

### **Activity and financial report on the Information Offices in the cities of Brussels and Strasbourg.**

#### I. Brussels

The Information Office in Belgium is physically located in the premises of the European Parliament in Brussels with a view to save additional costs for a building or a separate "Europe House" in Brussels. However, it is an Information Office in Belgium with the same objectives and tasks as EP Information Offices (EPIOs) in all other 27 member states: reaching out to citizens and stimulating public debate via the media and other multipliers, civil society, teachers and schools, universities, stakeholders in legislation etc. Similarly to other EPIOs, focus is given to "going local" in the regions of Belgium. The EPIO in Belgium has to work in two (sometimes three) languages and in the context of different and quite distinct public opinions. Due to its location at the seat of the EP, the EPIO in the past has also assumed additional responsibilities for the whole Institution, such as relations with Belgian and Brussels authorities, running of the Info Point (which served all visitors at the seat of the EP) as well as a high involvement in the Open Door Days organised at the seat of the EP in Brussels. The EPIO Belgium, not only in the run up to the European Elections but also beyond, focuses on communicating with Belgian citizens, going local and providing platforms of debate for Members outside the capital, in the regions of Belgium. Thereby the EPIO Belgium has the same objectives and tasks and realigns its priorities to those of EPIOs in all other member states.

In 2015, one focus of the EPIO Belgium were communication activities such as stakeholder debates with MEPs (e.g.: on climate change, research, social dumping), promoting values of the European Parliament (gender equality, human rights, cultural diversity) and activities for youth. In total, the EPIO organised 37 events, and reached out to more than 8.000 subscribers to their newsletter, 4.420 Facebook fans and 3.400 Twitter followers. Another important area were seminars and briefings with journalists. These included among others around 15 briefings with the participation of 56 journalists and seminars on specific legislative themes (immigration, new foods) in which 35 Belgian journalists were present.

For a detailed activity report of the Brussels information office, please see Annex 2.

The Information Office in Brussels employed in 2015 on average 12.1 full-time equivalents (FTE) and the largest part of its expenses were in relation to staff costs and mission expenditure. Being located in the premises of the European Parliament, no direct attributable building costs occurred. The budget of the Belgian EPIO for communication activities addressed to the Belgian citizens was comparable to that of EPIOs of similar size. The responsibility for the organisation of the open Days has in 2017 been shifted to the central services in charge of relations with Citizens.

For details on expenditure, please see the table below.

#### II. Strasbourg

The Strasbourg Office is different from other Information Offices in so far as its main "raison d'être" is linked to the seat of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. As in previous years, in 2015 the main mission of the Strasbourg Office was to accommodate the visitors at the seat of the EP outside the sessions (in 2015 it welcomed 82 405 visitors). The Strasbourg Office has also been ensuring the liaison with local and regional authorities in Strasbourg and in the region on both sides of the Rhine, as well as with the Council of Europe. In addition, it

organised many activities targeted towards the youth, including 18 sessions of Euroscola which welcomed 9 892 participants (8 901 students, 942 teachers and 49 accompanying journalists) from all member states. This program gives young people the opportunity to act as an MEP for one day.

The Office in Strasbourg is also responsible for the organisation of the Open Door Days at the seat of the Parliament, which attracted 18 000 visitors in 2015. This specificity of the Strasbourg Office is also reflected in the budget structure, where a major part of the communication and operating expenditure was assigned to the organisation of the Open Door Days. Overall, staff and mission expenditure for the on average 19.8 FTE staff were by far the most important expenditure category. As for Brussels, there are no direct attributable building costs.

For more details of the activities of the Strasbourg information office, please see Annex 1.

Please find below the detailed breakdown of 2015 budget for Strasbourg and Brussels Information Offices.

Expenditure relating to Brussels and Strasbourg information offices in 2015 (EUR thousands)		
Brussels		
Building		0
Staff* and missions		925
Communication and operating expenditure		
Brussels open days	314	
Information	98	
Seminars	36	
Internet	5	
Audiovisual	2	
Total communication and operating expenditure		455
Total Brussels expenditure		1 380
Strasbourg		
Building		0
Staff** and missions		1 803
Communication and operating expenditure		
Strasbourg open days	203	
Information	25	
Seminars	16	
Internet	1	
Audiovisual	1	
Total communication and operating expenditure		246
Total Strasbourg expenditure		2 049

\* Average staff Brussels (FTE) 2015: 12.1

\*\* Average staff Strasbourg (FTE) 2015: 19.8

#### Annexes:

Annex 2 - Strasbourg Office activity report 2015

Annex 3 - Brussels Information Office activity report 2015