

Annual Activity Report

2016

DG EPRS

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0. BUDGETARY IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

Code	Appropriation type	Type de crédits	EUR ou %	Formule
	Appropriations of 2016	Crédits 2016		
A	Initial appropriations	Crédits initiaux	9.009.000,00	
B	Final appropriations	Crédits finaux	7.698.963,00	
C	Commitments	Engagements	7.450.551,7	
D	Commitments in % of final appropriations	Engagements en % des crédits finaux	97%	D=C/B
E	Payments	Paiements	4.595.628,82	
F	Payments in % of commitments	Paiements en % des engagements	62%	F=E/C
G	Cancellations of 2016 final appropriations	Annulations de crédits finaux 2016	248.411,83	G=B-C-K
H	Cancellations appropriations in % of final appropriations	Annulations en % des crédits finaux	3%	H=G/B
	Appropriations carried over from 2016 to 2017	Crédits reportés de 2016 à 2017		
I	Automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	2.854.922,35	I=C-E
J	Automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of commitments	Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017 en % des engagements	38%	J=I/C
K	Non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	0,00	
L	Non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of final appropriations	Crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017 en % des crédits finaux	0%	L=K/B
	Appropriations carried over from 2015 to 2016	Crédits reportés de 2015 à 2016		
M	Automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2015 à 2016	2.854.262,78	
N	Payments against automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Paiements sur crédits reportés automatiquement de 2015 à 2016	2.633.380,32	
O	Payments against automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016 in % of automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Paiements sur crédits reportés automatiquement de 2015 à 2016 en % des crédits reportés automatiquement de 2015 à 2016	92%	O=N/M
P	Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Annulations de crédits reportés automatiquement de 2015 à 2016	220.882,46	P=M-N
Q	Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016 in % of automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Annulations de crédits reportés automatiquement de 2015 à 2016 en % des crédits reportés automatiquement de 2015 à 2016	8%	Q=P/M
R	Non-automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2015 à 2016	0,00	
S	Payments of non-automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Paiements sur crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2015 à 2016		
T	Payments against non-automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Paiements sur crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2015 à 2016 en % des crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2015 à 2016		T=S/R
U	Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Annulations de crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2015 à 2016		U=R-S
V	Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016	Annulations de crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2015 à 2016 en % des crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2015 à 2016		V=U/R
	Assigned revenue in 2016	Recettes affectées 2016		
W	Appropriations from assigned revenue in 2016 (current)	Crédits de recettes affectées courants 2016	0,00	
X	Assigned revenue carried over to 2016	Crédits de recettes affectées reportés à 2016	0,00	
Y	Balance of commitments on assigned revenue carried over to 2016	Solde des engagements reportés à 2016 sur crédits de dépenses spécifiques sur recettes affectées	0,00	

1. OBJECTIVES

1.1. Objectives of the directorate-general

The Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (DG EPRS) was established in November 2013 to provide Members of the European Parliament, and where appropriate, parliamentary committees, with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work. It aims to provide a comprehensive range of products and services, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so empowering Members and committees through knowledge.

The basic philosophy of DG EPRS, as defined by the Parliament's Bureau, reflects the following core principles:

- to be independent, objective and authoritative in the work undertaken;
- to provide a comprehensive service, backed by specialism in all policy fields;
- to be client-oriented and responsive directly to the needs of Members;
- to offer a single point-of-entry for Members and a rapid response to requests;
- to ensure the clear, simple branding of all products and services; and
- to complement written material with greater 'in person' briefing of Members.

In line with the overall mission statement of the directorate-general and the Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) adopted within the Parliament's administration in autumn 2014, DG EPRS established the following priority objectives in January 2016 for the year in question, working closely with other services within the administration:

Directorate A - Members' Research Service

- The Members' Research Service will engage in the continued development and launch of new or improved products and services for Members individually and collectively throughout 2016.
- The Members' Research Service will continue to increase the number of in-depth analyses of major policy areas and issues. The 'EU legislation in progress' series of briefings, systematically tracking the passage of all major legislative proposals, will be developed and refined. The concept of series of publications will be extended, to help make EPRS output increasingly accessible.
- The Policy Analysts and Information Specialists within the Members' Research Service will continue to intensify the provision of personalised briefing of Members, notably through in-person meetings, in addition to written material.
- The process of specialisation of staff by policy area within the Members' Research Service, supported by appropriate training, will continue.
- The advance programming of all EPRS publications - of which there were already over 600, in either paper or online formats, in 2015 - through the Publications Management and Editorial Unit, will be further enhanced.
- The Members' Research Service will continue to build up the delivery of services to the two EU Advisory Committees, implementing the Parliament's cooperation agreements with those bodies.

Directorate B - Library

- The Library Directorate will prepare the ground for a new 'strategic plan' for library services within the Parliament, based on greater digitisation, stronger emphasis on support for research, intensified provision of sources and databases, and the possible opening of some services to the general public.
- The Library Directorate will continue to support the other directorates and units within DG EPRS in their research and analytical work, in parallel to its existing comprehensive provision of physical and digital collections, news sources and databases for a wide parliamentary clientele.
- The Library Reading Room in Brussels will be actively developed as a forum for intellectual exchange, including through the hosting of roundtables and seminars on EPRS and other publications, drawing in expertise from and enhancing collaboration with a wide range of partner organisations.
- The Citizens' Enquiries Unit will continue to provide a high-quality support for Members by further developing its 'model answers' and new AskEP.net tools, such as alerts on campaigns. It will enhance its interaction with citizens by developing new channels, including through the Parliamentarium and the information offices.
- The work of the Historical Archives Unit will continue to be mainstreamed in the daily life of the Parliament. It will carry through the continued digitisation of the institution's archives, develop the Parliament's Historical Library, and contribute to providing a more systematic history of the institutional development of the Parliament over time, working closely with the House of European History.
- The Transparency Unit will continue to respond quickly and effectively to requests for access to documents and aim to increase the quality of the Transparency Register, through greater monitoring and outreach to registrants.
- The new Comparative Law Library Unit will be developed as a centre of knowledge and expertise on the law of the EU, its member states and other jurisdictions, from a comparative perspective, including through targeted publications and events.
- The On-site and Online Library Services Unit will work actively with the Comparative Law Library Unit to develop a strong collection in comparative law, backed by a website in the same field.

Directorate C - Impact Assessment and European Added Value

- The Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value will intensify its support for parliamentary committees, so as to strengthen EP involvement throughout the legislative and policy cycles and enhance scrutiny and oversight of the executive.

- Existing work in the fields of impact assessment and European added value will be further developed, so that parliamentary committees are better placed to analyse legislative options available to the EU institutions, on an *ex-ante* basis, and to review outcomes on the part of those institutions, on an *ex-post* basis.
- Support for parliamentary committees will be enhanced by the directorate's more active involvement in legislative project teams, established on an inter-DG basis, throughout the legislative cycle.
- Support for parliamentary committees specifically in the elaboration of implementation reports will be further strengthened, with the continued delivery of 'European Implementation Assessments'.
- The concept of 'rolling check-lists' of relevant material will continue to be pioneered by the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value, with their analysis designed to support committees and Members in scrutiny work.
- The Scientific Foresight Unit will underpin the process by which the work of the Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) process, backed by greater in-house analytical capacity and research, is becoming more policy-relevant, focussed more on issues related to scientific foresight, operating through shorter projects than before, and being made more widely available within the parliamentary community.
- The new Global Trends Unit will generate publications and events aimed at identifying, tracking and analysing long-and medium-term global trends and their implications for the EU. It will provide the secretariat for the inter-institutional ESPAS process.

Across the whole Directorate-General

- DG EPRS will implement its various projects in the Parliamentary Project Portfolio (PPP), based on its own Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) and that of the administration as a whole.
- DG EPRS will adopt key result indicators (KRIs) and other metrics to help monitor and manage the effectiveness of its most important activities. These will assist DG EPRS in providing a comprehensive range of products and services, underpinned by standards which are met, in a client-oriented and timely way.
- Through its dedicated 'client needs team' and other initiatives, DG EPRS will continue to improve knowledge of its products and services among Members and their staff, improve distribution channels of these products and services, and monitor their take-up, notably success in securing their regular and repeated use by clients.
- DG EPRS will intensify efforts to offer greater accessibility to its services to Members when they are outside the EP premises, based on a continued experiment with services for mobile use and multi-media communication, and the targeted diffusion of output through social media.
- The process of offering training for Members and their offices will be further developed, reflecting the wider and deeper range of products and services available.

- DG EPRS will further develop and intensify its outreach, liaison and dialogue with think tanks, academic and research institutes, as well as with national parliamentary research services and libraries, actively comparing experience and best practice in the latter case.
- DG EPRS will seek to provide its staff with the best possible working conditions and support, including through improved access to technology and modern office accommodation, underpinned by future moves to the new Wilfried Martens and Konrad Adenauer II Buildings in Brussels and Luxembourg.
- The successful integration of new colleagues from the two EU Advisory Committees and from the open competition for contractual researchers will be completed.
- The professional development of EPRS staff will be underpinned by a new overall strategy for training, with emphasis on the identification of long-term needs to nurture and maintain analytical capacities in certain fields.
- Capacity in the field of information technology will continue to be upgraded, along the lines foreseen in the PPP. DG-wide IT portfolio management of infrastructure, projects and requests will be further improved, with important projects to optimise workflows and increase the electronic availability and visibility of EPRS products, undertaken in cooperation with DGs ITEC and Communications.
- Local IT support and system administration will be further streamlined and professionalised, following internationally-recognised standards and best practice.
- The smooth and efficient execution of DG EPRS's budget will be assured, including by the effective forward planning of all financial transactions within the directorate-general. The existing alert system, identifying risks and remedial measures in the context of financial transactions, will be systematised.
- In the effective utilisation of the financial and other resources at their disposal, all administrative units will continue the drive to ensure maximum value for money, not least in any public purchasing undertaken by the directorate-general.

These specific objectives for 2016 were located in the context of the **rapidly-rising curve of activity** on which DG EPRS has been set since its creation in November 2013. During the **first three full years** of its existence - namely the 36 months from January 2014 to December 2016, DG EPRS registered the following principal achievements, in addition to the organisational and operational accomplishment of successfully establishing a new directorate-general within the Parliament's administration:

- The Members' Research Service of EPRS answered a total of 8,096 substantive requests for research and analysis from Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and their staff – 1,660 in 2014; 2,995 in 2015; and 3,441 in 2016 – in some cases with assistance from other EPRS services.
- The Members' Research Service also replied to 1,654 substantive requests for research and analysis from other parliamentary clients, such as committee secretariats, policy departments and political groups (720 requests in 2014; 497 in 2015 and 437 in 2016).
- The number of Members using the Members' Research Service rose throughout the period in question, with 88 per cent of Members having made requests for research or analysis by December 2016, and 75 per cent per cent doing so on a recurring basis in

the previous twelve months. (In autumn 2014, by comparison, the figure was only 22 per cent).

- The Members' Research Service issued 1,547 publications on EU policies, issues and legislation, for the use of Members generally and the institution as a whole, during the same three-year period: 231 publications in 2014; 594 publications in 2015; and 722 publications in 2016.
- The Directorate for the Library also answered over 52,000 reference requests from within the Parliament and treated over 180,000 citizens' enquiries, over the same period, as well as processing one kilometre of archival files and providing in-house training to over 3,300 persons.
- The Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value published 319 papers in support of the work of parliamentary committees in scrutinising the executive and holding it to account.
- Adding in Library publications and blog articles, there were a total of 2,680 EPRS publications during the three years in question: 541 in 2014; 970 in 2015; and 1169 in 2016. All of these publications can be accessed via the [EPRS catalogue](#) for that period.
- These EPRS publications and other material elicited over 4.7 million page-views on the Parliament's intranet in the three-year period in question, as well as some 3.5 million page views on the internet. By year, the figures for the intranet were 1.3 million in 2014, 1.8 million in 2015, and 1.6 million in 2016. For the internet, they were 700,000 in 2014, 1.3 million in 2015, and 1.5 million in 2016.

1.2. Feasibility and risk assessment

In pursuit of its work, DG EPRS identified the following risks for the calendar year 2016 and included them in the Risk Register:

- *Widen and deepen the range of research products and services for Members*

Risk issues/possibilities: Balance between demand and supply; quality of products: There is a risk that the research and information needs of Members might not always be correctly identified, leading to a situation where the request-driven and/or proactive products do not fully correspond to Members' needs in terms of substance, format or quality.

This risk was classified as 'very low' and the following measures were taken to mitigate and prevent it: Adaptation of the style and form of products; targeted and well-timed outreach activities; monitoring of incoming requests (Members' Hotline); clients' surveys; appropriate staffing level and skills for newly recruited staff, professional training for staff members.

- *Completing the legislative and policy cycles and contributing to more effective scrutiny of the EU executive*

Risk issues/possibilities: Balance between demand and supply; quality of products: There is a risk that request-driven or pro-active products cannot be delivered on time, or with the quality required (for example due to external factors, lack of human resources or lack of dedicated IT tools), and/or that information needs are not always

correctly identified, leading to a situation where they do not correspond to the need of Members and/or committees in terms of in terms of substance, format or quality.

This risk was classified as ‘very low’ and the following measures were taken to mitigate and prevent it: Forward planning; prioritisation of products; promotion and cooperation with committees and other relevant services in the EP, including regular exchanges on needs; and efficient use of procedures (for example, applying the public procurement procedures in such a way as to minimise delays).

- *Excellence of support at all stages: Ensure inter-DG collaboration in the legislative and policy cycles*

Risk issues/possibilities: Delay in setting up a fully operational modus operandi: Due to limited technical experience with the development of collaborative environments and limited end-user knowledge of such environments, development (and particularly the integration with existing applications) could be delayed or may be more resource-intensive than foreseen. There is a risk that Directorates A and C are not given full access to relevant data and information throughout the policy cycle.

This risk was classified as ‘very low’ and the following measures were taken to mitigate it: Encourage networking and exchange of information between stakeholders throughout all processes, including committee secretariats and policy departments. Base development on experience with existing collaborative environment solutions; close collaboration with DG ITEC. Continuously communicate the envisaged goals and processes to stakeholders. Appropriate staffing level and skills for newly recruited staff, professional training for staff members. However, due to reasons beyond the control of DG EPRS, this inter-DG project has been temporarily put on hold.

- *Implementing the upgraded inter-institutional agreement on the Transparency Register*

Risk issues/possibilities: Delayed implementation of the IIA on the Transparency Register: Delay of implementation of the project and/or technical failures may lead to delays and/or disruptions.

This risk was classified as ‘very low’ and the following measures were taken to mitigate it: Efficient work of the Joint Transparency Register secretariat; strategy to improve quality of Transparency Register data; close contact with stakeholders (awareness raising, helpdesk), so that the risk level could be reduced as the project progressed until successful completion.

- *Develop an enhanced online presence to improve the accessibility of EPRS products*

Risk issues/possibilities: Technical failure: Risk of technical failure of the server, leading to an impossibility to upload EPRS material.

This risk was classified as ‘low’ and the following measures were taken to transfer and mitigate it: Close engagement with DG ITEC; mitigation through a continued presence of EPRS material on the EPRS blog at ep.thinktank.eu.

- *Enhance research capacity by integration of up to 80 colleagues from the two advisory committees (EESC and CoR)*

Risk issues/possibilities: (Partial) failure to integrate staff: The integration of the new colleagues from the advisory committees may be more difficult and time-consuming than foreseen. There is also a risk that some colleagues will not stay with the service, which would lead to re-launching the recruitment process. Consequently, the productivity of the service may not be at the expected level.

This risk was classified as 'low' and the following measures were taken to mitigate it: Specific training programme; mentoring; close monitoring by respective heads of unit; interviews with all candidates; diligent needs analysis; filling of gaps in terms of out-going staff. The risk diminished over time and the project has since been finalised. By political decision by the two advisory bodies and the Parliament, the number of staff/posts eventually transferred was limited to 60. Meanwhile, all transferred colleagues have been successfully integrated within DG EPRS.

- *Preservation and management of the Historical Archives*

Risk issues/possibilities: Acquisition of new archival data base system: The migration of existing data into to the new archival data base system may be more time and resource consuming than foreseen because the current database is non-standard and contains coded data and business rules which are not sufficiently documented.

This risk was classified as 'very low' and the following measures have been taken to mitigate it: The creation of an intermediate database to normalise the current data structure and the way in which it is stored in the database before the migration, thereby reducing problems at the stage of establishing the final database. A follow-up project, building on parts of this project, has since been introduced in the new PPP projects of DG EPRS in 2016.

2. ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE OBJECTIVES - USE OF RESOURCES

2.1. Environment of the directorate-general

The European Parliament's Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) was established on 1 November 2013, in order to provide Members of the European Parliament, and where appropriate, parliamentary committees, with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, and so assist them in their parliamentary work. The Directorate-General aims to provide a comprehensive range of products and services, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so empowering Members and committees through knowledge and contributing to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence as an institution.

Organisationally, the Directorate-General comprises three directorates, as well as two horizontal units - for Strategy and Coordination, and for Resources. The three directorates are:

- Directorate for the Members' Research Service;
- Directorate for the Library;
- Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value.

The detailed structure of each Directorate-General, based on units, is set out in the official organigramme of the Parliament. On 1 November 2016, the Transparency Unit, dealing with public access to EP documents and the Transparency Register, moved to the Directorate-General for the Presidency (PRES).

At the beginning of 2016, the transfer of the last group of 60 staff members from the two advisory committees - the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - was completed, with the conclusion of the last practicalities.

During 2016, DG EPRS launched two major open public procurement procedures, namely for the purchase of archival processing and other associated services for the Historical Archives and for the purchase of subscription services for serial publications respectively. The first of these procedures is inter-institutional, with the European Parliament leading the tender for other six institutions.

2.2. Human resources of the DG

2.2.1. Establishment plan for DG EPRS

	at 1.1.2015				at 1.1.2016			
	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Permanent posts	141	113	2	256	151	116	4	271
Temporary posts				0				0
Total	141	113	2	256	151	116	4	271

2.2.2. *Staff numbers as at 31.12.2016*

	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total	ETP
Officials	143	109	3	255	250
Temporary staff	2	4	1	7	7
- in temporary posts				0	0
- in permanent posts		2	1	3	0
- to offset part-time working	2	2		4	
Contract Agents				57	57
END				6	6
Agency staff				14	14
Total				339	334

2.3. **Budget implementation 2016**

2.3.1. *Initial and final appropriations*

At the beginning of the year, the appropriations under the responsibility of DG EPRS amounted to EUR 9.009.000. During the two-stage ‘mopping-up’ exercise, an amount of EUR 1.310.037 was made available. (This is EUR 403.995 less than in previous years). There were no other changes between the initial and final appropriations in 2016.

2.3.2. *Final appropriations and appropriations committed*

Final appropriations: **EUR 7.698.963**

Committed appropriations: **EUR 7.450.551**

Implementation rate: **97%**.

The difference between the final appropriations and committed appropriations can be explained by retained margins, to maintain the DG’s capacity to promptly react to last-minute requests for studies from parliamentary committees or for subscriptions to sources of information relevant for individual Members and/or committees.

DG EPRS took the approach of reducing the number of provisional commitments to a strict minimum, in order to have tighter control over the execution of the budget.

2.3.3. *Appropriations committed and payments made*

The percentage of payments under committed appropriations was 62%, slightly higher than the previous year. An important structural issue (relating to the figure of payments in year n, and the level of carry-overs to year n+1) concerns the fact that whilst the DG commissions many of its external studies on the basis of requests received from the parliamentary committees during the financial year in question, the often time-consuming research involved means that they do not always give rise to payments during the same year. This has an effect on the ratio of executed payments against current commitments. Additionally, some payments made by for library services and the historical archives fall in the following financial year, and some experts entitled to travel reimbursement submit their requests and receipts only after the end of the financial year, when they prepare their private declaration of income.

2.3.4. *Use of automatic and non-automatic carryovers from 2015 to 2016*

DG EPRS had an overall payment rate of above 92% of the appropriations carried over from 2015 to 2016. The remaining percentage can be explained by the cancellation or delay of purchases of external publications which have not yet been received, and by the provision for travel expenses for experts invited that finally came in at a lower cost than expected.

2.3.5. *Use of appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue*

2.3.5.1 Situation with regard to specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue:

Not applicable.

2.3.5.2 Situation with regard to specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue carried over:

Not applicable.

2.4 **Results achieved**

The following specific results were registered by the various Directorates within DG EPRS during the course of 2016, presented below by directorate and/or unit most directly concerned:

A) Directorate for the Members' Research Service (Directorate A)

Background:

The central task of Directorate A of DG EPRS, the **Members' Research Service (MRS)**, is to provide all Members of the European Parliament with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, EU-related policy issues, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work.

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

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

- the provision of in-house, specialist expertise in all areas of EU policy, based on the work of policy analysts and information specialists;
- responses to specific requests from individual Members for research, analysis and in policy fields covered by the European Union, notably by means of tailored, personalised briefing to Members, both in written form and through in-person meetings;

- a comprehensive range of pro-active, content-rich, easy-to-read publications (and other analysis and research) for Members collectively on major EU policies and issues, including the automatic and systematic provision of analysis on EU legislative proposals at their successive stages of passage;
- the contribution of online content in all policy fields for use on the Parliament's various external and internal websites.

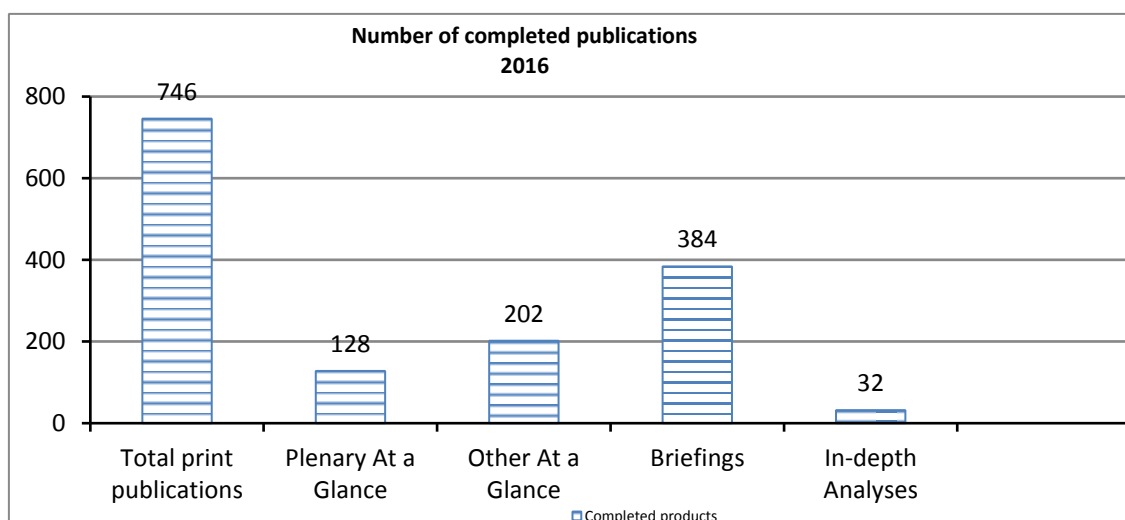
The Members' Research Service operates in accordance with detailed rules, which were adopted by the Parliament's Bureau in June 2014 and can be accessed [here](#). These identify its role in supporting Members individually and collectively, and specify who has the right of access to its services and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

Results:

After an initial 'take-off' period in 2014-15, the MRS is now fully operational in terms of its staff complement, level of policy specialisation and range of products for and services to Members, in line with its mission.

In 2016, the MRS received a total of 3,843 enquiries, of which 3,378 from Members or their offices. The average length of replies was five pages. The management of enquiries by Members follows strictly the principle of confidentiality. By the end of December 2016, a total of 88 per cent of Members or their offices had made requests for substantive research or analysis to the MRS since July 2014, and 75 per cent had done so in the previous twelve months. (The corresponding number of Members or their offices making requests in October 2014, soon after the last European elections, was 22 per cent, and by June 2015, it had risen to 66 per cent).

The Members' Research Service has also generated an increasing number of publications for Members and the institution as a whole, all designed to being clear, content-rich, accessible and easy to read. As the chart below indicates, the MRS generated 746 print publications in 2016, corresponding to the various categories used across the Parliament: *At a glance* notes, providing a one- to two-page summary of a topic; *Briefings*, offering a more detailed overview of a policy, issue or piece of legislation (up to 12 pages); and *In-depth Analyses* and *Studies*, giving a much more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the same (up to, and more than, 32 pages, respectively). MRS publications in 2016 included 141 briefings on 'Legislation in Progress' and 23 briefings on various MFF programmes, under the rubric 'How the EU Budget is Spent'.



There was a strong emphasis on the enhanced use of infographics and statistics in all these EPRS publications, to offer a concentrated visual presentation of useful figures and other information on any subject. A *Graphics Warehouse*, making available many of the infographics used in EPRS publications, had been created in May 2014 and was expanded to include over 1,000 graphics in 2016. A parallel *Statistics Warehouse* was launched in September 2016, in conjunction with the GlobalStat project at the European University Institute. Both warehouses are available to parliamentary clients on the EPRS intranet.

In addition, throughout the year, the Members' Research Service (together with the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value: see below) has been very actively involved in the development of the Parliament's new online 'legislative train schedule', launched on institution's website in October 2016. Updated every three months, this innovative visual tool uses images of trains, carriages and railway sidings to track the detailed progress - from departure to arrival - of every significant legislative proposal put forward by the current European Commission during its five-year term from 2014 to 2019. So far, the application contains more than 400 carriages, representing around 1,000 pages of analysis.

The MRS has also worked closely with the two EU advisory committees - the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - as foreseen in the cooperation agreements signed with them in 2014, and delivered services to those bodies by responding to specific requests for research and support in other forms. Around 150 such pieces of work were provided in 2015 and 2016, as foreseen in those agreements.

B) Directorate for the Library (Directorate B)

Background:

The most visible role of Directorate B of DG EPRS, the **Directorate for the Library**, is to operate the Library Reading Rooms in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg, housing the European Parliament's physical collections, which it acquires and manages. Such a classic library function has existed within the Parliament since 1953. However, today, the Library also provides digital and online access for Members and staff to a very wide range of knowledge sources, including many subscription-based journals, databases, and news and other information sources.

In parallel, the Library Directorate manages and provides access to the Parliament's ever-expanding Historical Archives and it answers a very large number of citizens' enquiries. Until November 2016, it also dealt with public access to parliamentary documents and other transparency issues. A new unit dealing with comparative law was created in September 2015. As a result, the Directorate for the Library is currently organised in **four units**: On-site and Online Library Services Unit (LIBS); Comparative Law Library Unit (COLL); Historical Archives Unit (ARCH); and Citizens' Enquiries Unit (AskeP).

On-site and Online Library Services

The **On-site and Online Library Services Unit (LIBS)** operates the Library Reading Rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg, and provides physical and online access for Members and staff to some 80,000 books and 20,000 e-books, as well as around 1,000 journals, databases, and news and information sources, whilst also providing training in the use of such sources.

Results:

The purpose of locating library services within DG EPRS was to bring it closer to the analytical and research work now undertaken by the directorate-general as a whole, and to realise certain synergies with the new Members' Research Service in particular. Although fewer staff now work in the core library function than before - 31 today, compared with 75 in 2013 - its output has risen in both relative and absolute terms over the last three years. (The majority of the library staff moved over to the new Members' Research Service, where they are now responding to research requests from Members and generating general publications for the Parliament as a whole).

There has been a steady increase in the use of library services, witnessed in a growing number of reference requests and greater use of databases, as shown in the statistics below. This has been matched by a more active use of the Library Reading Room as a centre for discussion - hosting an increasing number of EPRS policy roundtables and book launches - as well as intensified training of staff in use of information sources.

- The Library received and responded to an increasing number of reference requests (and other comparable requests) from parliamentary clients of various kinds. The figure has risen from 17,391 such requests in 2014, to 20,207 in 2015, and to 22,525 in 2016.
- 1,044 persons within the parliamentary community made reference requests to the EPRS in 2014; 1,292 in 2015; and 1,431 in 2016.
- A total of 4,900 clients used electronic newswires, news agencies and external databases in 2014, with 5,100 using them in 2015, and 5,200 in 2016.
- 9,500 books were borrowed from the Library in 2014, 11,000 in 2015, and 11,300 in 2016. A total of 10,000 new books and electronic documents were catalogued in 2014, 9,500 in 2015, and 4,633 in 2016.
- The provision of training support to EP and Members' staff in the use of databases and other information sources has been actively developed. Over 1,000 individuals participated in 124 training sessions of various kinds in 2014. There were 1,500 participants at 184 training sessions in 2015, and 826 participants at 126 training sessions in 2016.

Among practical improvements introduced recently in the Library are the launch of a new platform for e-books, EBook Central, a new document delivery service (via 'Reprints Desk'), the gradual implementation of a policy increasing on-demand acquisitions and simplification of cataloguing.

The On-site and Online Services Unit undertook, on behalf of the directorate-general as a whole, important work to upgrade the EPRS intranet site, including a new design for the Members' Hotline, improvements in 'My Account', new search result display and other features, new sections for 'policy cycle' pages and the EPRS Scrutiny Toolbox, new Statistics Warehouse, new features in the newswires section, a new Library services page to access all knowledge sources, new learning resources collection pages, new EU history pages. Parallel work was undertaken on a 'New Data Model' and improvement to the content management system; to improve library knowledge sources, including renewal of the web-scale discovery system to give access to e-journal subscriptions; to enhance the Library catalogue, for example through development of policy areas, acquisition reports, book label printing, data extracting and reporting programmes.

The Library Reading Room and other Library facilities in Brussels have been used much more actively for the holding of seminars and roundtables on policy issues, as well as for book launches and other events. The 60 events held by EPRS between January 2014 and December 2016 included joint discussions, open to all Members and staff, with partner organisations, such as the European University Institute, EUISS, OECD and IMF, as well as briefing sessions and exchange of best practice with other parliamentary research services and libraries in EU member states and worldwide. The Library Reading Room also served as the setting for 47 events organised by individual Members of the European Parliament during the three years in question.

The Library will continue its evolution in supporting the other directorates within DG EPRS in their research and analytical work, in parallel to its existing comprehensive provision of physical and digital collections, news sources and databases for a wide parliamentary clientele. The process of offering training for Members and their offices is being further developed, reflecting the wider and deeper range of EPRS products and services now available. By December 2016, staff from 370 Members' offices had attended info-sessions of various kinds.

Continuous efforts are being made to provide Members and staff with easier access to a wide span of state-of-the-art digital reference materials to the parliamentary community. The EPRS intranet site already provides Members and EP staff with access to around 100 digital subscriptions, notably to European and national news services (such as Agence Europe, AFP, DPA, Reuters and Financial Times) and databases and other information and research tools (such as Factiva, Nexis and Oxford Analytica). This is in addition to over 700 physical subscriptions to newspapers, magazines, journals and yearbooks. More e-books are being purchased each year - the number of e-books available has risen from around 1,000 in 2014 to more than 20,000 in January 2017. The objective is to move towards a fully digitally accessible library in coming years.

Comparative Law Library

During the years 2014-16, increasing emphasis has been placed on the improved presentation and accessibility of library material generally, with particular attention to strengthening capacity in the field of comparative law, an area of special interest to a supranational legislature. Reflecting this, a small **Comparative Law Library Unit** (COLL) was created in September 2015, to serve as a centre of knowledge and expertise for the Parliament on the law of the European Union, its member states and comparable democratic jurisdictions internationally. It is responsible for building up and maintaining an extensive reference collection of legislation, case law and legal doctrine, as well as engaging in research and analysis in the field of comparative law.

Results:

The Comparative Law Library Unit has successfully begun the process of building up a reference collection, both physically and electronically, in this field, and of establishing links with comparable libraries worldwide. It hosted a major conference on the role of constitutional courts in multi-level governance in the Library Reading Room in November 2016. In parallel, the unit published seven studies on the constitutional courts of different EU and non-EU states and on the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Historical Archives

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

Results:

In 2016, the Historical Archives Unit processed 85,000 electronic files and digitised over 17,000 audio-tapes. Some 200 linear meters were organised and transferred to the Historical Archives of the European Union. The unit answered more than 750 individual requests for historic documents and other information, supplying nearly 6,300 such documents.

Continued efforts are being made to mainstream the Historical Archives more actively in the daily life of the Parliament, based on easier online access to documents and their use to provide a more systematic history of the institutional development of the Parliament over time. A new website for the Historical Archives came online in 2015, alongside a new intranet site with useful information and practical advice for Members and staff. A multi-annual project to digitise the Parliament's archives is now under way, in attempt to make the Parliament's papers since 1952 the most easily accessible of those of any EU institution. In addition, historical studies based on the archives, historical roundtables and other events are being organised to make such material better known within the Parliament.

More specifically, the year 2016 saw: the launch of an inter-institutional call for tender for archival processing services; the development of the CLAVIS system; quality control and review of five million archival records before their migration into the new system; archival processing of the following collections: Petitions 1989-97, Parliamentary Questions 2004-09, Temporary Committee on Climate Change 2007-09, Convention on the Future of Europe 2002-03; the organisation of an exhibition on 'One Hundred Books on Europe to Remember (temporary exhibition in Strasbourg, permanent exhibition in Luxembourg); the organisation of historical round-tables on the first Hemicycle of the European Parliament (in Luxembourg) and on earliest forms of European cooperation (in Brussels); and publications on the first hemicycle of the European Parliament in the Schuman Building, Luxembourg (briefing), the role played by Altiero Spinelli on the path towards European Union (briefing); the history of European electoral reform and the Electoral Act 1976 (study), One Hundred Books on Europe to remember: list of publications (catalogue), as well as articles on the website of the Historical Archives.

Citizens' enquiries

The **Citizens' Enquiries Unit** (AskEP), also based in Luxembourg, answers information requests from members of the general public on the Parliament and EU issues more widely. The 2014-19 Parliament has witnessed a significant increase in the volume of requests, mainly as a result of seemingly coordinated 'write-in' campaigns on topical issues. As a matter of course, the unit replies to correspondence in the official language in which the citizen has sent their letter or email.

Results:

In 2014, the unit received over 8,000 individual letters or emails from members of the public, and 2,500 enquiries as part of organised campaigns. In 2015, these figures rose respectively to 9,700 individual enquiries and 68,000 ‘campaign’ enquiries. The volume broadly stabilised in 2016 at 8,967 and 82,923 respectively.

On average, over the three-year period, 45 per cent of citizens’ enquiries related to aspects of internal policy, 30 per cent to institutional matters, 12 per cent to external issues, and 13 per cent to other questions. Forty per cent of such enquiries were answered within three days and 80 per cent within ten days.

In parallel, intensive efforts have been made to promote greater diffusion and use of the work of the Citizens’ Enquiries Unit within the Parliament itself. Since May 2015, the unit has been making available ‘model answers’ for Members (and their staff) on the [EPRS intranet](#) in order to facilitate MEPs’ written communication with constituents and others. Currently, around 150 such replies are available, covering a wide range of issues, and they have been consulted by over 200 Members or their offices so far.

A range of publicly-available ‘EP answers’ to frequently asked questions - with around 50 topics currently covered - is available on a specially developed platform, called AskEP.net, on the [Parliament’s website](#) and on the EPRS [blog](#). Parallel arrangements are being made to install an interactive terminal on citizens’ issues in the Parliamentarium.

Library Directorate: Some performance indicators for 2016

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>On-site and Online Library Services</i>	
Reading Room opening days	Brussels ASP 5D - 219 Brussels ALR - 122 Strasbourg - 36 Luxembourg* - 244 Total - 621
Enquiries handled (number of requests)	Brussels info-desk - 19,397 Strasbourg info-desk - 578 Luxembourg info-desk* - 2,550 Total - 22,525
Book loans	Brussels - 9,451 Luxembourg - 1,817 Total - 11,268
Training sessions	Brussels - 120 (824 participants) Luxembourg - 6 (44 participants) Total - 126 (868 participants)
Events	Brussels - 35 Luxembourg - 3 Strasbourg - 1 Total - 39

Views on intranet	1,648,624
New books and articles uploaded on intranet	4,029
New EP publications uploaded on intranet	498
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Historical Archives</i> 	
Number of files processed	25,660
Units created and described in database	85,150
Number of requests	753
Number of documents sent	6,280
Number of study visitors/visitors in groups	18/114 (in 9 groups)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Citizens' Enquiries</i> 	
Items of mail received	91,890 (8,967 individual enquiries and 82,923 campaign enquiries)
Average response time (based on individual enquiries)	
0-3 days	39%
3-6 days	28%
6-9 days	15%
9-12 days	10%
More than 12 days	8%

(*) Statistics for the Historical Library in Luxembourg are included in all categories concerning On-site and Online Library Services.

C) Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value (Directorate C)

Background:

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

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

Results:

Over the three-year period from January 2014 to December 2016, the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value produced 319 publications of various kinds (69 in 2014; 106 in 2015 and 144 in 2016). Work was undertaken at the request of 17 parliamentary committees (out of 20), with findings presented orally in full committee or to coordinators on 41 occasions.

In 2016, legislative activity substantially increased as Parliament was approaching mid-term of its 2014 - 2019 legislative period. This led to a considerably higher output of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value compared to previous years.

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

European added value

The **European Added Value Unit** (EAVA) analyses the potential benefit of future action by the Union through *Cost of Non-Europe Reports* in policy areas where greater efficiency or a collective public good could be realised through common action at European level; it provides *European Added Value Assessments* to underpin legislative initiative reports put forward by parliamentary committees; and it identifies the added value of existing EU policies in practice.

Results:

Cost of Non-Europe Reports are carried out at the request of parliamentary committees, and analyse policy areas where there is significant potential for greater efficiency and/or the realisation of a 'public good' through common action at EU level. Seven such reports were published in 2016, including on completing the single market, the sharing economy, the resilience of Banking Union, integrated research area, organised crime and corruption, and cost of border controls in the Schengen area ('Cost of Non-Schengen'), altogether 1,171 pages.

European Added Value Assessments are undertaken on an automatic basis once a legislative initiative report has been authorised by the Conference of Presidents. They assess the basis for EU policy actions and consider subsidiarity and proportionality. Five *European Added Value Assessments* were completed last year on issues, including an EU mechanism for the rule and law and fundamental rights, cross-border recognition of adoptions, and the coordination of corporate tax policies in the EU (comprising altogether some 1,000 pages).

In addition, two *European Added Value in Action* briefings, which highlight the added value of existing EU policies, were published on Common Security and Defence Policy and EU development policy.

Ex-ante impact assessment

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

Results:

With the Commission's legislative output reaching its cruising speed, 2016 was marked by a very important increase in the number of legislative proposals submitted to Parliament and consequently in the number of Commission impact assessments requiring appraisal by the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit. The unit produced 36 initial appraisals of Commission impact assessments, which is almost three times as many as in 2015, providing parliamentary committees with timely insight to help them pursue an evidence-based policy-making approach. At the request of the LIBE Committee, the unit produced an impact assessment on seven amendments that were being considered in the context of the Commission proposal on provisional legal aid.

The unit continued developing procedures for the early identification and tracking of legislative files, including those not accompanied by an impact assessment. It remained committed to raising awareness within the Parliament of inter-institutional undertakings and best practice in the area of ex-ante impact assessment. In this respect, it contributed to the ongoing update of the Conference of Committee Chairs' *Impact Assessment Handbook*, further to the adoption of the new Inter-institutional Agreement on Better Law-Making. The unit continued to enhance the visibility of its work both within the Parliament and with external stakeholders and maintained close contact with other institutions by exchanging information on best practice and methodologies relating to impact assessment.

Ex-post evaluation

The **Ex-Post Impact Assessment Unit** (IMPT) and **Policy Cycle Unit** (CYCL) jointly provide a central information and support service on: (i) work being done by the European Parliament, European Commission and other bodies on the implementation and effectiveness of EU law and policies in practice; and (ii) the successive phases of the EU policy cycle, upstream and downstream of the adoption of EU law.

Results:

Since July 2014, when the two units first came on stream, support for ex-post impact assessment (evaluation) by parliamentary committees was strengthened and deepened through the launch of important new products. These include short *Implementation Appraisals*, longer *European Implementation Assessments*, and horizontal 'rolling check-lists' of various kinds. Between July 2014 and December 2016, the two units produced 20 *European Implementation Assessments*, 50 *Implementation Appraisals*, and 20 other publications (including ten rolling check-lists).

New rules on implementation reports adopted by the Conference of Presidents in April 2016 have contributed to a significant increase in the number of *European Implementation Assessments*, which are produced by the Ex-post Impact Assessment Unit as background documents to parliamentary committees' implementation reports. The 13 such assessments

and (one other ex-post evaluation) produced in 2016 totaled 1,656 pages and resulted in nine presentations in committee.

In parallel, the Policy Cycle Unit continued to provide background information on the implementation and effectiveness of existing EU law where the European Commission has announced to come forward with proposals amending this existing legislation, through the drafting of 'Implementation Appraisals' on 28 files in 2016 (totalling 290 pages). In addition, the unit stepped up its effort to reach out to the national parliaments in this field, by creating an ad hoc forum in IPEX, where all 'Implementation Appraisals' are uploaded.

Four *Rolling Check-Lists* (totalling some 1,000 pages) were updated and enlarged in 2016. They provide content analysis and procedural information on a wide range of issues:

- Rolling Check-List of review clauses and reporting duties in EU legislation listing the relevant clauses in the legislative acts adopted during the sixth (2004-2009), seventh (2009-2014) and current, eighth parliamentary term (2014-2019) and providing a general analysis on review clauses;
- Rolling Check-List of review and monitoring clauses in International Agreements, covering in the meantime 836 international agreements, 234 of which are multilateral and 602 bilateral;
- Rolling Check-List of the recent findings of the Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors, covering 26 special reports relevant for the 2014 discharge procedure;
- Rolling Check-List on evaluation in the European Commission, offering a general overview and state of play on publicly-announced evaluations.

All these *Rolling Check-Lists* form part of an EPRS Scrutiny Toolbox, allowing parliamentary committees and Members to identify information and analysis needed for an effective scrutiny of the executive and to promote a more informed approach to law-making.

European Council oversight

The **European Council Oversight Unit** (ECOS) monitors and analyses the delivery of the European Council (of EU heads of state or government) in respect of the commitments made in the conclusions of its summit meetings, as well as of its various responsibilities either in law or on the basis of intergovernmental agreements. The unit maintains a rolling database of all such commitments (and their follow-up), provides routine briefing notes on their degree of attainment within the Council system, and undertakes detailed research into the operation of the institution. Among its products are rolling-check lists of the delivery of European Council conclusions and country-specific recommendations (CSRs), as well as routine briefing notes issued before and after each European Council meeting.

Results:

From July 2014, when it became operational, to December 2016, the European Council Oversight Unit produced 64 publications of various kinds. In 2016, five updates of the *Rolling Check-List on European Council Conclusions* were published, and it was further developed by adding analytical sections for the different policy areas. In addition, systematic and timely briefing notes were published ahead of and after each European Council meeting, together with an overall assessment of European Council activities in 2015, and analyses on the European Council and Crisis Management. Two seminars were held on various aspects of European Council policy-making.

Scientific foresight

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

Results:

The Scientific Foresight Unit produced a total of 37 publications in the three years from 2014 to 2016 - nine publications in 2014, 18 in 2015 and 10 in 2016. These can all be found on the dedicated [STOA website](#). Among the topics covered in major research projects so far undertaken and/or managed by the unit for the STOA Panel since 2014 have been the ethics of robotics, ICT in the developing world, the collaborative economy, precision agriculture, organic food, learning and teaching technologies, and mass surveillance. In parallel, a new series of shorter publications on the policy implications of technological change - such as ‘What if your shopping were delivered by drones?’, ‘What if others could read your mind?’ or ‘What if I had to put my safety in the hands of a robot?’ - has broken new ground and proved popular.

The unit also organised 40 STOA events in 2014-16, attracting a total of almost 5,000 participants. Among them have been three highly successful ‘annual STOA lectures’ with leading international scientists. Since 2014, the popular ‘MEP-Scientist’ pairing scheme has brought together 47 Members and 47 scientists.

More specifically in the course of 2016, the Scientific Foresight Unit completed the first scientific foresight project (‘Ethical Aspects of Cyber-Physical Systems’), commissioned to support the legislative initiative report of the JURI Committee on ‘Civil law rules on robotics’ and carried out with the active involvement of the rapporteur. This was a good example of promoting synergies and collaboration between STOA and the parliamentary committees, thus linking STOA closer to policy work. In the course of 2016, the unit launched seven new projects, in the domain of both scientific foresight and technology assessment. In total 19 events were organised, among others the traditional Annual Lecture and a high-level conference of political, industrial and academic leaders from the EU and Japan, co-organised with the Science and Technology in Society (STS) forum. STOA also carried out the 5th round of the MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme, which saw the participation of 16 MEPs. In 2016, STOA published three studies, one briefing and six ‘At a glance’ notes.

All STOA events and publications were actively communicated to Members and a wider audience in the form of blog posts (31), podcasts (seven) and video clips (four) published in the course of 2016, as well as through live-tweeting from almost all events. In order to enhance the quality of its publications, in 2016 STOA increasingly relied on external peer-reviewing. Moreover, with a view to further improving its visibility, STOA started working on a new tool for visualisation of project outcomes, and has been preparing a new website. On the operational level, the unit developed and submitted to the STOA Bureau a procedure for prioritising and filtering STOA activities; a ‘silo and pipe’ strategy for better communication with and among its institutional and other external partners; and an action plan for facilitating a stronger engagement of Panel members in STOA activities.

The STOA Panel produces an **annual report to the Parliament's Bureau**, which is available [here](#).

Global trends

Finally, a **Global Trends Unit** (TREN), established in April 2015, seeks to identify, track and analyse medium- and long- term global trends - especially changes in the international economic, social and political environments - which may affect the European Union in the years to come. It keeps Members informed about such trends and their potential policy implications, by publishing briefings and organising seminars. These publications include a new *Global Trendometer*, to be produced at least twice a year, which analyses changes of potential importance to the Union.

The unit also supports the Parliament's participation in the administrative-level dialogue with other EU institutions on global trends - known as ESPAS (European Strategy and Policy Analysis System) - and facilitates contact more widely with outside organisations, notably think tanks and universities, working in this field. Each autumn, the unit co-organises - together with the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), the in-house think tank of the European Commission - the annual ESPAS conference, currently focussed on global trends to 2030.

Results:

During 2016, the unit's first briefing was published, 'Migration and the EU: a long-term perspective', followed by the first edition of the new *Global Trendometer*. In the context of the ESPAS process, it was actively engaged in the preparation of and follow-up to ESPAS Steering Group meetings, ESPAS Project Team meetings (including notes on horizon scanning 2016, trust, corruption, radicalisation and education), and participation in the ESPAS Young Talent Network. The unit played a leading role in arranging the EP day of the annual inter-institutional ESPAS Conference on 'Global Trends to 2030: Society and Governance', held in November 2016, in partnership with the EPSC. The conference brought together over 150 participants from the worldwide foresight community and generated very positive feedback. The unit has also developed close contact with outside foresight organisations, including think tanks, universities and governmental bodies such as France Stratégie, UK-DCOC and GAO (US).

The two **activity reports** for EP work in the fields of Impact Assessment and European Added Value covering the period in question are available online - for [June 2012 to June 2014](#) and [July 2014 to December 2015](#). The annual report for 2016 will follow shortly. A clickable PDF list of all publications of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value from January 2014 to December 2016 is available [here](#).

All such physical publications can be found on the Parliament's **Think Tank internet** website, at www.europarl.eu/thinktank, as well as on the **EPRS intranet** website at www.eprs.sso.ep.parl.union.eu and **EPRS blog** at www.epthinktank.eu. On-line only publications are available on the EPRS intranet and blog.

Type and number of publications produced by Directorate C of DG EPRS in 2016

2016

	<i>Documents</i>	<i>Pages</i>
- Initial Appraisals of Commission Impact Assessments	36	283
- Better Law-Making in Action	1	7
- Impact Assessments on substantive EP Amendments	1	174
- Cost of Non-Europe Reports	7	1171
- European Added Value Assessments	5	902
- European Added Value in Action	2	8
- Other ex-post evaluations	2	283
- Implementation Appraisals	28	306
- Issue papers (on implementation)	2	15
- European Implementation Assessments	14	1381
- Rolling Check-Lists	9	2749
- European Council briefings	2	19
- European Council in Action	10	199
- Post-European Council briefings	8	31
- Pre-European Council briefings	5	18
- Country-Specific Recommendations - Scorecard for 2015	1	36
- Global Trends briefing	1	7
- Global Trends study	1	52
- STOA briefings	1	10
- STOA notes	6	12
- STOA studies	2	519
<i>TOTAL</i>	144	8,182

D) EPRS-wide services

The development of a range of EPRS-wide services has played an important part in the successful launch and operation of the new Directorate-General since November 2013. These include notably the provision of a Members' Hotline for access to EPRS products and services, the pursuit of a conscious 'client needs' approach, underpinned by a dedicated team, and the widening and deepening of the EPRS presence on various electronic platforms.

Members' Hotline

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

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

To underpin the Members' Hotline concept, the EPRS has strengthened its internal enquiry management system (EMS), to allow a better and quicker treatment of the requests submitted by Members and their staff.

Client needs

The developing breadth, depth and availability of EPRS services have been drawn actively to the attention of Members. At the beginning of the new parliamentary term, a 'welcome desk' and a personalised welcome pack facilitated this process.

In parallel, small, dedicated Client Needs Team was established, on a permanent basis, to increase knowledge of EPRS products and services among Members and their staff, presenting the support to potential clients individually and in groups, through briefing visits or presentations of various kinds.

Between June 2014 and December 2016, nearly 650 Members or their offices (or 86 per cent) received briefing visits or presentations (on an individual or collective basis) about EPRS products and services. Over 320 Members or their offices (44 per cent) have received such briefing in the last 12 months.

By the end of December 2016, over 200 Members or their offices (some 27 per cent) were subscribing to automatic alerts on new EPRS publications, as soon as they are published, and over 730 Members (97 per cent) were pro-actively accessing sources available on the EPRS intranet, including newswires and other topical material.

The Client Needs Team has also ensured the distribution of 28,700 relevant EPRS publications at over 300 parliamentary meetings of various kinds, notably hearings, conferences, seminars and debates organised by EP bodies, individual Members and/or political groups. At some of these events, EPRS policy analysts were invited to present their papers in the discussion.

Electronic presence

The availability of EPRS products has been enhanced by a significant improvement in both intranet and internet capabilities, and the Directorate-General is experimenting with services for mobile use and multi-media communication, and is increasing the targeted diffusion of EPRS output through social media.

= Use of the EPRS intranet site

- A new EPRS intranet site, incorporating a range of new or enhanced features, was launched in May 2014.
- The great majority of the ‘Europarl’ community uses the EPRS intranet at some point in the year. There was an average of 9,211 unique users of the EPRS intranet, in each of the three years 2014 to 2016, with some 2,375 using it in an average month.
- The 2014 figure for unique users includes 684 Members (old and new) personally using the EPRS intranet at some point in the year (before or after the European elections), and over 1,500 parliamentary assistants doing so. For 2015, they were 497 MEPs and over 1,400 assistants. For 2016, they were 425 MEPs and over 1,500 assistants.
- Overall, the EPRS intranet site elicited over 1.3 million ‘page views’ in 2014, 1.85 million page views in 2015 and 1.6 million page views in 2016.
- The various EPRS electronic platforms carried a total of 541 publications in 2014 - 303 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 238 on-line only. The figures for 2015 were 970 publications, 702 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 268 on-line only. The figures for 2016 were 1,169 publications, 901 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 268 on-line only. The EPRS thus produced over 2,600 publications during the three years in question.
- A new Graphics Warehouse was created on the EPRS intranet site and on the EPRS blog, in order to make the (so far) 1,006 downloadable charts, tables, maps and other infographics used in EPRS publications more easily available for use by Members and staff in their own publications.

= Use of the EP 'Think Tank' internet site and EPRS blog

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

In addition, some 250,000 users visited the EPRS blog during 2014. The latter published more than 500 posts, receiving some 550,000 page views, during 2014. In 2015, the respective figures were 370,000 unique users, 470 posts and 750,000 page views. In 2016, the respective figures were 330,000 users, 509 posts and 660,000 page views.

- One linked set of publications by the Members’ Research Service - on the Hearings of the Commissioners-designate - was viewed 125,000 times in autumn 2014.

- EPRS is also present on social media. Its LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest accounts elicit increasing interest. For instance, followers of EPRS on Twitter have risen from 2,000 in January 2014 to nearly 16,000, including 211 MEPs in December 2016. The EPRS' YouTube page offers podcasts, videos of selected EPRS events, and video presentations of some of publications. Some 310 Members so far have used EPRS material in their social media communications.

Horizontal support - Resources, Strategy and Coordination

The provision of these EPRS-wide services - and indeed of all the activities of the three directorates detailed above - has been underpinned by the contribution of **two horizontal units**, respectively for resources, and for strategy and coordination.

The **Resources Unit** (RESU) is responsible for the efficient management of the Directorate-General's human, financial and information-technology resources, with three services reflecting each of those activities. The unit is also in charge of local property management and security issues. It works very closely with other directorates-general within the Parliament's administration on a wide range of issues, including on joint training projects.

The Resources Unit successfully undertook the recruitment of new staff throughout the three years from 2014 to 2016. The number of staff within the directorate-general rose from 214 persons (on its creation) in November 2013 to 327 persons in December 2016 (officials, temporary agents and contractual agents). The increase was mainly as a result of the cooperation agreements signed between the Parliament and the two Advisory Committees in February 2014 (see above), whereby 60 of the latter's staff (or posts) have been transferred to EPRS, and the recruitment of 40 contractual researchers through an open competition, following a reallocation of internal EP spending priorities by the budgetary authority.

The Resources Unit has also ensured the harmonisation of procurement and financial procedures across the new directorate-general, with a focus on securing optimal value for money. The team verified a total of 2,965 files (from units managing the budget) in the three years under consideration.

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

The unit oversees outreach, liaison and dialogue by all parts of the Directorate-General with national parliamentary research services and libraries. In 2015 and 2016, there were 44 visits to or from such services of national parliaments, including the German Bundestag, British House of Commons, Italian Senate, French Senate, Dutch House of Representatives and Hungarian National Assembly. There were also visits from the US Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the parliaments of Cambodia, Canada, Japan, Moldova, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Korea and the Pan-African Parliament.

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

DG EPRS has taken very seriously its commitment to eco-friendly administration, contributing more than proportionately to the attainment of the environmental goals set down

in the multi-annual EMAS objectives of the Parliament's administration. This is witnessed in DG EPRS' much lower than average CO2 consumption per capita on missions and its pioneering introduction of network printers, with a consequent fall in use of administrative paper.

3. EVALUATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROLS, INCLUDING AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTROLS' COST-EFFECTIVENESS (ARTICLE 66(9) FR)

Since its creation in November 2013, DG EPRS has put in place an organisational structure and the internal control systems which are designed to achieve the Parliament's various policy and internal control objectives, in accordance with its Minimum Internal Control Standards and having due regard to the risks associated with the complex environment in which it operates. Each year, DG EPRS assesses the continuing effectiveness of its key internal control systems. The assessment for 2016 relied on a number of monitoring measures and sources of information, including a survey of minimum internal control standards conducted between staff, reported exceptions and non-compliance events, developments in the budgetary and financial field, risk assessment, and weekly, monthly and quarterly reports on procedures and budget execution.

An assessment the 16 specific standards (listed in 6.8 of the Annexes below) did not result in the identification of any significant control weaknesses. While there is still some scope for improvement in defined areas (identified there), DG EPRS is confident that its internal control system as a whole, covering both financial and non-financial dimensions of its activities, is effective. The necessary procedures, staff skills and experience to identify and manage the main operational, financial and other risks are in place. In parallel, DG EPRS has taken measures to further improve the effectiveness of its internal control systems in the wider area of information and communication.

Concerning the overall state of its internal control system, DG EPRS complies with with the assessment criteria for effectiveness, including its staff having the required knowledge and skills, and systems and procedures designed and implemented to manage the key risks effectively, with no instances of ineffective controls that have exposed the DG to key risks. Hence, the annual review of the Internal Control Standards has resulted on an overall assessment of 'achieved', except for some specific actions that need to be put into effect during year 2017. On this basis, one can conclude that the necessary internal control standards were effectively implemented by DG EPRS in 2016.

4. CONCLUSION

Following its creation in November 2013, the new DG EPRS has been engaged in an intensive process of developing new products and services for Members and parliamentary committees, with the whole process conducted in a budgetarily neutral manner for the institution as a whole. 2016 marked an important year in which progress was consolidated, as the directorate-general reached 'cruising speed' in most fields.

During 2016, the Members' Research Service of EPRS received a total of 3,843 enquiries, of which 3,378 came from Members or their offices. The average length of replies was five pages. The number of Members using the Members' Research Service reached 88 per cent (since July 2014), with 75 per cent doing so on a recurring basis in the previous twelve months. (In autumn 2014, the figure was only 22 per cent). The Members' Research Service issued 722 publications on EU policies, issues and legislation, for the use of Members

generally and the institution as a whole. It was able to generate this volume of substantive replies and general publications on the basis of the high degree of policy specialism it had developed in 2014-15, with policy analysts and information specialists together covering all major fields of EU policy.

The Directorate for the Library answered 22,525 reference requests from within the Parliament (from 1,431 individuals) in 2016. A total of 5,200 individuals used electronic newswires, new agency material and external databases provided by the service, whilst some 11,300 books were borrowed and in-house training was provided to over 800 persons. The Directorate treated over 90,000 citizens' enquiries in 2016, as well as processing nearly 26,000 archival files.

The Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value published 144 papers of various kinds, mainly in support of the work of parliamentary committees in scrutinising the executive and holding it to account. It provided certain automatic briefings to all committees and undertook specialist research work at the request of a majority of committees.

Adding together the print publications and blog articles of the Members' Research Service, Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value, and the Library Directorate, EPRS produced a total of 1,169 such publications in 2016. In turn, EPRS material elicited some 3.1 million page-views on the Parliament's intranet and internet during the year in question.

5. DECLARATION BY THE AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION

I, the undersigned, Anthony Teasdale,

Director-General of DG EPRS,

hereby declare, in my capacity as authorising officer by delegation, that I have reasonable assurance that:

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

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgment and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of self-assessment, internal controls and remarks by the Internal Audit Service, as well as the lessons learned from the reports of the Court of Auditors for financial years prior to that for which this declaration is being made.

I also confirm that I am not aware of any fact not set down herein that could be prejudicial to the interests of the Institution.

Done at Brussels,

on 14th February 2017

Signature:

Anthony Teasdale

6. ANNEXES

6.1. 2016 budget implementation statement

6.1.1 Stock Credits									
Operational Unit - Budget lines	<i>Initial Credits</i>	<i>Transfer</i>	<i>Final Credits</i>	<i>Commitments</i>	<i>% Comm/FC</i>	<i>Payments</i>	<i>% P/Comm</i>	<i>Balance Commitments</i>	<i>Available</i>
APPLIC.TIC ACTIVITES - 02102-14	170000	-3.037,00	166.963,00	166.962,40	100,00%	50.657,88	30,34%	116.304,52	0,60
APPLICATIONS TIC - 02103-14	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
PROJETS IT - 02105-14	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
STOA - 03020-07	10.000,00	0	10.000,00	10.000,00	100,00%	9.239,00	92,39%	761,00	0,00
ACQUISITIONS EPRS, LIBRARY ARCHIVES - 03210	8.829.000,00	-1.307.000,00	7.522.000,00	7.273.588,77	96,69%	4.535.731,94	62,36%	2.737.856,83	248.411,23
TOTAL	9.009.000,00	-1.310.037,00	7.698.963,00	7.450.551,17	96,77%	4.595.628,82	61,68%	2.854.922,35	248.411,83

6.1.2 Automatic deferred credits				
Operational Unit - Budget lines	<i>Deferred credits</i>	<i>Payments</i>	<i>% Pmnts/DC</i>	<i>Available credits</i>
APPLIC.TIC ACTIVITES - 02102-14	105.792,68	100.029,64	94,55%	5.763,04
APPLICATIONS TIC - 02103-14	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
PROJETS IT - 02105-14	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
STOA - 03020-07	6.296,50	6.296,50	100,00%	0,00
ACQUISITIONS EPRS, LIBRARY ARCHIVES - 03210	2.742.173,60	2.527.054,18	92,16%	215.119,42
TOTAL	2.854.262,78	2.633.380,32	92,26%	220.882,46

6.1.3. **Specific expenditure commitments/assigned revenue carried over**

N/A

6.1.4. **Own revenue as at the end of December** - Financial year 2016 (nature 8)

N/A

6.1.5. **Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue**

N/A

6.2. Report on compliance with payment deadlines

<u>Invoices paid in 2016</u>		Default interest payable automatically (> € 200)	Default interest payable on request (<=€200)	No default interest payable	Total
Paid by the time limit	Number of invoices	0	0	698	698
	Total invoiced (€)	0	0	6.744.073,76	6.744.073,76
Paid outside time limit	Number of invoices	0	19	0	19
	Total invoiced (€)	0	104.871,26	0	104.871,26
	Amount of default interest (€)	0	0	0	0
Total number of invoices		0	19	698	717
Total invoiced (€)		0	104.871,26	6.744.073,76	6.848.945,02

Comment

On average, in 2016, DG EPRS received over three invoices per working day. The great majority of invoices (96.2%) were paid within the deadline of 30 calendar days, foreseen in the Financial Regulation. Delayed payments (3.8 % of all invoices) can be explained by the following reasons: (i) incorrect attribution of invoices, especially where suppliers delivered directly to other services of the Parliament; and (ii) in exceptional cases, some delays occurred due to the circuit of invoices, which may have to be transmitted from Luxembourg to Brussels and back again to Luxembourg. It is noteworthy that none of the invoices paid after the deadline produced automatically payable interest (which is the case if the interest to be paid is larger than EUR 200).

6.3. List of exceptions - derogations from the rules

List of waivers/cancellations of receivables (Articles 91 and 92 RAP)

Exceptions to procedures

Decisions to make an exception to the applicable procedures and rules							
Document ref.	Auth. officer responsible	Subject matter	Amount	Verifiers' opinion		Decision	
				Favourable with statement/unfavourable	Reasons	Authorising officer responsible	Reasons
754/102	HILLER	OD	1.600	NON CONFORME	THE PRINCIPLE OF ANNUALITY HAS NOT BEEN RESPECTED: IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO USE APPROPRIATIONS OF 2016 TO COVER EXPENSES INCURRED IN 2015.	PASSER OUTRE	SEE GEDA NOTE D(2016)16386. The supplier provided the service as requested, the AOS has therefore no choice but to overrule in order to pay the invoice.

Waivers/cancellations of receivables

Receivable waiver/cancellation procedures				
Document ref. (Finord ref.)	Relevant Authorising Officer	Subject	Amount	Authorising officer's reasons for waiver/cancellation
387/119	DUNNE	RO	14.828,69€	SWETS bankruptcy (see GEDA D(2016)47690). Following the information from the Curator in charge of the administration of SWETS, and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality, it was decided to waive the recovery of the amount receivable.

6.4. Long-term contractual obligations

Contractant	Subject	Duration in months (including renewals)		Total value of awarded contract	Budget year	Spent value	Renewal type(**)	Description des mesures de contrôle
		Contract	Award					
INFORMATICA EL CORTE INGLES	Mise en place d'un système informatique de gestion et de description documentaire des archives	120 Months	120 Months	€2.000.000,00	2016	€132.358,94	Automatic	

(1) Months, years or open-ended.

(2) Manual or automatic.

6.5. Exceptional negotiated procedures - Articles 53, 134 and 135 RAP

Awardee(s) name(s)	Amount	Justification	Reason	Candidates		Acceptability criteria	Awarded contract reference	PPF opinion date
				Invited	Acceptable			
ANP	€199.948,00	NP article 134.1 b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The service proposed conformed the request from the library	EPRS/BIB/SER/15/022N	08/11/2013
POLITYKA INFO	€17.000,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/BIB/SER/16/015N	
INFORMA UK	€25.000,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	3. In accordance with Article 149 (1)a, the contract will be awarded on the basis of the price, provided it is acceptable to the European Parliament for the service requested	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/001N	
ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT	€90.000,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/003N	
THE FINANCIAL TIMES	€510.449,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/005N	

BNS GROUP	Subscription to Baltic News Service - BNS	€24.060,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	3. In accordance with Article 149 (1)a, the contract will be awarded on the basis of the price, provided it is acceptable to the European Parliament for the service requested	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/008N	
CONTEXTE	Subscription to the Context online information service	€54.790,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	3. In accordance with Article 149 (1)a, the contract will be awarded on the basis of the price, provided it is acceptable to the European Parliament for the service requested	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/009N	
SIRSI	Subscription to the maintenance and support of the Symphony software	€25.700,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/010N	
VIEUWS	Subscription to the EU Trade Insights information service	€21.000,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/011N	
EBSCO INFORMATION SERVICES	Subscription to EconLit with full text	€28.900,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	3.4. The service proposed by the supplier corresponds to the needs of the European Parliament and to the established award criteria.	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/012N	
BLOOMBERG FINANCE	Subscription to Bloomberg	€37.191,42	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/014N	

VOTEWATCH EUROPE	Subscription to VoteWatch Europe online database	€31.400,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/019N	
LS TRAVEL RETAIL BENELUX	Daily delivery of newspapers and magazines for the Library, reading room users, EP President, EP Secretary General, EP vice-Secretary General in Brussels	€20.338,49	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The service proposed conformed the request from the library	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/020N	
ANSA AGENZIA	Subscription to the ANSA news service	€90.000,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/021N	
MBI MARTIN BRUCKNER INFOSOURCE	Subscription to the MBI Europa Aktuell	€68.875,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/022N	
DL SERVICES (ANCIEN DE LANNOY)	Subscription to the OECD iLibrary Package, the Commonwealth iLibrary and Norden iLibrary	€17.880,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The content of the tender is protected by copyright	EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/024N	
HAYMARKET MEDIA GROUP	Subscription to ENDS Europe	€46.796,00	NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b)	The supplier enjoys a monopolistic situation which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering	1	1	The service proposed by the supplier corresponds to the needs of the European Parliament and to the established award criteria	EPRS/LIBS/SER/2016/006N	

6.6. Results of ex-post evaluation

The nature of DG EPRS' activities and the relatively low risk associated with their financial operations have led to the conclusion that systematic ex-post controls are not currently needed, especially given the potentially highly resource-consuming character of such controls. Several other Directorates-General follow the same approach, with informal ex-post controls carried out when deemed appropriate. It is important to note that many of the services procured by DG EPRS are only paid for when fully rendered, reducing the financial risk for the institution. Systematic ex-ante checks are performed for every single financial operation, and by an independent team, for all low-, medium- and high-value procurement processes. The DG has focused on a thorough assessment and application of the Minimum Internal Control Standards as a way to enhance control of procedures.

6.7. Sensitive posts

DG EPRS has undertaken a thorough update of the full exercise which was carried out in 2015. The scrutiny focused on financial activities. The standard check-list was completed by all officials holding posts which correspond to the definition of sensitive functions, whilst the activities of other staff members was summarised by category.

The assessment resulted in the finding that the various sensitivity levels are sufficiently compensated by an adequate control environment. In no case was a residual risk found. The categories of activities which do not correspond to the above-mentioned definition were subject to a lighter scrutiny. These categories of activities correspond to functions strictly linked to research and analysis of information, administrative tasks, correspondence from citizens, the transmission of official information and documents, the elaboration of strategic plans for the development of the mission of the Directorate-General and the management of staff within the MRS and SACU. All these functions are performed within the hierarchical structure of the secretariat of the European Parliament and, therefore, subject to direct control by a hierarchical superior.

<i>Post identified as sensitive</i>	<i>Measures taken</i>
N/A	N/A

6.8. Assessment of the implementation of the Minimum Internal Control Standards

Self-assessment summary table

2014 standard No	2002 Standard No	Achieved	Almost	Partly	Started	To be started / NA
Section 1: Mission statement and values						
1. Mission	2	V				
2. Ethical and organisational values	1	V				
Section 2: Human resources						
3. Allocation of staff and mobility	3	V				
4. Staff assessment and development	3, 4	V				
Section 3: Planning and risk management						
5. Objectives and performance indicators	7, 9, 10		V			
6. Risk management process	11	V				
Section 4: Operations and control activities						
7. Operational set-up	5, 6		V			
8. Processes and procedures	15, 18	V				
9. Supervision by management	17	V				
10. Business continuity	19			V		
11. Document management	13	V				
Section 5: Information and financial reporting						
12. Information and communication	13, 14	V				
13. Accounting and financial information	12	V				
Section 6: Evaluation and auditing						
14. Evaluation of activities	N/A.	V				
15. Evaluation of internal control systems	20, 22	V				
16. Audit reports	21	V				

Standard 1 - Mission statement: Achieved

The mission statement of DG EPRS is up-to-date and easily accessible for all staff. It is published on Parliament's intranet and the EPRS Wiki page and is designed to be sufficiently clear for its purpose. All staff members are informed about the DG's mission statement after each update, and usually before or during the regular general staff meetings (which occur three to four times a year), including any changes to the mission statement that might occur. The job description and the objectives for each staff member are stated in his/her annual evaluation report. The Director-General discusses the annual objectives of the DG with the management, including the possible impacts on the units of the DG.

Standard 2 - Ethical and organisational values: Achieved

When taking up their duties, staff members are informed of their rights, duties and obligations, including relevant ethical and organisational values. Staff awareness vis-à-vis ethical and organisational values is promoted by workshops and training sessions. DG EPRS has established all necessary procedures for an annual update of information to staff on the

rules related to ethics and integrity, and conflict of interest. Procedures enabling staff to report suspected improprieties are also in place.

Standard 3 - Allocation of staff and mobility: Achieved

Recruitment is planned multi-annually in accordance with the objectives of the Directorate-General. Given the on-going general reduction in human resources within the Parliament's administration, DG EPRS paid particular attention to staff allocation and mobility during the course of 2016. The Resources Unit (Human Resources Service) conducts a continuous assessment of vacant posts, in order to meet the DG's responsibilities in terms of any reductions, whilst at the same time taking actions to fill the remaining vacancies as quickly as possible. Staff members are recruited on the basis of their knowledge and experience following a detailed needs' analysis of each available post. The human resources service and the relevant manager conduct job interviews, which are carried out professionally and fully documented. Mobility policy is applied to posts of the AD function group, in line with the rules on mobility of the EP. Staff assignment preferences are taken into account whenever possible and support is given to staff to facilitate their integration in their new working environment. DG EPRS seeks to offer the best possible support and service to its staff members in mobility.

Standard 4 - Staff assessment and development: Achieved

The performance of staff is assessed during the annual staff evaluation procedure. Specific problems arising during the year are dealt as promptly as possible. Regular training sessions ensure that staff members can acquire the skills required to perform their tasks efficiently and to meet the objectives of the DG. Training objectives are determined on a yearly basis within an annual EPRS training programme. A training officer, working within the Human Resources Service, was appointed in 2016, with the mission of following on training requirements for each unit. Training needs are also regularly discussed during the annual evaluation and routine management meetings.

Standard 5 - Objectives and performance indicators: Almost achieved

The objectives of the Directorate-General are discussed during senior management meetings in conjunction with the projects that DG EPRS proposes for the Parliament's Strategic Execution Framework (SEF). The objectives for each Directorate and unit are discussed and agreed among management and staff at all organisational levels. DG EPRS' objectives are available on the EP intranet as well as on the EPRS Wiki. DG EPRS held intensive discussions at senior and middle management levels and a group composed by colleagues from all three Directorates and the horizontal units, as well as a data sub-group, to identify and implement the process of identifying its 'key result indicators' (KRIs) and appropriate methods to measure their evolution and achievement. Following the conclusion of the consultation and discussion process on KRIs, DG EPRS communicated its updated set of four principal KRIs to the Secretary-General in March 2016. Since then, the progress towards meeting the defined objectives is being measured on an on-going basis.

Standard 6 - Risk management procedure: Achieved

Representatives of DG EPRS regularly attend the semi-annual meetings of the Risk Management Advisory Group organised on a horizontal level for all DGs. In addition, annual meetings are held between the EP's risk manager and the Director-General. The Risk Register is regularly updated. This register is based on the projects submitted in the framework of the

Parliamentary Project Portfolio (PPP/SEF) and identified financial risks. The management hierarchy has adequate insight and knowledge about such risks and risk management through weekly, monthly and quarterly reporting. Risk mitigating action plans are adopted and monitored. Within the overall framework of risk management, different actors intervene at different hierarchical levels. Although the management of the DG is fully aware of risk management processes and procedures, DG EPRS intends to continue to raise awareness among staff members.

Standard 7 - Operational set-up: Almost achieved

Delegation and sub-delegation of powers and functions within the DG are dealt with according to the applicable rules and are clearly defined in writing. A table indicating the powers of all financial agents of the DG is regularly updated and communicated to the management. Exercises concerning sensitive posts were conducted in 2015 and in 2016. A centralised IT governance plan is being put in place, based on an IT Advisory Group to senior management.

Standard 8 - Processes and procedures: Achieved

Processes and procedures comply with relevant rules and are properly documented. All units adopt procedural manuals for their activities and the budgetary items they manage, as necessary. Work procedures are reviewed taking into account any relevant developments in legislation and policy (for example, in the Financial Regulation or its implementing measures). The EPRS' intranet (Wiki page) contains such manuals and procedures in a form that is easily accessible to all staff. The DG keeps its staff informed about the methods to deal with exceptions to standard procedures, including who may authorise such exceptions and how they should be recorded. All exceptions are recorded and all 'notes to the file' are kept in the archives. Exceptions and other observations are also recorded in FINORD by the ex-ante verifiers within the DG.

Standard 9 - Management oversight: Achieved

The management of DG EPRS takes a forward-planning approach to ensure that all its work is conducted as efficiently as possible. When different working approaches are possible, management and staff members discuss to identify the best option(s) to be pursued. Research work in progress is subject to many routine controls - such as peer review, linguistic review, review by the Publications Management and Editorial Unit - and automatic scrutiny by the relevant Head of Unit. Regular unit meetings ensure discussions on possible issues faced by staff members and guidance on evolving priorities and operating practices.

Standard 10 - Business continuity: Partly achieved

Handover files, back-up procedures and substituting arrangements have been established to ensure 'business as usual' during interruptions such as leave, holidays or staff mobility. The minimum level of staff presence to guarantee the continuity of the services is defined in each unit. In addition, common service mailboxes and shared folders are used to facilitate the continuity of service. DG EPRS will shortly evolve a Business Continuity Plan, in planned consultation by Parliament's new Business Continuity Manager, appointed by the Secretary General further to the recommendation of the recent audit report of the EP's Internal Auditor.

Standard 11 - Document management: Achieved

Extensive work was undertaken to improve document management practices in the DG during 2016 - for example, to train staff and to prepare the move to electronic signature for financial workflows. DG EPRS' Filing Plan was adopted by senior management in April 2016. Document management systems comply with relevant compulsory security measures, provisions on document management and rules on protection of personal data. Procedures on document management are available to staff on the EPRS Wiki page. Documents for financial operations are filed in the central financial archive, in accordance with the relevant rules. Electronic archiving of all procurement and financial documents is in place. All incoming and outgoing mail is registered and archived. DG EPRS is planning to verify that document procedures are integrated in the procedure manuals of each unit.

Standard 12 - Information and communication: Achieved

Senior and middle management are briefed on on-going issues during weekly meetings. This information is also disseminated to the staff through meetings at different levels. In addition to internal communication flow in hierarchical structures, information is also available on the EPRS' Wiki page. During 2016, a new, weekly EPRS staff newsletter was launched to keep all colleagues abreast of relevant work-related developments. A mapping of internal communication structures has been developed. EPRS' working procedures, as well as procedures promoting high-quality work, are developed and updated in a centrally accessible log. The confidentiality of the personal data of Members' Hotline users - as regulated by the MRS rules - is secured by a combination of safeguards, including restricting access, training staff, checks in relation to the operation of the enquiries system, and immediate follow-up to any problems. External communications are under constant supervision and reviewed where appropriate.

Standard 13 - Accounting and financial information: Achieved

Budget implementation and financial risks are recorded in weekly, monthly and quarterly reports drafted by the Central Finance Service, and discussed at management meetings. Meetings with financial agents are held regularly.

Standard 14 - Evaluation of activities: Achieved

The performance of DG EPRS, in terms of results and impacts, is continuously assessed and communicated to senior management weekly. To this end, the DG has put in place a detailed system of monitoring and considering what its outputs are and how far they meet both the its mission and the needs of its clients. The development of sophisticated KRIs and other performance indicators has played an important part in the process.

15 - Evaluation of internal control systems: Achieved

The Central Finance Service coordinates the self-assessment of the DG's internal control systems, which involves all Heads of Unit (in a bi-annual review of internal control procedures). In 2016, a questionnaire on internal control standards was completed by a random sample of staff members, in order to assess staff awareness of applicable procedures. The results of the exercise were analysed and reported to senior management, and are incorporated in the current Activity Report.

16 - Audit reports: Achieved

The Central Finance Service is the contact point with the Internal Audit Service and the Court of Auditors. When recommendations are made, the finance service works in collaboration with the operational units concerned to ensure that an action plan is established to address and implement such recommendations.