one on the implementation of the internal control standards, one on the missions, one on the financial circuits, and one on the performance of studies and expert advice.

With regards to the audit on the application of the internal control standards (ICS) the identified actions have been integrated in the rolling plan of actions implementing the ICS under the supervision of a working group at the level of the Directors.

With regard to the audit on the adequacy of financial circuits, it should be pointed out that some changes in the allocation of sub-delegations have been implemented which resulted in an even better compliance with the Financial Regulation. This concerns particularly the Joint Services where it is not anymore possible that an authorising officer is placed lower in the hierarchy than an initiating agent. In addition mandatory training has been defined for all financial actors acting in the field of public procurement.

Concerning the action plan on performance of missions' expenses, a number of practical recommendations has been integrated in the new Mission Guide and in the new management tools. Examples include more detailed checklists referring also to the type of mission and the expected results, and the development of a partially pre-programmed IT tool allowing for the better integrity of standard data like daily allowances and a better monitoring of the budget consumption per functional unit.

Regarding the action plan on performance of studies and expert advice, the action plan has been fully implemented, amongst other by a revision of the related procedures, allowing to provide reasonable assurance on sound financial management.

3.5.8 Results from independent audits by the IAS during the year 2009

The audit on adequacy of budget planning system reached the final stage of the contradictory procedure by the end of the year. The audit is expected to lead to a number of important recommendations related to changes in organisation, clarification of responsibilities, definition and documentation of procedures, reinforcement of the coordination between the political objectives and the operational objectives, and implementation of control systems at the earliest stage of the planning.

3.5.9 Follow-up to recommendation of the external control bodies such as the Court of Auditors and the European Parliament

The CoR deploys a central database of the follow-up of all the recommendations of financial control bodies (Court of Auditors, Internal Audit Service, discharge resolutions, etc). This database is a base for the reports to the authorising officer by delegation, as foreseen in the internal implementing rules on the budget execution. Implementation of the recommendations is assigned to different services or financial actors with set deadline and clear guidelines.

With regard to the issue of weighted salaries transfer the Belgian authorities have not informed the CoR so far of any development in the cases handed over to them by the CoR. The CoR considers this case to be closed except if the Belgian authorities would still give a follow-up to the file.

Concerning the management and control system within the salary field, the majority of recommendations issued by the internal auditor have been implemented by the CoR's salary administration.

Weaknesses detected in the area of public procurement have been addressed by the clear rules on single financial responsibility in the cooperation agreement with the EESC. A special committee composed of members from the two administrations surveys large and complicated procurement processes.

The internal control standards are implemented in the Directorates for Translation and for Logistics, which the CoR shares with the EESC. Following a decision of the Cooperation Committee, an ex-post verification on a sample basis of files regarding CoR expenditure verified by the EESC verification service has been done by the CoR verification service, as part of the further improvement of the control environment in the Joint Services.

After the CoR and the EESC informed the European Parliament on the results of the evaluation of the so-called mini cooperation agreements in the areas affected by decoupling, the mid-term evaluation of the overall cooperation agreement as such is being prepared for 2011.

With regard to the implementation of Sysper2, this is presently foreseen for 2011.

The potential difficulties arising from the change of the organisation chart and the implementation of the cooperation agreement, identified as risks in the Risk Analysis 2009 did not materialise.

With regard to the issue of the declaration financial interests by the CoR members, it has been examined by the Commission for Administrative and Financial Affairs and the Bureau. This issue will be finalized in 2010.

3.6 Common Assessment Framework Exercise

Following an initiative of the CAFA, the Bureau took, in April 2009, the decision to implement the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) methodology within the CoR. The aim of this exercise was

to use quality management methods, such as self-assessment, in order to improve effectively, efficiently and continuously the performance of the organisation. The CAF exercise took place at the end of last year. Following a call for expression of interest, three self-assessment groups were set up each one being fairly representative of the organisation with regard to gender, nationality, categories and functions.

Based on all the individual contributions and the work of the three groups, a draft report brought together, in a summarised way, the CoR administration's strong and weak points and, in the form of a full list of all the suggestions, the possible improvement actions, covering all the 28 areas of the CAF-methodology.

The improvement actions proposed by the staff concerned a large number of matters from internal management structures to training, financial management etc. The adoption of an improvement action plan is under consideration.

4. ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE DECLARATION

In 2009 there are no issues pertaining to the declaration. All authorising officers by sub-delegation have signed their individual declarations of assurance. No remarks or reservations have been made.

5. DECLARATION BY THE AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION

I, Gerhard Stahl, secretary-general of the Committee of the Regions, in my capacity as authorising officer by delegation,

Hereby declare that the information contained in this report is true and accurate;

Confirm, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that the resources allocated to the activities described in this report were used for the purposes intended and in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and that the monitoring procedures established provide the necessary guarantees of the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. This belief is based on my own judgment and on the information available to me, such as, for example, the results of the ex-post checks and comments of the internal audit service and the lessons learned from the reports of the Court of Auditors for previous financial years;

Confirm that I have no knowledge of any fact not mentioned in this report which might be prejudicial to the interests of the institution.

Signed
Gerhard STAHL

Done at Brussels,

On 21st May 2010