

# **Annual Activity Report**

**2017**

**DG EPRS**

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## 0. BUDGETARY IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

|      |  |   | à remplir par la DG |         |
|------|--|---|---------------------|---------|
| Code | Appropriation type   | Type de crédits   | EUR ou %            | Formule |
|      | <b>Appropriations of 2017</b>  | <b>Crédits 2017</b>   |                     |         |
| A    | Initial appropriations   | Crédits initiaux  | 8.499.000,00        |         |
| B    | Final appropriations   | Crédits finaux  | 7.810.625,00        |         |
| C    | Commitments  | Engagements   | 7.614.254,23        |         |
| D    | Commitments in % of final appropriations   | Engagements en % des crédits finaux   | 97%                 | D=C/B   |
| E    | Payments   | Palements   | 4.014.486,91        |         |
| F    | Payments in % of commitments   | Palements en % des engagements  | 53%                 | F=E/C   |
| G    | Cancellations of 2017 final appropriations   | Annulations de crédits finaux 2017  | 196.370,77          | G=B-C-K |
| H    | Cancellations appropriations in % of final appropriations  | Annulations en % des crédits finaux   | 0,03                | H=G/B   |
|      | <b>Appropriations carried forward from 2017 to 2018</b>  | <b>Crédits reportés de 2017 à 2018</b>  |                     |         |
| I    | Automatic carryforwards from 2017 to 2018  | Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2017 à 2018   | 3.599.767,32        | I=C-E   |
| J    | Automatic carryforwards from 2017 to 2018 in % of commitments  | Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2017 à 2018 en % des engagements  | 0,47                | J=I/C   |
| K    | Non-automatic carryforwards from 2017 to 2018  | Crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2017 à 2018   | 0,00                |         |
| L    | Non-automatic carryforwards from 2017 to 2018 in % of final appropriations                                     | Crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2017 à 2018 en % des crédits finaux   |                     | L=K/B   |
|      | <b>Appropriations carried over from 2016 to 2017</b>   | <b>Crédits reportés de 2016 à 2017</b>  |                     |         |
| M    | Automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017   | Crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017   | 2.854.922,35        |         |
| N    | Payments against automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017  | Palements sur crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017   | 2.581212,46         |         |
| O    | Payments against automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017         | Palements sur crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017 en % des crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017          | 90%                 | O=N/M   |
| P    | Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017  | Annulations de crédits reportés automatiquement de 2016 à 2017  | 273.709,89          | P=M-N   |
| 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         | 0,10                | Q=P/M   |
| 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   | Palements sur crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017   | 0,00                |         |
| T    | Payments against non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 | Palements sur crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017 en % des crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017  | -                   | T=S/R   |
| U    | Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017  | Annulations de crédits reportés non-automatiquement de 2016 à 2017  |                     | U= R-S  |
| 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 |                     | V=U/R   |
|      | <b>Assigned revenue in 2017</b>  | <b>Recettes affectées 2017</b>  |                     |         |
| W    | Appropriations from assigned revenue in 2017 (current)   | Crédits de dépenses spécifiques sur recettes affectées courants 2017  | 676,11              |         |
| X    | Assigned revenue carried over to 2017  | Crédits de dépenses spécifiques sur 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                |         |

## 1. OBJECTIVES

### 1.1. Objectives of the Directorate-General in 2017

#### *Background*

The **Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services** (DG EPRS) - or European Parliamentary Research Service - provides 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 and contributing to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence as an institution. In undertaking this work, the directorate-general supports and promotes parliamentary outreach to the wider public, including dialogue with relevant stakeholders in the Union's system of multi-level governance.

Since January 2014, DG EPRS has answered over 11,000 requests for substantive research and analysis from over 90 per cent of individual Members, replied to over 2,000 such requests from other parliamentary clients, and undertaken targeted research work for 17 parliamentary committees. In parallel, over the same timeframe, DG EPRS has also replied to over 78,000 reference requests from within the Parliament and over 230,000 citizens' enquiries. It has produced over 2,700 physical publications, plus another 1,000 digital-only texts, so far eliciting over 11 million page views electronically.

#### *Specific objectives for 2017*

In line with the overall **mission statement** of the directorate-general and the Parliamentary Project Portfolio (PPP) adopted within the European Parliament's administration, DG EPRS focussed on the following **priority objectives**, defined at the beginning of 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 high-quality and innovative **products and services** for Members of the European Parliament, individually and collectively, throughout 2017.
- The policy analysts and information specialists working within the Members' Research Service will continue to give the highest priority to **responding to requests for research and analysis from individual Members**, of which there were 3,441 in 2016.
- In this process, the Members' Research Service will intensify the provision of **personalised briefing of Members**, notably through the increasingly frequent holding of **in-person meetings** and use of 'tailored analyses' in response to research requests.
- The Members' Research Service will also continue to **widen and deepen its range of publications** - of which there were 722 in 2016 - covering all major EU policies, legislation and issues. The development of **series of publications** - such as *EU legislation in progress* and *International agreements in progress* - will be expanded and refined, and new **annual publications** will be launched.

- Continuing attention will be given to the overall **accessibility, interactivity and visual presentation of publications**, and the effective use of visuals therein, as well as to ensuring the most appropriate format for each publication type, especially those which need to be regularly updated.
- Efforts will be made to ensure that publications can be more easily **adapted for personalised re-use by Members**, for example through greater deployment of modular elements and multilingual infographics. In parallel, there will be stronger emphasis on undertaking analytical work on the impact of EU policies on individual regions and social groups.
- The **advance programming** of all publications will be further refined, to ensure their appropriate timeliness and topicality, as well as comprehensiveness of coverage.
- The Members' Research Service will continue to issue regular publications on the **performance of the current European Commission** during its five-year term, and to coordinate and generate content for the Parliament's recent '**legislative train**' initiative, now available online, for tracking the implementation its ten-point plan. The latter project will be extended to cover all EU policy areas during 2017.
- The Members' Research Service (and Library) will continue to deliver a range of defined **services to the two EU Advisory Committees**, implementing the Parliament's cooperation agreements with those bodies in 2014.
- The successful process of **specialisation of staff by policy area and deepening of knowledge and skills** within the Members' Research Service, supported by appropriate training, will be maintained.

## Directorate B - Library

- The **Library Directorate** will develop and implement a comprehensive concept for the **modernisation of the EP Library** over coming years, based on greater digitisation, stronger emphasis on support for research, closer cooperation with other relevant libraries, especially inter-institutionally, and the possible opening of some library services to the general public.
- The '**digital library**' dimension of this new approach will permit wider and more integrated provision of collections, sources and databases to clients, as well as their easier access across a variety of communication channels, alongside greater emphasis upon the 'user experience', reflecting client interests and needs.
- 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 collections, sources and databases for a wide parliamentary clientele.
- The **Library Reading Room** in Brussels will continue to be actively developed as a forum and venue for intellectual exchange, including through the hosting of policy roundtables and seminars on EPRS and other publications, drawing in expertise from, and enhancing collaboration with, a wide range of partner organisations.
- The Library Directorate will cooperate increasingly actively and develop synergies with a range of **partner libraries**, starting with other EU institutional libraries and major research libraries across the European Union, in order to access wider collections and

compare best practice. Such cooperation will aim *inter alia* at the development of a **digital portal and digital repositories** for books and other material on EU issues and European integration.

- The **Comparative Law Library Unit** will be further developed as a centre of knowledge and expertise on the law of the EU, its member states and other jurisdictions, from a comparative prospective, including through targeted publications and events. Its collection will be strengthened, both physically and digitally, and reinforced by partnerships with similar bodies in other jurisdictions.
- The **Citizens' Enquiries Unit** will continue to provide high-quality responses to citizens' enquiries - of which there were over 90,000 in 2016 - and effective support for Members by further developing general and individualised tools to help them respond to citizens' enquiries, notably through 'model answers' (and translations thereof) and alerts on public campaigns.
- The work of the **Historical Archives Unit** will continue to be mainstreamed in the daily life of the Parliament. It will continue to develop a comprehensive policy of the collection, preservation, archiving and opening to the public of the Parliament's five-million documents, exploiting the opportunities of digitisation and archiving of electronic documents. It will deepen the Parliament's Historical Library and contribute to providing a more systematic history of the institutional development of the Parliament over time.
- The Library Directorate will participate fully in certain **EP-wide strategic projects**, notably the new online platform, 'My House of European History', where it will moderate contributions by citizens, and the Parliamentarium, where it already offers answers to issues of interest to citizens.

#### **Directorate C - Impact Assessment and European Added Value**

- The **Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value** will further develop its intensive support for parliamentary committees and the institution as a whole, with a view to enhancing their capacity for **scrutiny and oversight of the executive** and strengthening the Parliament's involvement throughout the EU **legislative and policy cycles** - notably through work on the cost of non-Europe, and analysis to support legislative initiative reports and implementation reports.
- The Directorate's 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 EU legislative options, on an *ex-ante* basis, and to review outcomes, on an *ex-post* basis. Research on the 'cost of non-Europe' will be broadened to new policy areas.
- The Directorate will continue to develop as a **centre for neutrally competent information and analysis** in these fields, supported by the series of '**rolling check-lists**' of relevant scrutiny material which it has pioneered, to be made increasingly available in a use-friendly electronic format.
- The Directorate will contribute to the successful **implementation of the new Inter-institutional Agreement (IIA) on Better Law-Making** and stand ready for any increase in demand for *ex-ante* impact assessment and *ex-post* evaluation work, in the context of greater awareness of the potential contribution of better law-making tools.

- 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, and operating through shorter projects, where possible, with the results of research being made more widely available within the parliamentary community.
- Using new interactive tools, the Scientific Foresight Unit will continue its efforts to reach **non-specialised Members** as recipients of analysis on scientific and technological developments and their possible impact on society and policy.
- The Global Trends Unit will generate publications and events for Members aimed at **identifying, tracking and analysing long-and medium-term global trends** and their implications for the EU policy process. It will provide high-quality in-put to, and the secretariat for, inter-institutional discussion of such trends within the ESPAS framework.
- The Directorate will further **enhance its advance planning and working methods**, to ensure that its products and services, whether produced automatically or on request, are delivered to clients in a timely manner, within existing capacity and in line with established standards and procedures. It will **improve statistics on delivery** of its products and services, and adapt them to new priorities and needs, as appropriate.
- The Directorate will further **develop briefing material** which is easy to read, easy to share, and easy to adapt to individual and local use. It will improve the **dissemination of its products and services**, by better identifying potential clients and optimal distribution channels, and will closely monitor **client satisfaction** with, and use of, products and services, in order to prioritise production and delivery.
- The Directorate will intensify **outreach and inter-institutional cooperation**, on the basis of developing networks, structures and agreements - including with the two EU Advisory Committees, the European Court of Auditors, and national and regional parliaments - and serve as a platform for exchange of best practice, methodology and knowledge.

#### **Across the Directorate-General as a whole**

- DG EPRS will continue to **refine and implement its various projects** within the overall Parliamentary Project Portfolio (PPP), with a view to generating innovative new products and services, working on the basis of its DG-wide Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) and other relevant benchmarks for the administration as a whole.
- Based on its 'key result indicators' (KRIs) and other metrics, DG EPRS will continuously **monitor its degree of success in delivery** to Members and parliamentary committees of a comprehensive range of products and services, underpinned by standards which are effectively met, in a client-oriented and timely way.
- Through its dedicated 'client needs team' and other initiatives, DG EPRS will continue to improve **awareness and take-up of its products and services among Members and their staff**, notably in securing their regular and repeated use by clients. It will continue to compare its own **enquiry management system (EMS)** with comparable systems used in other parliamentary research services and libraries worldwide.

- DG EPRS will intensify efforts to offer **greater accessibility of 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 (such as podcasts and animated infographics), and the targeted diffusion of output through social media.
- DG EPRS will further broaden and deepen **training for Members and their offices**, reflecting the much wider and deeper range of products and services now available from the directorate-general.
- Building on the wide range of events already organised in the Library Reading Room, DG EPRS will organise an increasingly coherent set of **policy roundtables** for reflection on EU policy, legislation and issues, often in cooperation with other directorates-general and partner organisations.
- DG EPRS will further develop and intensify its **outreach, liaison and dialogue with external partners** - notably think tanks, research institutes and academia, as well as with national parliamentary research services and libraries - to exchange knowledge and analysis and to access external expertise. Existing partnership arrangements with bodies such as the EUI, OECD and IMF research department will be further developed.
- Strengthened links with **national parliamentary research services and libraries** should be designed to take cooperation to a new level, including the organisation of an **annual conference** with such services from EU member states, ideally within the wider ECPRD framework, and the possibility of undertaking some joint publications.
- DG EPRS will pursue a coherent internal and external **communication and online strategy**, including the development of multimedia products, use of new formats for products (such as e-book publication), and exploration of additional social media platforms, working in cooperation with DGs COMM and ITEC, as appropriate.
- DG EPRS will continue to enhance its **visual identity**, with a view to increasing the **attractiveness and readability** of EPRS products, whether in physical or digital form, working in close cooperation with other directorates-general.
- EPRS' innovative **Graphics and Statistics Warehouses** - the former already featuring over a thousand items for downloadable use - will be further expanded as a resource for Members and staff.
- DG EPRS will engage in active **pursuit of the Parliament's environmental targets**, notably through the EMAS programme and its specific targets in 2017, building on its successful work over the last three years to reduce administrative paper, introduce network printers and maintain a low carbon footprint in relation to missions.
- DG EPRS will pursue a comprehensive and forward-looking **human resources strategy** for coming years, including an increasingly sophisticated exercise in mapping existing skills and experience within the directorate-general, and the expansion of **staff training** in specific areas, such further developing staff skills in economics and public speaking.
- DG EPRS will aim to provide its staff with the **best possible working conditions and support**, including through improved access to technology and modern office accommodation, not least in preparation for future moves to the new Wilfried Martens Building in Brussels and Konrad Adenauer II Building in Luxembourg.



- DG EPRS will further improve its **management of information-technology** infrastructure, projects and requests, with important projects to optimise workflows and increase the electronic availability and visibility of EPRS products, undertaken in cooperation with DGs ITEC and Communications.
- DG EPRS will strengthen its internal **IT governance structure**, with a view to better identifying and supporting strategic priorities through IT solutions and ensuring the optimal use of its IT capacity.
- DG EPRS will play its full part in supporting **cooperation between directorates-general** within the Parliament's administration, not least by participating fully in the work of various inter-DG steering committees, task forces, working groups and networks, such as on EMAS and GIDOC.
- Continued efforts will be made to ensure smooth and efficient execution of DG EPRS' **budget**, including by the effective forward planning of all financial transactions within the directorate-general.
- 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.

## 1.2. Feasibility and risk assessment

In pursuit of its work, DG EPRS identified the following **main potential risks** to its operations for the calendar year 2017:

1. One of the major goals of DG EPRS is to **continuously develop high-quality and innovative, pro-active products and services**, such as new series of publications, and at the same time **respond to an (increasing) demand by Members, parliamentary committees and the institution as a whole for EPRS products and services**, while guaranteeing timeliness and topicality of all publications, as well as a comprehensive coverage of all relevant policy areas. With regard to this goal, there was a potential risk that insufficient time could be devoted to deliver pro-active, automatic and/or serial, as well as on-demand, products and services simultaneously in a timely and qualitatively satisfactory manner given competing priorities and tight deadlines. This could be triggered by an imbalance between the available human resources for the provision of on-demand products and services, on the one hand, and commitments to issue publications automatically or pro-actively on the other. As a result, the capacity to deliver timely, high-quality and innovative research could be impeded. DG EPRS therefore reflected carefully before committing to deliver additional, automatic or serial products and seeks to ensure sufficient flexibility to adapt to arising needs for on-demand services, combined with advance forward planning for the provision pro-active products and services and of on-demand products and services (taking into account the Commission's legislative agenda, CWP). A mitigating measure consisted in combining the launch of new projects with the introduction of flexibility for the provision of automated or serial products and services, or under-used offers.

2. DG EPRS aims continuously to **improve the overall the accessibility, interactivity and visual presentation of its products and services**, extending electronic publications and providing an easier external online access to information resources across a variety of communication channels in user-friendly electronic formats. With regard to this goal, there was a potential risk of delays in the continued enlargement of digitised service offers, including options for easy external access, due to a lack of digital accessibility and loss of clients. The root causes of such a risk could be a non-alignment of requests and delivery of IT solutions and services, constrained development capacities for IT, insufficient support through other DGs or lack of internal IT capacities, and/or reliance on external providers. This could result in delays in the provision of IT-based service offers, incapacity to meet the expectation to be able to access EPRS products and services anywhere, at any time. As a result, non-availability of systems and analytical material would risk generating a decrease of client attention and impact of research. DG EPRS has managed to mitigate this risk by strengthening its internal IT governance, by improving identification and support of strategic priorities through IT solutions, and by ensuring the optimal use of the DG's internal IT capacity, as well of that of DG ITEC (and others).
3. DG EPRS is committed to **improving the specialisation of staff by policy area and to deepening their knowledge and skills**. For this purpose it pursues a comprehensive and forward-looking human resources strategy, including an increasingly sophisticated exercise in mapping existing skills and experience, and the expansion of staff training in specific areas. With regard to this goal, there was a potential risk that limited durations and/or attractiveness of job contracts/offers could lead to an inability to obtain or retain staff with the necessary specialisms or to train staff to become such specialists over time. This has posed the risk of inadequate human resources to cover all policy areas and to deliver high-standard quality research across them. This could endanger those EPRS objectives for the attainment of which specific skills-sets are required. In order to overcome these risks, the DG has chosen to optimise forward planning of staff recruitments/transfers, as well as increased specialised professional training, in close cooperation between human resources professionals and operational entities.
4. DG EPRS is committed to supporting a wide range of parliamentary clients in their research and analytical work, by **providing comprehensive range of collections, sources and databases** for the use of the EP as a whole. With regard to this goal, there was a potential risk of a lack of coordinated management and demand-driven cost increases in the field of paid subscriptions in particular. Unless a strong link between subscription/collection management and client needs was established and maintained, a misallocation of expenses and an overall increase of subscriptions, with a potential impact on costs (per user), could occur. Actions to counter such a risk have been consultation with the Internal Auditor on subscription policy, continued use of user surveys, and close contacts with other directorates and units within EPRS to identify and track evolving needs.
5. DG EPRS aims to **improve the distribution and dissemination of its products and services**, by better identifying potential clients and optimal distribution channels, and closely monitoring client satisfaction. The potential risk lies a mismatch between the EPRS 'offer' - in terms of product and service range, timeliness and quality - and the expectations of Members and parliamentary committees. DG EPRS has sought to mitigate this risk by pursuing a dedicated user-needs strategy, including continuous client contacts and the gathering and analysis of feed-back, further adapting products and services to client needs, as necessary.

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

### **2.1. Environment of the Directorate-General**

DG EPRS provides 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 and contributing to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence as an institution. In undertaking this work, the directorate-general supports and promotes parliamentary outreach to the wider public, including dialogue with relevant stakeholders in the Union's system of multi-level governance.

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

- 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 establishment plan of the Parliament. During 2017, the Policy Cycle Unit and the Ex-Post Impact Assessment Unit were merged into a single entity, known as the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit, to benefit from existing synergies and optimise the use of resources.

At the end of 2017, DG EPRS launched an open public procurement procedure for the provision of external expertise in the field of Science Technology Options Assessment (STOA) and Scientific Foresight, divided into five lots. In addition, following an inter-institutional call for tender launched by the European Commission, and in the framework of the on-going 'Open Digital Library' project, the Library Directorate ordered a new Integrated Library Management System (ILMS).

### **2.2. Human resources within the Directorate-General**

#### *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 | 153         | 117 | 3      | <b>273</b> | 148         | 111 | 4      | <b>263</b> |
| Temporary posts | 3           | 1   | 1      | <b>5</b>   | 3           | 2   | 1      | <b>6</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>    | 156         | 118 | 4      | <b>278</b> | 151         | 113 | 5      | <b>269</b> |

### 2.2.2. Staff numbers as at 31.12.2017

|                                | AD         | AST        | AST/SC   | Total      |  | FTE        |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|------------|--|------------|
| Officials                      | <b>136</b> | <b>103</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>243</b> |  | <b>243</b> |
| Temporary staff                | <b>8</b>   | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b> | <b>13</b>  |  | <b>13</b>  |
| - in temporary posts           | <b>1</b>   |            |          | <b>1</b>   |  | <b>1</b>   |
| - in permanent posts           | <b>2</b>   | <b>1</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>4</b>   |  | <b>4</b>   |
| - to offset part-time working  | <b>5</b>   | <b>1</b>   | <b>2</b> | <b>8</b>   |  | <b>8</b>   |
| Contractual agents             |            |            |          | <b>53</b>  |  | <b>53</b>  |
| Seconded National Expert (SNE) |            |            |          | <b>3</b>   |  | <b>3</b>   |
| Agency staff                   |            |            |          | <b>24</b>  |  | <b>24</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                   |            |            |          | <b>336</b> |  | <b>336</b> |

## 2.3. Budget implementation for 2017

### 2.3.1. Initial and final appropriations

At the beginning of 2017, the appropriations under the responsibility of DG EPRS amounted to EUR 8.499.000. During the second stage of the mopping-up exercise, an amount of EUR 688.375 was made available. This latter amount constitutes, by comparison with 2016, a reduction of 47.5 per cent in the share of the assigned budget mopped up, confirming the on-going trend to increase the proportion of the available financial resources used by the DG since its creation in November 2013. There were no other changes between the initial and final appropriations in 2017.

### 2.3.2. Final appropriations and appropriations committed

Final appropriations: **EUR 7.810.625**

Committed appropriations: **EUR 7.614.254**

Implementation rate: **97%**.

The implementation rate of 97 per cent is exactly the same as in 2016. It is important to note that DG EPRS' activities require the retention of some margin of manoeuvre to promptly react to last-minute requests for externally-commissioned studies from parliamentary committees, as well as for subscriptions to sources of information relevant for individual Members and/or committees. DG EPRS reduced the number of provisional commitments to a strict minimum, in order to exercise tighter control over the execution of the budget.

### 2.3.3. Appropriations committed and payments made

The percentage of payments related to committed appropriations in 2017 was, at 53 per cent, slightly lower than in 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 directorate-general 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 in producing these studies 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 for library services or by the Historical Archives fall in the following financial year, and some experts

entitled to travel reimbursement submit their receipts only after the end of the financial year, when they prepare their private declaration of income.

During 2017, a significant part of the budget was committed only in the second half of the year. The Historical Archives, for example, could make use of the new framework contract only during the last months of the year.

#### *2.3.4. Use of automatic and non-automatic carry-overs from 2016 to 2017*

DG EPRS had an overall payment rate of 90 per cent for the appropriations carried over from 2016 to 2017. The remaining percentage can be explained by the strict quality policy regarding studies. During 2017, several penalties were applied to suppliers when the quality of the studies delivered did not meet DG EPRS' standards. Beyond that, the cancellation or delay of purchases of external publications which were not yet received and the provision for travel expenses for experts invited that finally came in at a lower cost than expected, explain the remaining 10 per cent.

#### *2.3.5. Use of appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue*

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

An amount of 676,11 has been assigned to budget line 03210 due to the reimbursement of a double payment made to a provider.

##### *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 2017, 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:*

During 2017, the number of Members who have so far used the Members' Research Service since July 2014 rose to 91 per cent, with 72 per cent doing so in the twelve months in question. (In autumn 2014, one year after its creation, by comparison, the figure was only 22 per cent). The MRS responded to a total of 11,430 substantive requests for research and analysis from Members of the European Parliament and their staff during the first four full years of operation (1,660 in 2014; 2,995 in 2015; 3,441 in 2016; and 3,334 in 2017). A total of 2,131 substantive requests for research and analysis from other parliamentary clients, such as

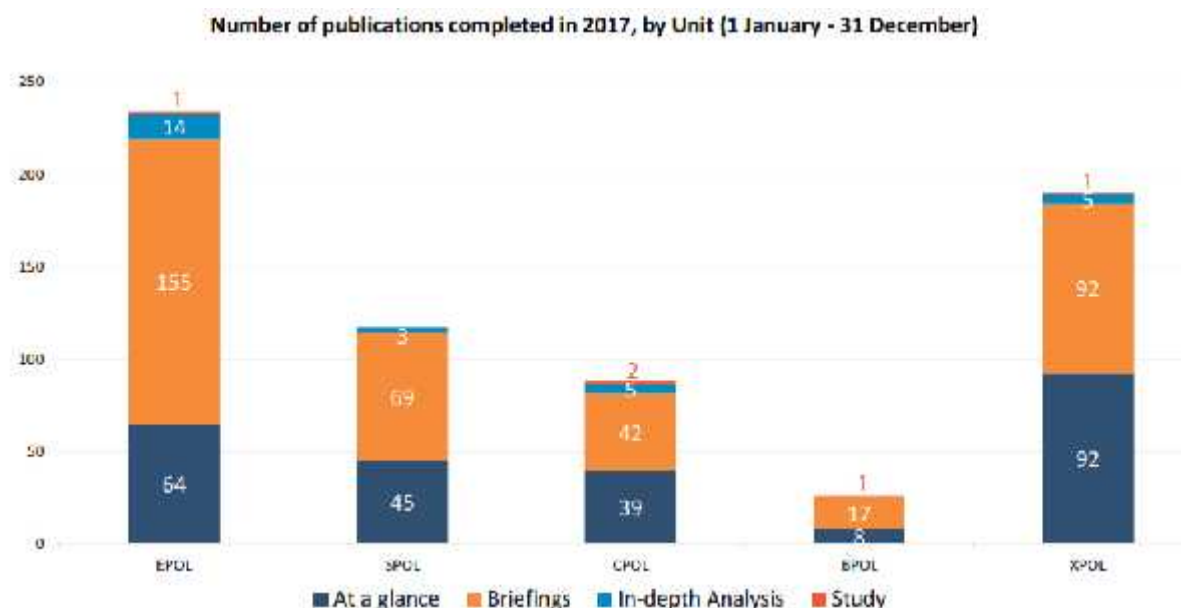
committee secretariats, policy departments and political groups, were also replied to (720 requests in 2014; 497 in 2015; 437 in 2016 and 477 in 2017).

In answering Members' enquiries, the five thematic units of the Members' Research Service (MRS) follow a strict principle of confidentiality. The largest number of such enquiries - 73% - are submitted electronically through an enquiry management system (EMS). The rest are received by email, on the phone or at the information desk in the Library.

As shown in the first table below, economic policies (including economy, industry, the environment, social affairs and employment) and external policies are the policy domains in which MRS clients display the strongest interest. It also shows that citizens' and external policies are the fields in which requests require the most substantive research work - and therefore show the highest numbers of 'tailored analyses', namely significantly more detailed replies. The Members' Research Service also offers 'in-person briefings', on request.



The Members' Research Service also publishes a wide range of briefing material pro-actively, across the categories of products defined at EP level. In 2017, it issued 677 publications. In line with its *raison d'être*, the Members' Research Service seeks to generate as many as possible of these publications internally, without use of external expertise, so reinforcing the development of a strong, specialised cadre and capability of in-house experts, as intended when the service was created.



Among these many publications, the Members' Research Service continued to develop various series in 2017. This approach has the advantage of making the output more predictable for our clientele and helps in organising the work from a managerial point of view. As a natural consequence, strong emphasis has been put on EU legislation and the budget, the core competences of the European Parliament. During 2017, 121 'EU Legislation in Progress' briefings were produced, seven briefings on 'How the EU Budget is spent', seven 'International agreements in Progress' briefings, 13 briefings on 'Understanding...' various issues, and 38 Topical Digests. In this fourth year of its existence, the Members' Research Service also started to produce a number major annual flagship publications, notably its 'Economic and Budgetary Outlook for the EU', 'Demographic Outlook for the EU' and 'Ten Issues to Watch in (year)' publications. These publications have a strong impact in the house and among the wider public, and have been promoted during events in the Library reading room and through social media.

While the topic is not specific to a particular unit, the Members' Research Service has responded to a number of requests linked to the UK withdrawal from the European Union (*Brexit*) and produced relevant publications in this regard following the preparation and the running negotiations.

In 2017, MRS continued to regularly update and upgrade the 'Legislative Train Schedule', which charts the legislative proposals issued by the Juncker Commission, focussing on the ten-point plan it announced on taking office in 2014. It brings together information on upcoming initiatives, legislative proposals in play and adopted, and also highlights blocked or withdrawn files. The application is now updated on a monthly basis. The 'Legislative Train Schedule' not only allows tracking of every individual file, it also provides a global figure for delivery by the European institutions and helps to identify blockages. The aggregated data provides the basis for a major research publication on the work of the Commission, in the form of an In-depth Analysis. This six-monthly publication has gradually become a reference-tool for the Parliament, other EU institutions and wider public.

In parallel, the MRS prepared monthly updates on the 59 priority files listed in the 'Joint Declaration on Priorities' by the Commission, Council and Parliament in December 2016. These updates served as working documents for discussion during five Inter-DG Policy Steering Groups established within the EP administration and meeting monthly as of February 2017, to promote cooperation between services along policy streams.

In view of the next European elections, in 2019, the Members' Research Service also started to prepare a *Leistungsbilanz* or EU delivery scorecard, which aims at explaining the contribution of the European Union, not from the point of view of the policy-maker, but rather from the perspective of the citizen. This easy-to-read material, looking at the impact of the EU on regions and localities, citizens and social groups, will be published online in the course of 2018 and 2019, as well as promoted through a variety of communication channels, on the basis of cooperation between several directorates-general.

The Members' Research Service participated actively in a wide range of EPRS events in the Library Reading Room, often involving Members, and engaged in the organisation of policy hubs among officials. The issues that have most frequently been discussed in events relate to economics and foreign affairs.

Following the 2014 cooperation agreement between the European Parliament and the EU's two advisory committees, the Members' Research Service focused on collaboration with the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and delivered services to those bodies by responding to specific requests for research and other forms of support, for example general briefing for the CoR's open days for regions and cities.



The Publications Management and Editorial Unit provides, within the Members' Research Service:

- Editing, formatting and publishing services for all publications of the directorate and the rest of the DG, in particular Directorate C; in addition, provides reference material and training on all publications-related issues, with the general goal of raising quality standards across the DG; and fulfils a range of coordination and reporting functions relating to EPRS publications.

- Graphic support, both in contributing graphics to enhance the readability and impact of a wide range of EPRS publications, and in producing stand-alone 'infographics', which have wide circulation within and beyond the house, and stand as instantly recognisable products of EPRS.

## **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. A unit dealing with comparative law was created in September 2015. As a result, the Directorate for the Library is currently organised in **four units**: the On-site and Online Library Services Unit (LIBS); Comparative Law Library Unit (COLL); Historical Archives Unit (ARCH); and Citizens' Enquiries Unit (AsKEP).

### *Results:*

During 2017, the Directorate for the Library continued to consolidate its support of the other EPRS directorates in research and analytical work. The Library acquired the new integrated management system for the future digital library project, and broadened its catalogue with e-book and e-journal packages. The Comparative Law Library Unit held a successful second Annual Forum, published ten studies and developed new modes of cooperation with external institutes dedicated to law studies (ERA and ELI). The Citizens' Enquiry Unit responded to a high level of queries and further automated tools and processes while at the same time broadening the range of services to members and citizens. The Historical Archives Unit managed the successful completion of its new IT system for archive management and launched ambitious new projects in the area of EP history and digital archiving.

## **On-site and Online Library Unit**

### *Background:*

The On-site and Online Library Services Unit (LIBS), based in Brussels, takes the lead in providing access to knowledge sources for the parliamentary community as a whole. It operates the Library Reading Rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg, and provides physical and online access for Members and staff to books, journals, databases, and news and information sources (whilst also providing training in the use of such sources). The unit helps provide

substantive content for the Parliament's internet and intranet presence and hosts various policy roundtables and other discussions organised by the Directorate-General (and by individual Members) in the Library Reading Room in Brussels.

### *Results:*

Staff of the On-site and Online Library Unit ensured the effective operation of the information desks in the Library Reading Rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg, supported the Members' Hotline, and replied to an increasing number of reference requests. The unit replied to over 18 000 reference requests in 2017, bringing the total since 2014 to over 78 000. It loaned out over 10,500 books (including those from the Historical Library in Luxembourg). Since 2014, 59 per cent of Members have borrowed books from the Library. The Brussels Reading Room was open for 211 working days in 2017. The unit also contributed to the organisation of an ever-expanding number of EPRS and Member events, 71 in the Brussels Reading Room in 2017 (see later). The latter reading room was reorganised physically to give more visibility to new acquisitions and special collections - notably the '100 Books on Europe to Remember' and 'Books by Members' collections - and to adapt to the collection becoming largely digital. In Strasbourg, a new open reading room was installed in the Winston Churchill Building, next to the Swan Bar.

The Library's client training programme was further developed and preparations were made for the development of e-learning courses. In order to give more visibility to library services, several outreach measures were undertaken, such as presentations to groups of specialist users (such as committee secretariats), subject guides, and short digital user guides to databases.

A new acquisitions and collection management policy was finalised and implemented, and the unit continued to gradually implement a policy increasing acquisitions on-demand, facilitated by the growing availability of e-books. During summer 2017, extensive weeding was performed on the paper reference collection. The library offer of academic material in general and e-books and e-journals in particular was greatly expanded. Cataloguing processes were simplified and the usage statistics improved.

A specific contract was concluded for the delivery and implementation of a new integrated library management system (ILMS/ALMA). Preparations for a smooth transition were made, including intensive contacts with other EU institutional libraries currently migrating to the same system. A new 'web-scale discovery system' was put into effect, including the integration of and access to e-journal subscriptions. In this framework, the library catalogue was put online and can now be shared with other libraries. The digital offer was substantially expanded by the acquisition of packages of e-books and e-journals, in parallel with a decrease in acquisition of print material. In cooperation with DG ITEC, a pilot was run on a 360 degree Virtual Tour of the Library.

The unit continued to support other services in DG EPRS. A new data model for the EPRS intranet site was implemented and an extensive training programme offered. A strategy for the future of the EPRS 'wiki' was developed, with colleagues trained in its use. A major framework contract for access to the press aggregator 'Factiva' was opened for the libraries of the two EU consultative committees. The unit actively participated in international library organisations (such as IFLA) and took over the chair of Eurolib. External visits to the Library included visitors from Japan, Estonia, UK, Greece, Georgia and Kenya.

## **Citizens' Enquiries Unit**

### *Background:*

The Citizens' Enquiries Unit (Ask EP), based in Luxembourg, seeks to enhance the Parliament's interaction with citizens by answering letters, emails and other requests for information on the Parliament and EU issues received by the institution from members of the public, as foreseen in law, and by making available 'model answers' to enquiries for the wider use of Members.

### *Results:*

In 2017, the unit treated over 9 200 individual enquiries and 42 900 'campaign' enquiries. (The former are defined as personalised messages sent by citizens on an individual basis; the latter as messages sent by citizens in the context of a coordinated initiative). As part of its role of supporting MEPs and other EP services in their correspondence with citizens, it launched a notification service for 'alerts on top issues' and continued actively to promote the use of 'model answers' to citizens' enquiries by Members and EP Information Offices in the various member states.

The unit also enhanced its 'AskEP.net' application, by adapting existing functionalities and delivering new versions of its module for pre-treating enquiries (eWIP), as well as continuing the development of its database (CitiDB) and modules for drafting answers (AnsComp) and producing statistics (StatsPortal). In order to report to MEPs and other EP services on subjects of particular interest to citizens, Ask EP produced a monthly report 'Citizens' Enquiries: Facts and Figures', deepened the analysis of correspondence received with a new product, 'Citizens' Enquiries: An Insight', and continued its close cooperation with Directorate C of DG EPRS on material relating notably to ex-post evaluation.

Aiming to enhance interaction with citizens and developing additional channels, Ask EP diffused topical material on Parliament's Facebook, Ask EP's page on Europarl and the EPRS blog. In addition, it worked closely with DG COMM on the latter's project 'EP in real time' and participated in the 2017 edition of the EP Open Days.

## **Historical Archives Unit**

### *Background:*

The Historical Archives Unit (ARCH), based in Luxembourg, manages and preserves the Parliament's official public documents and other archival material, including papers of individual Members, dating back to the launch of the ECSC in 1952, and operates the Library Reading Room ('Historical Library') in Luxembourg. It seeks to maintain the historical 'memory' of the Parliament as an institution, by making the archives publicly accessible, by assisting academic researchers in retrieving them for use, and by publishing historical studies of the Parliament based on the archives and other sources. It works closely with the EU Historical Archives at the European University Institute (EUI) in such work.

### *Results:*

In 2017, the Historical Archives Unit continued to develop a pro-active approach to acquiring EP archives, accompanying production departments in their archiving activities and conducting a retrospective analysis of the *fonds* processed in order to identify any gaps or weaknesses. This approach, coupled with a more and more rigorous application by the departments of the archiving rules defined in the retention schedules, has allowed for a

significant collection (the largest in terms of volume outside the electoral year) with, in particular, the first of several transfers for services that have never previously transferred their documents to the Historical Archives. Depositors included the EP Legal Service, Confidential Documents Unit, EP Ombudsman for children who have been victims of cross-border parental abduction, and ex-President Martin Schulz. The unit received 71 transfers in 2017, running to 288 linear metres, plus 148 CDs and 57 GB of electronic files. It also archived almost 43 000 items of EP official mail.

A campaign to record the oral histories of former Members began in November 2017 and will continue in the coming years, with the aim of gathering a significant number of stories, which will complement the private archives of former Members.

In addition, transfers to the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU) in Florence continued according to procedures successfully tested in previous years, with the submission of the parliamentary report files from the fourth legislature (168 linear metres).

After a transitional year in 2016, dedicated to the quality control of archival descriptive data in the context of the migration to the new CLAVIS archive management system and the revision of the archives processing methodology, 2017 saw the resumption of processing projects in accordance with this new methodology.

The Historical Library, based in Luxembourg, preserves the Parliament's historical and cultural heritage and ascertain its availability for future generations. During 2017, it developed a Rare and Special Book Collection (RSBC) and initiated restoration of books from the collection *100 Books on Europe to Remember*.

The Historical Archives Unit continued to provide access to the Parliament's historical documents and publications for all researchers wishing to explore the history of European integration, to develop relations with universities and to welcome trainees and visitors undertaking research on relevant topics.

In 2017, the unit launched an EP History project to chart the institutional development of the EP from the first direct elections in 1979 to the present day. Three studies were commissioned from leading academics on the first two parliamentary terms, from 1979 to 1989. The unit also drafted 76 blog posts of various kinds and organised six events and exhibitions. It also participated in the management of the 'My House of European History' website and continued to foster inter-institutional and professional cooperation, in particular, in the framework of the Inter-institutional Archives Group, but also by participating in expert groups and professional organisations so as to develop projects of common interest (*inter alia* digitalisation, unification of metadata and controlled authorities).

## **Comparative Law Library Unit**

### *Background:*

The **Comparative Law Library Unit** (COLL), based in Brussels, serves as a centre of knowledge and expertise on the law of the European Union, its member states and comparable democratic jurisdictions. It is responsible for building and maintaining an extensive reference collection of legislation, case law and legal doctrine, as well as engaging in research and analysis, and organising roundtable discussions among legal experts, in the field of comparative law. It works closely with other comparative law libraries for this purpose.

### *Results:*

In 2017, the Comparative Law Library Unit organised its second Annual Forum on Comparative Law, with the active participation of supreme-court justices, dedicated to the subject of 'judicial remedies for individuals before the highest jurisdictions'. Prior to the event, the unit published ten studies comparing the approach taken to the subject in the legal orders of Belgium, Canada, Germany, Italy, UK, US, Spain and Switzerland as well as the regulation in place in the Court of Justice of the EU and in the European Court of Human Rights.

The unit organised several conferences jointly with external partners, such as ERA (Europäische Rechtsakademie) and ELI (European Law Institute), as well as with the EP Legal Service. Topics included Better Law-Making, 60 years of the Treaties of Rome, 25 Years of the Treaty of Maastricht, EU Accession to the ECHR and Conflicts of Criminal Jurisdiction within the EU. The unit began publishing bibliographies and compilations of law cases on the subjects of the conferences (Better Law-Making, Rule of Law and Accession of the EU to the ECHR). The unit is also conducting research on the ratification of treaties, focusing on the main international partners of the EU, and continuing to build the inventory of relevant legal sources already existing in EP Library, as well as the identification of relevant new books, legal reviews and databases.

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

### *Background:*

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 **six 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:*

As parliamentary activity of this legislative term reached a new peak in 2017, the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value followed suit, with once again increased output. It produced 160 publications of various kinds (compared to 69 in 2014; 106 in 2015 and 144 in 2016). Work was undertaken for the whole spectrum of the parliamentary committees, with findings presented orally in full committee or to coordinators on 19 occasions.

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.

*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. Two such reports were published in 2017 - one on the added value of trade and on the impact of increased trade barriers and the other one on procedural rights and detentions conditions (348 pages). In addition to that, the fourth and final edition of the *Mapping the Cost of Non-Europe, 2014-2019* was published in December (184 pages).

*European Added Value Assessments* are undertaken on an automatic basis once a legislative initiative report by a parliamentary committee has been authorised by the Conference of Presidents. They assess the basis for EU policy actions and consider subsidiarity and proportionality. Two *European Added Value Assessments* were completed last year - on cross-border restitution claims of looted works of arts and on a statute for social and solidarity-based enterprises (totaling 178 pages).

Eight *European Added Value in Action* briefings, which highlight the added value of existing EU policies, were published amongst others on defense, internal market, roaming and fight against air pollution (30 pages). Two issues papers were published - on sovereign debt restructuring and on the untapped potential of the area of justice, security and liberty (26 pages). In total, out of the 766 pages produced, 442 were written in-house.

The unit also prepared and conducted three stake-holder consultations, at the request of the JURI Committee - on robotics, social and solidarity-based enterprises, and a law on administrative procedure.

The **Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit** (IMPA) analyses the quality of the Commission's impact assessments (IAs) accompanying legislative proposals. This analysis takes the form of initial appraisals of these IAs. The initial appraisals are routinely supplied to parliamentary committees in advance of their consideration of the corresponding legislative proposals. The Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit then offers the committees a range of follow-up services, including more detailed appraisals of Commission IAs, substitute or complementary IAs, and IAs on substantial parliamentary amendments.

With the Commission half way through its mandate, 2017 saw a high legislative output and a significant number of proposals accompanied by an impact assessment requiring appraisal by the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit. Accordingly, the unit further intensified its work during the year, with a total of 42 *Initial Appraisals of Commission Impact Assessments* produced, providing parliamentary committees with timely insight to help them pursue an evidence-based policy-making approach.

In addition to the automatic supply of initial appraisals, the unit also provided several products at the request of parliamentary committees. In particular, at the request of the IMCO Committee, the unit produced an *impact assessment on two amendments* that were being considered in the context of the Commission proposal on the online sales of goods and which extended the scope of the proposal to off-line sales. The positive findings of the Parliament's impact assessment, which were presented at an IMCO Committee meeting in June 2017, had a clear effect on the legislative process, with the Commission publishing an amended proposal on the sales of goods in October 2017, extending it to face-to-face sales. In its explanatory memorandum, the Commission explicitly stated that it had taken into account the findings of the European Parliament's impact assessment.

The IMCO Committee also requested an *impact assessment on eight amendments* introducing a commercial guarantee for lifespan in the proposed online sales and digital content directives. The findings of the IA were presented in an IMCO Committee meeting on 28 September 2017.

Furthermore, in the absence of a dedicated impact assessment accompanying the proposal on the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, the LIBE Committee requested a *substitute impact assessment* on some specific aspects of that proposal. The findings of the IA were also presented in a LIBE Committee meeting on 28 September 2017, prior to the vote in Committee that took place in October 2017.

The unit also actively contributed to the revision of the Parliament's *Impact Assessment Handbook*, the new version of which was adopted by the Conference of Committee Chairs in September 2017. During the year, the Ex-Ante Impact Assessment Unit further refined its working methods and procedures, in particular, by the early identification and tracking of legislative files, including those not accompanied by an impact assessment, and for informing parliamentary committees of the absence of such impact assessments, as appropriate. It remained committed to raising awareness within the Parliament of inter-institutional undertakings and best practice in the area of ex-ante impact assessment. 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 through technical exchanges on best practice and methodologies relating to impact assessment.

The merger of the previous Policy Cycle Unit (CYCL) with the Ex-Post Impact Assessment Unit (IMPT) into a new **Ex-Post Evaluation Unit** (EVAL) in 2017 yielded synergies and efficiency gains, by combining ex-post evaluation work and horizontal analytical support and monitoring.

The **Ex-Post Evaluation Unit** now acts as an integrated information and support service on: both (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.

Since July 2014, when the two separate units first came on stream, support for ex-post evaluation by parliamentary committees was strengthened and deepened through the launch of important new products: short *Implementation Appraisals*, longer *European Implementation Assessments*, and horizontal *Rolling Check-lists* of various kinds.

It should be noted that the number and subjects of *European Implementation Assessments* are limited, by definition, to those of the corresponding authorised committee implementation reports, and that the number and subjects of *Implementation Appraisals* are likewise limited to those of the legislative proposals amending existing legislation, foreseen in the Commission's annual Work Programme.

Between July 2014 and December 2016 (30 months), the two units together produced 20 *European Implementation Assessments*, 50 *Implementation Appraisals*, and 20 other publications (including ten *Rolling Check-lists*). By comparison, during 2017 alone, the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit produced 11 *European Implementation Assessments* (totalling 1 510 pages, accompanied by nine presentations in committee), 26 *Implementation Appraisals* (totalling 247 pages), 11 other publications (totalling 708 pages, with two presentations in committee), and four *Rolling Check-lists* (totalling 1 118 pages).

The increase in number of *European Implementation Assessments* can probably be attributed in part to the new rules on implementation reports, adopted by the Conference of Presidents in April 2016. A similar increase in number of *Implementation Appraisals* is not logically possible, but the Ex-Post Evaluation Unit's new general annual briefing on *Implementation Appraisals following the Commission Work Programme, 2018*, will facilitate the appropriate focus on, and timing and take-up of, the analytical material planned for the coming year by committees.

The various *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. The rolling checklists produced in 2017 are: European Commission Follow-up to European Parliament requests; Review Clauses in EU Legislation; Review and Monitoring Clauses in International Agreements; Evaluation in the European Commission; and Special Reports of the European Court of Auditors.

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 based on intergovernmental agreements. The unit maintains a rolling check-list 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, the annual report of the European Council activities, as well as routine briefing notes issued before and after each European Council meeting. The unit also produces ad hoc publications on activities of the European Council in various areas.

During 2017, the unit produced 20 publications of various kinds. These included four updates of the *Rolling Check-List on European Council Conclusions*, consisting of eight chapters with each a table and an analytical summary on the main follow up activities undertaken by the EU institutions, as well as, eleven systematic and timely briefing notes published ahead (6) of and after (5) each European Council meeting, together with an overall assessment of European Council activities in 2016. The unit also analysed the process going 'From Bratislava to Rome: Has the European Council delivered?', as well as the agenda-setting process in the European Council from 2014 to June 2017. Two seminars were held on various aspects of European Council policy-making.

The **Scientific Foresight Unit** (STOA) undertakes science and technology options assessment and analyses emerging policy issues and trends in these fields. It carries out 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 Panel. Since 2014 the STOA process, backed by greater in-house research, has been focusing more on issues related to scientific foresight, operating through somewhat shorter projects, and making its work and output more widely available than in the past, throughout the 8th legislative period.

The Scientific Foresight Unit produced a total of 24 publications in 2017, including seven studies, five briefings, ten 'At a glance' notes, and two 'In-depth Analyses'. These can be found on the dedicated [STOA website](#). The topics covered in major research projects undertaken and/or managed by the unit for the STOA Panel in 2017 include 'Achieving a sovereign and trustworthy ICT industry in Europe', 'Cybersecurity in the EU Common Security and Defence Policy', 'Towards a circular economy - Waste management in the EU',



‘Technological innovation strategies in substance use disorders’, and ‘Language equality in the digital age - Towards a Human Language Project’.

In parallel, a series of shorter publications focussing on the policy implications of technological changes - such as ‘What if mini-brains could help us understand dementia?’, ‘What if we could 3D-print our body parts?’, ‘What if we were to build skyscrapers from wood?’ or ‘What if technology helped society become more inclusive?’ - has continued to prove popular. These publications are routinely linked to EPRS podcasts, produced on a monthly basis. Following up on its 2015 publication ‘Ten technologies which could change our lives’, the unit published a second edition in 2017, presenting ten more technologies. Along similar lines, it also published a techno-scientific trends study focusing on different applications of block-chain technology that ‘could change our lives’.

The unit also organised 14 events in 2017, attracting a total of approximately 1 400 participants. The highly successful 2017 STOA Annual Lecture, with leading international scientists, focussed on the topic of ‘Media in the age of artificial intelligence’. A second high-level conference was organised with political, industrial and academic leaders from the EU and Japan, co-organised with the Science and Technology in Society (STS) *forum*. There were as two events on block-chain and ‘rational optimism’/Artificial Intelligence. The unit also ran the sixth round of the MEP-Scientist Pairing Scheme, which saw the participation of 18 MEPs and started with an event co-organised with the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC).

Several of the STOA studies were also presented and discussed directly within interested parliamentary committees, thus linking STOA more closely to policy work. Examples include the presentations of the cybersecurity study to the SEDE Sub-committee, of the precision agriculture study (published in December 2016) to the AGRI Committee, of the ICT industry study to the LIBE Committee, and of the ‘Language equality in the digital age’ study to a joint meeting of the ITRE and CULT Committees.

All STOA events and publications were actively communicated to Members and a wider audience in the form of blog posts (51), podcasts (12) and animated info-graphics (two) published in the course of 2017, as well as through live-tweeting from almost all events. In order to enhance the quality of its publications, STOA continued to rely on external peer-reviewing.

The **Global Trends Unit** (TREN) continued to work on identifying, tracking and analysing medium- and long- term global trends in the international economic, social, political and geo-political environments, and their implications for the EU policy process. It focuses on strategic foresight and keeps Members informed about trends and their potential policy implications, by publishing briefings and organising seminars.

During 2017, the unit published two editions of its new *Global Trendometer*. This publication draws attention to specific trends on a bi-annual basis. It also published a major strategic foresight study on ‘Global Trends to 2035 - Geo-politics and Power’.

In addition, the unit continued to underpin the Parliament’s participation in the administrative-level dialogue with other EU institutions on medium- and long-term trends (ESPAS). This involved inter alia the preparation and follow-up of ESPAS Steering Group meetings and active participation in the ESPAS Young Talent Network. The unit organised the EP day of the annual inter-institutional ESPAS Conference on ‘Global Trends to 2030: the making of a new geo-political order?’ in November 2017, working in close conjunction with the EPSC (European Commission). The conference brought together over 200 participants from the worldwide foresight community and generated very good feed-back.

The unit continued to systematically develop contacts with outside foresight organisations, including both think tanks and universities, and governmental bodies such as NATO and OECD.

An **activity report** for EP work in the fields of Impact Assessment and European Added Value covering the period from January to December 2016 is available online. The annual report for 2017 will follow shortly. A clickable PDF list of all publications of the Directorate for Impact Assessment and European Added Value for the year 2017 is available [here](#).

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

#### **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 - [epres@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:epres@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, a 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 2017, 667 Members or their offices (or 89 per cent) received briefing visits or presentations (on an individual or collective basis) about EPRS products and services. Nearly 300 (297) Members or their offices (40 per cent) have received such briefing in the last 12 months. By the end of December 2017, nearly 200 Members or their offices (some 26 per cent) were subscribing to automatic alerts on new EPRS

publications, as soon as they are published, and 744 Members (99 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 49,950 relevant EPRS publications at nearly 500 (494) parliamentary meetings of various kinds, notably hearings, conferences, seminars and debates organised by EP bodies, individual Members and/or political groups since 2015. 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 9,069 unique users of the EPRS intranet, in each of the four years 2014 to 2017, with some 2,355 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. The respective figures for 2017 were 428 MEPs and 1,466 assistants.
- Overall, the EPRS intranet site elicited over 1.3 million ‘page views’ in 2014, 1.8 million page views in 2015, 1.6 million page views in 2016, and almost 1.6 million (1,582,347) page views in 2017.
- The various EPRS electronic platforms carried a total of 569 publications in 2014 - 306 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 263 on-line only. The figures for 2015 were 995 publications, 705 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 290 on-line only. The figures for 2016 were 1,154 publications, 906 of which were available in both physical and digital forms, and 248 on-line only. In 2017, the respective figures were 1,057 publications, of which 843 were available in both physical and digital forms, and 214 on-line only. The EPRS thus produced over 3,700 (3,775) publications during the four 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) 1,297 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 2017, the respective figures were 1,145,763 page views (or an average of 95,480 per month), reaching a total of 1,027,202 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. The comparable figures for 2017 were 295,000 users, 514 posts and 608,000 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 over 18,500 (=18,560), including 219 MEPs in December 2017. The EPRS’ YouTube page offers podcasts, videos of selected EPRS events, and video presentations of some of publications. Some 338 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 **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. From 2015 to 2017, there were 70 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, Danish Folketing, Estonian Riigikogu, Latvian Saeima, Greek Vouli ton Ellinon and Hungarian National Assembly. There were also visits from the US Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the Chilean Congress, the parliaments of Cambodia, Canada, Georgia, India, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Moldova, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Venezuela 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.

In parallel, 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, business continuity 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 four years from 2014 to 2017. There were notably two larger recruitment efforts, one related to the integration of up to 60 translators/ posts into the Members' Research Service, in order to strengthen the latter's capacity. The second was related to the launch of a specific CAST competition and subsequent recruitment of some 40 high-level contractuels with academic background.

The Human Resources Service within RESU has successfully initiated the recruitment of new staff throughout the four years from 2014 to 2017. There were notably two larger recruitment efforts, one related to the integration of up to 60 translators/posts into the Members' Research Service, in order to strengthen the latter's capacity. The second was related to the launch of a specific CAST competition and subsequent recruitment of some 40 high-level contractuels with academic background. These contractual agents, FG IV, are vital for the increasingly required expert knowledge within DG EPRS.

The number of staff within the directorate-general rose from 214 persons (on its creation) in November 2013 to 310 persons in December 2017 (officials, temporary and contractual agents). Due to the suppression of posts (1% per year), the number of posts has decreased to 265 on 31 December 2017. In total, 21 recruitment procedures have been organised in 2017, with 71 candidates interviewed. 20 colleagues benefited from Career counselling in the same year. In order to maintain close contact to EPSO and assure that EPRS' priorities are communicated, three RESU colleagues worked in 2017 on EPSO boards.

A particular focus has been placed on making available specific and timely professional training, to both newcomers and colleagues within the DG shouldering new responsibilities. To this end, a comprehensive induction training is offered to each new member of staff (over 40 sessions of induction training were delivered in 2017). A total of 24 colleagues attended external individual training courses, whereas 20 tailor-made courses were offered to staff, organised in cooperation with the Learning and Development Unit. Furthermore,

- two EPRS staff were selected for EU Fellowships in the academic year of 2017-2018;
- two EPRS staff took part in the EP-EEAS short assignment programme in 2017
- two EPRS staff took part in the annual TLD Washington programme for 2017;
- one EPRS senior manager participated in the EP Executive Education Programme in 2017;
- three EPRS managers participated in the 'Coaching for Managers' programme in 2017.

The unit also organises staff missions, notably to all part-sessions in Strasbourg. The DG regularly achieves an implementation rate of 95% of the envelope made available.

In 2017 DG EPRS welcomed 43 Robert Schuman trainees to Brussels and four trainees to Luxembourg, from 20 different countries. It hosted one trainee from the EP Information Office Washington in 2017. All trainees have been given the chance to travel to Parliament's seat in Strasbourg at least once during their five-month internship.

The Central Finance Service within the Resources Unit verified in 2017 a total of 984 files (from units managing the budget), of which 105 correspond to procurement procedures. The service furthermore ensures the harmonisation of procurement and financial procedures across the Directorate-General, in order to secure optimal value for money. A special effort was made to streamline procurement procedures to avoid duplications and ensure coherent application of financial rules, through the maintenance of a financial events register. This register is analysed carefully to extract conclusions and issue recommendations to financial actors. As a result, the accuracy and quality of financial operations significantly increased in 2017 in comparison with previous years.

The Resources Unit's activities in office management during 2017 involved inter alia the following actions: 270 office move requests; 162 telecom installation requests; and 220 furniture requests.

The Information Technology Service, within RESU, oversees the portfolio of all IT projects within DG EPRS, as well as the portfolio of internally developed and managed applications. As of 2017, the IT Service is home to a central development team, providing maintenance and evolution services for existing EPRS-specific applications, and developing new IT-tools for the DG. Financial resources linked to IT are now centrally managed in the IT Service, which oversees both the financial initiation and the authorisation of expenditure.

The consolidated centralisation of IT-related resources within the central IT Service increases efficiency due to the sharing of IT resources among the DG's different directorates and units. It allows for a clear overview of all projects, involving IT, and activities at all times and improves IT governance, making sure all IT needs within the DGs are adequately prioritised, aligned with the business objectives, and eventually implemented in the most resource-efficient fashion. It also makes the EPRS IT Service the single point of contact for other DGs, most notably DG ITEC, for all matters concerning IT.

As part of its 'business as usual' activities, the LSA team, reinforced by two external resources, provided IT support to all users within the DG, including trainees and visitors, as well as technical assistance during EPRS events. More specific results were obtained in the context of projects, including the extensive preparation of the EP-wide migration to Windows 10, the purchase and installation of a detailed tracking system for printing consumption, and the deployment of 'hybrid' computing devices.

The development team finalised a complete revamp of the EPRS intranet, the back- and front-end system for the digital distribution of EPRS products within the Parliament. Two further development projects were taken on board. Firstly, the Perform project, designed to digitise the 'EPRS scrutiny toolbox' (of Rolling Check-lists) was taken over from DG ITEC. Secondly, the Enquiry Management System (EMS), used by Members to request research and analysis from EPRS, was completely redeveloped, offering state-of-the-art features such as a new interface, a more streamlined internal workflow, and enhanced possibilities for generating statistics and charts.

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

DG EPRS has put in place the organisational structure and the internal control systems suited to the achievement of the policy and control objectives, in accordance with the standards and having due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

DG EPRS applies a decentralised financial structure, hence the financial initiators are at the level of the operational Units and Directorates which are also AOS for the transactions concerned. The ex-ante verification is carried out centrally by the central finance service on all financial transactions to ensure conformity with the applicable rules. In order to enhance efficiency in the processing of a large number of financial transactions, emphasis is put on prudent financial planning. The knowledge and awareness of financial rules and procedures is enhanced through financial training, inter-service meetings and instructions available on Wiki.

The central finance service issues a weekly report addressed to the Head of Resources Unit in which weekly transactions are analysed. Monthly reports cover all aspects of budget implementation and are addressed to the AOS and all Heads of Unit. Quarterly reports are distributed to the AOD and AOS mentioning the anticipated financial risks and budget execution. The use of budget funds is transparent and under detailed scrutiny at all levels of the hierarchy. The AOD includes the issue of finances regularly on the agenda of the Senior Management Meeting. Regular meetings with all financial actors have been set up, and implemented by the central finance service, in order to continuously monitor and improve financial procedures.

The MICS survey was conducted in December 2017. All managers of the DG were invited to participate in the survey. The assessment of the 16 standards did not identify any significant control weaknesses. While there is scope for improvement in some areas, DG EPRS internal control system as a whole, covering both financial and non-financial aspects, is effective. Necessary procedures, staff skills and experience to identify and manage the main operational, financial and other risks are established.

DG EPRS concludes that there were no major deficiencies or combination of deficiencies in the components of its internal control system which would undermine their effectiveness or prevent the achievement of the Directorate-General's objectives.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, since becoming fully operational in 2014, DG EPRS has developed an increasingly sophisticated range of products and services designed to support and empower Members individually and collectively in fulfilling the key representational, legislative and oversight roles of the only directly-elected institution of the EU system, on behalf of the citizen. The directorate-general has made very substantial progress in supporting the Parliament in ways that previously were not possible, and this progress is witnessed in the depth, breadth, quality and use of DG EPRS products and services outlined above.

Members of the European Parliament represent and will always be the ‘core constituency’ for DG EPRS activity. During 2017, 72 per cent of Members or their staff submitted over 3,300 substantive research requests to the Members’ Research Service, with other parliamentary clients making nearly 500 similar requests. Ninety-seven per cent of Members or their offices consulted the EPRS intranet in 2017, whilst 43 per cent of Members used DG EPRS publications at one of their own events, 41 per cent used EPRS ‘model answers’, and 32 per cent used DG EPRS material on social media in the same year. Use of the three latter services grew at about two per cent a month during 2017. The breadth, depth and credibility of DG EPRS’s support for parliamentary committees in ex-ante and ex-post evaluation was deepened on several fronts, reaching a new high in terms of output for and use by committees.

DG EPRS produced over 1 000 physical or online publications in 2017 - dealing with a very wide range of EU policy, legislation and issues, and aimed both at Members and the wider parliamentary community - material which elicited some 3.3 million page-views on the Parliament’s intranet and internet. The Library Directorate responded to over 18,000 reference requests from within the parliamentary community and some 50,000 citizens’ enquiries externally. DG EPRS held more events, with more partners, in the Library Reading Room in Brussels than ever before - including major events on global trends, comparative law, and cooperation with other parliamentary research services.

More generally, since January 2014, DG EPRS has answered over 11,000 requests for substantive research and analysis from over 90 per cent of individual Members, replied to over 2,000 such requests from other parliamentary clients, and undertaken targeted research work for 17 parliamentary committees. In parallel, over the same timeframe, DG EPRS has also replied to over 78,000 reference requests from within the Parliament and over 230,000 citizens’ enquiries. It has produced over 2,700 physical publications, plus another 1,000 digital-only texts, so far eliciting over 11 million page views electronically.



5. DECLARATION BY THE AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION

I, the undersigned,

Director-General for Parliamentary Research Services,

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-ante 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

Bunnels

on

12<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

Signature

Monary Teasdale

(A.L. TEASDALE)

## 6. ANNEXES

### 6.1. 2017 Budget Implementation Statement

#### 6.1.1. Current appropriations as at the end of December - Financial year 2017 (nature 0)

| <b>Budget lines</b>                                | <i>Initial Credits</i> | <i>Transfer</i>   | <i>Final Credits</i> | <i>Commitments</i>  | <i>%<br/>Comm/FC</i> | <i>Payments</i>     | <i>% P/Comm</i> | <i>Balance<br/>Commitments</i> | <i>Available</i>  |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| APPLIC.TIC ACTIVITES - <b>02102-14</b>             | 175.000,00             | -7.896,00         | 167.104,00           | 167.103,20          | 100,00%              | 36.767,44           | 22,00%          | 130.335,76                     | 0,80              |
| APPLICATIONS TIC - <b>02103-14</b>                 | 0,00                   | 0,00              | 0,00                 | 0,00                | 0,00                 | 0,00                | 0,00            | 0,00                           | 0,00              |
| PROJETS IT - <b>02105-14</b>                       | 0,00                   | 0,00              | 0,00                 | 0,00                | 0,00                 | 0,00                | 0,00            | 0,00                           | 0,00              |
| STOA - <b>03020-07</b>                             | 10.000,00              | 0                 | 10.000,00            | 10.000,00           | 100,00%              | 7.883,00            | 78,83%          | 2.117,00                       | 0,00              |
| ACQUISITIONS EPRS, LIBRARY ARCHIVES - <b>03210</b> | 8.314.000,00           | -680.479,00       | 7.633.521,00         | 7.437.151,03        | 97,43%               | 3.969.836,47        | 53,38%          | 3.467.314,56                   | 196.369,97        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                       | <b>8.499.000,00</b>    | <b>688.375,00</b> | <b>7.810.625,00</b>  | <b>7.614.254,23</b> | <b>97,49%</b>        | <b>4.014.486,91</b> | <b>52,72%</b>   | <b>3.599.767,32</b>            | <b>196.370,77</b> |

#### 6.1.2. Automatic carryovers as at the end of December - Financial year 2017 (nature 2)

| <b>Budget lines</b>                                | <i>Deferred credits</i> | <i>Payments</i>     | <i>%<br/>Pmnts/DC</i> | <i>Available<br/>credits</i> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| APPLIC.TIC ACTIVITES - <b>02102-14</b>             | 116.304,52              | 108.525,42          | 93,31%                | 7.779,10                     |
| APPLICATIONS TIC - <b>02103-14</b>                 | 0,00                    | 0,00                | 0,00                  | 0,00                         |
| PROJETS IT - <b>02105-14</b>                       | 0,00                    | 0,00                | 0,00                  | 0,00                         |
| STOA - <b>03020-07</b>                             | 761,00                  | 186,26              | 24,48%                | 574,74                       |
| ACQUISITIONS EPRS, LIBRARY ARCHIVES - <b>03210</b> | 2.737.856,83            | 2.472.500,78        | 90,31%                | 265.356,05                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                       | <b>2.854.922,35</b>     | <b>2.581.212,46</b> | <b>90,41%</b>         | <b>273.709,89</b>            |

6.1.3. **Non-automatic carryovers** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 6)  
N/A

6.1.4. **Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 7)

| <b>Budget lines</b>                            | <i>Deferred credits</i> | <i>Payments</i> | <i>%<br/>Pmnts/DC</i> | <i>Available<br/>credits</i> |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| ACQUISITIONS EPRS, LIBRARY<br>ARCHIVES - 03210 | 676,11                  | 0,00            | 0,00%                 | 676,11                       |

6.1.5. **Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue carried over** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 5)  
N/A

6.1.6. **Specific expenditure commitments/assigned revenue carried over** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 3)  
N/A

6.1.7. **Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 9)  
N/A

## 6.2. Report on compliance with payment deadlines

| <u>Invoices paid in 2017</u>   |                                | Default interest payable automatically ( > €200) | Default interest payable on request (<=€200) | No default interest payable | Total        |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Paid by the time limit</b>  | Number of invoices             |  |  | 648                         | 648          |
|                                | Total invoiced (€)             |  |  | 6.763.625,43                | 6.763.625,43 |
| <b>Paid outside time limit</b> | Number of invoices             | -  | 3  |                             | 3            |
|                                | Total invoiced (€)             | -  | 24.110,71                                    |                             | 24.110,71    |
|                                | Amount of default interest (€) | -  | 8,76   |                             | 8,76         |
| Total number of invoices       |                                | 0  | 3  | 648                         | 651          |
| Total invoiced (€)             |                                | 0  | 24.110,71                                    | 6.763.625,43                | 6.787.736,14 |

### Comment

In 2017, DG EPRS received over 10% fewer invoices than in the previous year. The great majority of invoices (99.5%) were paid within the deadline of 30 calendar days, foreseen in the Financial Regulation. Delayed payments (0.5 % 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   |
| 5062          | HILLER                    | ED             | 1.800€  | NON CONFORME                           | STOA IN 2015 ORDERED A SERVICE (AN ARTICLE ON MASSIVE SURVEILLANCE AND ITS PUBLICATION). THE BUDGETARY COMMITMENT WAS CARRIED OVER TO 2016 AND THE STUDY WAS PAID ON 07/10/16. PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE TOOK PLACE ONLY IN FEBRUARY 2017, WITH NO PRIOR BUDGETARY COMMITMENT FOR THE SERVICE IN QUESTION.  | PASSER OUTRE                    | SEE FOR REFERENCE GEDA D(2017)11072   |
| 716/13        | HILLER                    | OD             | 123,26€ | NON CONFORME                           | IN BREACH OF ARTICLE 67.3 OF RAP: NO PRIOR BUDGETARY COMMITMENT IS CREATED. ALSO, IN BREACH OF ARTICLE 24 OF FR: THE IMPREST ACCOUNT IS ATTRIBUTED TO LINE 3020-07, I.E. STOA REPRESENTATION EXPENSES, BUT WAS USED TO PAY A TAXI FOR MEPS. AN ACTION THAT IS OUT OF THE SCOPE OF THE MENTIONED BUDGET LINE. | PASSER OUTRE                    | SEE FOR REFERENCE GEDA D(2017)11072   |
| 5117          | HILLER                    | ED             | 35340€  | NON CONFORME                           | The order form stemming from ED 5117 validated by the ex-ante on 30/05/2017, was signed by the AOS on the 06/06/2017, one day after the expiration of the relevant framework contract (05/06/2017). The exception was discovered on an ex-post basis by DG FINS on a routine control in Webcontracts.        | NA                              | On the 19/05/2017, it was administratively decided to order an animated infographic as visualisation tool for the outcomes of the STOA study on precision agriculture, using the framework contract EP/DGPRES/BIB/SER/2013/006/001 which had an end date on the 05/06/2017. Following the formal agreement of the Director EPRS/A, responsible for the framework contract in question, and the Director EPRS/C, AOS for the budget line from which the order would be financed, the financial commitment 5117 and the webcontract EPRS/STOA/SER/17/013 have been initiated on the 23/05/2017 and sent out the Ex-ante verifiers on 24/05/2017. The file has been approved by them on the 30/05/2017 (25-28/05 were days off). For an unknown reason, the file was delayed during three working days and the AOS signed the financial commitment and the legal commitment (order form) on the 6/06/2017. |

**Waivers/cancellations of receivables**

N/A

#### 6.4. Long-term contractual obligations

| Contractor                  | Subject  | Duration <sup>(1)</sup> |                       | Overall value of procurement operation | Contract expenditure in 2017 | Renewal method <sup>(2)</sup> | Description of monitoring measures |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                             |  | Contract                | Procurement operation |  |                              |                               |                                    |
| 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                          | €2.564,71                    | Automatic                     | -                                  |

(1) Months, years or open-ended

(2) Manual or automatic

#### 6.5. Exceptional negotiated procedures (Articles 53 and 134) and competitive procedures with negotiation (135 RAP)

| Name(s) of successful tenderer(s) | Subject                                  | Amount      | Legal basis                  | Grounds   | Applicants |                  | Eligibility criteria  | Contract reference    | PPF opinion date |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|------------------------------|---|------------|------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------|
|                                   |  |             |                              |   | Invited:   | For negotiations |   |                       |                  |
| AGENCE EUROPE                     | Suscription to Agence Europe             | €185.000,00 | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market |            |                  | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering | EPRS/BIB/SER/17/015N  | 25/01/2017       |
| POLITYKA INFO                     | Suscription to Polityka Insight          | €17.000,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market |            |                  | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering | EPRS/BIB/SER/17/016N  | 25/01/2017       |
| RETRIEVER SVERIGE                 | Suscription to the MEDIEARKIVET database | €43.700,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market | 1          | 1                | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering | EPRS/LIBS/SER/16/025N | 25/01/2017       |



|                                |   |             |                              |   |   |   |   |                       |            |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|------------|
| INFORMA UK                     | Suscription to Agra Europe by Informa Agra information                        | €30.500,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | Supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market   | 1 | 1 | 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/17/001N | 25/01/2017 |
| BARTLETT MEDIA                 | Suscription to EU Food Policy   | €18.000,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market   |   |   | R-The contract is awarded on the base of the price  | EPRS/LIBS/SER/17/003N | 25/01/2017 |
| CONTEXTE                       | Suscription to Contexte   | €174.410,00 | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The content of this information service is protected by copyright and is exclusive to the economic operator concerned |   |   | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position which leaves no opportunity for competitive tendering   | EPRS/LIBS/SER/17/005N | 25/01/2017 |
| IHS GLOBAL                     | IHS World Markets Country Analysis and Advanced Country Analysis and Forecast | €30.000,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market   |   |   | Supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market   | EPRS/LIBS/SER/17/006N | 25/01/2017 |
| EESTI MEEDIA                   | Suscription to BNS  | €24.060,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market   |   |   | Supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market   |                       | 25/01/2017 |
| LEXISNEXIS BUSIN.INFO.SOLUTION | Suscription to Nexis only in Dutch  | €291.120,00 | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market   |   |   | The supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market   |                       | 25/01/2017 |
| VERLAG C.H.BECK OHG            | Suscription to Beck Online  | €54.646,50  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market   |   |   | The supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market   |                       | 25/01/2017 |
| THOMSON REUTERS(LEGAL)         | Suscription to Westlaw International/UK and Ireland service                   | €127.227,00 | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market   |   |   | The supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market   |                       | 25/01/2017 |

|                                |  |             |                              |   |  |  |   |  |            |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------|------------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|------------|
| POLITICO                       | Suscription to POLITICO                      | €250.450,00 | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market |  |  | The supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market |  | 25/01/2017 |
| BGOV                           | Suscription to Bloomberg Government database | €34.894,26  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market |  |  | The supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market |  | 25/01/2017 |
| ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT    | Suscription to EIU                           | €95.400,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market |  |  | The supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market |  | 25/01/2017 |
| ANSA AGENZIA                   | Suscription to ANSA                          | €290.738,00 | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market |  |  | The supplier enjoys the monopoly position on the market |  | 25/01/2017 |
| MBI MARTIN BRUCKNER INFOSOURCE | Suscription to MBI Europa Aktuell            | €68.875,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The content is protected by copyright                 |  |  | The tender is conform to the specifications             |  | 25/01/2017 |
| DL SERVICES (ANCIEN DE LANNOY) | Suscription to OECD                          | €17.610,00  | NP article 134.1 rt 134 1.b) | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market |  |  | The supplier enjoys a monopoly position on the market   |  | 25/01/2017 |

#### **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 to 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**

Following instructions from central services, and the exercises carried out during the years 2015 and 2016, no exercise was conducted during 2017.

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

**Self-assessment summary table**

| Standard  | Achieved | Almost | Partly | Started | To be started / NA |
|---|----------|--------|--------|---------|--------------------|
| Section 1 - Mission statement and values        |          |        |        |         |                    |
| 1. Mission                                      | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| 2. Ethical and organisational values            | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| Section 2 - Human Resources                     |          |        |        |         |                    |
| 3. Allocation of staff and mobility             |          |        | V      |         |                    |
| 4. Staff assessment and development             | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| Section 3 - Planning and risk management        |          |        |        |         |                    |
| 5. Objectives and performance indicators        |          | V      |        |         |                    |
| 6. Risk management process                      |          |        | V      |         |                    |
| Section 4 - Operations and control activities   |          |        |        |         |                    |
| 7. Operational set-up                           | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| 8. Processes and procedures                     |          | V      |        |         |                    |
| 9. Supervision by management                    | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| 10. Business continuity                         |          |        | V      |         |                    |
| 11. Document management                         | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| Section 5 - Information and financial reporting |          |        |        |         |                    |
| 12. Information and communication               | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| 13. Accounting and financial information        | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| Section 6 - Evaluation and auditing             |          |        |        |         |                    |
| 14. Evaluation of activities                    | V        |        |        |         |                    |
| 15. Evaluation of internal control systems      |          | V      |        |         |                    |
| 16. Audit reports                               | V        |        |        |         |                    |

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

#### **Standard 1. Mission statement: Achieved**

Staff are informed of the mission statement of the DG by email before each relevant staff assembly. Moreover, the mission statement and annual objectives of the Directorate-General (and of each of its Units) are published on the DG's intranet site EPRS Wiki and easily accessible for all staff. The job description and individual objectives of all staff are set out in the annual staff reports.

#### **Standard 2. Ethical and organisational values: Achieved**

Staff have access via the DG's intranet and EPRS Wiki, to information on all matters related to staff conduct and responsibilities, prevention and reporting of fraud and irregularities, ethics and integrity, conflict of interest, the Staff Regulation, etc. In addition, the Resources Unit encourages staff to participate in training and workshops on these issues. Newly-recruited staff are informed of their rights, duties and obligations by the Resources Unit.

### **Standard 3. Allocation of staff and mobility: Partly achieved**

The recruitment of staff is based on the objectives and priorities of the DG. All vacant positions are evaluated prior to allocation to optimise the use of human resources. However, EPRS tasks and activities are continuously evolving and new tasks and projects can be assigned to the DG without any accompanying increase in resources. However, EPRS is well able to organise projects on a cross-unit basis and has implemented a scheme of temporary internal reassignment for limited periods for specific projects. Wherever possible, staff working preferences are taken into account and support is given to staff to facilitate their integration in the new working environment.

### **Standard 4. Staff assessment and development: Achieved**

Staff performance is assessed on an annual basis. Specific problems arising during the year are dealt with individually and corrective measures are taken if necessary. The training officer ensures that professional training policy is followed, as well as ensuring that continuous specialised training is developed (staff can also benefit, under certain conditions, from specific external training courses). Training needs are also regularly discussed during the annual staff appraisal procedure. Information on trainings is also available via EPRS Wiki. One or two people are appointed to coordinate specific trainings organised for the members of the directorate.

### **Standard 5. Objectives and performance indicators: Almost achieved**

The Director General develops overall Objectives for the year, which are discussed at Director and Head of Unit level, usually with an opportunity for all staff members to comment, before communication to the Secretary General.

Objectives for directorates and units are discussed and agreed among management and staff at all organisational levels. All these objectives are communicated to all staff and published on the intranet site of the DG. Based on the Mission Statement for DG EPRS and the goals identified in the Strategic Execution Framework of EPRS, 'key result indicators' (KRIs) gauge the directorate-general's performance, which it monitors with special attention, using both quantitative and qualitative tools. Since then, progress towards meeting the defined objectives is measured on an on-going basis and a monthly report sent to the Secretary General. In the finance area, an inter-DG working group has established a list of 10 financial indicators that would be used from 2018 onwards.

### **Standard 6. Risk management procedure: Partly achieved**

The risk register of the DG has recently been updated. Concerning financial risks, hierarchy have sufficient insight and knowledge about the risks and risk management via means of weekly, monthly and quarterly reporting.

### **Standard 7. Operational set-up: Achieved**

The delegation of powers and functions within the DG complies with the relevant rules. More transparent and centralised IT governance was introduced over the course of 2017. Firstly, an IT Advisory Group was established, grouping the operational-level EPRS colleagues handling IT projects, in order to improve communication and coordination between the different EPRS sub-entities dealing with IT. Secondly, the Brussels-based EPRS development team was moved from Directorate B to the central level, where it is now a part of the EPRS IT Service in the Resources Unit. Thirdly, all financial resources spent on IT

were put under the control of the Resources Unit, with the Head of Unit and the Head of the IT Service acting as authorising officers by sub-delegation.

#### **Standard 8. Processes and procedures: Almost achieved**

All relevant processes and procedures are documented either on paper or on the intranet. Manuals and procedures are easily accessible to staff via EPRS Wiki. Procedures are updated where appropriate in order to maintain compliance with the relevant rules. However, work on how to improve efficiency and effectiveness of procedures is ongoing.

#### **Standard 9. Management oversight: Achieved**

Management supervision is ensured by the appropriate reporting. Ex-ante service verifies all procedures, payments and budgetary commitments of the DG. All these files are archived with the name, date and signature of the ex-ante verifier who verified the file. Potential weaknesses are discussed, analysed and addressed in weekly meetings of senior management and, ad hoc when necessary.

#### **Standard 10. Business continuity: Partly achieved**

Appropriate procedures (handover files and substituting arrangements) are in place to ensure continuity of operations during disruptions of any nature. In finance service, there is always at least one ex-ante verifier present. Common service mailbox and shared folders are also used to facilitate continuity of service. A formal Business Continuity Plan will be adopted for DG EPRS in due course.

#### **Standard 11. Document management: Achieved**

The document management and archiving policies meet the relevant requirements. Document management complies with the provisions on security and protection of personal data. A section dedicated to document management can be consulted on the EPRS Wiki. Systematic and formal registration of incoming documents is made in GEDA. The financial archives are organised and held in the central financial archive.

#### **Standard 12. Information and communication: Achieved**

A 'senior management meeting' is held once per week by the Director-General. Each unit has regular team meetings and an ' is held weekly. Meetings are also regularly held between the Finance Service and the financial initiators. In addition to internal communication through hierarchical structures, information is communicated and readily available on the EPRS Wiki pages. Specific events are organized to maintain a good communication flow: for example, there are two to three general meetings of the Directorate-General each year, the internal EPRS newsletter is produced each week and an innovation hub has been established. Risks of major breaches of systems are centrally managed by DG ITEC. Local responsibilities regarding IT security mainly relate to access rights and software defences (anti-virus etc) on the local PC park. Both are managed by the LSA team, part of the EPRS IT Service in the Resources Unit. The rules and guidelines to be followed with regards to access rights (including the creation of mailboxes) are well documented and strictly applied. No serious issues have been identified.

**Standard 13. Accounting and financial information: Achieved**

In the context of budgetary planning and financial management, weekly, monthly and quarterly reports are drafted by the Finance Service and communicates to senior management, in order to be discussed at the management meetings. Regular meetings are held with the financial agents to address new developments and potential issues. Information related to budgetary and financial procedures is available and regularly updated on the EPRS Wiki page under 'Financial Toolkit'.

**Standard 14. Evaluation of activities: Achieved**

Activities are evaluated by the central finance service, and communicated to senior management. Special attention is dedicated to new activities.

**15. Evaluation of internal control systems: Almost achieved**

Self-assessment of the efficiency of the internal control system is coordinated by the central finance service. In 2017, MICS exercise was successfully completed. Questionnaires on internal control standards are drafted and distributed to the management (yearly rotation principle staff+ management) in order to assess their awareness and potential issues. Results of the exercise are analysed and reported. However, spreading awareness of the internal control system may need extra attention.

**16. Audit reports: Achieved**

The central finance service ensures that action plans following the audit are implemented, operating as a central contact point with IAS/COA.