EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2009 - 2014

Committee on Budgetary Control

19.1.2010

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Answers to Questionnaire on the discharge for implementation of the European Union general budget for the financial year 2008.

Section I - European Parliament

INDEX

General questions

1. Rule 207, paragraph 1 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure

According to Rule 207, paragraph 1 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure the Secretary-General shall "perform his duties conscientiously and with absolute impartiality". "Impartial" means "not giving special favour or support to any one person or group"

Could the Secretary-General explain to the Committee his feelings about this requirement of "absolute impartiality"?
Would a professional manager from the outside world be in a better position to comply with this requirement than a manager with background in a political group? If not, why not?

According to art. 23.9 of the internal Rules of Procedure, the Bureau appoints the Secretary General. The Bureau is therefore also responsible for the choice of the most appropriate profile to cover this function and can judge upon the requirements of impartiality and professionalism of the candidates.
The present Secretary General has been appointed by the Bureau unanimously.

Doing so, the Bureau confirmed a tradition, in place for many years now, to entrust the position of Secretary General of the Institution - and indeed the position of Deputy Secretary General - to personalities with a proven track record both in the Administration and the political groups.
Both the two previous Secretary Generals, as well as the two previous Deputy Secretary Generals, had been Secretary General of a political group - in those cases the Socialist Group and the former European Democratic Group (Conservatives).

2. Administrative and political responsibility

In order to act in "absolute impartiality" it would seem necessary to distinguish between on the one side the professional administrative management of a parliament and on the other side, the political objectives set by the political leadership of the same parliament.

On the basis of which criteria is the Secretary-General able to distinguish between matters falling under the responsibility of the administrative managers and matters falling under the responsibility of the political leadership?

Could the Secretary-General inform the Committee whether the criteria used in the European Parliament to distinguish between the administrative sphere and the political sphere are in accordance with international good practice in this area?

Which good practices can be drawn from national parliaments' experiences in identifying the borderline between the administrative sphere and the political sphere?

As laid down in art.207 of the internal Rules of Procedure "the Secretary-General shall give a solemn undertaking before the Bureau to perform his duties conscientiously and with absolute impartiality".
When appointed, the Secretary-General has given such an undertaking and intends to keep this engagement.

The European Parliament has independently decided about the respective responsibilities of the political leadership and the Administration by adopting its rules.

The administrative management executes decisions taken by the political leadership and in the framework defined by it.
The Bureau and the Conference of Presidents are regularly informed about the decisions taken falling under the responsibilities of the Secretary General.

There are no international standards and it can be said that the EP as the only parliament organising a continental democracy and independent from the executives would be the American Congress, but the comparison would be difficult.
On the other side, the administrative culture and historical experience in national parliaments varies so much between them that no standard model can be identified that would serve as a benchmark.

3. Article 199 of the Treaty

Article 199 of the Treaty states that "The European Parliament shall adopt its Rules of Procedure, acting by a majority of its Members." This is the basis for what commonly is referred to as Parliament's autonomous right to decide its own internal organisation.

How comprehensive is this right, according to the view of the Secretary-General? Does the Secretary-General believe that there is some kind of limitation to this right - if so, which?

The right to establish its own rules of procedure has served Parliament well in its history allowing it to more and more establish itself as a fully fledged legislator strengthening in relation to the other institutions. The struggle to establish a strong democratic Chamber for 500 million citizens has progressed very much but is not yet finalised so the instrument continues to be important and needs to be used with responsibility, creativity and imagination.
The limits are in the respect of the law, but also in the respect of legitimate expectations of smaller groups and minorities.

The responsibility for the amending of the Rules of Procedure lies with the Political Authority.
Art 202.2 of internal Rules of procedure, clearly states that: *"Any Member may propose amendments to these Rules and to the annexes thereto accompanied, if appropriate, by short justifications.*
Such proposed amendments shall be translated, printed, distributed and referred to the committee responsible, which shall examine them and decide whether to submit them to Parliament.
The same article adds that: (...)*"amendments to these Rules shall be adopted only if they secure the votes of a majority of the component Members of Parliament"*.

The General Secretariat, therefore, is not involved in this process.

4. <u>Decentralisation of financial management</u>

4.1. *Which measures have been taken in order to ensure that - after decentralization of financial management and control - administrative rules and procedures are implemented up to the same standards across the institution?*

The Financial Regulation of 25 June 2002, which came into effect on 1 January 2003, introduced fundamental changes in the concepts underlying internal control and in the implementation of the budget by all EU institutions. These changes reflect the principles of decentralisation and the assumption of full responsibility by authorising officers.
As a result of the changes, Authorising Officers by delegation are responsible for putting in place internal control and management systems that will give reasonable assurance of attaining the three key objectives of the process (compliance with laws, regulations and policies; reliable management information and recording systems; economy, effectiveness and efficiency of operations). Within Parliament's administration, the powers of authorising officers by delegation are exercised by the 11 Directors-General and by 1 Director.

However, as internal control is to be regarded as a process, effected by staff at all levels of the organisation, a decentralised system of this sort can only work effectively if complemented by a number of accompanying structures and measures. In Parliament, these are as follows:

1) a control framework headed by a Principal Authorising Officer by delegation (PAOD) who can call on AODs at any time for analyses and advice. The institution has adopted Minimum Standards of Internal Control, with which Authorising Officers by delegation must comply in implementing the process. The standards are based on five interrelated control components. Together, these five components and the three key objectives constitute the Internal Control Framework (ICF);

2) an elaborate set of regulations, rules and guidelines, available on the DG FINS website;

3) a central IT system for financial management, integrating both general accounting (FINICS) and budgetary accounting (FINORD), and designed to leave a detailed audit trail;

4) specific reporting requirements, as defined by the Internal Rules;

5) central support structures (Budget / Accounting / Central financial Units / the Legal Service, the Public Procurement Forum) which supply budgetary and financial advice to spending departments, oversee processes and procedures, set standards and advise on their implementation.

The oversight role implies a degree of central responsibility for the systemic adequacy of the ICF, which complements, but in no way reduces, the responsibility of individual Authorising Officers by delegation. This role is assumed, on behalf of the Principal Authorising Officer by Delegation, chiefly by DG Finance (in its role as principal advisor on budgetary implementation), and in particular, by its Central Financial Unit ("CFU").

6) internal and external auditors who target their checks on the basis of risk analyses, i.e. focussing on areas where the stakes are significant and where they consider that weaknesses might exist. Parliament's Internal Auditor has conducted several reviews of the Institution's Internal Control Framework. He reports to an Audit Panel made up of three of Parliament's Vice-Presidents. The Internal Audit Service was previously located within a Directorate-General but since 01/09/2009 has been attached at its own request to the Office of the Secretary-General. Attaching the Internal Auditor at the highest administrative level of the organisation ensures the Internal Auditor's independence and is in line with international auditing standards and best practices.

4.2. For several years the Committee on Budgetary control has stressed - in the context of the discussions on the Commission discharge report - that proper implementation of minimum internal control standards is not in itself and automatically sufficient to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the internal control system. This is also reflected in Article 60 (7) in the Financial Regulation which states that the authorising officers shall in their annual activity report indicate

- "the results of the operations by reference to the objectives set"
- "the risks associated with these operations"
- "the use made of the resources provided"
- "the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control system".

Were all the required analyses included in all annual activity reports for 2008? If not, *why not?*

Overall, the Secretary-General's instructions for establishment of the 2008 annual activity reports were respected, although there were variations with regard to certain sections. Thus, for example, while all DGs indicated the results of operations by reference to the objectives set and almost all reported on the use of resources allocated to them, fewer DGs indicated the risks associated with their operations or reported on the working of their internal control systems. This was no doubt due to the fact that the instructions for the drafting of the 2008 annual activity reports left the Authorizing Officers by delegation greater latitude in the manner in which they reported, notably on their internal control systems. The instructions for the 2009 reports were stricter in this regard.

4.3. What is the Secretary-General's opinion on the quality of the authorising officers' description of the "efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control system" having in mind that the authorising officers also are responsible for establishing "the control procedures suited to the performance of his/her duties" (Financial Regulation, Article 60 (4))?

The Secretary-General's predecessor signed a declaration in February 2009 with respect to financial year 2008. That declaration contained no reservation or qualification. It was based on the declarations signed by the Authorising Officers by delegation, on the control framework put in place within the Institution, on the internal audit reports received and on all the other information available to the then Secretary-General.

The incumbent Secretary-General will be in a position to assess the process in relation to the Annual Activity Reports for 2009 and to the declaration which he will be required to draw up in that connexion.
The instructions for the 2009 reports were devised by the Secretary-General with a view to further enhancing and harmonising the information supplied in the reports, which underlies the Authorising Officers' declarations. Those instructions aim in particular to ensure fuller reporting on departmental control systems, to be assessed by reference to the Institution's Minimum Standards of Internal Control.

4.4. According to the actual wording of Article 60 of the Financial Regulation it appears that those responsible for the setting up of the internal control system are the same as those who shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the same system. In colloquial terms this set up could be described as a situation in which the inmates are running the asylum.

Bearing in mind that the Authorising Officers' Annual Activity Reports and declarations are the basis for the Principal Authorising Officer's declaration of assurance the Committee would like to know

- *Whether the Secretary-General as principal authorising officer by delegation and as the* *one who gives an overall assurance declaration feels confident as to the Authorising Officers' management of what seems to be a conflict of interests?*

Article 60 §4 of the Financial Regulation as adopted in 2002 required the Authorising Officer by delegation "to report to his institution on the performance of his duties in the form of an annual activity report" and specified that the report "shall indicate the way the internal control system functions".

In 2006, the EU legislator revised the wording of this provision to require that the annual activity report "indicate the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control system". Parliament's Authorising Officers by delegation seek to fulfil this requirement as factually and objectively as they can.

However, as stated in reply to question 4 above, the Authorising Officer is not alone in evaluating his control system. This assessment is conducted at the technical level by the Secretary-General with the help of the central services, and at the political level of course by the discharge authority.

- *Whether the Secretary-General carries out his own analysis of the quality of the Authorising Officers' declarations?*

The general control framework put in place within Parliament is designed to ensure that the Authorising Officers' declarations satisfy the required quality criteria. To underline the importance of those quality criteria, the Secretary-General's instructions for the 2009 Annual Activity Reports drew Authorising Officers' attention to the need to respect those instructions including the standard format for the declaration. These are designed to permit analyses of the reports and declarations to be conducted in an appropriate manner as a basis for the Secretary-General's own declaration.

4.5. *Does the Secretary-General - having regard to the fact that all Parliament's activities are high risk activities - believe that there is a need to improve the* ***protection*** *of the institution's political and administrative leadership and if so how?*

The Secretary-General is aware that the Internal Auditor has drawn attention to the need to adopt and deploy an institution-wide risk management framework, which should go beyond purely financial risks to encompass all types of major risks to which the Institution may be exposed. Important steps have been taken towards introducing such a framework, and further decisions on the matter will be taken in the future.
The Secretary General intends to establish a risk management function directly attached to his office in the course of 2010.

4.6. *Does the accounting officer - or another "prudential function" next to management - assume responsibility for the integrity of the financial statements and the internal control system as a whole?*

Because of a revision of the Financial Regulation, the Accounting Officer has been required as from the presentation of the final accounts for 2005 to certify that he has "*reasonable assurance that the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial situation of the institution*". Amongst the most important of his prerogatives in this domain are those of laying down the accounting rules and methods and the chart of accounts; of keeping and presenting these accounts; and of laying down and validating the central accounting system, as well as validating departmental systems laid down by the Authorising Officers insofar as they supply or justify accounting information. The Accounting Officer is empowered to carry out any check he deems necessary in order to sign off the accounts. He shall make reservations, if necessary. This is the framework within which the Accounting Officer exercises his role as defined by the Financial Regulation.

Responsibility for the overall internal control system, which covers more than the purely financial side of the Institution's activity, lies with the Secretary-General, as principal Authorising Officer by delegation. Authorising Officers are indeed fully responsible for the funds they manage as well as the legality and regularity of the expenditure under their control.

4.7. *Would the institution's political and administrative leadership be better protected if Authorising Officers' declarations as well as the Principal Authorising Officer's declaration were countersigned by a "prudential function" - accountant, "controller", Chief Financial Officer - at the same level as the Authorising Officers and the Principal Authorising Officer?*
Does the Secretary-General believe that he would be in a more comfortable position when signing the assurance declaration if the institution's Internal Auditor issued a formal audit opinion on the declaration given by the "prudential function"?

The Secretary-General does not consider that such an arrangement would be in keeping with the principles underlying a decentralised system of management.

5. Derogations from and exceptions to the applicable rules and regulations.

5.1. There is a relative big difference in the number of derogations/exceptions reported by the Authorising Officers (from 0 to 28).
What is the total of budgetary transactions against which the 28 derogations/exceptions should be mirrored?

These 28 derogations relate to 52 budgetary operations in one Directorate-General. These have to be set against a total of 3084 operations processed in 2008 (498 commitments, 2450 payment orders and 136 recovery orders).

5.2. *Does the high number of derogations/exceptions in some Directorates indicate that a culture of "management by exception" is developing in these Directorates?*

One of the principles of management in general is that top management should deal mainly with strategic issues, as well as with specific operational issues deserving their attention. Parliament's internal control system recognizes the validity of this approach. Thus, for example, Article 8 §7 of the Internal Rules for implementation of its budget require Authorising Officers by delegation, in addition to their regular reports to the Principal Authorising Officer by delegation, to inform him of "*substantial transactions likely to have significant financial implications for the budget, and of how those transactions have proceeded, at the conclusion of those transactions";* and to inform him "*in good time of any significant event that might jeopardise the sound management of appropriations or prevent the objectives set from being achieved"*.
It should also be acknowledged that derogations may not always be avoided and are acceptable, provided that they are properly documented and justified. Where an *ex ante* verifier considers that a transaction does not comply with applicable rules or procedures, he should withhold endorsement. Withholding of endorsement provides evidence of the proper functioning of internal controls and of management's concern for transparency. The absence of any withholdings of visa might in fact indicate certain malfunctions in internal controls. Having too few exceptions should raise questions in the same way as having too many.

5.3. *Which measures has the Secretary-General taken to strengthen central financial services aiming at 1) avoiding different management cultures in different Directorates-General and 2) ensuring freedom for management as well as transparency and sound financial management?*

As explained in the reply to question 4, the Secretary-General considers that Parliament's internal control framework is generally adequate. Nevertheless, as part of the process of continuous improvement of operations on which it is embarked, the Secretary General envisages the following action:

- further development of objective-setting, and the introduction of a general risk management framework;
- reviewing the minimum internal control standards;
- enhancing the control and risk self-assessment exercises;
- introducing peer reviews of Authorising Officers' annual activity reports and of their declarations to be coordinated by DG Fins.

5.4. In 2008 the Director-Generals reported in total 78 derogations/exceptions as regards the applicable rules and regulations.
Against how many budgetary commitments and payments shall these 78 exceptions be mirrored?

The 78 derogations relating to 102 budgetary operations have to be mirrored against a total of 31.085 budgetary transactions (7.410 commitments and 23.675 payment orders) executed in 2008, i.e. 0,33% of that total. By normal standards, that percentage would be considered not material.

5.5. *The Committee would appreciate an overview of the 78 exceptions indicating in particular*
1) area of activity,
2) reason for the exception (political imperatives, objective urgencies, insufficient management and/or forward planning,) and
3) the lessons learned and actions taken by the Secretary-General to reduce the number of exceptions.

Overview of the 78 derogations per area of activity:

Area of activity	PRES	EXPO	IPOL	COM	PERS	INLO	TRAD	INTE	FINS	ITEC	SJ	Total
Procurement		13		2	6					2		23
Budgetary procedures	26	4	2	4		5			1	3		45
Others	2	1	1	3	2	1						10
Total	**28**	**18**	**3**	**9**	**8**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**5**	**0**	**78**
Nombre engagements	498	271	494	1.684	656	1.508	347	310	123	1.439	80	7410
Nombre ordonnances	2.450	395	671	2.618	2.921	4.508	3.791	770	1.583	3.892	76	23.675
Total opérations	2.948	666	1.165	4.302	3.577	6.016	4.138	1.080	1.706	5.331	156	31.085
Ratio exceptions/opérations	0,950%	2,703%	0,258%	0,209%	0,224%	0,100%	0,000%	0,000%	0,059%	0,094%	0,000%	0,251%

The reported derogations relate to (a) *procuremen*t, (b) *budgetary acts*, and (c) *others.*

a) As regards procurement, some AODs stated that they had not always been able to use the procurement procedures required by the Financial Regulations for the cases in question. Most frequently, highly specialized services or products with few potential suppliers, or short notice periods, were given as grounds for not adhering to the rules.
b) A majority of exceptions concerning budgetary procedures related to breaches of the rules regarding prior budgetary commitments or annuality, and the use of inappropriate budget lines.
c) Other exceptions related to the absence of appropriate delegations, inventory management, or differences between goods or services ordered and those actually delivered.

As stated in reply to the previous question, the volume of derogations at 0,33% of all operations does not give rise to particular concern. The low level of derogations itself reflects the fact that measures have been taken over the last few years, at both central and departmental levels, to remedy systemic shortcomings identified in Parliament's internal control framework. Nevertheless, Authorising Officers by delegation draw the necessary conclusions from any derogations arising and take such measures as they can to prevent recurrence.

6. The declaration of the Principal Authorising Officer by delegation

As Principal Authorising Officer by delegation the Secretary-General shall issue a declaration as to whether Parliament's budget has been implemented in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and as to whether the control framework put in place provides the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying operations (Internal Rules on the Implementation of the European Parliament's Budge, Article 8, paragraph 9-11).

This declaration shall be sent to the President of the European Parliament and the Committee on Budgetary Control and the former Secretary-General's declaration regarding the financial year 2008 was sent on 4 March 2009.

In his declaration of 4 March 2009 the former Secretary-General

- *certified* that he has a reasonable assurance that Parliament's budget has been implemented in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that the control framework put in place provides the necessary guarantees as to the legality and regularity of the underlying operations

- *noted* that no authorising officer had entered formal qualifications in his or her declaration.

On the other hand: In the Internal Auditor's Annual Report for 2008 the Internal Auditor informs that 88 recommended actions and four recommended critical actions are still uncompleted.

6.1. *How it is possible to have reasonable assurance when a large number of actions aiming at tightening the internal control system have not been carried out and when there still is a rather important number of "Exceptions to the rules"?*

(See also reply to Question 12 on outstanding central action plans)

In no internal control system, no matter how sophisticated and costly to run, is it possible to guarantee that processes will be error-free. Authorising Officers by delegation declare that they have a "reasonable assurance" that the information included in their reports is free of material mis-statements or error, and that all relevant information has been included. This does not mean that no errors have been made or that there is no room for improvement. The answer to question 12 outlines that most of the actions pertaining to Parliament's internal control framework have been implemented. The remaining actions have been assessed as less urgent and will be implemented as soon as possible taking into account external developments.

The declarations signed by Authorising Officers by delegation / Directors-General certify that, in their respective fields of responsibility, the resources made available have been used for the appointed purposes and in accordance with the principles of legality, regularity and sound financial management.
Within their areas of competence, Authorising Officers constantly strive to improve the operational processes. They are helped in that respect by the central support services and by the recommendations of the internal and external auditors aimed at reducing their exposure to risk.

6.2. Under which circumstances shall qualifications/reservations be mentioned? Are there common rules on when qualifications/reservations shall be entered or is it a *matter for the individual Authorising Officer's appreciation?*

Article 8 §11 of the Internal Rules for implementation of Parliament's budget provides as follows on this point:

"The declaration may be accompanied by specific reservations drawing attention to risks associated with the transactions and measures managed by the directorate-general or service concerned. Such reservations may contain remarks by the authorising officer by delegation on the management of operations inherited from his predecessor(s). Reservations must not have the effect of negating the substance of the declaration but may draw attention to inadequacies in the planning or implementation of internal control and management systems, in which case, the measures which the authorising officer by delegation has taken or proposes to take to remedy the situation shall also be indicated (as shall the time scale for their implementation)."

Further guidance on the subject of reservations was provided in the Secretary-General's instructions for establishment of the 2004 Annual Activity Reports and is annexed to the present document.

7. Objectives for 2008 - 2009

By note of 19 November 2007 (D(2007)70542) to the Directors-General the Secretary-General set the following objectives for 2008 - 2009:

- Preparing for application of the Lisbon Treaty
- Preparing for the 2009 European elections so as to help reverse the voter turnout trend
- Stepping up services for Members
- Reforming and consolidating the General Secretariat of Parliament.

Which criteria for measuring the degree of success were established?

On the basis of these criteria, how well did the Secretariat-General achieve the objectives in 2008?
Which lessons has the Secretary General drawn from any unsatisfactory achievements of the objectives in 2008?

Lisbon
While interrupted because of the negative outcome of the Irish and Dutch referenda, the preparation for the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty was resumed by the present Secretary General. These measures were already reflected in the 2010 budget and the main part of it will be decided and financed through the 2010 Lisbon Amending Budget. The preparation of Parliament for the new Treaty will be completed in the framework of the 2011 budget. It is therefore too early to draw conclusions.

Preparation for European elections
During one of the incoming meetings, the Bureau will discuss the outcome of the information campaign for the European elections 2009, based on the works of the working group of the Bureau on Communication policy. The results of such an evaluation will be forwarded to the Committee on Budgetary Control.

Services for Members
During the last years the stepping up of services for members has become a priority for the Secretary General.

Several measures and new projects have been established (such as, for instance, the "ad personam" interpretation service and the Briefing Service of the Library). Beside, the majority of the new posts were allocated to the services more closely involved in the legislative activity (parliamentary committees).
This process is not over and will be continued in the forthcoming year.

Reform of the General Secretariat

A complete overview of the restructuring measures adopted in 2008 is provided for in point 16. All of these decisions taken by the Bureau have been successfully implemented.

8. Risk based sound financial management

The financial resources of the European Parliament are taxpayers' money. Any institution using public funds has an obligation to explain how these funds have been used and to give comprehensive, objective and relevant information on the degree to which the funds have been used for the intended purposes and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management (Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness).

In this perspective and having regard to the well-known high reputational risk involved in the activities of the European Parliament it would have been ambitious and forward-looking to include in the objectives new ideas and strategies aiming at strengthening the European Parliament's accountability towards European taxpayers.

However, the identification and achievement of world class sound financial management in the European Parliament and full transparency to European citizens on how Parliament uses public funds was not among the objectives for 2008 - 2009.

Which measures has the Secretary-General taken or will he take in order to bring risk-based sound financial management in the European Parliament higher up on the list of priorities and objectives and will he present to the Committee a list of actions to be carried out in order to achieve this objective?

Risks
At present, individual Directors-General/Authorizing Officers by delegation identify and manage risks in their respective operating environments in the framework of the internal control systems which they have each put in place.

The Internal Auditor has drawn attention to the need for an Institution-wide approach to risk management.

On 30 June 2008, the then Secretary-General and the Directors-General agreed on a general framework for risk management combining decentralised management of sectoral risks with central management of horizontal risks, based in both cases on central methodological support. A harmonised methodological approach to risk identification, classification, prioritisation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting remains to be developed, formally adopted and implemented. These tasks will be entrusted to the official soon to be appointed and whose role will include that of institutional risk manager.

Sound financial management

Sound financial management is one of the eight fundamental budgetary principles. It is therefore included in the Financial Regulation, together with the other seven budgetary principles.[1] The principle of sound financial management relates to economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.[2]

The Financial Regulation is the basis for the implementation of the budget of the European Parliament. Therefore the objective of sound financial management is implicitly included in every decision which has budgetary and financial implications. Sound financial management is therefore, together with the other budgetary principles, the basis for all budgetary and financial management in the European Parliament and as such is implicitly included in the annual objectives.

9. Ex-ante and ex-post verifiers' staff reports

Can the Secretary-General confirm that both ex-ante and ex-post verifiers' staff reports are drawn up by the same person as the one whose decisions they are supposed to verify? If yes, does the Secretary-General see this as a weakness in the internal control system and a risk for the achievement of sound financial management?

Parliament's Authorising Officers by delegation/Directors-General carry full responsibility for implementing the budgetary appropriations allocated to their sectors of activity. They have put in place, in compliance with the minimum internal control standards, organisational structures appropriate to their respective operating environments. Within those structures, *ex-ante* and *ex-post* verifiers have direct access to Authorising Officers by delegation and sub-delegation. The task of the *ex-ante* verifier is to check, before the AO approves any transaction, that it respects the principles of legality, regularity and sound financial management. Thus, the role of the *ex-ante* verifier is one of support for authorizing officers.

Performance reports are drawn up by hierarchical superiors; and Article 6 §3 of the Internal Rules for implementation of Parliament's budget provides that staff members responsible for *ex-ante* verifications shall not come under the authority of those whose operations they verify. In addition, Minimum Internal Control Standard N° 4 on staff performance, together with the rules governing staff assessment, provides a number of other safeguards for staff, including - in the last resort - appeals procedures.

The Secretary-General considers that these arrangements create an environment in which *ex-ante* and *ex-post* verifiers feel able to perform their duties in all objectivity, in line with the code of conduct adopted by the Institution for those agents.

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[1] Financial Regulation, TITLE II, article 3.
[2] Financial Regulation, TITLE II, CHAPTER 7, article 27.

10. Standard financial statement

Article 8 of the Internal Rules on the Implementation of the European Parliament's Budget states that: *"A standard financial statement shall be drawn up for all proposals for decisions by the Bureau, the Conference of Presidents and the Quaestors and requests for authorisation submitted by other parliamentary bodies (committees, political groups) or the Secretariat-General that have budgetary implications."*

The absolute respect of this requirement seems to be one of the conditions for ensuring respect for the principles of sound financial management and for the carrying out of ex ante and ex post verification.

Were decisions and requests with budgetary implications taken or submitted in 2008 without the corresponding standard financial statement and if yes which decisions and requests and for which amounts?

In 2008, 29 meetings of the Conference of Presidents, 22 meetings of the Bureau and 14 meetings of the Quaestors took place, with, on average, 10-12 decisions taken per meeting. It is the responsibility of the service concerned to ensure that a financial statement accompanies proposals for decisions with budgetary implications.

In the three cases listed below, a financial statement did not accompany the decisions taken. Two cases related to authorisations for delegation travel which for urgent political reasons or time pressures had to be treated within very short deadlines. A further set of decisions related to the exceptional situation following the collapse of part of the ceiling of the Strasbourg Chamber.

1. 22.05.08 - the Conference of Presidents authorised, while minuting that a financial statement was still pending, the sending of a 4-member delegation to a conference on food security organised in Rome by the UN FAO on 3-5 June 2008.

2. 11.12.08 - the Conference of Presidents authorised, exceptionally, the sending of a delegation of the High-Level Contact Group for relations with the Turkish Cypriot committee in the northern part of the island to Bratislava.

3. 27.08.08 - In light of the partial collapse of the ceiling in the Strasbourg Chamber, the Quaestors adopted certain decisions concerning the relocation of the September I part-session from Strasbourg to Brussels (flexible arrangements re visitors' groups, a derogation to the usual PEAM rules on intermediate travel for Members who had already booked travel to Strasbourg, a derogation to the usual rules on participation in roll-call votes for those Members who had visitors' groups in Strasbourg in the week concerned). It should be borne in mind that the then Secretary-General had officially launched the crisis contingency plan on 18 August 2008 which entailed certain exemptions for the application of the Financial Regulation.

More detailed questions

11. Information Offices in the Member States

11.1. *The Committee would appreciate an overview of the costs of running the information offices in the Member States.*

TOWNS	2008		
	PROPERTY COSTS[3]	STAFF COSTS	Operating appr. (Information)[4]
ATHENS	€256.200	€1.035.430	€436.500
BARCELONA	€197.007	€0	€122.600
BERLIN	€737.674	€1.343.257	€1.051.900
BRATISLAVA	€146.680	€308.346	€252.495
BRUSSELS	€0	€980.362	€326.005
BUCHAREST	€657.600	€244.812	€278.000
BUDAPEST	€130.850	€414.925	€308.500
COPENHAGEN	€199.688	€780.226	€370.100
DUBLIN	€382.070	€503.854	€453.063
EDINBURGH	€219.982	€0	€94.500
HELSINKI	€233.728	€668.952	€256.550
THE HAGUE	€152.049	€594.011	€578.100
VALLETTA	€48.500	€244.890	€168.050
LISBON	€178.951	€654.474	€366.900
LJUBLJANA	€132.025	€262.666	€226.350
LONDON	€1.085.877	€1.488.273	€1.388.613
LUXEMBOURG	€111.239	€71.796	€214.630
MADRID	€923.451	€1.386.611	€825.500
MARSEILLE	€91.926	€0	€249.500
MILANO	€88.974	€0	€138.500
MUNICH	€106.085	€0	€159.862
NICOSIA	€92.190	€189.341	€225.100
PARIS	€1.278.922	€1.501.055	€557.500
PRAGUE	€220.521	€294.459	€257.000
RIGA	€99.055	€291.519	€183.600
ROME	€626.452	€1.115.484	€772.150
SOFIA	€657.600	€253.912	€188.300
STRASBOURG	€0	€1.035.465	€316.100
STOCKHOLM	€399.688	€562.267	€307.725
TALLINN	€146.400	€361.186	€206.200
WARSAW	€163.285	€375.692	€399.650
VIENNA	€841.761	€433.923	€340.537
VILNIUS	€167.550	€151.747	€209.800
MISC.	€477.820	€0	€0

[3] Property costs shown in this table include: rental costs; amortization costs; furbish and re-refurbish of the places; cleaning and maintenance costs; energy consumption; security and surveillance of the buildings.

[4] Operating costs in this table include: costs of information and communication activities and administrative costs.

TOTAL	€11.251.800	€17.548.935	€12.229.880

NB: as far as the staffing is concerned, the offices of Barcelona, Edinburgh, Marseilles, Milan and Munich are included in the figures for Madrid, London, Paris, Rome and Berlin

11.2. *Which criteria have been developed in order to assess the qualitative results - not number of brochures distributed - of the activities carried out by the Information Offices?*

The Information Offices of the European Parliament (hereafter EPIOs) are responsible for the delivery in the 27 Member States, their regions and localities of European Parliament's overall information and communication strategy. The EPIOs strategy focuses on citizens and on the best way to make them informed of EP decisions and role. In each Member State and in each national context, tools and instruments work differently. Therefore the global strategic approach is adapted by the EPIOs to the respective needs in the Member States.

The main focus is on relations with citizens, press and media. Each EPIO has its own website for communication with the general public. They cooperate with the Commission Representations in the framework of the interinstitutional communication strategy, decided by the Interinstitutional Information Working Group, chaired jointly by the responsible Vice-President of the European Parliament, the correspondent Commissioner and the Presidency-in-office of the Council. EPIOs also ensure contacts with local authorities in Member States, develop relations with civil society, monitor trends in public opinion and give support to members having an institutional role in the EP when visiting the different countries (such as Members of the Bureau, Conference of Presidents, rapporteurs, etc.). Their activity is based on an annual working programme, communicated to all the Members of each country, in time to allow them to include into their own planning initiatives they are interested in.

With regard to the information and communication activities carried out under the mission statement and all administrative costs (excl. staff and property costs), the total expenditure amounted to € 12.229.880 in 2008. With this relatively low budget, the EPIOs carried out around 1400 information and communication activities in the 27 Member States.

In 2008, direct contacts with EU citizens were enhanced and further developed mainly by Citizens Fora. The latter have been implemented as part of the EP's contribution to the reflection period on the Future of Europe and have been proven to be a success tool in increasing qualitatively and quantitatively direct contacts with citizens. By its decentralised "go local" main feature, an open and direct debate with citizens and civil societies in regions has been achieved. In total, 77 Citizens Fora were held in 2008 in 19 Member States. The number has since then continuously increased and extended to all Member States.

According to the Mission Statement, MEPs are informed on EPIOs yearly working programmes and are involved in a maximum of activities. Their positive feedback shows the overall consent and satisfaction with EPIOs information and communication activities in the Member States.

DG COMM uses different means to supervise and monitor the execution of EPIOs communication activities in order to guarantee good qualitative results (from the procurement procedure till the reporting system). In order to ensure the implementation of a coherent information and communication strategy in the different Member States, EPIOs have been reinforced with Press Officers working closely together with their colleagues in the Media Directorate.

However, it is not so easy to measure the results of any communication and information activity and not only at EPIOs' level. Therefore, within the range and spread of communication activities, the best indicators are still, at this stage, the number of media and citizens reached by the EP decentralised activities. In 2008, figures show that:

- Overall, more then six million citizens were reached directly via communication activities like conferences and seminars. In addition to that, we estimate that several million European citizens were reached via TV, radio, newspapers and internet for which precise figures are often difficult to obtain because of the nature of the actions and of the lack of resources.
- The attempt to increase the interest of regional, national and online media through decentralised activities has considerably increased the outreach and impact of the EP strategy: over two thousand new different media, as well as new 260 Web media has started in 2008 to cover the EP activities in the 27 Member States reaching millions of citizens via their multiplier effect.

Therefore, in addition to the above-mentioned figures, one has to bear in mind that a great many of other communication activities addressing e.g. the youth (lectures, Euroscola, Spring Day etc.) and/or visitors groups as well as media and journalists in the EPIOs and EP's working premises have been carried out.

It should also be pointed out that with regard to media activities, including not only the promotion of the EP, but also the rebuttal of inaccuracies and distortions either after publication or during research by journalists on certain subjects before publication, many time consuming efforts are made by the EPIOs which are "invisible" and not measurable although they are of highest importance for an accurate image of the EP in the media.

11.3. *Could the objectives be met more cost-effectively by other means than Information Offices?*

The choice between the information offices and other forms of information and communication is taken by the Political Authorities, namely the Bureau and the Plenary.
Expenditure related to information and communication activities carried out under the mission statement and all administrative costs of EP Information offices budget appropriations amounted in 2008 to 2€/citizen reached (without counting the media impact). In total, the overall budget in 2008 amounted to 12 229 880 €, which guaranteed the EP to outreach more than 6 million citizens in 27 Member States at the same time.

EPIOs are undoubtedly the forefront actors in the Member States which can provide non-partisan information about the European Parliament and raise awareness of citizens and media. For example, they play an important role in implementing the institutional information campaign for the European Elections 2009.

In accordance with the mission statement the 'go local' approach is a priority with a view to provide information and create debate about Europe through decentralised events at local level (Citizens' fora, etc).

In detail, the current mission statement of the Information Offices was adopted by the Bureau on 18 June 2007. The modifications made by the Bureau at that time mainly underline the Offices' role vis-à-vis citizens.

Whereas of course the European Parliament is represented by the Members who play a political role, the European Parliament Information Offices are responsible for delivering coherent information about decisions taken by the European Parliament and promoting and projecting as widely as possible the Parliament and its activities in an institutional and non-partisan way. Of course, Information Offices involve Members in the activities they organise. In this regard, programming activities must take account of the European Parliament agenda and meetings calendar in Brussels and Strasbourg.

In accordance with the mission statement, the Information Offices concentrate on relations with citizens and media relations. In this context the organisation of citizens' fora outside the capitals in the regions has been very successful. Members are of course fully involved in these fora as well as national/regional/local bodies. The purpose is to deal with issues of importance in the region concerned and to ensure a broad audio-visual and press coverage**.**

The offices provide regular press reviews for members, organise visits and seminars for journalists in Brussels and Strasbourg (to which members are invited) and play an active role in rebutting inaccuracies and distortions in press coverage concerning the European Parliament.

In addition, EPIOs ensure cooperation with the European Commission Representation and a high profile presence of the European Parliament in Commission activities in the member states. Offices are also maintaining contacts with the national and regional public authorities and in particular the respective parliaments in their host country. They also give support to visits by Members who fulfil an institutional role (e.g. members of the Bureau, the Conference of Presidents, the Conference of Committee Chairmen, the Conference of Delegation Chairmen, rapporteurs and official Parliament delegations).
Thus, the role and missions of the EP Information offices complement with their activities in the capitals and at local level the political role of Members (MEP) who are involved in these activities, as only elected MEPs can represent the European Parliament.
In terms of seeking the decrease of costs, the European Parliament and the Commission developed in 1994[5] the concept of a common location for their external offices in the member states ("Houses of Europe"). Therefore the Information Offices of the European Parliament in the capitals of the member States are located - with the exception of Athens - together with the Representation Offices of the Commission in a single building in order to take advantage of the possibilities to make financial savings through sharing common areas, and create a unique image of the European Union towards the general public in the member states.

12. Implementation of outstanding 2008 Internal Audit recommendations

Which initiatives have been or will be taken aiming at a more rapid implementation of outstanding 2008 Internal Audit recommendations (88 uncompleted actions and 4

[5] European Parliament Resolution on the Draft general budget for 1995 (A4-0105/94) adopted on thursday 15 decembre 1994, para 35

uncompleted critical actions.)?

The actions referred to are those remaining from the central and departmental action plans agreed by the Secretary-General in 2004 based on recommendations by the Internal Auditor following his review of the Institution's internal control framework.

The 452 approved actions were recognised from the start as not all being of equal weight, and the time-scale for their implementation was differentiated accordingly (short-, medium- and long-term).

364 (80%) of the actions had been implemented as at 31 December 2008 and a number of those outstanding at that time will have been realised in the intervening year. Meanwhile, a substantial number of the remaining actions are on hold pending the Lisbon-related revision Financial Regulation, of the internal Rules of Procedures and of some subordinate texts, as well as the modernisation of the relevant IT applications).

The Secretary-General nevertheless recognizes the need for the outstanding departmental actions to be implemented at the earliest opportunity and will continue to monitor progress in this respect.

As regards central actions, the Secretary-General intends to devote particular attention to development of appropriate planning, programming and objective-setting mechanisms; development and implementation of a harmonised approach to risk management; and the review and enhancement of IT applications for financial management.

13. Vacancies

13.1. *For how many months has the post of Head of Unit in the Committee on Budgets been vacant and what are the reasons for not filling the post as soon as possible in order to ensure the quality of the work?*

In order to guarantee the high and professional level of service to Members, appointment procedures of Head of Units in Committee secretariats should take into consideration the parliamentary context. Delays in filling vacancies may therefore occur, justified by the need to fulfil appropriate requirements.

The post of Head of Unit in the Committee on Budget is vacant since 16 June 2008,. When the former Head of Unit was appointed to the post of a Director for budgetary Affairs, it seemed to be suitable to let her continue in heading the secretariat and running the work of the committee in the interest of the smooth resumption of the ongoing budgetary procedure**. This decision followed a request by the committee's authorities**. In 2009, when the publication of the post was planned for the beginning of the year, it was decided to postpone it to the time after the elections for the same reason mentioned above. Hence, the post has been published on 7 September 2009. The recruitment procedure is close to be finalised.

13.2. *For how many months has the post of Head of Unit in the Committee on Budgetary Control been vacant and what are the reasons for not filling the post as soon as possible in order to ensure the quality of the work?*

The post of Head of Unit in the Committee on Budgetary Control is vacant since 1 May 2009. To ensure the continuity of the Committee work within the Secretariat, a senior administrator was appointed Head of Unit (FF) on 6 May 2009 acting under the supervision and guidance of the Director. When the post became vacant, it was decided to open it after the elections. The post has also been published on 7 September 2009. The recruitment procedure is about to be submitted for decision.

13.3. The fact that Head of Unit posts as well as Director posts are vacant for several months is clearly not in harmony with the objective of "Stepping up services to the Members" in so far as services not fully staffed cannot deliver the same quality of work as fully-staffed services.

Which measures is the Secretary-General envisaging to limit the vacancy of posts to a strict minimum - and not more than two months - and thereby significantly contribute to improving the services to Members?

Les postes vacants au niveau de l'encadrement intermédiaire concernent majoritairement les unités linguistiques et s'expliquent principalement par la pénurie de candidats ayant les qualifications nécessaires.
Le taux de vacances est en forte baisse par rapport aux années précédentes. Ainsi, on ne dénombrait au 18 novembre 2009 que 16 % des postes d'encadrement intermédiaire non occupés ou occupés par des fonctionnaires "faisant fonction".
A la même date, la totalité des postes d'encadrement supérieur était pourvue, à l'exception de celui du directeur général de la DG PERS dont le pourvoi est en cours et pour lequel une décision sera prochainement soumise au Bureau.

It has to be recalled, however, that 7 director posts have been filled before the summer 2009 as were 2 director general and 1 director posts *in* November 2009 through *mutation* Furthermore, 2 directors general and 3 directors will be appointed probably in February this year.

14. Carry-overs

According to Article 9 (2a) of the Financial Regulation, differentiated commitment appropriations and non-differentiated appropriations not yet committed at the close of the financial year may be carried over in respect of amounts corresponding to commitment appropriations for which most of the preparatory stages of the commitment procedure have been completed by 31 December. Such amounts may then be committed up to 31 March of the following year.

Were all the 2007 appropriations carried over to 2008 in accordance with Article 9 (2a) used before 31 March 2008?
Were all the 2008 appropriations carried over to 2009 in accordance with Article 9 (2a) used before 31 March 2009?
In any cases where such appropriations were not used before 31 March the Committee expects full information as to which cases and the reasons why.

Situation des crédits reportés non automatique de 2007 à 2008

1. **Achat du bureau d'information de Vienne**
   Ligne 2003 "Acquisition immobilière": 23.500.000 €
   Taux utilisation: 96,03%
   Ligne 2008 "Autres dépenses liées aux immeubles": 1.500.000 €
   Taux utilisation: 42,63%, en raison d'une consommation de crédits plus modérée que prévue.

2. **Bail emphytéotique, bâtiment Eastman à Bruxelles**
   Ligne 2001/03 *"Redevances pour Emphythéose": 18.500.000 €*
   Taux utilisation: 100%

3. **Rénovation du bureau d'information de Valetta**
   Ligne 2007 "travaux d'aménagement des locaux": 220.036 €
   Taux utilisation: 100%

4. **Rénovation du centre sportif à Bruxelles**
   Ligne 2140 "Matériel et installations techniques": 80.000 €
   Taux utilisation: 99,85%

Situation des crédits reportés non automatique de 2008 à 2009

1. **Centre audiovisuel D5**
   Ligne 2140 "Matériel et installations audiovisuels": 3.850.000 €
   Taux utilisation: 95,73%

2. **Centre de visiteurs**
   Ligne 3243 "Centre de visiteurs": 4.465.729 €
   Taux utilisation: 75,10%

Le taux d'utilisation de la ligne 3242 "Centre de visiteurs" et au 75,1 % à cause du fait qu'il y a eu l'annulation d'un marché. En effet, la production de contenu multimédia n'avait pas pu être exécutée dans les délais initialement prévus. Or le Parlement doit fournir au contractant les textes afin de les transformer en contenu multimédia, mais la finalisation des différents paquets de contenus présentant les pouvoirs de l'institution, son fonctionnement, son histoire ainsi que les groupes politiques et membres a pris du retard. Cela s'explique notamment en raison des adaptations à la nouvelle législature et aux changements constitutionnels liés au Traité de Lisbonne, ainsi que par la nécessité d'assurer des traductions de qualité dans un style convivial. De ce fait un montant de 1.111.967 € n'a pas pu être financé par les crédits reportés.

15. Costs of translation and interpretation

The costs of the necessary translation and interpretation (meetings, documents, interpreters) into all official languages of the European Union have increased in 2008 compared to 2007.

- Does the SG have any insights regarding possible reduction of costs in this area?
- Is the SG aware of the fact that there are numerous meetings where cabins are in use by interpreters while there is no member or assistant of that language attending the meeting?
- Does the SG agree that indicating their attendance for meetings by MEP´s or assistants of smaller countries could be an instrument to avoid unnecessary presence of certain interpreters and therefore an instrument to lower the costs of translation?

Interpretation

The EP's policy on multilingualism is based on its Rules of Procedure which stipulate that *"All members shall have the right to speak in Parliament in the official language of their choice. Speeches delivered in one of the official languages shall be simultaneously interpreted into the other official languages"*.[6] The revised Code of Conduct on Multilingualism has been adopted by the Buerau in late 2008. The Code of Conduct on Multilingualism foresees more effective measures to streamline the scheduling, coordination and processing of requests for meetings with interpretation. Through these measures the resources of the service can be better planned and it can be avoided to a great extent that interpreters participate at meetings where their services are not needed, leading to a reduction in costs. However, the costs will never be completely eliminated as some flexibility is needed and unforeseen events can not be excluded. The implementation of the Code of Conduct will be monitored throughout 2009 in order to assess its effectiveness. Therefore it is for the moment too early to propose any changes and all changes will have to be approved by the Bureau.

Translation

Although the overall costs of the translation service rose in accordance with inflation between 2007 and 2008 the overall production rose by 34%, resulting in a reduction in the price per page. The increase in productivity was due, to a large extent, to the move toward a systematic use of translation memory software (Euramis) for all legislative texts and to a service wide IT training programme to ensure that translators are able to make maximum use of the technologies available.

The continued use of Euramis and its extension to all document types offer significant potential for further reduction of costs in the area of translation.

Efficiency gains can be achieved by adapting the staffing levels of the language units to the number of pages submitted for translation instead of having a one size fits all approach.

16. Fragen auf Organisationsebene

16.1. *Wie viele Neueinstellungen erfolgten im Jahr 2008? Wie hoch war dabei der Anteil der Stellen, die wegen des Ausscheidens des Stelleninhabers ersetzt wurden? Wie lange betrug die durchschnittliche Dauer zwischen Ausscheiden und Neubesetzung?*

6 Article 138 of the Rules of Procedure

Durch welche Maßnahmen stellte das Parlament eine abgestimmte Personalpolitik mit den anderen Institutionen sicher?

Entre le 1/12/2007 et le 30/11/2008, le secrétariat général a recruté 392 agents (*274 fonctionnaires, 105 agents temporaires et 13 agents contractuels 3bis*). Sur la même période 142 fonctionnaires ont cessé définitivement leurs fonctions. Le nombre de cessations de fonctions définitives enregistrées entre le 1/12/2007 et le 30/11/2008 représente 51.8% du nombre de nominations de fonctionnaires stagiaires au cours de la même période (274).
La durée moyenne des vacances peut être estimée de l'ordre de 5 à 6 mois en moyenne.
Le secrétariat général est en contact étroit avec les autres institutions notamment par sa représentation auprès de nombreux comités interinstitutionnels et notamment le Comité de Préparation pour les Questions Statutaires (CPQS) ainsi que le collège des Chefs d'Administration. Un des axes essentiels de la coordination de la politique du personnel avec les autres institutions passe par les relations que la DG PERS entretient avec l'Office européen de sélection du personnel (EPSO) afin de planifier au mieux la sélection de fonctionnaires et d'agents sous contrats.

16.2. *Welche organisatorischen Veränderungen ergaben sich auf Referatsebene (Zusammenlegung / Trennung) innerhalb der einzelnen Generaldirektionen? Was waren die Gründe hierfür?*

Les principales modifications organisationnelles intervenues en 2008 sont les suivantes:
DG PRES:

- Direction des actes législatifs : réorganisation des secteurs linguistiques via la création de trois unités
- Création de nouveaux services au sein de la Direction de la Bibliothèque
- Transfert de la Direction Relations avec les Parlements nationaux de la DG IPOL vers la DG PRES.
- Transfert de la Bibliothèque de la DG INFO (COMM) vers la DG PRES

DG COMM :

- Réorganisation de la DG et création de la Direction "Relations avec les citoyens"

DG TRAD :

- Réorganisation interne des services centraux

DG INTE :

- Création de la Direction générale (Ancienne Direction de l'Interprétation de la DG INLO)

DG ITEC :

- Création de la Direction générale ITEC (Fusion de l'ancienne Direction informatique (DIT) de la DG PRES et l'ancienne direction de l'édition de la DG TRAD)

Toutes ces modifications/restructurations visaient à une meilleure efficacité des services et ont été approuvées par le Bureau.

16.3. *Wie hoch war der Personalbestand am Anfang und am Ende des Jahres 2008 der Generaldirektionen Finanzen und Personal bei den im Jahr 2009 von der Einführung des*

Abgeordneten- und Assistentenstatuts betroffenen Referate?

DG PERS

Afin de faire face au défi majeur que représentaient le recrutement et la gestion administrative de +/- 1400 assistants parlementaires accrédités, les effectifs des unités directement concernées de la DG PERS ont été renforcés de 12 personnes entre 2008 et 2009.

DG PERS	Situation 01/01/2008	Situation 01/01/2009
Cabinet Medical BRU	13	16
Dir. Gest. Adm. PERS	4	4
Unite des Decomptes	15	14
Unite Droits Individuels	18	24
Unite Formation Professionel	34	34
Unite Gestion Personnel	23	19
Unite Informatiques	15	16
Unite Missions	12	13
Unite Pensions / Ass. Soc.	19	20
Unite Recrutement	29	31
Unite Rel. Pers. BRU	23	26
	205	217

Bien évidemment, les unités recensées dans ce tableau étaient également chargées de la gestion administrative des autres catégories du personnel de l'institution (fonctionnaires, agents temporaires, agents contractuels).

C'est pourquoi, le tableau ci-dessous présente une estimation des effectifs directement concernés par l'instauration du statut des assistants. Le tableau n'indique que les données propres à 2009 puisque la DG PERS n'était pas en charge de la gestion des assistants en 2008 sous le précédent régime (responsabilité de la DG FINS). On peut estimer globalement que, selon la nature des activités conduites par les différentes unités de la DG PERS, le pourcentage des effectifs liés directement à la gestion des assistants parlementaires accrédités se situe autour de 12% des effectifs globaux des unités concernées.
Il y a lieu de noter que l'intégration des assistants parlementaires accrédités au Régime Applicable aux autres Agents (RAA) représente un accroissement de l'ordre de 25% de la population "statutaire" du Parlement européen gérée par la DG PERS.
Les agents affectés au sein de la DG PERS et chargés de la gestion administrative des assistants parlementaires accrédités sont susceptibles d'être redéployés au sein de la DG selon l'évolution des besoins liés à cette gestion, l'accent ayant ainsi été mis initialement sur les unités en charge des principales étapes du recrutement (unité recrutement, cabinet médical, droits individuels).

DG PERS	Estimation de l'effectif en charge des assistants au sein des unités en 2009

Cabinet médical Bruxelles	3
Unité des Décomptes	2
Unité des Droits Individuels	5
Unité Formation Professionnelle	2
Unité Gestion du Personnel	2
Unité des Missions	3
Unité Pensions et Assurances Sociales	2
Unité Recrutement	3
Unité Relations avec le Personnel à Bruxelles	3
Total	**25**

DG FINS

DG FINS	Situation April 2008*	Situation 31/12/2009**
Director /secretariat	3	4
Members' salaries and Social Entitlements Unit	17	19
Parliamentary assistance and Members' General Expenditure Unit	18	23
Members' Travel and Subsistence Unit	22	23
Total	**60**	**69**

* In the beginning of 2008, the services in charge of the allowances and social entitlements of Members were part of two different units with a total of 49 officials covering the sectors concerned. Through the filling of 9 new posts received in the 2008 budget and redeployment inside the DG, a separate directorate with 60 officials dealing with the Members' financial and social entitlements deriving from the Statute could be created in view of the coming into force of the Members' Statute. The figures in the table reflect the situation after the restructuration.

** DG Finance received 7 new posts in the 2009 budget, which were attached to the Directorate for Members' Financial and Social Entitlements. At the end of the 2009 budget exercise, two additional posts were attributed to DG Finance given the supplementary work load that has been experienced following the coming into force of the Statute on 14 July 2009.

16.4. *Wie hoch waren die Kosten für festangestellte Dolmetscher und Übersetzer im Jahr 2008. Wie viele Arbeitsstunden bzw. übersetzte Seiten stehen dem gegenüber? Wie hoch sind die Kosten für externe Dolmetscher- und Übersetzerleistungen und wie viele Arbeitsstunden bzw. übersetzte Seiten stehen dem gegenüber?*

Secteur de l'interprétation

According to Pericles, DG INTE's internal work management system, DG INTE employed in 2008 a total of 364 permanent staff interpreters, of which approximately 25 were in administrative posts and not working mainly as interpreters (Director-General, Directors, Heads of Unit, Programming, Recruitment, Meetings & Conferences etc.). The total number of interpreting days provided by DG INTE in 2008 was 103.007, of which 51.8% were provided by staff interpreters. The remaining 48.2% were provided by ACI interpreters at an average cost of 1 015 EUR per interpreting day which includes travel allowances, per diem, etc.

It has to be underlined that the percentage of days covered by staff interpreters has risen, showing a rise of their productivity. This can be explained because, when there are no meetings in EP, staff interpreters work for other institutions thus further increasing cost effectiveness for interpretation.

An awareness-raising quarterly information note is sent to all users concerning language facilities requested but not used. A biannual report on the respect of the Code of Conduct is drawn up for the attention of the Secretary General and for information of the Bureau.

Secteur de la traduction

In 2008, a total of 689 translators were employed as officials in DG Translation. This represents a staffing cost (including overheads) of € 120 792 724.
Expenditure on external translation services totalled. € 22 036 824.
A total of 1.8 Mio translated pages were produced, of which 39 % (705 000 pages) were outsourced.

It should be borne in mind that translators also carry out duties other than translation. A working time-analysis carried out over 2008 and 2009 has shown that, on average, a translator is available for translation for 80% of his/her total working time.

It should also be borne in mind that the externalization of translation involves a certain administrative burden, the cost of which has been calculated at some €30 per page, and that the quality control and revision of texts translated by external contractors also represents an additional work load for the internal service.
The following table summarises the answers to these questions

EP staff 2008:

Interpreters	Translators
€ 37,8 Mio	€120.792.724
Interpretation days: 53.357	Translated pages: 1.095.000

External staff 2008:

Interpreters	Translators
€46.178.220	€22.036.824
Interpretation days:44.642	Translated pages: 705.000

16.5. *Wie viele Stellen gab es im Jahr 2008 in den Informationsbüros des Parlaments in den Mitgliedsstaaten? An welchen Orten werden Gebäude und sonstige Logistik von Parlament und Kommission gemeinsam genutzt? Bestehen institutionalisierte Abstimmungsmechanismen?*

Staff in EP Information offices in 2008 was composed by 235 officials: 72 AD (from which 24 press officers and 9 with temporary contracts) and 128 AST (from which 15 with temporary and 11 with term contracts).

A code of conduct to manage the inter-institutional cooperation was agreed by both EC and EP institutions at high level in 2001. Due to the development of cooperation and new context, the EP proposed a revision. The inter-institutional competent services from DG COMMs of both institutions worked on the new code of conduct all along 2008, which came into force in February 2009 (see annex).

In addition, as a follow up of the White Paper on a European Communication Policy[7], under European Commission proposal, a pilot project of 'European Public Spaces (EPS) in the Houses of Europe' was set up from July to September 2007. The pilot projects run in Dublin, Madrid and Tallin.

In June **2008**, the Inter-Institutional Group on Information and Communication (IGI) adopted an intermediate report jointly prepared by the EP and EC. In September 2008a set of specific rules on the working methods to run EPS was agreed by EP and EC DG COMM.

At the same time, EP's and EC's DG COMM also agreed on a list of further eleven (11) EPS to add: Berlin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Lisbon, Luxembourg, Nicosia, Prague, Riga, Rome, Stockholm and Vienna.

16.6. *Wie wird der Informationsaustausch zwischen den unterschiedlichen Ausschüssen und deren Sekretariaten, insbesondere betreffend Anhörungen und die Vergabe von Studien sichergestellt? Was wurde zur Verbesserung des Informationsflusses unternommen?*

Concerning Public Hearings organised by the parliamentary committees' secretariats:
Each year in November, committees have to submit to the Conference of Committee Chairs and to the Conference of Presidents their planning for public hearings to be held the following year. The annual hearings programme consists of all committees' projects and enables transparency, exchange of information and possible cooperation between committees which have chosen the same or similar topics. The Conference of Committee Chairs as well as regular meetings of the Committees secretariats' heads of units are also ensuring the permanent flow of information.

Concerning studies:
Requested by parliamentary committees and organised by the policy departments, external expertise is commissioned in the form of studies, briefing papers, panels and workshops. In order to exchange information on requests and projects, the heads of units of all policy departments are meeting on a regular basis. A number of common studies, co-financed by the expertise budget of two or more committees, proved that cooperation between committees has been undertaken successfully. The visibility of the studies and the accessibility to them via both Parliament's public website and the DG's Intranet pages has been also improved.

16.7. *Wie viele Stellen / Köpfe beträgt die Mitarbeiterzahl des Kabinetts des Präsidenten? Wie ist dort die Arbeitstaufteilung vorgesehen?*

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[7] COM (2006) 35 – 1 February 2006

L'organigramme du cabinet du Président est joint en annexe au présent document.

17. Fragen betreffend besonders den Personalbestand

17.1. *Wie viele Dienstfahrten von Beamten und Angestellten erfolgten im Jahr 2008 zwischen Brüssel und Straßburg auf Grund der Plenarwochen? Wie viele Übernachtungen erfolgten durchschnittlich je Dienstreise?*

Im Jahr 2008 erfolgten, auf Grund der Plenarwochen, 11.803 Dienstreisen zwischen Brüssel und Strasbourg mit durchschnittlichen 3 Übernachtungen. Wie Sie aus der untenstehenden Tabelle entnehmen können überwiegen die Pauschalübernachtungen.
Nb missions = 11.803
Nb Nuits d'hôtel = 9.586
Nb forfait = 27.278
Nb moyen nuitées = 3

17.2. *Wie hoch ist der durchschnittliche Krankenstand (Dauer und Personenzahl)?*

Au cours de la période du 1er décembre 2007 au 31 novembre 2008, le secrétariat général a recensé 8275 certificats d'arrêt de travail concernant 4738 personnes et couvrant au total 64009 jours d'absence.

Ces 64009 jours d'absences comprennent notamment

- 47781 (75%) jours d'absence ouvrable pour maladie:
- 9997,5 (16 %) jours d'absence ouvrable pour maternité:
- 3754 (6 %) jours d'absence pour accident:
- 2476 (3%) autres

En prenant en compte le nombre de personnes malades sur la période concernée, la durée moyenne d'absence pour maladie est de 10 jours.

Please see also reply to Question 27.

17.3. *Wie dokumentiert die das Parlament die Erreichung der abzuleistenden Arbeitszeiten sowie von Überstunden? Wie hoch ist die durchschnittliche Überstundenanzahl? Wie stellt das Parlament sicher, dass Überstunden auf ein Mindestmaß beschränkt werden?*

La prestation des heures supplémentaires et leur contrôle sont essentiellement de la responsabilité de la DG (et de son directeur général) dont dépendent les agents.
Toutefois, les DGs doivent composer avec une enveloppe budgétaire limitée et allouée par la DG PERS sur la base de la prise en compte de leurs besoins annuels. A compter de 2010, les DGs disposeront d'un nouveau module de gestion électronique (Streamline) qui facilitera la déclaration, le paiement et le contrôle des heures supplémentaires prestées.

Sur la base des déclarations mensuelles d'heures supplémentaires introduites par les agents, le nombre moyen des heures supplémentaires prestées et déclarées par demande est de 11.93 heures/mois.

Concernant la limitation au minimum des heures supplémentaires et comme signalé ci-dessus, il appartient à chaque DG de s'assurer de son organisation ainsi que de la véracité et de la légalité des heures prestées par les agents.

17.4. *Wie hoch ist das durchschnittliche Lebensalter und das durchschnittliche Dienstalter der Mitarbeiter beim Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst? Wie viele Vorruhestandsvereinbarungen wurden getroffen und wie oft wurde das vorzeitige Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst mit medizinischen Gründen gerechtfertigt?*

L'âge moyen des 142 fonctionnaires qui ont cessé définitivement leurs fonctions entre le 1/12/2007 et le 30/11/2008 était de 62 ans
Au cours de l'année 2008, 38 agents ont demandé une retraite anticipée. Les cessations de fonctions justifiées par des raisons médicales correspondent à des mises en invalidité. Entre le 1.12.2007 et le 30.11.2008, 11 fonctionnaires ont été placés en invalidité.

17.5. *Wie viele Mitarbeiter werden (in absoluten Zahlen und als Prozent bezogen auf die Gesamtstellenzahl) bis 2012 regulär durch Erreichen des Diensthöchstalters aus dem Dienst ausscheiden?*

Sur base des informations disponibles à ce jour, 157 personnes auront atteint l'âge maximal de mise à la retraite d'ici 2012 ce qui représente 1.95% des emplois permanents 2009. Ces chiffres ne préjugent pas des éventuelles retraites anticipées.

18. Voluntary pension fund

18.1. *Which measures will be taken to limit the risks for the EP budget stemming from the actuarial deficits of the voluntary pension fund, considering that the EP has to guarantee the acquired pension rights to individual (former) MEPs?*

During it's meeting of 01/04/2009, the Bureau has taken the following decisions, which limit the risks, ensure clarity, reflect the long standing position of Parliament's Legal Service and complies with the obligation contained in the new Members' Statute:

- The option of drawing a reduced pension from age 50 (Article 3 of the rules governing the (Voluntary) Additional Pension Scheme) and the option of receiving a lump sum equivalent to 25% of pension rights (Article 4 of the rules) - both these options having already been suspended by decision of 9 March 2009 - are now abolished in order to improve the liquidity of the Fund and avoid premature dissipation of the capital;

- Subject to the transitional measure for certain Members who have already reached the age of 60 years, and with effect from the first day of the parliamentary term which starts in 2009, the retirement age for the Scheme would be raised from 60 to 63 in accordance with the Statute for Members which enters into force at the beginning of the new parliamentary term, in order to safeguard the Fund's capital;

Furthermore, the President, in his letter of 4 May 2009 to the managers of the Fund called upon to adopt a more prudent and balanced investment strategy and to avoid exposing the Fund to risks of fluctuations in exchange rates.

18.2. *Does the Secretary-General consider reviewing Parliament's commitments due to the fact that it has not full control over the investments made by this private fund which is guaranteed in fact with public money? Will the Secretary-General forward the latest figures concerning the fund to the Committee before it concludes its discharge procedure?*

La responsabilité du Parlement à garantir le respect des droits acquis des membres du régime de pension complémentaire découle des décisions prises en la matière dans le passé par les organes du Parlement. The Bureau confirmed in its meeting of 1 April 2009, taking into account a note from the Secretary-General on the Voluntary Pension Scheme for Members (PE 421.873/BUR), that Parliament has to assume its legal responsibility to guarantee the right of members of the Scheme to the additional pension which could be retained after exhaustion of the Pension Fund and that, equally, any capital remaining in the Fund after all pension entitlements had been honoured would be transferred to the European Parliament. Actuellement la base juridique constituée par l'article 27 du Statut des Députés renforce la responsabilité du Parlement.

Le Secrétaire général a fait procéder à une mise à jour de l'étude indépendante sur la situation financière du Fonds et a entamé les contacts avec le Fonds sur les suites à donner.

18.3. *The Committee would be interested in an estimate of the annual costs born by Parliament due to the in house activities of the fund - office space, meetings interpretation, printing, notifications.*

Autres les dépenses administratives encourues par les travaux de gestion effectués par le Fonds même, les tâches de gestion administrative courante menées par le Parlement européen supposent l'affectation d'un poste AST à plein-temps. Ces frais peuvent être chiffrés comme suite :

- coût annuel d'un poste AST :	€ 60.743
- 20% du coût annuel d'un poste de chef d'unité :	€ 32.901
- coût annuel des dépenses administratives connexes (bureaux, infrastructure administrative, coûts des applications informatiques)	€ 30.205
- coût de 5,5 jours de réunions avec interprétation:	€ 21.414
- coût pour l'utilisation interne des salles pour les 5,5 jours de réunion (incl. frais technicien et sécurité) estimation:	€ 4.630
TOTAL	€ 149.893

18.4. The changing of the procedure for paying contributions to the voluntary supplementary pension fund gave rise to "additional, unplanned administrative work" according to DG Finance' annual activity report (paragraphs 44, 45 and 46).
What is the cost - in hours and Euros - of this "additional, unplanned administrative work"?

La charge de travail supplémentaire suite au changement des modalités de paiement des contributions de la pension par les députés a débuté au mois d'octobre 2008 et doit se poursuivre courant l'année 2009 et prendra fin pendant les premiers mois 2010. Celle-ci peut être évaluée à 1 poste AST à plein-temps ce qui suppose un coût annuel de ± € 60.743.
Ces tâches additionnelles sont liées au suivi des paiements des contributions des députés. Plus particulièrement il s'agit des rappels des paiements aux députés ; la vérification des paiements effectués ; la dévolution des contributions indues ainsi que la réponse aux demandes d'information des députés concernés.

Il est à souligner que, suite aux souhaits exprimés par la commission du Contrôle budgétaire, la possibiluté de payement à partir de l'indemnité de frais généraux à été supprimée.

19. Parliamentary assistance allowance

19.1. *The Committee would appreciate a first assessment of the implementation of the new statute for assistants with focus on any identified shortcomings?*

Depuis le début de la nouvelle législature, les assistants parlementaires accrédités travaillant dans les locaux du Parlement à Bruxelles, Luxembourg ou Strasbourg sont engagés par le Parlement européen, à la demande des députés qu'ils sont chargés d'assister, étant entendu que ces recrutements sont financés à partir de la dotation d'assistance budgétaire des députés concernés. Les directions générales concernées par le recrutement des assistants parlementaires accrédités (DG PERS et DG FINS) ont relevé le défi majeur que représentait le recrutement dans un laps de temps très court (moins de trois mois) de plus de 1.300 assistants, soit un nombre d'agents équivalent à plus de 22% du personnel du Secrétariat général du Parlement en activité au 15 septembre 2009 et supérieur au nombre total d'agents recrutés au sein du Secrétariat général dans le cadre des derniers élargissements (EUR-10 + EUR-2).
A la fin du mois de novembre 2009, plus de 1.300 contrats d'assistants parlementaires accrédités étaient en vigueur.
Le Bureau du Parlement a mis en place un groupe temporaire de travail chargé d'évaluer la mise en œuvre des nouveaux statuts des députés et des assistants et de proposer, le cas échéant, des modifications des mesures d'application relatives à ces nouveaux statuts adoptées par le Bureau en 2008 et 2009 respectivement. Ce groupe temporaire de travail est présidé par Mme Dagmar ROTH-BEHRENDT. Ses travaux, qui ont débuté le 29 septembre 2009, sont en cours à la date de rédaction de cette réponse.

The Temporary Working Group could state that, in general, the implementation of the new statute has proceeded well. Amongst the positive aspects of the implementation one can note in particular the assurances the statute provides for greater transparency, legality and sound financial management of the parliamentary assistance allowance. At the same time, a number of issues have been identified, mainly due to adaptation difficulties with the new system.

On proposal of the Secretary General and the Temporary Evaluation Group, the Bureau took several decisions in its meetings of 11 and 23 November 2009 to modify the implementation of the Members' and Assistants' Statutes. On issues concerning problems with the implementation of the new rules for accredited and local assistants, the Bureau took the following decision to overcome the shortcomings:

(a) to amend the implementing measures of the Members' Statute to provide Members with the possibility to carry over a part of the parliamentary assistance allowance (maximum one months' worth) from one calendar year to the next,
(b) to amend the implementing measures of the Assistants' Statute in order to enable accredited assistants to receive, on request, advances on mission expenses,
(c) to amend the implementing measures of the Members' Statute in order to allow local assistants to be reimbursed on a flat-rate basis (maximum €100/month) for minor travel expenses within the Member's constituency with the aim of reducing the administrative burden on Members' paying agents,
(d) to amend the implementing measures of the Members' Statute in order to reduce the administrative burden for members' service contracts, insofar as the requirements concerning verification are concerned,
(e) to amend the implementing measures of the Members' and of the Assistants' Statutes in order to allow Members to replace assistants after two months instead of three months in cases of long-term sick leave or maternity leave and to be allowed to have short-term replacements.

19.2. *Have approved paying agents been selected in all Member-States?*

The administration has assisted the Members in finding appropriate paying agents and has made a preliminary assessment of their professional capabilities before accepting their contracts. In this way more than half of the re-elected members could keep their previous paying agents.
In addition, within the framework for the preparation for the implementation of the new Statute and in conformity with the Financial Regulation the administration launched two procedures of call for tenders aiming at the creation of a pan-European network of paying agents. Since these procedures have not achieved the desired objectives, mainly due to a lack of interest of prospective candidates, the Working Group on the Implementation of the Members´ statute is currently reviewing the situation.

19.3. *With reference to paragraphs 52 - 59 in DG Finance's Annual Activity Report the Committee would like to know the amount actually paid back by how many individual Members of Parliament by September 2009.*

78 Members have reimbursed approximately 455.000 euro by September 2009 in relation to the Parliamentary Assistance Allowances received. The amounts were higher in 2007 and 2008 (about 1.01 million euro and 1.88 million euro resp.) which results *inter alia* from the regularisation conducted in 2008 by the services for the years 2004-2007 following the report of the Internal Auditor on this sector. It can be stated that the need for reimbursement has been significantly reduced following the regularisation exercise for the

year 2008.

19.4. *In how many cases was OLAF involved? How many cases have been forwarded to the national judicial authorities?*

The Secretary General will answer orally and "in camera" to the questions related to OLAF.

19.5. *How many assistants employed by Members of the European Parliament in 2008 were directly related to the Members (spouses and others)?*

As no restrictions for the employment of family members existed before the coming into force of the Members' Statute on 14 July 2009, such information was not collected by the administration. No figures are available in the Parliamentary assistance database for the period before 14 July 2009.

20. Travel allowances

Since the new statute for Members is in force Members are paid out the actual (real) travel costs.
Considering the fact that there are less Members of Parliament than in the last legislature will the Secretary-General explain why the total sum of travel costs will rise above the total paid out on an annual basis under the old system of travel allowances?

In accordance with the rules under the Statute for Members entered into force on 14 July 2009, travel and subsistence entitlements as recorded in budget 2009 and budget forecast 2010 have been evaluated taking into account the new Member's Statute and its implementing Measures.

According to this new legal framework and in particular the new allowance for travels inside the Member State of election (article 23 of IMS) additional credits have been calculated in order to cover these costs.

In addition to this, an increase has been considered in relation with the costs of the air ticket to which members are entitled. Under the former regulation the reference for calculation/reimbursement of the travel lump sum payment was the price of an "YY economic unrestricted fare ticket" but under the new regulations Members are entitled to reimbursement of a "Business-full-fare-ticket".
2009 and 2010 budgets include the necessary credits to cover the supplementary costs that could derive from these two new particular items.

Actually, the amounts paid for ordinary travel to Strasbourg and Brussels are 10 to 20% lower than the forecasts made. However, at this stage, it is not possible to draw an accurate trend in relation to the level of expenditure given the short experience in the implementation of the new Members Statute and the fact that Members may claim their travel expenditures of 2009 up to 31 October 2010. Consequently, the final figures related to the 2009 budget implementation can only be given after this date.

21. Buildings

21.1. *The suspended ceiling in the Strasbourg Chamber*

In August 2008 a part of the suspended ceiling in the Strasbourg Chamber of the European Parliament collapsed. The necessary repair work was carried out quickly to the price of € 8 812 631 and the October plenary session was held in Strasbourg as usual.

Who paid this amount?

Actually, the whole part of this amount was carried by the Parliament. But the Parliament had also sued the insurance company AXA, the architects, the contractors and a number of other parties responsible for the original construction work (approximately 40 parties) for compensation.

The legal proceeding is still pending before the French Court.

21.2. *Is this matter now definitively closed or are other expenses expected?*

The works concerning the suspended ceiling of the chamber are definitively completed. But some others works, resulting of some complementary damages discovered during these repairs works began in 2009 and will continue in 2010 (reinforcement of the metallic ceilings of the LOW buildings and fire protection of the metallic structures). (see note to the Bureau ref. D(2009)62763). A legal action had been brought by Parliament to win compensation also for these damages.

21.3. *Would the repairs have been less expensive if the works could have been carried out over a longer time-span?*

The major part of the repair costs concerns specific infrastructures needed in order to access the ceilings (scaffoldings, special equipment to work in high level,). This part of the amount had no links with the delay. Only the period (August 2008) and the obligation to find people in other places than the local area (Strasbourg) is linked with extra costs but it is not the main part of the costs. Moreover, and taking into account the clear political will to hold again the session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg as soon as possible, a longer time-span of works would have been led to higher costs, as a consequence of the necessity to ensure the security of people circulating inside the building.

21.4. *Asbestos*

The Parliament has been confronted with a number of cases of asbestos in several

buildings it was planning to rent or buy or had already rented or bought.
Can the Secretary-General give an overview of total costs in connection with asbestos in the buildings, including costs of studies/expertise, legal costs, staff man hours, removal, cleaning, etc?

Strasbourg
On December 2007 TÜV Süd Industrie Service GmbH carried out an asbestos survey in all Strasbourg buildings. The cost of the surveys and expertises by TÜV Süd is 173.000 € and the cost of studies by consultant Habitat & Santé is 65.000 € and the cost for the inspection of the works by Envirotech is 92.000 €. Total costs for these consultants are 330.000 €.
The total cost estimate for the removal of asbestos in the Strasbourg buildings is 2.912.000 €. The Municipality of Strasbourg has agreed to pay 2.015.000 €. The asbestos removal works are currently under way and should be completed by the end of 2010.

Brussels
On December 2007 VINçOTTE Environment was commissioned to carry out an asbestos survey of all buildings of the European Parliament in Brussels, based on the methodology mandatory by Belgium legislation. The cost of this survey, which has been completed by the end of February 2008, was 20.000 €.
On April 2008, TÜV Süd Industrie Service GmbH was commissioned to carry out an asbestos survey of all buildings of the European Parliament in Brussels, based on the methodology according to German legislation. The cost of this survey was 120.700 €.
Both surveys came to comparable results.
Although a very limited number of components including asbestos have been found, the TÜV concluded that there would not be any requirement to remove such asbestos products but only to reappraise them regularly at intervals of 5 years or in a few cases of 2 years. The cost for such an appraisal is estimated to about 3.000 €.

Luxembourg
On the Luxembourg site only the buildings Konrad Adenauer (KAD), Schuman (SCH) and Senniger Berg (SEN) include a few asbestos applications which are well encapsulated and do not represent any immediate risk. The annual cost of the asbestos appraisal is about 4.500 €/year. The KAD building will be renovated (Project of new KAD), SCH and SEN building will be abandoned in a few years, for this reason there is currently no specific asbestos removing project planned.

21.5. *What is the total sum to be recovered, from who and which sums have already been recovered?*

As mentioned above, concerning the Strasbourg buildings, the Municipality of Strasbourg has agreed to pay 2.015.000 € for asbestos removal.
Asbestos surveys and appraisals mentioned above for Brussels site and Luxemburg site have been financed by the budget of the European Parliament.

21.6. *Which actions were undertaken so far in order to recover the costs of the collapse of the ceiling in Strasbourg falling under the guarantee clauses in the contracts?*

At present, the whole part of this amount was carried by the Parliament. But the Parliament had also put in place a legal procedure against the insurer and the constructors of the suspended ceilings to obtain reimbursement of the paid amounts.

21.7. *Has any money been recovered from insurance companies or others?*

The amount of 2.015.000 € that the Municipality of Strasbourg has agreed to pay for asbestos removal will be paid according to the progress of the works. The first part of 604.000 € has been submitted to the Municipality and payment is under way.

21.8. *Can the Secretary-General explain the reasons why on a budgeted sum of 143 million for DG infrastructure 58 million were carried over to 2009?*

Concernant les crédits reportés de l'exercice 2008, il est à noter que sur 59,5 Mio Euros, 51.5 Mio Euros ont fait l'objet d'un paiement tandis que les 8 millions d'euros restant n'ont pas été payés, indépendamment de la volonté de l'ordonnateur, pour des raisons de non réception de travaux.

Détail des principaux reports de crédits:

1. **Poste 02005-00: Construction d'immeubles.**

Les contrats relatifs aux travaux de terrassement et aux travaux préparatoires de l'Extension du bâtiment KONRAD ADENAUER à Luxembourg ont été signés en décembre 2008.
Les travaux préliminaires ont immédiatement débuté et devaient se terminer en 2009. En conséquence, les crédits ont été reportés pour un montant de 8,6Mio€. Cependant, suite à la découverte d'une pollution du sol qui a dû être assaini avant le début des terrassements, les travaux ont été suspendus durant plusieurs mois et leur achèvement a été reporté au-delà du 31/12/2009.
Une partie des Crédits reportés (2,6Mio€) n'a donc pas été utilisée et un engagement de dépense sur un autre exercice budgétaire a été établi.

2. **Poste 2007: Aménagement des locaux.**

Les crédits reportés concernent des projets importants et complexes dont la réalisation s'étend sur plus de 12 mois. Le report de ces crédits est nécessaire afin d'assurer la continuité de la couverture budgétaire des contrats jusqu'à leur exécution complète en 2009.
Principaux projets

- LUX: Bâtiment PRESIDENT: travaux spécifiques de prise en location: 1,9Mio€
- LUX: bâtiment KONRAD ADENAUER : remise à niveau de la production froid: 0.86Mio€
- STR: Travaux liés au plafond Hémicycle: 4,22Mio€
- STR: Travaux d'aménagement Salles WIC 100/200: 4,68Mio€
- STR: Travaux de désamiantage: 0,604Mio€
- BRU: Travaux dispatching sécurité: 2,617Mio€. Suite à un retard des travaux, une partie des crédits reportés (1,05Mio€) ne pourra donc pas être utilisée et un engagement de dépenses sur un autre exercice budgétaire a été établi.
- BRU: Travaux sas: 0,995Mio€
- BRU: Remplacement des groupes froid: 3,53Mio€

- BRU: Rénovation du Centre sportif: 1,356 Mio€

TOTAL: 18,76Mio€

Le solde reporté concerne divers petits projets dont la facturation n'était toujours pas introduite auprès de l'Institution.

3. **Poste 2008: Autres dépenses afférents aux immeubles.**

Les crédits reportés concernent principalement les deux points suivants:

- LUX: Honoraires maîtrise d'œuvre de l'Extension du bâtiment KONRAD ADENAUER: 4,35Mio€

Ces crédits ont fait l'objet d'une facturation et ont été utilisés.

- STR: Taxe Ordures Ménagères: 1,2Mio€. Crédits engagés pour constitution d'une garantie financière dans le cadre du litige entre le Parlement européen et l'Etat français sur cette taxe contestée.

Ces crédits tomberont en annulation.

4. **Poste 2022: Nettoyage et entretien.**

Un montant de 7,1Mi€ a été reporté en attente des factures des derniers mois de l'année 2008 qui sont introduites auprès de l'Institution dans les premiers mois de l'année 2009.

5. **Poste 2024: Consommations énergétiques:**

Un montant de 3,8Mio€ a été reporté pour les mêmes raisons que pour le poste 2022.
En résumé, le report de crédits est rendu nécessaire pour les deux raisons principales suivantes :

- certains engagements juridiques sont contractés pour une période couvrant plus d'une année budgétaire. Par conséquent, les engagements de crédits y afférents doivent également être maintenus sur plus d'une année budgétaire ce qui implique leur report automatique. Ceci concerne principalement des projets importants et complexes (travaux et études).

- la facturation des prestations exécutées en fin d'années ne sont pas toujours facturées avant la clôture budgétaire. Par conséquent, les engagements de crédits y afférents doivent être reportés jusqu'à la facturation des prestations

22. Cars, contracts awarded

Which cars - type and brand - were bought by Parliament in 2008 and 2009? What were the CO2 emission figures for these cars?
Which services are using these cars?
Is it correct that the prices for the acquisition of cars mentioned in the contracts awarded in 2008 are without tax and other levies/duties?
Which cars - at the same price or lower - were considered to be the most environmentally friendly cars available on the market during the same period?
Does the contract with the firm providing cars with driver for Members of Parliament, stipulate that environmental friendly cars should be used? Can the Secretary-General provide a copy of this part of the contract?
Will the vehicle fleet be renewed by renting or buying hybrid cars which are less polluting?

CARS PURCHASED

in 2008

	CO$_2$ g/km	
▪ AUDI A 8 3.0 Tdi	224	Assigned to the Political groups, to the President and to the Secretary General
▪ BMW 730 i	260	
▪ BMW 730 i	241	
▪ BMW 730 i	241	
▪ 2 x FIAT/Microvett (100 % electric)	0	Removers Service
▪ FORD Transit	(not available)	Supplies Service

in 2009

▪ AUDI A 8 90 Tdi	224	Assigned to the Political groups, to the President and to the Secretary General
▪ AUDI A 6 3.0 Tdi	199	
▪ BMW 730 d	192	
▪ MERCEDES E350cdi	193	
▪ BMW 730 d	192	Pool
▪ BMW 730 d	192	Pool
▪ 4 x MERCEDES E250cdi	154	Pool

("assigned" means assigned in accordance with Art. 2 of the "Rules governing the use of officials cars by Members of the European Parliament" of 3 May 2004).

Yes, it is correct, that that the prices for the acquisition of cars mentioned in the contracts awarded in 2008 are without tax and other levies/duties. The EU-Institutions purchase all goods free of VAT.

Cars with smaller engines and/or with Diesel instead of Petrol engines were considered to be the most environmentally friendly cars.

All external cars used for the transport of Members must meet the Euro 5 standard by June 2010 in Strasbourg and by the end of 2010 in Brussels. Furthermore, by June 2010 the cars in Strasbourg may not be more than three years old when used, and CO_2 emissions may not exceed 140 g/km (130 g/km as from 2013). For Brussels, similar requirements will be imposed through the next procurement procedure programmed in 2011.

Regarding hybrid cars: the Administration will purchase or rent vehicles which are the least polluting while also meeting the minimal functional requirements (e.g. sufficient boot space) and price considerations.

23. Contracts awarded by the DG Presidency.

Parliament has subscribed to a number of commercial databases like the Dow Jones, the Economist Intelligence, etc.

What are the total annual costs of these subscriptions?

Who have access to these databases?
Do Members of Parliament have access to these databases?

In 2008 the Library of the European Parliament had 75 subscriptions to commercial electronic information services – 51 databases such as the Economist Intelligence Unit's 'Country Reports' and 24 news agencies such as Dow Jones News 'Europa Aktuell'. The Library keeps a constant check on the market in information services in order to identify those which are of best use in satisfying client needs. The exact number of subscriptions will therefore vary from one year to another as new services are added to the offering whilst others for which demand has fallen off are discontinued.

The total annual costs of these services in 2008 and 2009 are as follows:

	2008	2009
News agencies (sub-item 03220-02)	€ 874,849.37	€ 823,466.21
Databases (sub-item 03220-03)	€ 804,987.00	€ 970,484.62

The permitted users and method of access are defined in each contract but, broadly speaking, services fall into three categories:

– Highly specialised
  for which the Library has access for one or two members of its own staff and, in some cases, the Legal Service,
– Specialised
  for which the licence provides access to a limited group, e.g. officials from the relevant committee secretariat and policy department of DG IPOL or DG EXPO,
– General
  for which the Library has taken out a site licence granting access to all MEPs and Parliament staff connected to Parliament's internal IT network.

Parliament is forbidden under its contracts and copyright law from passing material from these sources to third parties.

24. Contracts awarded for studies.

24.1. *What was the total amount paid on studies commissioned by the EP in 2008?*

24.2. *Which measures are in place to check whether a similar study is already available either in the European Commission or in research institutions?*

24.3. *Did the competent service in Parliament check whether the Commission had a study done on "the type approval requirements for the general safety of motor vehicles" before Parliament commissioned one?*

24.4. *Have arrangements been made between the institutions aiming at coordinating the commissioning of studies done by third parties?*

IPOL:
24.1: In 2008, DG IPOL has committed € 7.105.576,79 and paid € 5.447.804,14 for external expertise.

24.2: The policy department in charge, with support by the information specialists of the Library, is checking, on a regular basis as integrated part of the procedure, whether a similar study is available before taking a decision.

24.3: Yes. The Commission had already done an impact assessment study to its legislative proposal. As the responsible parliamentary committee aimed to come to its own conclusions, a study was commissioned in order to receive an assessment independently from the Commission's one.

24.4: No. Given the objective of almost all studies undertaken or commissioned by the Parliament to support parliamentary committees in its function as legislator, coordination between institutions can be useful to a certain extent in terms of an exchange of information but cannot serve Parliament's objective of taking its decision on the basis of an independent expertise.

EXPO:
24.1: In 2008, DG EXPO committed 499.423 € for external expertise. Altogether 80 studies were commissioned.

24.2: The policy department, with support by the information specialists of the Library, is checking, on a regular basis as integrated part of the procedure, whether a similar study is available before a decision is taken.

24.3: n/a

24.4: No. Given the objective of almost all studies undertaken or commissioned by the Parliament to support parliamentary committees, coordination between institutions could risk to impair the clear separation of functions and the visibility of each institution's own responsibility.

25. Staff matters.

Are sign language interpreters used by Members of Parliament in official meetings recruited and remunerated under the same conditions as those applying for ordinary interpreters under the AIIC agreement? If not, why not?

No, because any external interpreter hired by DG INTE has to be hired according to the Inter-institutional Agreement between the EU-institutions and AIIC (International Association for Conference Interpreters), and on the basis of an inter-institutional accreditation test. Any interpreter not being hired according to the Agreement and the recruitment criteria, i.e., being recommended or suggested by an MEP, would not comply with the basic principle of accreditation for the EU-institutions and the obligation of the services to choose according to quality (certified by tests), skills and professional domicile criteria.

The single payment office (created on the request of budgetary authorities for more inter-institutional cooperation and to avoid duplication of work) only pays external interpreters under this safeguard, proned also by the Court of Auditors.

Therefore, in order to establish an own data-base of trained sign-language interpreters, which DG INTE has offered to provide, a decision must be taken by the Bureau and the necessary human and financial resources would have to be allocated to DG INTE by the budgetary authorities.

26. Social service

How many persons are working in the Social Service Unit?
Is this number sufficient in view of the increased number of staff?
What is the ratio in other international institutions?

L'unité Crèches et actions sociales appartient à l'organigramme de la DG PERS. Ce service qui compte 51 personnes (18 fonctionnaires et 31 éducatrices sous contrats auprès des crèches) constitue la pierre angulaire des actions sociales conduites par la DG (aide financière, support garderie, aide familiale, procédures décès...). Il faut également prendre en considération les cabinets médicaux de Bruxelles et Luxembourg, les assistantes sociales tant à Bruxelles qu'à Luxembourg ainsi que les politiques à vocation sociales menées notamment par l'unité Pensions & assurances sociales ou encore l'unité de l'Egalité des chances (aide aux handicapés...). On peut ainsi estimer qu'environ 75 à 80 personnes de la DG PERS assurent des missions de service social.
Le niveau des ressources humaines apparaît adéquat compte tenu de leur regroupement au sein d'une direction spécifique de la DG PERS au 01/01/2010.
Le secrétariat général ne dispose pas d'informations similaires pour d'autres institutions internationales.

27. Sick leave

The Committee would appreciate a comprehensive overview of staff on sick leave during 2008 broken down in such a way that it gives a detailed view of the situation in the institution and at least as per number, reason, percentage of total, length of sick leave period, directorate, and unit.

The Committee would also appreciate an overview showing how many persons were on invalidity leave in 2008

The Committee would also appreciate a comparison with the situation in other international institutions.

La table détaille le **nombre de jours** ouvrables d'absences pour raisons médicales enregistrés du 1.12.2007 au 30.11.2008 pour les fonctionnaires, agents temporaires (2a, et

2b) et agents contractuels 3bis.
Au 31 décembre 2008, la DG PERS recensait 376 pensions d'invalidité accordées sous l'ancien statut et 50 allocations d'invalidité (nouveau statut).
Le secrétariat général ne dispose malheureusement pas d'éléments de comparaison avec les autres institutions.

	Maladie	Maternité	Accident	Mi-temps médical	Absences irrégulières	Total	En % du total
01 - Direction Générale de la Présidence (DG PRES)	5520	969	426	366	43	**7323**	11%
02 - Direction Générale Politiques Internes (DG IPOL)	3196	589	299	397	87	**4568**	7%
03 - Direction Générale Politiques Externes (DG EXPO)	1302	497	214	62	0	**2075**	3%
04 - Direction Générale Information / Direction Générale Communication (DG INFO / DG COMM)	5492	1238	406	286	62	**7484**	12%
05 - Direction Générale Personnel (DG PERS)	4449	428	482	296	15	**5669**	9%
06 - Direction Générale Infrastructures et Interprétation / Direction Générale Infrastructures et Logistique (DG IFIN / DG INLO)	5037	425	413	157	25	**6056**	9%
07 - Direction Générale Traduction/Direction Générales Traduction et Publications (DG TRAD / DG TRED)	13369	3689	749	185	148	**18139**	28%
08 - Direction Générale Finances / Direction Générale Interprétation et Conférences (DG FINS / DG INTE)	3467	1452	220	103	28	**5269**	8%
09 - Direction Générale Finances (DG FINS)	1195	282	110	10	10	**1606**	3%
10 - Direction Générale Innovation et Support Technologique (DG ITEC)	3849	180	407	123	12	**4570**	7%
20 - Comité du Personnel	27	0	0	0	0	**27**	0%
SJ - Service Juridique	605	93	14	62	5	**779**	1%
CP - Président	110	156	15	0	0	**281**	0%
SG - Secretaire Général	113	0	0	0	0	**113**	0%
CV - Secrétariat du Vice-Président	22	0	0	0	0	**22**	0%
QS - Secrétariat du Questeur	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0%
SH - Direction des Relations avec les Groupes Politiques	32	0	0	0	0	**32**	0%
TOTAL	**47782**	**9998**	**3755**	**2044**	**433**	**64010**	100%
%	75%	16%	6%	3%	1%	**100%**	

28. Nominations

Progress has been made as regards increasing the number of candidates for vacant management functions in the institution.

How many candidates applied per vacant posts - head of unit and above - since March 2009?

Depuis mars 2009, les chiffes des candidats à des postes d'encadrements sont les suivants :

- 40 postes de chefs d'unité ont été publiés qui ont suscité 190 candidatures
- 5 postes de l'encadrement supérieur ont été publiés qui ont suscité 35 candidatures.

29. Passerelle-procedure

What is the "passerelle-procedure"?
Why was it created?
When did it enter into force?
What is the number of temporary staff by grade who passed the passerelle-procedure since it entered into force?
How many succeeded their stage and how many were "seconded" back to the groups?
Are all grades entitled to take part in the "passerelle -procedure"?
If not why not?

La "procédure passerelle" correspond à une procédure de concours que peut organiser l'institution conformément à l'article 29 paragraphe 3) du Statut. "Chaque institution peut

organiser pour son propre compte des concours internes sur titres et épreuves, pour chaque groupe de fonctions, de grades AST 6 ou supérieurs ainsi que de grades AD 9 ou supérieurs. De tels concours sont ouverts uniquement aux agents temporaires de l'institution considérée recrutés conformément à l'article 2 c) du régime applicable aux autres agents des Communautés européennes. Les institutions exigent comme conditions minimales d'avoir accompli au moins dix années de service en tant qu'agent temporaire et d'avoir été engagé en tant qu'agent temporaire après une procédure de sélection assurant l'application des mêmes critères que pour la sélection des fonctionnaires conformément à l'article 12, paragraphe 4, point a), du régime applicable aux autres agents. Par dérogation au paragraphe 1, point a) du présent article, l'autorité investie du pouvoir de nomination de l'institution qui a recruté l'agent temporaire examine, avant de pourvoir aux vacances d'emploi, les mutations parallèlement aux lauréats desdits concours internes."
Cette procédure a été introduite lors de l'adoption du nouveau statut des fonctionnaires des communautés européennes en 2004. Depuis 2004, le Parlement a lancé deux concours passerelle en 2006 puis 2007. Le nombre de lauréats par grade issus du concours de 2007 ainsi que le devenir professionnel de ces lauréats figurent ci-dessous. Tous les fonctionnaires stagiaires ont obtenu un stage positif. Il y a lieu de noter que la liste des lauréats du concours de 2007 est exploitée seulement depuis le 1er décembre 2009 (6 AST ont débuté leur stage au 01/12/2009 et 4 agents -3AD et 1AST- ont rejoint le secrétariat général)
Cette procédure a été introduite afin de permettre aux agents des groupes politiques et travaillant depuis plus de dix années pour ces groupes de bénéficier du statut de fonctionnaires et donc d'un cadre réglementaire d'emploi plus stable que celui d'agent temporaire auprès d'un groupe. Elle vise également à permettre à l'Administration de bénéficier du potentiel d'expertise présent dans les secrétariats des groupes politiques. Conformément aux souhaits du législateur, seuls les agents temporaires de grades AST 6 ou supérieurs ainsi que de grades AD 9 ou supérieurs peuvent prendre part à ces concours.

Résultat du Concours "Passerelle"

Le résultat du premier exercice, qui s'est tenu en **2006**, est le suivant :

GRADES	PPE	PSE	ALDE	VERTS	GUE	IND/ DEM	UEN	TOTAL	TOTAL PERSONNES
A* 12	4	11	4				1	20	20
A* 11	7(*)	2	1	1				11	11
A* 10	2(*)				1	1		4	3
B* 10	3	5	2	3	1			14	14
B* 08	1(*)	1(*)						2	2
B* 07	4(**)	1(*)	1				1(*)	7	5
B* 06	2(**)	1	1(*)		1(*)			5	4
C* 06	7(**)	5	2(*)		1(*)	1	2(*)	18	13
TOTAL	30	26	11	4	4	2	4	81	-
TOTAL Personnes	25	25	10	4	3	2	3	-	72

(*) dont 1 double candidature
(**) dont 2 doubles candidatures

Parmi ces lauréats :
21 (29%) sont fonctionnaires dans l'administration (11 AD et 10 AST), dont 14 le sont devenu directement et 7 après avoir effectué le stage à la Direction Rel.GP
2 ont renoncé à la titularisation
2 sont lauréats du 2ème concours passerelle (à une catégorie supérieure)

2 ont demandé d'effectuer leur stage après les élections de 2009
45(62%) (20 AD et 25 AST) sont détachés dans les GP

30. Parliament TV

How have the added value of 'Parliament TV' been measured?
How many people watch the 'Parliament TV' every month?
What is the cost per viewer?

Since its launch in September 2008, europarltv has been the object of a placement strategy which has given rise to a dissemination effort targeting both National Parliaments' channels and regional TV stations. The first step is an agreement with national television RTBF to take over programmes from europarltv in broadcast quality, which will be rolled out in 2010. Negotiations are ongoing with CIRCOM, an internation audiovisual network of 376 TV channels in 38 countries.

Furthermore, these initiatives have been complemented by a strategy of distribution on sister websites of the European Parliament, Members websites, external websites, using the "embed" function of europarltv.

Crucially, the live section of europarltv is offering a wide range of streaming of live parliamentary activities, further enhancing the openness and transparency of business in the European Parliament.

A special campaign about the Commissioners' hearings has been launched in January 2010.

For the period between September 2008 and December 2008, an average range of 150000-300000 viewers per month saw europarltv programmes. These figures take account of europarltv programmes broadcast on television channels with high viewership rates such as Euronews, ARD and RTV, the Slovenian national television channel.

The cost per viewer for the period concerned was 9 cents without costs for the translation. However, taking on board the cost of multilingualism in 22 languages, the final cost per user was about 18 cents.

31. Election campaign

How much money was used for the 2009 election campaign, or preparing for it, in the 2008 budget?

La DG COMM a engagé € 16,3 millions (10,3 millions budget initial pour l'élection + un virement interne P de 4 millions + 2 millions par virement C)

32. Visitors' centre

What were / are the problems with the visitor's centre?
Why didn't it open as scheduled?

The duration of the Visitors' Centre project depends on the following elements:

1. The ambition and complexity of the project

With a total of gross surface of some 6000 square meters and an estimated annual visitor number of up to half a million persons per year, the Visitors' Centre will be the largest parliamentary Centre in Europe and one of the largest in the world. It will contain 39 different multimedia applications and more than 150 interaction points which will explain the role and functioning of the European Parliament as well as the impact of its work on the daily life of citizens. The Visitors' Centre should be fully accessible to all and provide information for different target groups from children to experts in European affairs. It will be the first visitors' centre worldwide that endeavours to provide all content in 23 languages (plus sign languages and Braille for certain applications). These complex specifications have an impact on the duration of the project.

In particular, the management of multilingualism in the exhibition space is a major challenge. For example, to allow the visitor to automatically access all information in his/her language, a RFID triggered media-guide system had to be developed specifically for the Visitors' Centre. Another example is the production of the role-play game where school classes simulate law-making at EU level: To produce the game in all languages, more than 350 actors had to be casted.

2. The procurement environment

In order notably to maximise competition and to facilitate supervision by Parliament's administration, the project has been implemented by a series of successive tender procedures.

Since the start of the Visitors' Centre project, 12 procurement procedures have been completed, resulting in a total of 21 contracts with 15 different contractors. At the moment of the drafting of this note, two further tenders are awaiting award of contracts and two last tenders are in preparation.

The preparation, management and evaluation of these procurement procedures has been time-consuming. By the same token, the interdependence of several contracts has led to situations where lags in the award or implementation of one contract have affected the progress of implementation of other contracts.

3. The resources

In the period 2005-2007, the Bureau's decision to establish the Visitors' Centre was not reflected by the creation of additional posts in the establishment plan. Two posts (1 AD and 1 AST) allocated to the management of the project originated from internal redeployments. In 2008, DG COMM allocated two additional posts (1 AD and 1 AST) to the project, again without increase of DG COMM's human resources.

The budget 2009 foresaw for the first time the creation of posts in the establishment plan specifically for the purpose of the Visitors' Centre project.

4. Institutional changes

Recent institutional changes, in particular the re-constitution of Parliament after the European elections as well as the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty have a direct impact on the project schedule. As core facts and figures about the European Parliament and the institutional environment have changed (composition of Parliament, legislative powers and procedures, official terminology...), large parts of the exhibition narrative need to be overhauled and adapted.

The drafting of scripts relating to the organisation of the European Parliament could only start in September 2009 and integration of the Lisbon Treaty started at the date of its ratification.

Please note that the report established in response to the European Parliament's resolution on the Budgetary Guidelines of 10 March 2009 provides a more detailed description of the project implementation. The report is attached in the annex.

33. Sports centre

How much has the renovation of the Sports centre cost?
What did the European parliament get for the money?
Has it been possible to rent the premises for a higher price, now that they have been renovated?

The total cost for the renovation of the Sports centre was 2.660.306,48 Euro (218.850,92 Euro for studies and 2.441.455,56 Euro for works).

Le centre sportif existant a été complètement rénové afin de rendre les espaces plus agréables et plus spacieux, et en particulier :

- l'entrée a été agrandie et complètement réaménagée (meilleure visibilité);
- les vestiaires, les douches et les sanitaires ont été rénovés à neuf;
- les salles de soins ont été rénovées à neuf et déplacées à côté de l'entrée principale;
- les salles de sport et les circulations ont été rénovées;
- l'installation électrique, l'éclairage et le système de ventilation, etc. ont été améliorés;
- l'accessibilité aux personnes moins valides a été améliorée.

34. The "mopping up" procedure

What is the "mopping up procedure"?
What is the purpose of this procedure?
Is the procedure transparent for the European citizens?
Are there alternatives to the procedure?
How much was transferred to 2009?

La procédure de "virement de ramassage" est une simple procédure de virement de crédits basée sur les articles 22, 24 et 43 du Règlement financier. Sa particularité est que ce virement, généralement organisé en fin d'exercice budgétaire, touche un grand nombre de postes budgétaires "donneurs", à partir desquels sont "ramassés" les éventuels reliquats de crédits disponibles.

La finalité du virement de ramassage est une utilisation optimale des ressources budgétaires autorisées pour l'exercice. En effet, dans un budget de fonctionnement important comme celui du Parlement, il existe structurellement un reliquat "technique" de crédits de l'ordre de 1% à 2%, répartis sur les quelques 220 lignes budgétaires. Depuis 1992 les ramassages annuels ont été consacrés avec succès à la politique immobilière. De cette manière le Parlement a pu acquérir des immeubles dans les trois lieux de travail. Cette politique d'acquisition porte maintenant ses fruits puisque, en l'absence des financements anticipés ou des acquisitions réalisées par le passé, les redevances emphytéotiques représenteraient en 2010 une charge budgétaire supplémentaire de l'ordre de 100 Mio €.

La procédure étant celle d'un virement de crédit, elle est parfaitement transparente.

Théoriquement, d'autres approches existent, telles une programmation plus détaillée sur la ligne budgétaire concernée ou le report des opérations visées par un virement de ramassage à l'année suivante. Toutefois, ces approches ne paraissent ni les moins coûteuses, ni les mieux adaptées pour permettre de réagir aux opportunités qui peuvent surgir en cours d'exercice. Lorsqu'aucun besoin de financement imprévu ne se présente, l'institution n'organise pas de virement de ramassage et les crédits inutilisés tombent alors en annulation au 31 décembre.

En 2008, il n'y a eu qu'un virement de ramassage "limité" de 8 Mio € destiné à la campagne d'information pour les élections européennes (6 Mio pour les groupes politiques et 2 Mio pour la DG COMM). Ces crédits ont été engagés avant la fin de l'exercice 2008 et reportés à 2009, en vertu de l'article 9 du Règlement financier.

35. Contingency reserve

How much of the contingency reserve of 10 million € was used during the 2008 budget?

Les crédits du chapitre 101 "Réserve pour imprévus" étaient de **5 Mio** en 2008 et ont été utilisés à hauteur de 4.920.000 € et selon la répartition suivante:

- C5: Charge de travail supplémentaire pour le projet web TV pour 165 000€
- C10: Remplacement du système d'inventaire ELS pour 500 000€
- C11: Initiatives concernant «2008, Année européenne du dialogue interculturel» pour un total de 300 000€
- C12: Inspection détaillée relative à l'amiante, à Bruxelles pour 200 000€
- C13: Signature du nouveau contrat, à Bruxelles, et du complément de services assuré par la société de gardiennage externe pour1 500 000€
- C14: Présentation de rapports demandés sur l'EMAS et couvrant les dépenses énergétiques supplémentaires pour Bruxelles en raison de la forte hausse des prix pour 2 000 000€
- C18: Dépenses supplémentaires dans l'assistance juridique externe pour 55 000 €
- C19: Invitation de tous les lauréats précédents au vingtième anniversaire du Prix

Sakharov pour 200 000€.

36. The LUX film price

What was the total cost for the prize in 2008 and 2009?
How many Members of Parliament took the time to see the films and vote for their personal favourite?

1. The total cost for the prize was as it follows:

- in 2008 : 297,500 euros
- in 2009: 338,000 euros

The prize itself, equalling to 87,500 euros, is included: as a reminder, it consists in (i) subtitling the laureate into the 23 official languages of the European Union, including an adaptation of the original version for visually- or hearing-impaired people and (ii) in producing a 35-mm print per member state or supporting the subsequent DVD release.

2. Members of Parliament who took the time to see the films and vote for their personal favourite were as it follows:

- in 2008: 131 Members, covering the 7 political groups and the Non-attached from 23 out of 27 member states.
- in 2009: 164 Members, covering the 7 political groups and the Non-attached from 24 out of 27 member states.

3. The LUX Prize is subject to a yearly report to the Members of the Bureau assessing the previous year and proposing key guidelines for the forthcoming edition.

37. Additional funding for local media

Is there a possibility for Members of Parliament to have additional funding for small local media to access to the European parliament as was suggested 2008?

Information Offices in the member States take in due consideration the suggestions made by Members of Parliament when it comes to deciding which journalists are invited to seminars organised in Brussels and in the member States. The number of local or regional press invited to participate in those seminars have increased in the last years. The budgetary line for their organisation has been in fact reinforced so that they now cover not only the plenary session but also particularly important events or the discussion or vote of a specific topic at the centre of EU legislation.

38. Knowledge Management system

Which progress has been achieved regarding the introduction of a Knowledge Management System?

Cet outil de gestion documentaire s'inscrit dans le cadre de la nouvelle stratégie des Technologies de l'information et de Communication (TIC) et deviendra un maillon du programme e-Parliament dans le cadre du traitement de l'ensemble de la chaine documentaire législative.

C'est dans le cadre de la procédure budgétaire 2008 que fut exprimée pour la 1ère fois la volonté des députés de voir la création d'un système de gestion des connaissances leur permettant d'accéder à toutes les sources documentaires accessibles au Parlement européen et actuellement relativement dispersées. Pour se faire il convient de développer un outil approprié qui permette d'agréger les différentes sources documentaires existantes et qui soit accessible à différents types de public (députés, assistants, groupes politiques, secrétariats de commission) afin de rendre plus efficaces les services rendus aux parlementaires. Toutefois le développement d'un tel outil impose une certaine modernisation de la structure actuelle de gestion des documents tant d'un point de vue logistique (classification et traitement de l'information) qu'informatique (infrastructure et applications informatiques requises).
Le Bureau, dans l'esprit d'améliorer la gestion des documents, a en effet concentré les services qui ont la responsabilité de gérer les documents produits par l'institution (Registre et Archives) ainsi que le courrier officiel arrivant à l'Institution au sein d'une seule et unique Direction, la Direction Bibliothèque et Gestion des documents. Ceci doit assurer une meilleure traçabilité des documents au travers des différentes étapes de la vie de chaque document.

Les programmes administratifs 2009-2011 fixent deux objectifs sur ce sujet - 5 'Development of a document management system for the EP' (DG PRES) et 114 'Legislative Knowledge Management a unique tool to assist the legislative decision making' (DG ITEC) - qui s'inscrivent dans cette démarche et seront conduits en étroite collaboration entre les deux DG concernées.

Sur la base des conclusions d'une étude conduite en 2008[8], le Parlement a souhaité mettre en œuvre la 1ere étape indispensable pour envisager le lancement d'un tel système de gestion des connaissances, à savoir le référencement harmonisé des documents liés à l'activité parlementaire et par voie de conséquence leur valorisation et leur stockage afin de les rendre facilement identifiables et donc retrouvables.

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[8] Cette étude a donné lieu aux conclusions suivantes :

- confirmation de la possibilité d'agréger les différents systèmes d'information existants afin d'accéder à l'information disponible via un portail d'accès unique;
- nécessité de contextualiser l'information pour mieux la comprendre, la conserver et la retrouver quelque soit la langue de recherche et donc d'établir une gouvernance du traitement de l'information;
- nécessité de conserver l'information dans un format flexible (XML) et de la stocker dans un repository approprié (Content management System) et répondant aux particularités du fond documentaire du Parlement;
- nécessité de développer un outil de recherche unique élaboré selon le principe du "web-service" et accessible via l'intranet.

Une étude portant sur l'élaboration du socle technique permettant l'indexation automatique des documents est en cours de finalisation. Dès sa mise en exploitation, attendue à l'été 2010, il sera procédé à l'indexation de l'activité parlementaire des deux dernières législatures afin que l'outil de support à la gestion documentaire s'appuie sur un fond documentaire déjà conséquent. Parallèlement tous les nouveaux documents liés à l'activité législative produits, à compter de cette date, seront indexés via l'OP et stockés dans le CMS, pour être par la suite accessibles via le portail d'accès unique de gestion documentaire. Les documents archivés au centre d'archives et de documentation (CARDOC), étant déjà indexés sur base d'EUROVOC, seront également concerné par cette facilité.

If the test of automatic indexation proves successful in practice, the achievement of this first step will allow a great progress in the management of documents. However, it has to be pointed out that additional staff with appropriate professional qualifications in indexing and additional financial resources may be required to validate and edit the metadata generated automatically.

39. Relations with the Belgian State

The Belgium State was supposed to pay back to the Parliament for buildings and work done on the Dalle due to an agreement between the Parliament and Belgium State.

How much money they paid in 2008?

Le Gouvernement belge a introduit un projet d'ajustement de son Budget 2009 pour un montant total de 85.897.000€. Les services ont reçu des indications que l'Etat belge verserait au Parlement européen début 2010 le montant de 85.896.382 € en une seule fois.

Annexes

A. ANNEXE à la Question 6

Les réserves dans déclaration annuelle de l'ordonnateur

Une *"réserve"* dans la déclaration annuelle est une attestation faisant état d'un dysfonctionnement ou d'une défaillance des systèmes de contrôle interne et/ou d'une erreur grave ayant eu, éventuellement, une incidence significative sur la gestion des activités de la Direction générale. Afin d'éclaircir cette définition la notion de "'incidence significative" et du terme "grave" sont à préciser:

- Incidence significative: le dysfonctionnement, la défaillance ou l'erreur affecte une ou plusieurs activités budgétaires ou opérationnelles de la Direction générale et provoque ou augmente considérablement le risque que la gestion des opérations s'écarte du principe de bonne gestion financière et/ou qu'elle ne respecte pas les principes de la légalité et de la régularité.

- Grave: d'une telle envergure que ses implications peuvent porter un préjudice à l'Institution.

Si l'incidence n'est pas considérée grave, l'ordonnateur délégué la mentionnera dans la partie du rapport destinée aux "observations".

Dans la mesure du possible les réserves essaieront de quantifier la valeur ou le budget concerné par le dysfonctionnement, la défaillance ou l'erreur. Si la valeur du préjudice subi par le budget ne peut être chiffrée mais l'ordonnateur estime qu'elle sera significative, la déclaration comportera une réserve indiquant l'incertitude quant aux montants concernés.

Les réserves seront clairement décrites dans la déclaration annuelle en précisant leur impact éventuel sur la gestion des activités et sur le budget de la DG et en exposant les actions mises en place ou prévues par l'ordonnateur délégué afin de limiter leurs effets, voire les éliminer.

B. ANNEXE à la Question 11-2

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT OF DIRECTORATE COMMUNICATION
DG COMMUNICATION - 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2008

SYNOPSIS
Information Offices ➢ 27 main Information Offices in the Member States' capitals and 1 in the EP site (Strasbourg) ➢ 5 Member States have also regional offices (Munich, Milan, Barcelona, Edinburgh and Marseille) ➢ Staff in place - 235 officials: 72 AD (from which 24 press officers and 9 with temporary contracts) and 128 AST(from which 15 with temporary and 11 with term contracts)

This is a general overview of the activities carried out by the Information Offices from 1 January till 31 December 2008.

1. Missions

According to their mission statement, the European Parliament Information Offices hereafter referred as EPIOs, shall be responsible for the delivery of DG Communication's overall information and communication strategy in the Member States.
The Information Offices, located in all national capitals and in six regional capitals are there to inform and promote the European Parliament to the citizens in the Member States and to develop contacts with national and regional media outlets and with national, regional and local authorities.

2. Other major projects for 2008 - 2009

Information Offices

- Pursue and reinforce branding of Citizens' Forums
- Organisation and development of annual communication events (Year of Intercultural Dialogue, 50th anniversary of the European Parliament, 30th anniversary of the directly-elected Parliament, Open Days, Sakharov Prize, Lux Prize, Commemoration of victims of terrorism, Journalist Prize, Karlspreis, etc.)
- Implementation of revised mission statement of the Information Offices

3. Human resources

Altogether, the number of staff detached in the Information Offices is 235 officials (72AD, 128 AST- 9 under term contract). Within this staff, there are currently 24 press officers in 24 Member States. Luxembourg will not have a press officer and, at this stage, only Bulgaria and Brussels do not have a press officer. At present 4 Information Offices have interim Head of Offices: Bucharest, Brussels, Luxembourg and Sofia.

4. Premises

Whereas DG INLO (Infrastructure and Logistic) is competent for the property management of Information Offices, EPIOs together with DG COMM central services are responsible for a sound and effective study and evaluation of local real state market and for the choice of premises.

Furthermore, evaluation and choice of premises is under the inter-institutional co-operation agreement with the European Commission, as today most of the decentralised premises are co-shared by the European Parliament and the European Commission in the "European Houses". At present, 28 out of 33 EPIOs share their premises with the European Commission Representations (ECRs). With the exception of Luxembourg, it is not envisaged that EP central places of work, Brussels and Strasbourg, will share common places with the ECRs because of their special nature/location. Apart of these 2 cases, just London and Edinburgh are still not in common premises. In Athens just the InfoPoint is shared by both institutions.

5. General overview on decentralised DG COMM activities and products in 2008

Information Offices have implemented 958 activities for 2008 during the period 1 January - 31 December 2008. These 958 activities produced around 1350 information and communication actions.

Figures show that in 2008 there have been 1921 participations of MEPs in EPIOs activities. Some activities, e.g. Citizens' Forums, seminars, etc. have been attended by more than one MEP.

5.1. Information and communication activities

- ***Information activities targeting Media***

  Information activities conceived for *media*, written and audiovisual, are designed to maximise coverage of the Parliament and to take a more active role in rebutting inaccuracies and distortions in local press coverage of the European Parliament and legislative procedures.

  Main information activities addressed to media, written and audio-visual are:

  - press conferences with MEPs
  - seminars for journalists in Member States
  - development of contacts with senior editorial staff of the national and regional audiovisual media and press
  - visits and seminars for journalists in Brussels and Strasbourg

  In addition to the 900 journalists invited to cover the plenary session in Strasbourg and Brussels, a total of 102 activities directly addressed to media in Member States have been completed in 2008.

- ***Information activities targeting Citizens, NGOs and Civil Society in general***

  An increasing number of activities to enhance direct contacts with EU citizens have been developed, taking the form of:

  - seminars / conferences and debates

- o Citizens' Forums
- o events or campaigns aimed at maximising publicity for the European Parliament

During the whole year, 95 seminars/conferences/debates have been organised in most Member States.

In addition, Citizens' Forums, implemented as part of the European Parliament's contribution to the reflection period on the Future of Europe, proved to be a success tool to increase both qualitatively and quantitatively Parliament's direct contacts with EU citizens. By its decentralised "go local" main feature, Citizens' Forums not only endeavoured an open and direct debate with EU citizens, but reached mainly EU citizens who had never been involved in any previous EU debate. In total, 77 Citizens Forums were held in 2008 in 19 Member States.

Finally, around 381 information and communication activities (events or campaigns aimed at maximising publicity for the Parliament) took place in 26 Member States.

- **Fairs and Exhibitions**

Information Offices participate and co-organise fairs and exhibitions. The main purpose of these events is to publicise and raise awareness on the European Parliament and its activities. This is achieved via the distribution of promotional materials, publications and direct contact with citizens (replies to citizens' queries). Overall, EPIOs participated in 107 fairs & exhibitions in 17 Member States.

- **Audio-visual products**

The EPIOs, in coordination and with the support of central audio-visual services, may finance, when appropriate, audiovisual productions and co-productions on the work of the Parliament and its MEPs. Furthermore, EPIOs ensure as great presence of MEPs as possible on national, regional and local television and radio programmes. All in all some 211 audiovisual productions and/or co-productions have been completed in 2008.

- **Support products**

- o Publications and Promotional products (PR material)

Traditional publications are a major educational tool for increasing citizens' awareness on the European Parliament and its activities, members and powers. Moreover, publications of EPIOs allow developing a single message determined by the European Parliament taking into account the specific national dimension. Whereas publications work as an information tool, promotional products are meant to publicise and create an image of the European Parliament.

These two information and communication activities are the main support tools for Fairs and exhibitions.

- **Internet**

Each Information Office shall have its own web sites which shall be the principal communication tool vis-à-vis the general public. The web sites main contents are: basic useful information for citizens on the Parliament; details about the respective EPIO current activities; information targeted at the media in the Member State; online publications and other online products, including where appropriate, interactive products and links to the other web sites of DG Communication and the

Institution. At this stage, only 4 EPIOs have external websites not hosted in Adagio 4.

- **Co-operation with the European Commission Representations (ECRs)**

  EPIOs shall ensure that MEPs are involved as much as possible in events organised under the aegis of the PRINCE programme as well as activities relating to the relays and networks. A number of joint events may also be organised each year between the Office and the Representation relating to themes of common or general interest.

  All in all 267 activities were carried out in cooperation with the European Commission Representations.

- **Activities in relation to the host Member State**

  EPIOs shall maintain contacts with national and regional public authorities, including national and regional parliaments, and with civil society. These contacts are increased in the scope of the coordination and implementation of Information strategy for 2009 EP elections.

  Lastly, EPIOs provide logistical and, where appropriate, political back up for visiting parliamentary leaders and delegations.

Conclusions

Figures show that 2.136 media (946 regional media, 930 national media and 260 Web) have covered the information and communication activities organised and implemented by the EP Information offices in the 27 Member States reaching millions of citizens via their multiplier effect.

Overall, we calculated that 6.043.659 citizens were reached directly via communication activities. Though, we estimate that other several million European citizens were reached via audiovisual and press actions not included in the above number (TV, radio, newspapers and internet) for which precise figures are often difficult to obtain.

C. ANNEXE à la Question 16-5

4 February 2009

Code Of Conduct For Communicating Together - European parliament Information Offices ("EP IOs") and European Commission Representations ("EC Reps")

In 2001 the EP and EC agreed a first Code of Conduct[9]. Since then the EU has grown to 27 countries, and the Institutions have agreed to communicate on European issues in partnership.[10] Also the EP and EC have worked ever more closely together, for example, by setting up Houses of Europe.

This second, revised Code of Conduct reflects those changes, and aims to develop as much as possible new joint strategies and activities

1. ORGANISATION

There are three levels of EP-EC cooperation:

a. Political: The Interinstitutional Group of Information (IGI) meets twice a year to define a joint communication strategy and inter-institutional communication priorities.

b. Operational: DGs COMM of the two Institutions:

- set the framework for organising cooperation;
- plan, organise, monitor and evaluate actions:
- organise joint working parties to develop actions and shared products and services

c. Local: EPIOs and EC Reps manage the daily work in Member States and adapt guidelines to local circumstances.

2. COOPERATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

They cooperate in mutual trust, transparency and respect for the roles and agendas of each Institution and of their respective offices in Member States, as set out in their mission statements. EPIOs and EC Reps constitute the "Houses of Europe" in most Member States[11]

Cooperation between EPIOs and EC Reps staff aims at:

a. giving a coherent image of the EU

b. improving communication with the public, and stimulating active European citizenship;

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[9] On the basis of a meeting held on May 15, 2001
[10] cf Joint Declaration "Communicating Europe in Partnership" OJ C. 13 of 20.01.2009
[11] In April 2008 25 of the 27 Member States have a House of Europe

c. increasing efficiency and effectiveness, by jointly developing products and services

3. PROCEDURES

a. Coordination of activities:
The EP and EC inform each other on the activities programmed by their respective offices to which they endeavour to associate the other Institutions to a maximum. On that basis the EPIO's and EC Reps seek to develop synergies and joint activities, such as
- definition of local/national communication priorities;
- organisation of events and activities able to attract public interest and media coverage
- development of products and services, both new and existing;

b. Meetings
in Brussels:
in autumn, Heads of EPIOs and EC Reps and staff from DGs COMM of the two Institutions share information, evaluate state of play and plan next steps

at local level:
Heads of EPIOs and EC Reps:
- hold regular, at least bimonthly, progress meetings;
- forward main conclusions to the central coordination offices in Brussels.

4. DOMAINS FOR JOINT ACTIVITIES

4.1 Media and Public opinion monitoring

a. Media reviews and press clippings	print - newspapers, magazines, broadcast - radio and TV online
b. Research	share findings about how citizens, organisations or stakeholders use our information or communication products and services, organise research jointly.

4.2 **Infrastructure, technologies**

a. Premises Houses of Europe
European Public Spaces (see separate code of conduct for EPS)

b. Online Links between EC and EP websites

4.3 Activities and Publications, as for example:

a. Information Campaigns in the framework of management partnership contracts with MS or any other kind of agreement

b. Events
   - Seminars
   - Conferences and exhibitions
   - 9 May Celebrations
   - Visits by Commissioners and MEPs

c. Media
   - Press visits
   - Meetings
   - Press conferences and seminars

d. Publications
   - press releases
   - brochures, audiovisual products, etc.

Specific working methods for European Public Spaces (EPS)

The present chapter only applies to those Houses of Europe that are formally hosting a "European Public Space", recognized as such by the headquarters of the two institutions.

Objectives and activities

1. European Public Spaces (EPS) are joint projects run by the Commission Representations (REPs) and by EP Information Offices in selected locations, following a pilot project launched in 2007.

2. The aim of the EPS is to encourage dialogue and democratic debate by creating public spaces in the Member States where the Institutions may interact with society, with an emphasis on politics, culture, education and civil society.

Working methods

3. The space would be run jointly by the two institutions according to the capacity of each office. Other partners can contribute to specific operations of the EPS, on an ad hoc basis and after approval from both partners.

4. In general terms, there can be no "one size fits all" approach as regards the resources to be dedicated to the European Public Spaces - since the operational budget and administrative resources vary considerably from one location to another.

5. In each EPS activity equal visibility should be guaranteed by both institutions.

6. The two parties should commonly adopt an annual programme of events to be organised in the EPS.
It should be adopted no later than November of the previous year. It can be revised at any time and be adaptable to changing priorities or to new emerging opportunities.

7. The REPs and EP Offices would be jointly involved in the organisation of events forming part of the annual programme of events. Whereas, given their greater financial and staffing resources, the logistical arrangements, including the recourse to additional staffing through outsourcing, will often be taken care of and managed by the European Commission, EP Offices should also be involved within their individual financial and staffing capacities.

8. Both Institutions should have access to his space for activities organised on its own account when the space is available. Third organisations (students associations, NGOs, etc) may organise events in the EPS upon request and after approval by both institutions.

9. Each EPS will lay down practical arrangements for the operation of the EPS in terms of opening hours, security, staffing, etc.

D. ANNEXE à la Question 16-7

Cabinet of the President of the European Parliament

Head of Cabinet	Maciej POPOWSKI
Assistant to Head of Cabinet	Maja URBANSKA
Protocol	Lilian PHILLIPS
Deputy Head of Cabinet	Anthony TEASDALE
Assistant to Deputy Head of Cabinet	Claire MEYER
President's Spokesperson	Inga ROSINSKA
General Adviser	Javier POMES RUIZ

<u>Political Strategy and Governing Bodies</u>

Team Leader (see above)	Anthony TEASDALE
Policy Advisers:	
Special Adviser and speech-writer	Marek EVISON
Speech-writer	Witold NATURSKI
Policy Advisor	Fearghas O'BEARA
Policy Advisor	Astrid WORUM
Assistants	Monique BRASSEUR
	Daniela ROHRIG

<u>Internal Policy and Legislative Affairs</u>

Team Leader	Eschel ALPERMANN
	Annamaria FORGACS
Policy Advisers	Emanuela ILARIO
	Valeria FIORE
Assistant	Janeta DUFFY

<u>External Relations</u>

Team Leader and Chief Diplomatic Advisor	Alexandre STUTZMANN
	Levente CSASZI
Policy Advisers	Arnoldas PRANCKIEVICIUS
	Dariusz SEROWKA
Assistant	Anne-Marie BEYST

<u>Communications, Visits and Events</u>

Team Leader and President's Spokeswoman	Inga ROSINSKA
Deputy Spokesman	Robert GOLANSKI
Press Officers	Richard FREEDMAN
	Daniela SENK
Assistants	Charlotte DU REITZ
	Slawomir ROGOWSKI

Cabinet Administration

Team Leader	Eduard REIJNDERS
	Antonia GIARRIZZO
Assistants	Monique BRASSEUR
	Jakub KAMINSKI
Personal Usher	Francois AMBROSINI
Driver	Rudy VANHASSEL

Private Office and Protocol

Team Leader	Anna PARADOWSKA
Protocol	Lilian PHILLIPS
Assistants	Anna OWCZARCZAK
	Lesya NEDELCU

E. ANNEXE à la Question 32

__Resolution of 10 March 2009__:

§ 26: "Deplores the fact that the visitors' centre will not be established before the 2009 elections and requests full information as to the reasons behind this delay."

This note analyses project time spent per category of activity and describes the main elements that have influenced project implementation.

I. Breakdown by activities

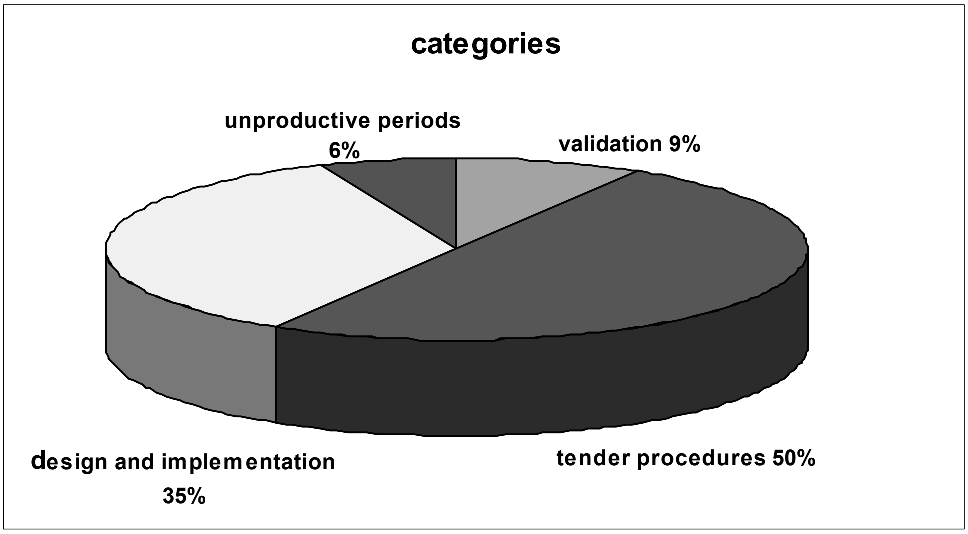
The project reached an overall duration of 46 months at the end of April 2009.

The breakdown of project time into categories of activities shows the following:

- The main element determining project duration is time spent in managing **public procurement procedures**: The preparation and management of public procurement procedures accounts **for 23 months or 50% of the overall project duration up until now;**

- In contrast to this the net productive time for the ***development of the design and its implementation*** accounts for no more than 16 months, equivalent to ***35% of the project duration***;

- ***Validation procedures*** (4 months) and "unproductive periods" (miscellaneous preparatory work and closure days) account for the remainder of ***15%*** of project duration.



The following chapters examine in detail the critical elements and project progress with regard to the above categories.

II . Tender procedures

For reasons of compliance with the Financial Regulation and control over project implementation, the option of a turnkey-operation (one single tender for the entire project) had to be excluded. Instead the project is implemented in a series of successive tender procedures.

In general terms, the time necessary for tendering is a function of (1) the number of procurement procedures, (2) their complexity and (3) the market response to the tenders;

2.1. Number of procurement procedures

Since the start of the Visitors' Centre project, **10 tender procedures** have been completed, resulting in a total of **19 contracts** with **13 different contractors**
with an overall financial volume of more than **11 mio €**. Three more tenders are currently open.

The tenders relate to the following three project phases:

The project started with the Bureau's decision of 4 July 2005. The first weeks after the decision were used for setting-up the project management, for strategy development and market prospection of what then was for Parliament's administration a genuinely new field of activity. It was also necessary to proceed to a rapid analysis of the building infrastructure, which was already under construction but had not been planned for the purposes of a Visitors' Centre.

Public procurement activities began only after this short start-up phase:

(a) ***The concept phase*** started in October 2005 with the approval of the Centre's Mission Statement by the Bureau and was completed in June 2006 by the approval by the Bureau of the base concept for the Visitors' Centre. The report was based on an external consultancy report which had been commissioned through a first tender procedure (1);

(b) ***The design phase*** started in June 2006 with the approval of the above mentioned base concept by the Bureau and was completed in December 2008 with the approval of the Final Design for the Visitors' Centre. During this phase three major tender procedures were concluded relating to the interior and exhibition design plus the production of a role-play game (2), research and provision of source material (3) and assistance in project management (4);

(c) ***The production phase*** partially overlaps with the Design phase: A first series of infrastructural works started in 2008 (5) + (6), a second series of tenders relating to the supply of a media guide (7), a LED-mesh (8), media productions (9) and infrastructural adaptations (10) were concluded in March 2009. The last series of tenders, concerning fit-out (11) and media hardware (12) are ready to be launched at the moment of the drafting of this note.

2.2. Complexity of the procedures

The Financial Regulation, its implementation measures and other administrative rules define the procedural steps for public procurement procedures and fix a number of compulsory ***minimum periods***. In compliance with the minimum procedural thresholds, the minimum period between the launch of a tender procedure and the signature of a contract lasts approximately 100 days.[12] This period relates exclusively to the procurement procedure as such and does not take account of the time needed for drafting the tender specifications. In the case of the Visitors' Centre project, drafting of tender documents has taken between 1 and 6 months. The following elements are of relevance:

(a) The tenders relate to such ***heterogeneous deliverables*** as architectural studies, research services in the field of history, sociology and European studies, media hardware, the production of films and audiovisual material, construction works, adaptation of technical installations, which make comprehensive inter-service consultations necessary;

(b) Some of the tender documents are ***voluminous and technical***, leading to long delays in translation and editing. Due to the volume and cost considerations the objective to translate all tender documents into all official languages had to be abandoned[13];

(c) In particular the specifications relating to infrastructural modifications require ***knowledge of applicable legislation***. As such, the designers were obliged to subcontract an engineering company acquainted with Belgian legislation. Due to the strict financial rules, the sub-contractor could unfortunately not be the same as the one who designed the building. The need for the external engineering company to analyse the as-built files and become familiar with existing infrastructure has caused delays in the drafting of the tender documentation.

The last example also illustrates the complexity of a project in which firms from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland collaborate on a building site in Brussels.

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[12] The absolute minimum period is 93 days: 12 days between launch of contract notice and publication in Official Journal Minimum period of 52 days between publication and deadline for submission of offers, 7 days between deadline for submission of offers and opening of offers, 7 days for evaluation of offers, minimum period of 15 days between contract award notification and signature of contract. In practice, site visits, translation periods, clarification of questions by tenderers/handing in of additional documents and simply the time needed to compare point by point individual offers lead to (sometimes substantially) longer periods.

[13] The fit-out tender with its 600 pages, which could be compared with the REACH proposal, may serve as an example: Translation into 22 languages would take approximately four to five months and would cost approximately 1,2 mio €.

2.3. Market response to tenders

As with the tender schedule, the purchasing authority has no influence on the market response to tenders launched. In the case of the Visitors' Centre project, external factors negatively affected project progress in two instances:

- In one case (research framework tender), the award of a series of contracts had to be postponed by 6 months as a precautionary measure to guarantee equal opportunities and non-discrimination of all applicants. This had become necessary following an alleged incompatibility between two firms which had submitted offers for two complementary invitations to tender. The late award of the contracts had a direct impact on the overall project schedule;

- In another case, the purchasing authority was obliged to cancel the procedure altogether in order to protect the institution's financial interests: The offers received seemed to be overpriced and a possible collusion between tenderers could not be excluded. This market failure has resulted in a 2-4 months delay in the overall project implementation.

The tenders in figures[14]:

Number of tenders:	**10**
Number of contract signed:	**19**
Minimum tender duration:	**93 days**
Tender documentation:	**2.613 pages**
Pages translated:	**11.273 pages**
Number of applications:	**97**
Number of offers received:	**58**
Number of evaluation meetings:	**56**
Number of criteria evaluated:	**300 sub-criteria (estimation)**

III. Validation periods

3.1. Political validation

The project is steered by the ***Bureau Working Party on Information and Communication policy*** which continuously supervises project progress and endorses project milestones prior to their presentation to the Bureau. ***The Bureau*** has held so far seven exchanges of views on the project. In 2006, the project was also referred to the ***Conference of Presidents***.

3.2. Academic validation

[14] DG COMM tenders only

With regard to the academic supervision, an ***Advisory Academic Committee*** composed of leading European intellectuals and academics in the field of European studies, philosophy, sociology, economics and history, monitors project progress. This body has to date held 5 joint workshops with the Bureau Working Party on Information and Communication Policy. The modifications and proposals introduced by the Academic Committee were subsequently incorporated into the content development and design or further developed by the research teams. Whilst the advice of the Academic Committee has proven to be of great relevance, the members' multiple engagements have complicated the organisation of the meetings and have prolonged the time needed for consultation.

In total, validation periods account for approximately four months since the start of the project.

IV. Implementation periods

The Bureau's decisions of 4 July and 24 October 2005 set an ambitious framework:

With regard to the concept, the project has the following features:

- The Visitors' Centre is the **largest parliamentary Centre in Europe** and one of the largest in the world;

- It is the only centre of its kind worldwide that endeavours providing **full language coverage in 23 languages**;

- The concept of active citizenship through a combination of modern scenography and ***interactive multimedia applications*** is a completely new approach in institutional communication at European level;

- The narrative proposed by the advisory Academic Committee and endorsed by the Bureau is ***interdisciplinary*** and extends to themes such as history and diversity in Europe, subject matters which require outside expertise and source material.

With regard to the physical environment, it is useful to note that the space occupied by the Visitors' Centre had initially been designed to serve as an underground parking and was later adapted to the functional plan of an external museum project. The situation inherited at the start of the project represented a number of challenges:

- Since the start of the project a number of fundamental ***infrastructural adaptations*** have been implemented to establish full accessibility for disabled persons and to improve visitor flows;

- The ***(re-)integration*** of the Visitors' Centre as publicly accessible space into Parliament's security, technical and internal data network architecture raises a number of questions, in particular with regard to video surveillance, extension of EP internal telephone and data networks to the Visitors' Centre, integration and adaptations of heating, ventilation, air-condition and electricity supply networks;

- Finally, certain infrastructural works are subject to ***public permits***. This is in particular the case for (a) the fire protection strategy, which had to be revised in light of the installation of new staircases and lifts, and (b) the LED-façade installation on the external lobby which equally requires a public permit from the Brussels Region.

When put into relation with the above challenges, the progression of the project has followed a steady path and has been swift:

4.1. With regard to the concept phase:

A Mission Statement was presented to the Bureau less than a month after the project secretariat had effectively taken up its work (September 2006).

The establishment of the base concept (Master Plan) was completed in less than four months between January and April 2006.

4.2. With regard to the design phase:

The Final Design was completed in less than one year as of the contract signature with the design firm. The schedule of the various design validation steps is shown in the following table:

January 2008	Contract start with Atelier Brückner
March 2008	Hand-in of revised functional and interpretive plan
April 2008	Approval of functional and interpretive plan by Bureau
June 2008	Hand-in of Preliminary Design
September 2008	Approval of the Preliminary Design by the Bureau
November 2008	Hand-in and approval of Detailed Design
December 2008	Hand-in and approval of Final Design
March/April 2009	Hand-in of tender documentation (ca. 900 pages)

The above overview shows that it has taken less than 15 months from the first tender design proposal to the final tender documentation for the production of the Visitors' Centre.

4.3. With regard to the production phase:

The following elements are already in place:

- The first series of infrastructural works launched under the supervision of DG INLO (staircases, lift, external lobby) will be completed end of May 2009;

- More recently, three large tenders, for which a non-automatic carry-over had been requested, were successfully completed and signed within the regulatory deadline. They refer to media content productions, the supply of a media guide and the supply of an LED-mesh for the external lobby with a budgetary volume of 4,5 mio €. The implementation of these contracts has started and should be completed by the end of 2009.

V. Resource side

The intermediary results achieved so far have to be put into relation with the resources which have been made available for the project.

In the period 2005-2007, the Bureau's decision to establish the Visitors' Centre was not reflected by the creation of additional posts for this activity in the establishment plan. Two posts (1 AD and 1 AST) allocated to the management of the project originated from internal redeployments to the detriment of other DG COMM services. In 2008, DG COMM allocated two additional posts (1 AD and 1 AST) to the project, again without increase of DG COMM's human resources.

The progress achieved during this period, as outlined above, was only possible through recourse to a number of external consultancy contracts, internal redeployments within DG COMM and the attempt to establish an informal project team structure involving staff from various specialist services.

With 2 AD, 3 AST and 2 further temporary AST posts, the budget 2009 foresees for the first time the creation of posts in the establishment plan for the purpose of the Visitors' Centre.

The posts were published in January 2009 and the completion of the recruitment procedures for the permanent posts is imminent. In turn, the recruitment procedures relating to the two temporary posts have been fruitless and it remains doubtful whether qualified personnel can be found for the specific job profiles (communication assistant and media-technician) for a remaining contract duration of less than 8 months.

VI. The next steps

6.1. Completion of fit-out

Two further large tenders relating to the definitive fit-out of the Visitors' Centre and media hardware supplies are currently in inter-service consultation and will be published in May 2009[15].

These tenders will inter alia incorporate the elements of the earlier tender on infrastructural adaptations which had to be closed without result (see point 3.3. above).

In line with the procedural rules applicable, these tenders could be completed at the earliest in September 2009. Subject to availability of the necessary budgetary funds, the works could

[15] The procedures are already officially launched with the publication of pre-information notices in April 2009

start in September and be completed by March 2010.

6.2. Completion of content work

With regard to content, a number of works still need to be completed:

(a) For most of the exhibition areas, the raw scripts will need to be finalised, refined, edited by professional script-writers and translated into all languages;

(b) The collection of external source material represents another challenge: More than 1000 photos and an estimated 250 audiovisual files will be used in the exhibition. Much of this material will come from external sources. The selection of the material, the identification of owners and the negotiation of individual copyrights will be one of the priorities over the coming months;

(c) Part of the media production should be finalised before the end of the year. However, it should not be overseen that part of the production cannot be dissociated from the parliamentary life cycle: Certain sections, such as portraits of office holders and individual MEPs, interviews with the political group leaders or information on the composition of Parliament and political groups can only be developed after the European elections and the constituent meeting in July. The same applies to the envisaged 360° filming of parliamentary activities (plenary and committee meetings) which can start at the earliest in September 2009.

6.3. Future daily operation of the Visitors' centre

An external consultancy report on the staffing and organisational structure on the future Visitors' Centre was completed in March 2008, the findings of which were presented to the Bureau in April 2008.

An updated proposal on staffing and operational cost will soon be submitted to the Bureau for approval. Pending a final decision on this issue an amount of 3,1 mio € has been entered in the reserve for the 2010 budget.

The tenders to procure floor-staff and other services related to the operation of the Visitors' Centre, including the envisaged souvenir shop, will be launched in line with the Bureau's decision and its endorsement by the Committee on Budgets.

- Project milestones

July 2005	Bureau decision to establish Visitors' Centre
October 2005	Approval, by the Bureau, of a Mission Statement for the Visitors' Centre
December 2005	Signature of a contract with an external service provider on the establishment of a base concept for the Visitors' Centre
May 2006	Referral of base concept to the Conference of Presidents
June 2006	Approval, by the Bureau, of the base concept

January 2007	Launch of tender procedures on the design of the Visitors' Centre
November 2007	Approval, by the Bureau, of a progress report on the Visitors' Centre
January/February 2008	Signature of a total of nine contracts with external service providers on the design of the Visitors' Centre.
April 2008	Favourable opinion, by the Bureau, on the design, organisation and cost of Visitors' Centre
September 2008	Progress report to the Bureau Launch of 4 calls for tender concerning media production, the media guide, the LED mesh and infrastructural works.
October 2008	Launch of preparatory infrastructural works (Implementation phase 1)
December 2008	Completion of Design phase
March 2009	Launch of media production and further infrastructural works (Implementation phase 2)
September 2009	Start of fit-out of exhibition areas and installation of media (Implementation phase 3)
Spring 2010	Opening of Visitors' Centre