

Annual Activity Report

2017

DG IPOL

Contents

0.	BUDGETARY IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW	3
1.	OBJECTIVES	4
1.1	Objectives of the directorate-general	4
1.2	Feasibility and risk assessment	6
2.	ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE OBJECTIVES - USE OF RESOURCES	7
2.1	Environment of the directorate-general	7
2.2	Human resources of the DG	8
2.2.1	Establishment plan	8
2.2.2	Staff numbers as at 31.12.2017 (from e-ringbook)	9
2.3	Budget implementation 2017	9
2.3.1	Initial and final appropriations	9
2.3.2	Final appropriations and appropriations committed	10
2.3.3	Appropriations committed and payments made	10
2.3.4	Use of automatic and non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	10
2.3.5	Use of appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue	11
2.4	Results achieved	11
3.	EVALUATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROLS, INCLUDING AN OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTROLS' COST- EFFECTIVENESS (ARTICLE 66(9) FR)	15
4.	CONCLUSIONS	17
5.	DECLARATION BY THE AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION	18
6.	ANNEXES	
6.1.	2017 budget implementation statement	19
6.2.	Report on compliance with payment deadlines	21
6.3.	List of exceptions - derogations from the rules	22
6.4.	Long-term contractual obligations	24
6.5.	Exceptional negotiated procedures (Articles 53 and 134) and competitive procedure with negotiation (135 RAP)	25
6.6.	Results of ex-post evaluations	26
6.7.	Sensitive posts	26
6.8.	Assessment of the implementation of the Minimum Internal Control Standards	27

0. BUDGETARY IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

to be filled in by the DG		calculation	
			IPOL
Code	Appropriation type	Type de crédits	EUR ou %
	Appropriations of 2017	Crédits 2017	
A	Initial appropriations	Crédits initiaux	6.366.000,00
B	Final appropriations	Crédits finaux	5.235.192,00
C	Commitments	Engagements	4.603.261,83
D	Commitments in % of final appropriations	Engagements en % des crédits finaux	88%
E	Payments	Paielements	1.548.465,23
F	Payments in % of commitments	Paielements en % des engagements	34%
G	Cancellations of 2017 final appropriations	Annulations de crédits finaux 2017	631.930,17
H	Cancellations appropriations in % of final appropriations	Annulations en % des crédits finaux	12%
	Appropriations carried over from 2017 to 2018	Crédits reportés de 2017 à 2018	
I	Automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2017 à 2018	3.054.796,60
J	Automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018 in % of commitments	Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2017 à 2018 en % des engagements	66%
K	Non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	Crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2017 à 2018	0,00
L	Non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018 in % of final appropriations	Crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2017 à 2018 en % des crédits finaux	0%
	Appropriations carried over from 2016 to 2017	Crédits reportés de 2016 à 2017	
M	Automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	3.283.408,80
N	Payments against automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Paielements sur crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	3.167.596,41
O	Payments against automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Paielements sur crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017 en % des crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	96%
P	Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Annulations de crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	115.812,39
Q	Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Annulations de crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017 en % des crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	4%
R	Non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	0,00
S	Payments of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Paielements sur crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	
T	Payments against non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Paielements sur crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017 en % des crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	
U	Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Annulations de crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	
V	Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	Annulations de crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017 en % des crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017	
	Assigned revenue in 2017	Recettes affectées 2017	
W	Appropriations from assigned revenue in 2017 (current)	Crédits de recettes affectées courants 2017	0,00
X	Assigned revenue carried over to 2017	Crédits de recettes affectées reportés à 2017	0,00
Y	Balance of commitments on assigned revenue carried over to 2017	Solde des engagements reportés à 2017 sur crédits de dépenses spécifiques sur recettes affectées	0,00
Z	Payments in 2017 against appropriations from assigned revenue (current and carried-over)	Paielements sur crédits de recettes affectées 2017 (courants et reportés)	0,00
AA	Payments in 2017 against assigned revenue in % of assigned revenue in 2017 (current and carried-over)	Paielements sur crédits de recettes affectées 2017 en % des crédits de recettes affectées 2017 (courants et reportés)	-

1. OBJECTIVES

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

A. OBJECTIVES RELATED TO DG IPOL'S ONGOING OPERATIONS

IPOL's operational objectives for 2017, against the backdrop of the unfolding political priorities of the European Parliament, were:

1. Continue to provide timely, coherent and high-quality support, concerning their legislative, budgetary/discharge and scrutiny functions, to parliamentary committees and bodies, to the Institution, to its President and Members.
2. Continue to deliver high quality expertise for committees and other political bodies, in a timely and targeted way, underlining the specific role of Policy Departments and Economic Governance Support Unit's expert services as described in the 2016 report by the CCC and their added value to deliver tailor-made products for committees. Ensure continuing innovation in their field of expertise and appropriate dissemination of their products. Ensure active and wide-ranging cooperation with other services and DGs as well as external networks.
3. Organise and ensure the smooth running of the mid-term constitutive meetings of committees and of the Conference of Committee Chairs in early 2017 as well as the forthcoming public hearing process linked to the reshuffling of the College of the European Commission.
4. Assess the potential implications of the Brexit negotiations on policy matters in committees. Contribute to the definition of Parliament's position on the negotiating mandate; ensure good coordination among committees and with political authorities in charge of the follow-up of the negotiations via the Conference of Committee Chairs.
5. Contribute to the mid-term review/revision of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2014-2020 and to the evaluation of the current MFF and its programmes with a view of reassessing the EP's priorities for MFF post-2020 (Commission proposals mid-2018).

With these developments in mind, monitor, assess and scrutinise the implementation of ongoing MFF programmes and related financial instruments, and organise and coordinate the relevant committee activities in a proactive and efficient way (MFF network, regular exchange of information, MFF database).

6. Ensure the implementation of the Better Law Making Agreement, including the annual programming and the monitoring of the Commission replies to legislative own-initiative reports. Give support to the negotiations on delegated and implementing acts and on international agreements; actively contribute to the setting up of an inter-institutional legislative database as well as the delegated acts register.
7. Ensure the smooth implementation of the revised Rules of Procedures in the committees, supported by clear communication, applying the necessary adaptations to the IT applications, provision of training, exchange of best practices and flow of information.

Committee secretariats should promptly complete the ITER database with the information on their ongoing legislative files and should verify its accuracy in view of reporting obligations. A systematic use of C-Plan is encouraged in order to enhance data completion and improve visibility among secretariats.

8. Continue to give high priority to scrutiny-related activities in committees by putting in place - as for example on implementation reports - or proposing procedures and providing expertise, as further detailed in the IPOL PPP projects 2014-2016, for example on the implementation of the MFF programmes and on delegated acts. Take stock of the new rules on implementation reports.

9. Further promote working in networks such as the recently set up networks on Petitions, as well as the already well-established ones on Legislative Procedures, Trilogues, MFF, Delegated and Implementing Acts and Gender mainstreaming, in order to identify and share best practices.

10. Organise the follow-up of the part of the Ombudsman's recommendations on trilogue negotiations for which IPOL is responsible; efficiently coordinate work with other DGs and other Institutions.

11. Continue efficient intra- and inter-DG cooperation on communication with a view to further enhancing the visibility and accessibility of DG IPOL services' activities - in particular those of committees and Policy Departments (see point 2). Ensure an appropriate level of expertise on communication matters through training and systematically exchange best practices through a network.

12. Continue to provide quality assistance and follow up on on-going projects

a) to ensure that the IT systems supporting the work of parliamentary committees and bodies are always up-to-date and well in line with the political requirements of the EP, bringing IT tools in line with the revised Rules of Procedure and

b) gradually, by actively contributing to the corporate e-Parliament PPP project, to digitalise the whole chain of activities supporting the legislative and budgetary/budgetary control work performed at committee and plenary level, so as to gain improvements in terms of efficiency of processes and quality of output.

13. Ensure the efficient management of Human as well as Financial Resources, providing support for the implementation of the occasional teleworking scheme and taking into account the provisions of the Financial Regulation and the strategic decisions taken in the SEF of the Parliament and of DG IPOL.

Implement the new training paths while continuously adapting the internal training offer; set the basis for the establishment of the exchange programme between IPOL and Commission/Council in the long term.

14. Following the metrics reporting covering the second half of 2016, review the appropriateness of the IPOL specific metrics, in the light of the insights gained and of the work invested in compiling them. Streamline the IPOL metrics and reporting, according to the result of this analysis.

B. Objectives derived from the PPP

In the process of contributing to the Parliament's Strategic Execution Framework and Parliamentary Project Portfolio (PPP), DG IPOL has elaborated a new set of strategic projects for the PPP 2017 - 2019.

The 2017 milestones planned for these new projects as well as remaining 2017 milestones of old PPP projects formed part of DG IPOL's objectives for that year.

1.2 FEASIBILITY AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Most of DG IPOL's objectives, as described under point one, are closely linked to political processes and decisions and it is difficult to attach any specific linked financial and non-financial risks which might adversely affect them.

Similarly, assistance and expertise for the parliamentary committees, as well as many horizontal issues - in the legislative and budgetary fields particularly but also increasingly other "scrutiny measures"- are thus part and parcel of the DG's daily work but remain linked to political decisions (for example decisions on the timetable for a legislative file, or whether to request a study to accompany such a file, or whether to draw up a non-legislative report, etc.) both inside and outside the Parliament.

Therefore, the main objectives of the DG are very much dependant on such 'political risks' but it is not considered feasible or appropriate to try and put a price on such political developments within the framework of this overview.

However, as far as administrative risk is concerned, which may of course also have a knock-on effect on the real objectives described, the DG's risk register and risk assessments has been updated.

In 2017, these effectively all relate to the objectives under item 1 and are the following:

- Risks related to the optimal functioning of parliamentary committees
- Risks related to human resources
- Risks related to financial resources
- Risks related to the dependence on IT systems
- Risks related to logistics, such as infrastructure, including office space.

These risks and the associated efforts to mitigate them are described in the risk files, including a rating as to their likelihood and seriousness. The risk files were updated in 2017 and will be updated once again in early 2018. DG IPOL also held meetings with the Risk Manager to monitor the situation.

In previous reports, IPOL underlined the need for improved "crisis management" and "business continuity management" mechanisms for unexpected events in the Parliament. DG IPOL had therefore already welcomed the creation of the Business Continuity Management Unit, in line with the recommendations made by the Internal Auditor. During 2017 DG IPOL continued to support the ongoing work in this area, notably the elaboration of a more comprehensive crisis & business continuity management scheme in the European Parliament, as well as the move to formalise and clarify responsibilities at a high management level through the Crisis & Business Continuity Management Team (to be supported by the aforementioned Unit).

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

2.1 ENVIRONMENT OF THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Legislative work in 2017 was to a high degree shaped by the dossiers of the Joint Declaration. December 2016 saw, for the first time, the Parliament, the Council and the Commission agreeing on such a Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2017. IPOL worked hard to support committee Members on these 59 proposals.

The new Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2018-19, signed in December 2017, combines unfinished files from the 2017 Joint Declaration and adds new ones: It will be of equally great importance for IPOL's work up to the end of the legislative term.

Two temporary committees under the umbrella of DG IPOL, EMIS (Committee of Inquiry into Emission Measurements in the Automotive Sector) and PANA (Committee of Inquiry into Money Laundering, Tax Avoidance and Tax Evasion), successfully concluded their work during the year and a third one, TERR (Special Committee on Terrorism), was started. The rapid setting-up and staffing of these temporary committees was a considerable challenge. These temporary committees resulted in extra coordination efforts and work as regards staffing, offices and other organisational issues.

As already highlighted in last year's AAR, equipping the temporary committees with adequate staff that guarantees the effective provision of services to Members is proving more and more difficult. The timing for the creation of these secretariats is very tight and implies immediate redeployment of experienced colleagues from other units, in most cases from within DG IPOL. In fact, TERR committee secretariat has not yet been completed, due to difficulties encountered in redeploying an AST permanent staff member.

Parliament's new meeting pattern was confirmed in 2017. Meetings of less than 2.5 hours - both with and without interpretation - accounted for more than half of the meetings of IPOL. These meetings were held to make progress notably on legislative files in the Joint Declaration. During 2017, technical trilogues (i.e. 3 to 4 hour working sessions at administrative level) appeared as a new meeting pattern, making it difficult and time-consuming to find enough resources for all these to take place, especially during the second semester.

The unexpected incident of 16th October at the EP Data Centre, and the following unavailability of most of the IT applications used by DG IPOL, produced several difficulties in the normal functioning of parliamentary work at committee level, in particular during the days following the incident. The IT outage affected political activity, but the impact was very much mitigated thanks to the commitment and professionalism of staff, in particular AST staff.

In general terms, the difficulties caused by the unavailability of many applications forced staff to look for alternative ways of working, implying some extra time, not compensated, for the tasks that could by no means be delayed (e.g. related to plenary), or to postpone some less urgent tasks, with a subsequent increased workload over a longer period.

The main priority in the recovery process was rightly given to the production environments of the applications. Nevertheless, IPOL applications are now facing delays in their development and improvement in the aftermath of this outage, in particular those related to the full digitalisation of the legislative process for the beginning of the next legislative term (e-parliament).

The reduction of the IPOL missions budget, effectuated at the beginning of the year, led to the cancellation of a number of missions (such as for stakeholder consultation events and visits to national parliament research services), to a reduction of the duration of our trainees' missions to Strasbourg and to a reduction of external trainings implying missions costs.

During 2017, the outcome of the referendum on the United Kingdom's EU membership, of June 2016, had a considerable impact on IPOL committees, research units and horizontal services. IPOL units were called upon to follow this process and to prepare analytical material based on fact-finding work to consider the impact of the withdrawal on the policy areas and legislation in their respective fields. Future work on this issue is of a very complex legal nature but the expertise built up in committees and policy departments is ready to be mobilised during the subsequent phases of the UK withdrawal process based on political decisions taken.

2.2 HUMAN RESOURCES OF THE DG

2.2.1 *Establishment plan*

	at 1.1.2016				at 1.1.2017			
	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Permanent posts	294	251	9	554	284	239	12	535
Temporary posts	4	2		6	4	2		6
Total	298	253	9	560	288	241	12	541

The decrease of 19 posts in 2017 is the result of the following movements :

- 7 establishment plan posts were deleted,
- 7 establishment plan posts were removed in order to compensate for the creation of posts in the organigramme of the political groups,
- 2 posts were moved to the general organigramme of the EP,
- 2 AD colleagues were transferred with their posts to the President's Cabinet without compensation,
- 1 AD colleague temporarily seconded from another DG in 2015 with his post (for special committee mandate) left DG IPOL during 2016.

2.2.2 Staff numbers as at 31.12.2017 (from e-ringbook)

	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total	FTE*
Officials	267	221	12	500	493,7
Temporary staff	9	10	0	19	18,85
- in temporary posts	3	1	0	4	3
- in permanent posts	1	4	0	5	4,99
- to offset part-time working	5	5	0	10	11,95
Contractual agents				23	21,4
Seconded National Expert (SNE)				13	13
Agency staff					
Total				555	546,95
* full time equivalent					

2.3 BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION 2017

2.3.1 Initial and final appropriations

Final appropriations amounted to EUR 5.24 million compared to the EUR 6.37 million originally available. Some EUR 1.1 million was offered in the two-stage ramassage-procedure. The main reasons for this under-implementation are:

Firstly, a high number of expertise items were launched in late 2016 (using available 2016 funds) due to the extreme urgency/very short deadlines requested by Coordinators of several committees in order to be able to deliver the expertise items in early 2017 (for example Brexit-related studies for several committees, and expertise for the PANA committee). In the main, these had originally been planned against 2017 appropriations, thus leaving a surplus this year.

Secondly, a number of major expertise items were delayed and were not launched in 2017 as first planned. This was due to the fact that necessary political decisions from the coordinators/bureaux of several committees were still pending concerning these items and, given the need to ensure adequate quality planning from the administration's side, that it therefore became necessary to foresee these for launch in 2018, using 2018 appropriations, once the necessary decisions have been taken.

These unforeseen factors of both front-loading (Brexit urgencies) and back-loading (major studies awaiting political decisions) combined to create a significant unused surplus in the 2017 budget.

2.3.2 *Final appropriations and appropriations committed*

Overall implementation stood at 88 % (72% if the effect of the *ramassage* and other transfers is eliminated), corresponding to EUR 4.6 million committed (5.42 million in 2016). Overall implementation was therefore somewhat lower than that of the previous year due to the reasons explained under the previous item.

As in previous years, a certain margin also existed with regard to the budgeting of full amounts for temporary committees, as stipulated in the guidelines laid down by the Conference of Committee Chairmen, which the running temporary committees did not fully absorb

For further details please see annexes.

2.3.3 *Appropriations committed and payments made*

Payments on contracted appropriations stood at 34% at year-end, a slight decrease compared to last year (39 %).

This relatively modest level of payments in year n, and the consequently rather high level of carry-overs to year n+1, stems from the fact that research departments commission studies and papers on the basis of political requests, during the financial year, from the committees. Many of these, particularly the more costly ones, are subject to time-consuming research and rarely give rise to payments in the same year. This has a major effect on executed payments against commitments.

Additionally, guests entitled to reimbursements sometimes send in their requests and receipts only after the end of the financial year, possibly when they prepare their private tax returns. This means that a significant portion of provisional commitments for travel and subsistence allowances has to be carried over as well.

The final amount carried over to 2018 (EUR 3.05 million) was similar to last year (EUR 3.28 million). As a proportion of contracted commitments, the ratio thus remained rather stable.

Amounts carried over will then be paid the following year at a rate that should approach 100% (96 % on 2016 funds carried over to 2017). Exceptions can relate to cases where the Parliament cancels a particular expertise item or considers that only part of the service has been delivered. They can also relate to carry-overs for travel and subsistence reimbursements, as the travel costs are not known at the time of the carry-over. It is therefore necessary to make an estimation erring on the safe side.

2.3.4 *Use of automatic and non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017*

The use of the appropriations carried over from 2016 to 2017 was about 96 %.

For DG IPOL, which exclusively tenders for services (mainly studies, impact assessments and briefing papers) it is not unusual that a small part of the carry-overs is

in fact cancelled, but the DG tries to minimise this portion through active follow-up and reminders from the Finance Unit.

If some amounts are not finally used it can relate to the fact that papers may occasionally be rejected once received, either outright or (more often) in view of substantial modifications that need to be made. This is sound financial management as studies of insufficient quality should not be paid for, or only paid for partially.

Also, there are some (minor) outstanding amounts, not finally used, that relate to carry-overs made on provisional commitments related to travel reimbursements. This is difficult to avoid since the final costs are not known at the time of the carry-overs procedure.

2.3.5 *Use of appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue*

2.3.5.1 Situation with regard to specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue

N/A

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

N/A

2.4 RESULTS ACHIEVED

As a DG providing direct and tailor-made support to committee Members, most of IPOL's work feeds into - and results in - processes and products which are - or become - political in the end, such as legislative and non-legislative reports, opinions and amendments, committee meetings, trilogues, hearings and committee missions, etc.

The fact that IPOL's work feeds completely into the political sphere makes it impossible to link the DG's main objectives to performance indicators. Dimensions of parliamentary work such as, for example, how long it took to steer a report through Parliament, how many amendments a report comprised, whether and how instruments such as hearings or studies were used, how negotiations were handled and which elements a final piece of legislation includes, are political by nature and not subject to assessments by the administration.

IPOL considers its objectives for 2017 as achieved and no incidents are to be reported. IPOL staff has done its utmost to provide fast and flexible support to committee Members and to always find solutions to upcoming issues and it has maintained this service-culture and its standards also under extraordinary conditions.

These conditions include very long night trilogues which start in the early evening and last until the early morning (recent examples include three ENVI committee trilogues on Climate Action/Effort Sharing Regulation, the Waste Package and the Emissions Trading System in November and December, lasting from 19h00 to 05h30, from 19h00 to 01h10 and from 18h00 to 03h40, respectively).

The IT outage in October is another example of a situation which was mastered due to the reactivity, adaptability and availability of IPOL colleagues in a situation where many vital applications were not available for several days.

Resources

As regards IT matters, in the framework of the e-Parliament corporate programme, DG IPOL remains committed to the action plan we proposed in 2016 so as to achieve complete digitalisation of the legislative workflow for the beginning of the next legislative term. However, the IT outage in October 2017 added to implementation delays, making achieving the deadline very challenging.

Also in the framework of the e-Parliament programme, IPOL proposed (in agreement with DG EXPO and PRES), refined key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the state of play of implementation. These would also help in pinpointing potentially problematic areas – whether business or IT implementation related – where further attention is needed.

Since 2017, the legislative activity carried out by committees is more visible both inside and outside of the European Parliament. Thanks to data access control functions, which allows for customisation of the type of information that can be retrieved from the ITER database, political groups now have direct access to committee activities. And, the Secretary-General's office can now obtain precise information on inter-institutional negotiations registered in ITER as well as from the new public inter-institutional Register for Delegated Acts (hosted by the Commission and operational since December 2017). This register now receives real time notifications from ITER on relevant decisions taken by EP committees.

During 2017, IPOL Business Analysts played a significant role in the detailed analysis of the impact of the changes in the Rules of Procedure on the IT systems.

As concerns logistics, after conducting three extensive pilot phases, the implementation of the EMAS Strategy's target of phasing-out of individual printers was successfully concluded in Brussels during the summer recess.

Also, IPOL committee secretariats consolidated the trend towards more paperless meetings by increasingly using "e-meeting" and "e-committee" features.

The EMAS Square de Meeûs network continued carrying out various successful initiatives, such as facilitating parking for bicycles and further improving reusing and recycling of stationary. IPOL Logistics finalised the setting up of an effective and efficient system for the management of office supply stocks, resulting in financial and environmental benefits.

In the area of finance, IPOL procurement templates for Negotiated Procedures with 3 and 5 candidates were revisited in order to fully respond to what the operational units need and, also, to fully take into account changes introduced to the financial regulation as of 1 January 2016, particularly with regard to exclusion criteria, and new copyright contract clauses.

Also, IPOL prepared extensive step-by-step guides on the financial aspects of organising organisation committee missions outside the 3 places of work, focussing both on the basic financial principles and on the financial procedures to be carried out

before, during and after the missions. Further guidance was also developed for the financial aspects of workshops.

The Bureau rules on hearings, revised during 2016, including the provisions on financial reimbursements of the Parliament's guests at those committee hearings, were successfully adopted by the Bureau in January 2017 and entered into force on 1st February.

In the human resources field, it is worth mentioning that the mobility procedure 2017 was concluded in time with the transfer of all mobile IPOL colleagues into new units. The staffing of the TERR temporary committee was nearly concluded with up to 26 IPOL staffers having being redeployed to temporary committees from their units of origin since the beginning of the legislative term. This achievement was made all the more difficult because, due to budgetary cuts, in most cases no contract agent compensation could be given to the units of origin.

In 2017, 14 establishment posts were removed due to staff reductions and due to a contribution to the organigramme of the political groups. The introduction of the occasional teleworking scheme within DG IPOL was a success and it is being increasingly used by the staff. Also, a pilot project on extra-time for official meetings, taking place after regular working hours, was introduced towards the end of the year and will continue to run through 2018.

In the field of learning and development, specific training paths were implemented. The internal training offer was further expanded to cater for the changing needs of DG IPOL colleagues. Also, a pilot for a short-term staff exchange programme between DG IPOL, the Commission and Council services was run, in order to assess the feasibility of establishing such an exchange scheme on a regular basis.

Obtained results (data against budget items)

The below are annual statistics to measure some of the quantitative aspects of the DG's output, which also contribute to meeting the objectives of the DG. They are linked - sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly - to practically all of the objectives:

- 392 parliamentary committee meetings were organised (2016: 391). These, and all related work prior to them, eventually led to the treatment and vote of some 477 committee procedures, not including opinions or scrutiny procedures (2016: 427 procedures)
- 251 trilogue meetings were organised in 2017 (135 such meetings in 2016 and 226 in 2015)

Compared to 2016 the number of legislative files was significantly higher, as already predicted in last year's report, following a rather expected pattern. In fact, with the end of the legislative term now coming in sight, activity on legislative files picked up and for 2018, we expect a further increase, particularly on the files included in the recently adopted Joint Declaration for 2018/19. Committees will be expected to deliver more than 200 legislative files by the end of this mandate - including the future MFF-related proposals.

Concerning budget resources managed directly by DG IPOL, the following quantitative analysis can be made:

- Concerning sub-item 1612-02 (professional training): DG IPOL organised 101 individual courses (54 in 2016), out of which 28 had an impact on the professional training budget. Also, six “Unit External Training Days” - ex Away Days (11 in 2016) and 3 specific collective trainings (0 in 2016) were organised.
- Concerning sub-item 3042-01 (committees' missions): In total, 96 missions were organised (79 in 2016), out of which 70 had a financial impact against this line (organisational costs such as rental of office space and local transport). The number of missions thus increased compared to last year, especially taking the temporary committees into account.
- Concerning sub-item 3200-01 (external expertise): The policy departments commissioned a total number of 239 items of external expertise (2016: 264). Of these, 10 were long studies between EUR 60.000 and EUR 135.000 (2016: 12), 44 were medium studies between EUR 15.000 and EUR 60.000 and 185 were short studies of less than EUR 15.000. Approximately 40 % of the total volume of studies (based on value) was ordered through the existing framework contracts (2016: about 47 %), the remaining 60 % being ordered through other procedures. On 31 December 2017, IPOL policy departments had 9 framework contracts in place (2016: 9). The DG also disposes of 4 CEI lists (2016: 4), call for expression of interest, to further widen the choice of expertise in some areas.
- Importantly, some 479 internal studies and briefing papers were also produced (including about 100 updates of existing ones), not drawing on any budget funds managed by IPOL (2016: 382, 2015: 352 and 2014: 218). This again demonstrates a very big increase in in-house expertise, which now makes up a very substantial part of activities. And, in addition to this, both committees and policy departments were as always involved in continuously updating the “EP fact sheets”, numbering in their hundreds. Against a backdrop of tight human resources budgets, this development was impressive.
- The policy departments also organised 45 workshops (2016: 31) in which external experts participated and discussed with committee members. A total of 59 experts were reimbursed against this item (2016: 70). Further experts were invited to share their economic, financial and monetary expertise in preparatory meetings of Monetary Dialogue sessions organised by ECON; these experts delivered 32 briefing papers prior to the sessions (2016: 38).
- The parliamentary committees organised 133 hearings, including 20 by temporary committees (2016: 124, 2015: 100 and 2014: 50). This is, for the second year running, the highest number of hearings recorded in any one year. A total number of 167 guests at these hearings were reimbursed for travel costs against this item (2016: 127, 2015: 183 and 2014: 104). Also, the Petitions Committee heard 208 petitioners (201 in 2016) at different hearings and meetings, 56 of whom were reimbursed against this item.
- Sub-item 3220-13 (books and subscriptions) was used 8 times for various books and subscriptions (16 times in 2016, 30 times in 2015 and 7 times in 2014).

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

IPOL's financial activities include a mix of medium to low-value transactions. In terms of value, some 90 % of the budget is related to the purchase of expertise following requests from parliamentary committees. A substantial number of very low-value transactions is also handled and relate to reimbursement of experts for hearings.

The budget structure and detailed financial circuits for the DG's implementation of these funds are published and updated on its web-pages. A substantial update and check of this information was made in 2014, at the request of the Authorising Officer by Delegation (AOD), and is also done continuously by the Finance Unit.

The AOD always includes an item of budget follow-up on every agenda of the Directors' meetings (weekly). The implementation of all funds is authorised at the level of Directorates, with the respective Director as Authorising Officer by Sub-delegation (AOS), and in close cooperation with the Finance Unit in terms of ex-ante control and advice. This cooperation between operational departments and the Finance Unit, and also with the personnel and IT units for those issues, reflect a strong culture of cooperation and communication in an essentially decentralised structure with strong central support functions.

The use of budget funds is transparent and under detailed scrutiny at all levels of the hierarchy. Naturally, all basic concepts, such as the segregation of duties, are fully respected.

The DG objectives are set annually, taking into account the Parliamentary Project Portfolio in which DG IPOL presently manages 11 projects. The objectives are communicated to staff in writing and orally in meetings. Delegations of powers are clearly defined and always communicated in writing.

Risk management within the DG has evolved considerably over the past few years and the identified risks and mitigating measures were updated once during the year, and will be updated again in early 2018.

In addition to the above, IPOL also operates a number of other procedures and work practices to continuously monitor and improve the compliance with the minimal norms for internal control and their effective functioning.

For example, DG specific instructions on public procurement issues are also published and updated, including all relevant links to DG Finance models.

IPOL also runs an official working group to promote knowledge and experience in the field of procurement and contract management. This group liaising with the Public Procurement Forum is very useful to discuss and resolve issues in detail, such as consequences of the new rules and their implementation.

Regular meetings with all financial actors have also been set up by the AO, implemented by the Finance Unit, in order to continuously monitor and improve financial and contractual procedures.

The AO has since many years operated a training programme for newcomers, also including a module on "financial circuits" to emphasise the importance of correctly applying the existing procurement, contractual and financial rules.

In the field of public procurement, DG IPOL has consistently implemented all recommended improvements, included those by the internal auditor. Only one older issue remains:

The creation of a common database or webpage for supplier quality assessment sheets. It should however be noted that these are already now fully available through the Finance Unit. This issue is still pending mainly due to other priorities imposed by the legislator, such as modified negotiated procurement procedures with 3 and 5 candidates, new rules on exclusion criteria and intellectual property rights.

Methodology for assessing the costs and benefits of internal control

Overall, the cost effectiveness of controls is assessed by the Resource Directorate in consultation with the Director General and his staff. This is done within the framework of the annual budget procedure and the annual report procedure. By and large, the aspects of "methodology" and the DG's approach are described and built into the Annual Report itself.

It is considered that the effectiveness of controls and preventive measures is high with a large degree of transparency, good cooperation and clear procedures, while at the same time maintaining a lean establishment plan and an un-bureaucratic central structure.

In order to achieve efficiency of the control system, DG IPOL's scarce resources are geared towards preventing any erroneous and non-compliant expenditure in the first place, and its working methods were set up to achieve this goal.

Records of the overall results of financial controls are kept in the FINIP (IPOL Finance Unit internal database) and FINORD, as well as in Web-contracts. In our FINIP database the records include the following mandatory information:

- identification of all transactions and operations of the DG, together with the total amount of these items,
- identification of the ex-ante verifiers who carried out the control,
- information whether the result was positive or negative, and, in case it was negative, it is reported as an exception or derogation describing i.a. whether a) it referred to internal procedures or b) to contractual or regulatory provisions;

This standard system again proved its worth in 2017; no recovery orders had to be established (no non-compliant amounts identified). In addition, the very early detection of a "fake" invoice, manipulated in a way so that an incorrect account number had been introduced instead of the one of IPOL's officially registered contracting partner, confirmed the robustness of IPOL's internal control system.

Importantly, DG IPOL also continued to dedicate a previously existing post of an ex-ante verifier purely for procurement issues and contractual advice as from January 2012. This strategy has continued to give positive results during the course of the last 5 years.

The focus on giving individual assistance to operational departments "ante ex-ante" i.e. before submitting the files for the official ex-ante verification, thus continues in a successful way, preventing the risk of errors to a very high degree and thus keeping the error rate for legality and regularity extremely low.

In connection with the Annual Report, the existing measures are considered in the light of the year in question. So far, they have always been deemed appropriate and adequate.

Given the strong focus on ex-ante advice and checks (preparative and preventive work) as well as considering the annual budgets and staff resources available, ex-post controls have not been considered appropriate from the point of view of cost-benefit. Full and strong cooperation is of course afforded to any actions in this respect by the Court of Auditors and/or the Internal Auditor.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the DG saw intensified legislative work, as is usually the case in the second half of a legislative term. This increased activity is demonstrated, of course, in the numbers of files on the negotiating table and, consequently, also in the number of trilogues and other meetings, with the well-known logistical challenges of finding sufficient meeting slots and interpretation facilities.

For 2018, yet a further increase of legislative work is expected, in particular on files included in the Joint Declaration, combined with time pressure to finalise dossiers before the end of the legislative term.

Core business thus increased, from an already high level in 2016, whilst the additional intensified focus on parliamentary oversight and scrutiny continued.

The Brexit process had clear implications for IPOL's work in 2017 with substantial support and expertise from IPOL committees, policy departments and horizontal services, feeding into the Parliament's overall preparations and work, including the provision of sector analyses.

The setting-up and running of temporary committees and their secretariats again proved to be an organisational challenge for the DG (staffing, meeting slots, quick planning of hearings and missions, consultation of confidential documents, offices) which was mastered successfully, in close cooperation with other DGs concerned. Two temporary committees successfully concluded their work during the year and a third one was set up.

The human resources of DG IPOL were generally appropriate for tackling the 2017 workload. However, continued pressure on the Establishment Plan continued to make the staffing of the temporary committee secretariats very difficult. In fact, the staffing of these secretariats, in a context of cuts in human and budgetary resources, without additional Contract agent funding for the units of origin concerned, might risk having adverse effects on the quality of services provided to Members.

5. DECLARATION BY THE AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION

I, the undersigned, **RICCARDO RIBERA D'ALCALA'**

Director-General of **DG IPOL**

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, ex post 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 **15 FEB. 2018**

Signature



Use of current appropriations as at 31 December 2017 (source: FINORD)

Situation of current appropriations							Situation of payments		
Sub-item	Initial appropriations	Transfers / Amending Budgets	Appropriations	Commitments done	Appropriations available	% Committed	Payments done	Still to be paid	% Paid
1	2	3	4	5	6=4-5	7=5/4	8	9=5-8	10=8/5
1612-02 * Formation professionnelle	85.000,00	-10.000,00	75.000,00	29.538,45	45.461,55	39,38%	25.186,05	4.352,40	85,27%
Total chapter 16	85.000,00	-10.000,00	75.000,00	29.538,45	45.461,55	39,38%	25.186,05	4.352,40	85,27%
03020-09 * Frais de réception et représentation comm.parlem.	26.000,00	0,00	26.000,00	14.197,44	11.802,56	54,61%	9.099,04	5.098,40	64,09%
03042-01 * Réunions des commission	215.000,00	0,00	215.000,00	166.490,07	48.509,93	77,44%	145.090,07	21.400,00	87,15%
Total chapter 30	241.000,00	0,00	241.000,00	180.687,51	60.312,49	74,97%	154.189,11	26.498,40	85,33%
03200-01 * Acquisitions d'expertise : politiques interne de l'UE	6.000.000,00	-1.102.808,00	4.897.192,00	4.381.256,32	515.935,68	89,46%	1.357.310,52	3.023.945,80	30,98%
03220-13 * Livres et inscriptions	40.000,00	-18.000,00	22.000,00	11.779,55	10.220,45	53,54%	11.779,55	0,00	100,00%
Total chapter 32	6.040.000,00	-1.120.808,00	4.919.192,00	4.393.035,87	526.156,13	89,30%	1.369.090,07	3.023.945,80	31,17%
TOTAL	6.366.000,00	-1.130.808,00	5.235.192,00	4.603.261,83	631.930,17	87,93%	1.548.465,23	3.054.796,60	33,64%

Use of appropriations carried over from 2016 as at 31 December 2017
(source: FINORD)

Situation of appropriations carried over				
Sub-item	Appropriations carried over	Payments done	Still to be paid	% Paid
1	2	3	4 = 2-3	5 =
1612-02 * Formation professionnelle	11.313,24	11.313,24	0,00	100,00%
Total chapter 16	11.313,24	11.313,24	0,00	100,00%
03020-09 * Frais de réception et de représentation	5.899,00	4.576,16	1.322,84	77,58%
03042-01 * Réunions des commission	23.497,73	17.861,51	5.636,22	76,01%
Total chapter 30	29.396,73	22.437,67	6.959,06	76,33%
03200-01 * Acquisitions d'expertise : politiques interne de l'UE	3.242.298,83	3.133.620,02	108.678,81	96,65%
03220-13 * Livres et inscriptions	400,00	225,48	174,52	56,37%
Total chapter 32	3.242.698,83	3.133.845,50	108.853,33	96,64%
TOTAL	3.283.408,80	3.167.596,41	115.812,39	96,47%

Annex 6.2. Report on compliance with payment deadlines

SOO25:Invoices paid from 01/01/2017 to 31/12/2017

		INTEREST AMOUNT <= 200	NO INTEREST AMOUNT	Total
ON TIME	Number of invoices		358	358
	Total invoice amount (EUR)		4.363.339,81	4.363.339,81
	Total interest amount (EUR)			
LATE PAYMENT	Number of invoices	34		34
	Total invoice amount (EUR)	221.856,21		221.856,21
	Total interest amount (EUR)	341,35		341,35
Number of invoices		34	358	392
Total invoice amount (EUR)		221.856,21	4.363.339,81	4.585.196,02
Total interest amount (EUR)		341,35		341,35

6.3 List of exceptions - dérogations from the rules

Les décisions dérogeant aux procédures établies et aux réglementations applicables							
Réf. document	Ordonnateur compétent	Objet	Montant €	Avis vérificateurs		Décision	
				conforme avec observation / non conforme	Justification	Ordonnateur compétent	Justification
OD 377/18	K.P. Repplinger	Presentation of study on "European Digital Guarantee"	2 800	Non conforme	Part of the service delivered after the expiry of the underlying framework contract. - see GEDA Note D(2017) 19098	K.P. Repplinger	See GEDA note D(2017)24341 of 14.06.17 of the AOS informing the AOD of his intention to overrule the negative opinion of the ex-ante verification.
OD 563/28	K.P. Repplinger	Presentation and short follow-up briefing for workshop on the consequences of Brexit held on 28/02/17	7 000	Non conforme	Art. 86.1 Fin.Reg. : Order form signed 1 day before ED 377/15080 - see GEDA Note D(2017) 28681	K.P. Repplinger	See GEDA note D(2017)29354 of 10.07.17 of the AOS informing that he signed both ED and Order form the same day. The accidental omission of the electronic signature of the ED was discovered the day after, and may therefore have been due to technical reasons.
OD 796/007	K.P. Repplinger	Briefing Note on the social and employment situation in Estonia	12 900	Non conforme	Art. 86.1 Fin.Reg. : Order form signed before ED 796/15112 - see GEDA Note D(2017) 26956	K.P. Repplinger	See GEDA note D(2017)28210 of 30.06.17 of the AOS informing that he signed both ED and Order form the same day. The accidental omission of the electronic signature of the ED was discovered the day after, which was a Friday before the Strasbourg session, so that it could only be rectified on Tuesday in Strasbourg.
OD 964/006	K.P. Repplinger	In-depth analysis on precautionary recapitalisations	4 000	Non conforme	Art. 86.1 Fin.Reg. : Order form signed before ED 842/15135 - see GEDA Note D(2017) 32549	K.P. Repplinger	See note to the file of 01.06.17 informing that both ED and Order form were processed within in a single file and signed de facto on the same day.

Les décisions dérogeant aux procédures établies et aux réglementations applicables

OD 503/057	S. Oberhauser	Hearing on "Towards a European Road Safety Area"	693,14	Conforme	Lost originals, travel from different place of residence, and authorisation by AOS given afterwards	S. Oberhauser	Authorisation of reimbursement of travel costs by AOS after the hearing took place (see note to S. Oberhauser of 23.03.2017)
OD 875/11	A. Vitrey	Study on Financial Instruments	72 600	Non conforme	Art. 86.1 Fin.Reg. : Order form signed before ED 875/15357 - see GEDA Note D(2017) 41927 of 23.10.17	M. Strasser	Separate treatment of paper signataire and electronic signature procedure led to accidental signature of Order form before valid electronic signature of ED by previous AOS (A. Vitrey, see memo in GEDA D(2017)41927 of 23.10.17).

6.4 Long-term contractual obligations

Contractor	Subject	Duration ⁽¹⁾		Overall value of procurement operation	Contract expenditure in 2017 (EUR)	Renewal method ⁽²⁾	Description of monitoring measures
		Contract	Procurement operation				
Blomeyer y Sanz	IP/D/ALL/FWC/2015-001/lot2/C4	5x12 months	60 months	800.000 EUR	36.000	automatic	Expiry date of FWC 30/03/2020; reopening of competition for specific assignments

(1) Months, years or open-ended

(2) Manual or automatic

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

Name(s) of successful tenderer(s)	Subject	Amount	Legal basis	Grounds	Applicants		Eligibility criteria	Contract reference	PPF opinion date
					Invited:	For negotiations			
Vagedes & Schmid GmbH	COP23	32.729,35 (covered by ED 15023)	Art. 134.1.b) RAP	rental of office space	1	1	Sole operator in charge of the organisation of the Conference with whom an agreement could be signed	Delegation expenses	n/a
Vagedes & Schmid GmbH	COP23	13.870,65 (covered by ED 15229)	Art. 134.1.b) RAP	rental of office space	1	1	Sole operator in charge of the organisation of the Conference with whom an agreement could be signed	Delegation expenses	n/a

6.6 Results of ex-post evaluations

No posts available in DG IPOL for ex-post evaluations.

Only in the frame of the annual carry-over exercise, IPOL ex-ante verifiers may control the respective transactions ex-post.

6.7 Sensitive posts

<i>Post identified as sensitive</i> <i>Measures taken</i>
<p>The 2017 assessment of the sensitivity of DG IPOL posts showed that there are potentially 54 sensitive posts (i.e. 1 Director General, 2 Directors, 11 ADs and 40 ASTs) that have remained more than 7 years in the same post. Out of these 54 posts, 1 AD changed status in 2014. In addition, 1 AD changed the unit, and 1 Director and 1 AD retired in 2017. Overall, the evaluation result for each category of posts indicated that the risks identified are low. The existing control environment can be considered as sufficient to compensate for the resulting risks (e.g. inclusion in the annual mobility exercise).</p>

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	✓				
2. Ethical and organisational values	1	✓				
Section 2: Human resources						
3. Allocation of staff and mobility	3	✓				
4. Staff assessment and development	3, 4	✓				
Section 3: Planning and risk management						
5. Objectives and performance indicators	7, 9, 10	✓				
6. Risk management process	11	✓				
Section 4: Operations and control activities						
7. Operational set-up	5, 6	✓				
8. Processes and procedures	15, 18	✓				
9. Supervision by management	17	✓				
10. Business continuity	19		✓			
11. Document management	13	✓				
Section 5: Information and financial reporting						
12. Information and communication	13, 14	✓				
13. Accounting and financial information	12	✓				
Section 6: Evaluation and auditing						
14. Evaluation of activities	n/a					
15. Evaluation of internal control systems	20, 22		✓			
16. Audit reports	21	✓				

Comments on the outcome of the annual self-assessment of MICS performance

1. Standards assessed as 'achieved' - good practices

Good practice examples (N° of standard(s) in brackets):

- Budget management structure published on IPOLNET (1);
- Regular training for newcomers (2);
- Access to databases (e.g. FINORD) linked to mandatory training; toolbox for initiators published on IPOLNET (3);
- Dialogue with line manager for annual assessment in place (3, 4);
- Objectives of the DG are defined and communicated each year (5);
- Administrative work program in place (5);

- Weekly monitoring of main budget implementation done by the DG's Finance Unit in cooperation with all operational departments (5);
- Risk assessment done by the responsible AOS for financial and legal commitments up to 60.000 EUR (6);
- Rotation policy in place (7);
- Financial Agents table published on INTRANET (7);
- Financial circuits in line with Financial Regulation in place and published on IPOLNET; Detailed checklists for initiation , verification and archiving continuously updated and published (8);
- Exceptions and Derogations are registered in the Finance Unit's database FINIP and in Web Contracts (8);
- Budget follow-up figures on every agenda of the Directors' (AOS) weekly meetings (9)
- On a political level, the CCC reviews the budget in September for potential adjustments and re-allocations in accordance with the Committees' needs (9)
- Back-up in place to ensure the continuity of operations (10).
- Financial archives, of the DG centralised and managed by in the DG's Finance unit; all procedures published; in addition, , destruction of all financial documents fulfilling the conditions established by DG IPOL's Retention Schedule Document (11, 12);
- Rules published on IPOLNET (12, 13);

2. Standards assessed as '**almost achieved**' - further work required (10) and (15)

- On-going regular update and revision of tailor-made IPOL templates and best-practice in procurement. Depends on IPOL. Full harmonisation of IPOL specific models for all procedures in place. A major check and update of on-line based manuals / templates of financial and contractual procedures on the new IPOL web-site is being done since it has been launched in October 2014. Moreover, continuous feeding of a “NEWS” section in Finance Unit's web-site containing the latest replies to relevant questions by the financial actors allows improved efficiency of communication with all financial agents and Committee Secretariats.
- Follow-up a continuous implementation of recommendations (e.g. IPOL working group to improve efficiency of procurement activities). In 2017 IPOL ‘Negotiated Procedure’ templates with 3 and 5 candidates have mainly been on the agenda of the IPOL working group to fully adapt them to the 2016 Financial Regulation. Depends on IPOL.
- Annual revision of control framework in connection with the annual activity report. Depends on IPOL. Such a “method” should still be better defined, even though the control framework is continuously monitored and improved, notably through the Finance Unit and particularly the use of the DGs web-pages.
- In our IPOL Risk Register we have identified and assessed potential risks in 5 different areas, i.e. IT, HR, Finance, Logistics, and Legislative Coordination. In October 2017, for example, the Parliament was challenged by an unexpected IT outage caused by a fire alarm which provoked the destruction of data in key IT systems. This incident showed again that a corporate contingency plan defining the workarounds to be applied in case of failure at any stage of the parliamentary / legislative work cycle is necessary to

maintain the core business of the European Parliament, as well as a recovery plan to integrate in the IT applications the backlog of data once the system is operational again.

3. Standards assessed as '**partly achieved**' or '**started**' - weaknesses and practices

NA

4. Standards assessed as '**to be started**' or '**non applicable**'

- From a purely political aspect, control standard 5 is, however, partially non-applicable. This is due to the fact that the most important objectives of the DG are of a political nature and mostly depend on political decisions. They do not lend themselves easily to measurement through quantitative indicators. In his recent audit report n° 16/18 on the Annual Activity Reporting, the Internal Auditor confirmed the specific nature of “political DGs” compared to purely “administrative DGs” and recommended that the future objective-setting framework for the annual reporting should take this difference better into account.
- Multi-annual programming is not an integral part of the current system of an annual "administrative work program". With the introduction of a "Strategic Execution Framework" (SEF), multiannual aspects feature more prominently. Further improvement is expected by the implementation of the Internal Auditor's recommendations and action plan proposed in his 2017 audit on “Annual Activity Reporting”.
- The DG does not operate an ex-post evaluation system. Given the need to carefully weigh the benefits of such controls compared to the resources needed to implement them, it is considered much more effective to concentrate limited resources on ex-ante controls in conjunction with continuous information and training. This is particularly so given the DGs relatively modest annual budget. Nevertheless, informal ex-post controls can be made when deemed pertinent.