

Directorate-General for Communication

Annual Activity Report

2017

DG COMMUNICATION

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0. BUDGETARY IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

		COMM
Code	Appropriation type	EUR or %
	Appropriations of 2017	
A	Initial appropriations	91.906.100,00
B	Final appropriations	92.474.600,00
C	Commitments	92.224.341,25
D	Commitments in % of final appropriations	100%
E	Payments	53.090.929,87
F	Payments in % of commitments	58%
G	Cancellations of 2017 final appropriations	250.258,75
H	Cancellations appropriations in % of final appropriations	0%
	Appropriations carried over from 2017 to 2018	
I	Automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	39.133.411,38
J	Automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018 in % of commitments	42%
K	Non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	0,00
L	Non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018 in % of final appropriations	0%
	Appropriations carried over from 2016 to 2017	
M	Automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	38.233.251,48
N	Payments against automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	35.656.128,03
O	Payments against automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	93%
P	Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	2.577.123,45
Q	Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	7%
R	Non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	0,00
S	Payments of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	
T	Payments against non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	
U	Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	
V	Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2016 to 2017	
	Assigned revenue in 2017	
W	Appropriations from assigned revenue in 2017 (current)	3.887.043,71
X	Assigned revenue carried over to 2017	1.134.915,91
Y	Balance of commitments on assigned revenue carried over to 2017	104.758,15
Z	Payments in 2017 against appropriations from assigned revenue (current and carried-over)	535.947,98
AA	Payments in 2017 against assigned revenue in % of assigned revenue in 2017 (current and carried-over)	10%

1. OBJECTIVES

1.1. Objectives of the Directorate-General

The objective of the Directorate General for Communication (DG COMM) is to **help build the reputation of the EU** by showcasing its democratic legitimacy, embodied in the European Parliament.

European citizens have the right to receive complete and impartial information about the Institution. It is the role of DG COMM to provide this information which signifies helping audiences to understand what the European Parliament is, what it does and what it stands for. The right message must be delivered to the right audience at the right time and in parallel, help the media in doing their work.

Reaffirming its commitment to continue to implement its own Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) and Project Portfolio whilst striving to respect its objective to “**produce less, communicate better**” was still valid in 2017.

A variety of communication products and services provided by DG COMM contributed in 2017 in achieving these objectives through **coordinated and consistent approaches to communication**. While DG COMM adapts its communication to audiences, it speaks with one voice across every channel and platform, striving to maximise the impact of all messages.

DG COMM pursues its objectives through four channels of communication, which help to engage with its target audiences:

➤ **Media**

The media are key opinion multipliers. They share an enormous impact on shaping people's world views and influencing their priorities. DG COMM's aim is to assist the media in their work of informing citizens and through this monitor false information about the EP and correct it with factual rebuttals. Digital communication via online and social media channels is one of the most efficient ways of engaging particularly with youth and ensuring transparency regarding EP's work.

➤ **Information campaigns**

Campaigns gather all the tools and channels of the DG in a simple focused communication action which aims at achieving an identified result: increasing awareness, and call for a specific action. All such campaigns serve to underpin the broad mission of DG COMM.

➤ **Visitors**

DG COMM provides a wide and attractive range of services for visitors, both in Brussels and in the Member States. This direct interaction with the Institution provides a higher degree of intensity for its audience and the best qualitative contact. The fundamental goal in providing these services is to mobilise citizens first as Ambassadors and when the time comes, as actors committed in the democratic power of citizens in the lead up to the elections.

➤ **Strategic engagement through targeted dialogue in Member States**

With a view of going beyond one-way communication flows and enabling direct exchanges between citizens and Members of the European Parliament, DG COMM organises targeted dialogues on legislative issues via its Liaison Offices in Member States. The targeted audiences in this field are institutional partners, civil society groups or networks and stakeholders in many sectors as well as youth and students. These activities aim at increasing visibility of the European Parliament within Member States and raising awareness of the impact of the European Parliament's extended powers resulting from the Lisbon Treaty.

Besides operational objectives, DG COMM continued working in 2017 on the **effective and efficient use of resources**. The introduction of the **integrated reporting matrix** ensured a harmonization of the measurement and evaluation methodology across the entire range of communication tools or activities. The monitoring of media coverage given to EP activities provides essential information as to the topics which most interest EU citizens and this, together with the information obtained via the public opinion monitoring, will be of vital importance in drawing up the EE2019 information campaign. The continuous **digitalisation** of processes further reduced red tape, speeding up administrative and financial management.

1.2. Feasibility and risk assessment

Early in 2017, DG COMM submitted a new risk register to the Risk Manager as a result of the identification of potential risks threatening the achievement of the key objectives.

These risks were classified in three main categories:

- heightened security threat;
- high level of dependency on the availability and functioning of logistical infrastructures;
- high level of dependency on third parties (partners or external service providers)

and were assessed according to the risks' impact and the likelihood¹.

Further to the risk assessment and scoring, DG COMM decided to treat all risks with an impact/likelihood ratio 9 in order to identify the appropriate risk treatment (Avoid, Transfer, Reduce, Accept) and mitigation actions. On this basis, DG COMM elaborated its action plan for risk management, which was submitted to the Risk Manager in June 2017.

Among the identified mitigation actions, DG COMM envisages the following measures:

- Improving contractual procedures and redeploying staff in order to minimize the risk of dependency on third parties at central and decentralised level;
- Organising frequent back up of data and regular meetings with logistic contractors in order to reduce the risk of dependency on the availability and functioning of logistical infrastructures.

Whilst the implementation of mitigation actions is within the remit of DG COMM services, DG COMM relies on the support of DG SAFE and DG ITEC for most risks related to physical and cyber security.

DG COMM regularly monitors the implementation of the action plan and carried out two review sessions in September and December 2017 to record any change of the status of mitigation actions and risk ranking in order to update the risk register and the action plan.

At the request of the Parliament's Risk Manager and in parallel to the general risk assessment exercise, DG COMM launched a **Project Risk Management exercise** for one of its 34 PPP projects. DG COMM selected the "*European Ambassador School Programme*" aiming at improving secondary and vocational school students' knowledge of the role of the European Parliament, of the democratic and decision-making processes and European citizenship values.

¹ Both impact and likelihood have a score between 1 and 5.

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

2.1. Environment of the Directorate-General

2.1.a. Operational environment

DG COMM is a **multi-site** Directorate-General. Staff are divided between Brussels and the Liaison Offices in each of the 28 Member States as well as in Washington.

A variety of activities are organised both in the Headquarters and the Liaison Offices to achieve DG COMM's objectives. In 2017, focus was placed on the consolidation of the EP's visibility through its communication channels and on the preparation of the 2019 European Elections.

In terms of projects managed in the **media** area, 6 projects of Parliament's Project Portfolio are led by DG COMM: Regional Media, Fake News, National Press Teams, Electoral Evening, Search Engine Optimization, 3000 journalists. In these areas, strategies on **fighting fake news** and on **relationship with regional media** have been prepared. The EP's **web presence** has been further developed to keep pace with fast evolving trends, technologies and consumption patterns with **Responsible Web design reform** and **Search engine optimisation** as well as the **Multimedia Centre**, an all-in-one offer for audiovisual content replacing the Audiovisual and EPTV websites. **Support the work of journalists** and assisting them in Brussels, Strasbourg and in the Member States are also part of the DG COMM's core tasks. Press officers feed them important information about the EP's legislative work and its values, using all channels at their disposal. Finally, to facilitate the journalists work and to adapt it to modern day requirements, the **press room** in Strasbourg was completely renovated and substantial progress has been made in the renewal of audiovisual infrastructure in Strasbourg.

In reference to **visitors**, the opening of the **House of European History** on 4 May 2017 by the President of the European Parliament, followed by the opening to the public 2 days later was of major interest. Regarding the **Visitors Strategy** validated by the Bureau in 2015, a new set of priority projects has been identified for the SEF/PPP 2017-2019. The Visitors' services Coordination unit acquired new competences in terms of centralisation of most marketing and promotion activities for the visitors services in Brussels and Strasbourg as well as managing visitors' facilities (Station Europe & Atrium, esplanade).

In terms of **strategic engagement in Member States**, the third phase of the **Stakeholders' Dialogue** pilot project carried out in cooperation with DG IPOL was finalised. The EP Liaison Offices organised stakeholders' events aiming at reinforcing support to rapporteurs' legislative work by offering them the possibility to engage discussion with stakeholders on selected legislative files. In November 2017, the Bureau validated the proposition² for a reimbursement concerning the travel of rapporteurs on mission for the Stakeholders' who travel outside of their Member State of election, making the practical arrangements more convenient for the Members participating in this project.

Following a successful pilot project, the EU-wide **EP Ambassador School Programme** was implemented in all Liaison Offices. The programme is an essential element in targeting young people via students in secondary and vocational schools and via teachers as multipliers. One of the aims pursued with these programme activities is to attract students who will become first-time voters in 2019. In addition and with the aim to create synergies between projects addressed to youth, one **Euroscola** session in 2017 was dedicated to EP Ambassador Schools.

² Under Article 10(2) of the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members

Being very active on **social media**, community managers in Member States' Liaison Offices communicate on a daily basis with citizens and multipliers and develop this channel of communication that allows direct engagement with an ever-growing community of followers. 2017 was a very successful year with almost 1 million fans and followers reached on their Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts.

Installing the most successful elements of the Brussels Parliamentarium in the Liaison Offices is also an important tool to improve the EP's visibility. These new areas, called "**Europa Experience**", were established in **Berlin** in 2016 (144.570 visitors in 2017), and **Ljubljana** (7.185 visitors). The Parliamentarium Simone Veil in **Strasbourg** were inaugurated in 2017. Preparation works have started in **Copenhagen** to open in 2018 and projects in Tallinn, Helsinki and Paris were approved at the end of 2017.

To analyse the **public opinion**, two major mid-term surveys were published: (1) "*Two years before the 2019 European elections*" Eurobarometer focussed on key issues relating to Europeans' perceptions and expectations about EU's actions and (2) the Parlemeter 2017³ researched Europeans' opinions on EU membership and its benefits, as well as citizens' attitudes towards the European Parliament, its priorities, actions and mission. A special focus was put on the role of the EU in tackling major threats and protecting the main European achievements. A **Flash Eurobarometer** survey was carried out by phone in December 2017, measuring and updating citizens' media consumption habits in the 28 Member States, allowing to help define how to best reach the target groups and through which channels during the 2019 European elections campaign. Lastly, a new product in the form of a **regular plenary newsletter** for Members was launched, providing them at the beginning of each plenary session with recent Eurobarometer data relevant to topics on the agenda.

2.1.b. Organisational and administrative changes in 2017

On 1st February 2017, Mr Jaume DUCH GUILLOT was appointed Director-General of DG COMM taking over the responsibilities of his predecessor Mrs Juana LAHOUSSE.

A **new mission statement of the EP Information Offices**⁴ was approved confirming the direction in which the communication strategy of the EPLOs has evolved and approving the three pillars on which the work of the EPLOs would concentrate: (1) Citizen engagement; (2) Engagement with the media (including social media) and (3) Engagement with stakeholders and multipliers.

In doing so, DG COMM continued to strengthen the administrative and budgetary capacities and execution of its Liaison Offices through the Project Management Cycle methodology that allows for structured objective-based planning and programming while providing the necessary reactive capacity and flexibility to respond to ad-hoc communication needs of Members.

Concerning Visitors, the main change in 2017 was the entry into force of the **new rules governing the reception of visitors groups** on 01.01.2017⁵. Overall, Members and group leaders positively welcomed the more transparent and flexible rules in the use of the budget allocated to visitors groups, reducing at the same time the risks inherent to the handling of large amounts of cash. This has allowed more visitors to come to the European Parliament with the same budget, with the concepts of "sponsored visitors" and "accompanying visitors".

³ Parlemeter 2017 « A stronger voice », October 2017 - PE 608.741

⁴ Liaison Offices as from 1.1.2018 - Bureau decision of 7.11.2017

⁵ adopted by the Bureau on 24.10.2016

In December 2017, the Bureau adopted a proposal for **reorganisation of DG COMM**. The most significant changes foreseen by this reorganisation include the creation of a Campaigns Directorate and a Visitors Directorate. The new structure of five directorates - Media, Campaigns, Visitors, EPLOs and Resources - will help to realise the pioneering strategy for EE19 and ensure that the Directorate-General works as a single entity towards this common goal.

2.2. Human resources of the DG

2.2.1. Establishment plan

	at 1.1.2016				at 1.1.2017			
	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Permanent posts	271	339	10	620	269	333	10	612
Temporary posts	11	10	0	21	13	10	0	23
Total	282	349	10	641	282	343	10	635

2.2.2. Staff numbers as at 31.12.2017

On 31/12/2017, DG COMM staff amounted to 760 of which 639 officials and temporary staff and 121 contractual agents, national experts and agency staff. This represents a slight increase of 3% compared with figures at the end of 2016.

	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total		FTE
Officials	254	326	9	589		565
Temporary staff	27	20	3	50		48
- in temporary posts	12	10	0	22		22
- in permanent posts	11	4	0	15		14
- to offset part-time working	4	6	3	13		12
Contractual agents				117		108
Seconded National Expert (SNE)				2		2
Agency staff				2		2
Total				760		725

2.3. Budget implementation 2017

2.3.1. Initial and final appropriations

The final budget for the year 2017 amounts to €92 474 600⁶ against the initial budget of €91 906 100, representing an increase of 1%.

⁶ Current appropriations only. Assigned revenue are dealt with in section 2.3.5.

The difference between initial and final budget is a result of the following transfers which were processed during the year:

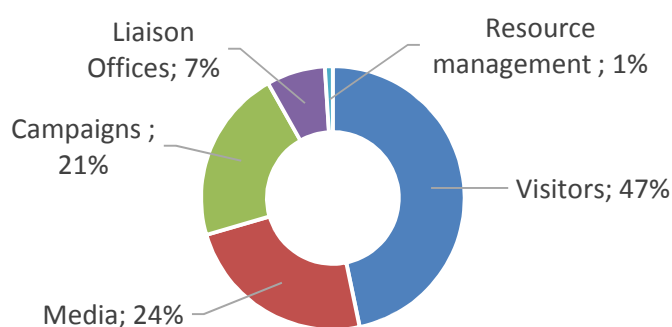
- A rebalancing budget transfer (P-transfer) was adopted in July 2017, reinforcing the budget for the EYE2018 (€2.2 million), for the Visitor Strategy (€0.5 million) and for seminars and journalists (€0.5 million) with funds from the budget for the House of European History. The amount of funds approved by the budget authority for the budget line for the House of European History (€ 7.47 M) had been complemented with contributions from the European Commission for an amount of €3.2 million in 2017. The initial allocation being sufficient to finance activities for the House of European History, a surplus of €3.2 million has thus been made available for transfer.
- An S-transfers €600 000 with funds from DG SAFE to cover investments in the press rooms in Brussels and Strasbourg⁷ ;
- A C-transfer of €1 300 000, in order to fund the renewal of the audiovisual infrastructure in Strasbourg, was adopted by the Committee on Budgets in November 2017. The additional amount aims to replace the audiovisual infrastructure in the Weiss building managed by DG COMM, still dating from the opening of that building 18 years ago and which has now become obsolete.
- Finally, a total of €1 331 500 has been returned to the mopping-up exercises. This related mainly (€ 1.0 million) to a surplus on the visitors line, where under the new rules concerning the reimbursement method for visitors groups some savings could be made.

2.3.2. *Final appropriations and appropriations committed*

The total commitments entered into amounted to € 92 224 341.25 and 99.7 % of final appropriations have been used. This corresponds to an almost full implementation of the commitment appropriations taking into account that certain types of appropriations (e.g. visitors' groups) can never entirely be used since the commitments are made on the basis of reservations which are above the actual consumption due to cancellations or no shows.

The chart below shows the breakdown of the appropriations by the 4 operational pillars of DG COMM: Media, Visitors, Campaigns and EP Liaison Offices:

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION BY COMMUNICATION CHANNEL



⁷ Geda D(2017)37313

2.3.3. Appropriations committed and payments made

For administrative appropriations, commitments are paid in year n or in year n+1 on the carried-over appropriations. The use of payment appropriations has therefore to be assessed over a two-year period, as indicated below.

At the end of 2017, the situation was as follows:

- on the **appropriations used in 2016** for commitments: 58% was paid in 2016; 39% have been paid in 2017 and 3% were cancelled at the end of 2017.
- on the **appropriations used in 2017**: 57% was used for payments processed for new contracts established in 2017.

Payments on carried-over and current appropriations				
	Appropriations committed 2016	%	Appropriations committed 2017	%
Paid 2016	52.859.516	58%		
Paid 2017	35.656.128	39%	53.522.435	57%
Cancelled	2.577.439	3%		0%
Balance to pay			40.278.488	43%
TOTAL	91.093.083	100%	93.800.923	100%

The amount of appropriations committed in this table includes the commitments made on assigned revenue.

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

Automatic carryover to the financial year 2017 totalled €38 233 251.48. Overall, 93% of these carried-over appropriations have been used. The final amount on the carried over appropriations from 2016 to 2017 that remains unused is €2.6 million.

The main unused balances on commitments concern:

- Budget line 03242: Webstreaming 3.0 (balance €0.4M) due to delays in the implementation,
- Budget lines 03244 and 03248: two grant agreements (€0.3M - one cancelled and one action not finalised, to be paid in 2018),
- Budget line 03247: House of European History (balance €0.6M) which accounts for 15% of the appropriations carried over on the budget line concerned.

There were **no non-automatic carryovers** from 2016 to 2017.

2.3.5. Use of appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue

2.3.5.1 Situation with regard to specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue

The assigned revenue incurred in 2017 amounted to €3 887 044 and concerns mainly:

- €3 200 000 from are contributions of the EC to the House of European History (€0.8 million as final payment for expenses incurred in 2016 and €2.4 M as pre-financing payment for expenses incurred in 2017)

- €188 250 contribution of the EC to the EUVP-programme
- €323 954 reimbursements from visitors' groups
- €115 108 income from the Parliamentarium (e.g. the contribution of the shop)
- €59 732 from various other sources

11% of these appropriations were used and the remainder is carried over to the year 2018.

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

Assigned revenue carried over from the year 2016 totalled €1 134 916. It concerns mainly contributions of the European Commission to:

- the House of European History (€0.8 million) following a service level agreement signed in November 2016;
- EUVP programme (€0.2 million)

These appropriations have almost entirely been used in 2017.

2.4. Results achieved

2.4.1. Hours of attention across all communication channels

At the beginning of the year, the Secretary General confirmed “**Hours of attention across all communication channels**” as DG COMM’s lead indicator⁸. DG COMM further developed its indicators defining key products per pillar (*online, media and face-to-face*), examining possibilities for measuring the duration of exposure and developing a methodology for reporting on hours of attention across all communication channels on a monthly basis. DG COMM collected results achieved for 2017 and analysed available measures per main product and pillar⁹.

On top of measuring the attention level reached, DG COMM is developing a methodology for measuring the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of DG COMM’s activities across all its communication channels. The aim is to deliver efficiency gains and service improvements thanks to strategic decisions based on data, intelligence and evaluation (impact, media reach, engagement, resonance).

❖ **Online pillar** (Europarl website and Social media)

The **Europarl website** comprises the galaxy of all sections of Europarl (global website and EPLO’s websites) and specific websites such as the Visiting or the House of European History websites. In terms of hours of attention in 2017, the Europarl website registered **47.000 hours of attention on average per month**. It was noted that some sections of the Europarl website are more visited certain months due to the nature of political activities or that traffic increase was due to specific pages update (ie. opening of the application period for traineeships).

DG COMM operates on **12 Social Media** platforms. As a first step, the focus was on Facebook and Twitter as they are considered the most relevant ones. This includes Facebook and Twitter impressions, EuroparlTV videos and other videos on Facebook or on other social media platforms (ie. YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat etc.). Social media recorded **2.935.446 hours of**

⁸ note D(2017)7625

⁹ see also annex 6.9. summary table of hours of attention in 2017

attention on average per month. Available data show that the increase of the level of attention reached by DG COMM on social media was the result of a combination of paid promotion campaign and organic content and activities.

❖ **Media pillar** (Written press and Television)

Hours of attention for **Written Press** remained stable across the first six months of the year, with a peak in March (60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome and Citizen's Parliament event) followed by a drop in summer, representing **904.802 hours of attention on average per month.**

A similar trend was observed on **Television.** DG COMM monitors the use of watermarked images via Teletrax, which represents only a potential outreach, representing a **monthly average of 2.880.948 hours.**

❖ **Face-to-face pillar** (Media relations, Visitors and Events)

Media Relations covers the activities of DG COMM's press services and relations with journalists. The level of attention remained stable throughout 2017 (**average 5.420 hours per month**) except a decrease of communication activities for journalists with the approaching of the summer break.

The **Visitors'** activity is subject to seasonal trends, with many more visitors' groups during school year and fewer during holiday time, while a higher number of individual visitors during the summer break. Overall hours of attention registered on this pillar were about **118.697 hours on average per month.**

Events includes a wide range of events, from large scale to local events, organised in Brussels and in the Member States, targeting different audiences. Available measures show that the level of attention was on **average 50.696 hours per month**, with a peak in May and a scale down of activity during summer.

2.4.2. *Activities by Communication channel*

A variety of activities were organised in 2017 both in the Headquarters and the Liaison Offices to achieve DG COMM's objectives. Focus was placed on the **EP's visibility** through its four communication channels and on the preparation of the 2019 European Elections, measured by the above mentioned hours of attention.

❖ **Media**

In the field of media, numerous projects have been implemented. The EP's **web presence** has been further consolidated with the implementation of a multiplatform approach and a new EP portal and news planet. Essential work has been done regarding increasing Parliament's visibility on the internet when using search engines. The first topic was migration. Very positive results showed that identifying and answering the audience's needs and interests are key factors for success.

Adaptability of the Parliament's communication to the needs of media and other target groups is reflected in the web-project **Multimedia Centre** which is an all-in-one offer for audiovisual content (photo, video or audio). Besides the tools, **consolidating the relationship with media** is also part of DG COMM's core tasks. Among others, the work done around and since the triggering of article 50 by the UK and the media activities around the debate on the State of the European Union - which was a major political moment with "unprecedented" media impact -

have to be mentioned. In 2017, 223 press seminars were organised in the Member States with more than 3076 journalists. On top of that, 1905 journalists were invited to take part in plenary sessions, centrally organised press seminars and High Level Conferences.

DG COMM paved also the **way for the 2019 European elections** with in the field of media intelligence, completion of externalisation of EP's monitoring and media analysis in EPLOs and in view to facilitate the journalists work, the complete renovation of the press room in Strasbourg and substantial advancement in the renewal of audiovisual infrastructure in Strasbourg.

A major tool to better understanding citizens' perceptions of the EU and of the Parliament in the context of elections or in a broader view is the **Eurobarometer**. In 2017, the Parlemeter showed the fortified voice of European citizens as well as a strengthened image of the European Parliament. In the context of a rekindled debate on the future of Europe and a challenged unity within the European Union, 47% of European citizens felt that their voice counts in the EU. This is the best result since the European elections 2009. Moreover, with 57% of respondents feeling that EU membership is a good thing for their country, this indicator is also nearly back to its pre-crisis level. On 2019 European election awareness, with less than two years to go, 47% of Europeans call for a more important role for the European Parliament, while 55% of Europeans already declared their interest in the next European elections.

The **awareness on EU's action** was also measured through the survey "*Two years before the 2019 European elections*", which showed a very strong call for more action by the EU in a range of key policy areas. In comparison with last year's results, the proportion of those believing that EU action was adequate raised markedly in most of the fields surveyed, possibly demonstrating that respondents are becoming increasingly aware that the EU is acting on their behalf. The replies on issues such as the fight against terrorism and the migration issue bore witness to this. According to the respondents, the EU still has some work to do to demonstrate that democracy is operating well within it. Just under 50% have this feeling, while just over half take this view when it comes to how democracy is working in their own country.

❖ Campaigns

As mentioned in DG COMM's objectives, campaigns bring together all the tools and channels in a single focused communication action. In this context, different campaigns run every year such as the **International Women's Day** and **Sakharov Prize** as part of a wider campaign communicating the human rights as values that the EP stands for and as one of the EP's priority topics. The official launch of the campaign "*They Defend our Freedoms - 30 years of the Sakharov Prize*" with the Magnum Photos agency took place in Strasbourg during the December 2017 plenary session with the opening of anniversary exhibition and launch of the special anniversary book. Another project was initiated with a **film festivals dedicated to human rights** across Europe, combining the use of media tools, in order to better target the audience already interested in human rights related issues.

The film festival, the "**Lux Prize**" hosted its 10th edition. In cooperation with the Creative Europe Programme of the European Commission and Europa cinemas network, the Lux Prize co-organised more than 250 simultaneous screenings across 18 EU countries with debate open to audience. Additionally, an increasing number of LUX screenings occurred outside EU borders occurred (e.g. Iceland, South Africa and in Austin, USA). In the EP itself, this last edition has shown raising interest of MEPs in using the LUX Film Prize to present the EU in their constituencies (50% more than in 2016, mainly in Germany, Poland, Greece and Cyprus).

Various other annual events took place such as the **Open Days**, the 10th edition of the **Charlemagne Youth Prize**, the **European Citizen's Prize**. DG COMM played also a major role in the organisation of the **Flame of Peace** event in Strasbourg and in collaboration with the Cabinets of the President and the Secretary General, "**High Level Conferences with Stakeholders**" were organised, such as the ones on Tourism, Financing the Energy Transition, Africa etc. receiving almost a thousand participants in each one of these conferences.

Finally, large scale events approved by the Bureau or supported by the EP President took place such as the "*Oratorio Luther: The Project of a Thousand Voices*" in March, Celebration of *400 years of the Vincentian family at the service to the poor around the world* (June), *9th European Innovation Summit* at the end of November or the *4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities* in December.

❖ Visitors

DG COMM provides also a wide and attractive range of services for **visitors**, both in Brussels and in Member States aiming to ensure the best qualitative contact with citizens. In 2017, DG COMM welcomed more than 1 million visitors on its premises:

Premises	Visitors
• <i>In Brussels</i>	
Visitors Groups (sponsored and not sponsored)	140.530
Individual visitors	56.406
Parlamentarium	315.666
House of European History (opening 5/2017)	99.344
Station Europe and Atrium	90.991
EUVP	104
• <i>In Member States</i>	
Visitors Groups in Strasbourg (sponsored and not sponsored)	151.818
Individual visitors in Strasbourg	11.422
Visits EPIOs	1.140
Parlamentarium in Strasbourg (opening 3/7/2017)	21.280
Europa Experience in Berlin	144.870
Europa Experience in Ljubljana	7.185
TOTAL	1.040.756

There are several types of visitors in the EP:

Visitors Groups and individual visits in Brussels and Strasbourg: *Sponsored groups* include all groups invited by MEPs and by opinion multiplier groups. *Non-sponsored groups* include both MEPs' invited groups as well as groups visiting on their own initiative. *Individual visitors* visit the Hemicycle, either with an audio-guide or with a short briefing, or watch the session in Strasbourg. Concerning sponsored groups, the quota and use in % for the years 2016 and 2017 per Member State is the following:

Member State	MEPs 2014-2019	2017	2016	Member State	MEPs 2014-2019	2017	2016
Austria	18	73%	76%	Italy	73	84%	85%
Belgium	21	94%	64%	Latvia	8	100%	100%
Bulgaria	17	97%	97%	Lithuania	11	95%	96%
Croatia	11	97%	98%	Luxembourg	6	55%	55%
Cyprus	6	100%	100%	Malta	6	100%	100%
Czech Republic	21	91%	94%	Netherlands	26	55%	57%
Denmark	13	79%	82%	Poland	51	91%	91%
Estonia	6	100%	100%	Portugal	21	98%	99%
Finland	13	83%	85%	Romania	32	93%	95%
France	74	60%	63%	Slovakia	13	98%	98%
Germany	96	79%	81%	Slovenia	8	97%	100%
Greece	21	99%	99%	Spain	54	78%	83%
Hungary	21	82%	84%	Sweden	20	79%	82%
Ireland	11	85%	86%	United Kingdom	73	31%	32%
Global				751 77% 78%			

In the **Parlamentarium**, new audiovisual contents and updates were produced in 2017, including a new 360° film that anticipates some of the themes that may play a role in the upcoming election campaign. These new contents are automatically pushed in the Parlamentarium in Strasbourg and the Europa Experience spaces in Member States, increasing the outreach of the EP. According to TripAdvisor, the level of satisfaction of visitors is 4.2/5 with 87% of them rating the experience excellent or very good.

In the first seven months since its opening, the **House of European History** has welcomed almost 100 000 visitors for its permanent and temporary exhibitions. First visitor feedback has been collected from individual visitors and groups. Out of the replies by groups, 94% of visitors rated the facilities either great (74%) or good (20%). From the beginning, a learning programme was made available and guided tours have been offered. At the end of the year, some 160 guided tours were carried out. Lunch tours can be booked on Tuesdays via the booking tool on the dedicated website, which is in the air since March 2017. The frequency of guided tours will be stepped up once external tour guides can be involved. As from the opening, an events programme was kicked off, either organised in-house or hosted by the museum but organised externally. In all, there were 17 hosted events and 6 internal events. The House of European History is also active on social media channels with, via its Facebook account, 6,763 Likes, 21,600 Video views, 7,800 Video minutes viewed. On Twitter there are 708 followers and via the YouTube account there have been 1,611 video views and 2,074 minutes of video watchtime.

Other visitors' facilities such as **Station Europe** (entry point to visit the EP), **Esplanade Solidarno** (hosting 34 events in 2017) and **Atrium** (welcome points for groups) are on duty since the end of 2017.

In Member States, 2017 was a highly productive year with a **Parlamentarium in Strasbourg** and a **Europa Experience** in Ljubljana besides the one in Berlin.

All these premises allow to customize the visitor's experience, at the centre of the global Visitors' strategy. Implemented in 2017, the **Visitors Strategy Coordination** ensures the communication on and promotion of the global offer, as well as the entire marketing strategy for the visitor offer in Brussels and Strasbourg. It also manages partnerships with other EU institutions and local Belgian partners and authorities across a wide range of projects and common concerns. In 2017, this materialised in the implementation of a series of cross-

communication activities (presence on all institutions websites, joint communication products, events, etc). In the framework of the SEF 2017-2019, several longer-term projects are at different stages of progress, i.e. the development of the online booking tool, consolidation of social media presence and feedback and loyalty programme.

❖ Stakeholders dialogue

Regarding the fourth communication channel “communication strategy in Member States”, the “**Stakeholders Dialogue**” pilot project in cooperation with DG IPOL allowed 25 events to take place, involving 14 rapporteurs from 12 Member States. Another additional 34 events with 31 rapporteurs were organised by the Liaison Offices on legislative topics different from those within the scope of the Stakeholder Dialogue project. Altogether, 59 stakeholder events with 45 rapporteurs and around 6 000 stakeholders were organised by the EPLOs in 2017. With this project, the Liaison Offices contributed to reinforcing support to rapporteurs' legislative work by offering them the possibility to discuss with stakeholders in a number of Member States a specific interest or relevance regarding the selected legislative files.

An essential element of the outreach to the youth both directly via students in secondary and vocational schools and via teachers as multipliers is the EU-wide implementation of the EP **Ambassador School Programme**. In 2017, 700 schools were certified as EP Ambassador Schools, more than 2.600 teachers appointed senior ambassadors, and more than 9.100 students became part of the junior ambassadors' network committed to the European project and enthusiastic to disseminate it among their peers. In addition to this event dedicated to young people, the **Euroscola** competition attracted 9.579 students and 1.015 teachers.

Finally, communication in Member States is ensured through **social Media** with almost one million fans and followers on EPLOs Facebook (698.551 fans), Twitter (271.840 followers) and Instagram (20.302 followers) accounts, which represents a 25% increase as compared to 2016.

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

3.1. Internal control environment and control results

The operational activities of DG COMM are implemented through a large number and variety of **financial transactions**:

- The vast majority of actions are implemented through contracts for delivery of services or goods, where contractors are selected following an appropriate procurement procedure. 70% of the budget is implemented following the purchase of goods and services with tendering. DG COMM manages a substantial amount of procurement procedures: 1.100 new procurement procedures were launched in 2017, many of them being low value procedures, mainly for the Liaison Offices. However, in monetary terms, the vast majority of contracts are awarded following a full competitive procedure. In respect of the procedures launched in 2017: 12% of contracts are awarded following a negotiated procedure for small or medium value contracts, 3% are awarded using an exceptional negotiated procedure and 85% of the amount of all contracts is awarded following competitive procedures (either open procedures, restricted procedure or procedures with reopening of competition following an open procedure).
- The second main category of expenditure concerns subsidies paid to visitors groups or opinion multipliers, which count for 26% of all expenditure. The rules for these reimbursements are established in specific Bureau decisions. The rules governing the payment of financial contributions to sponsored visitors' groups have been revised in October 2016 in order to enhance the transparency and accountability of the process. These new rules entered into force on 1.1.2017.
- 4% of the budget was implemented through a grants programme. It consists of the co-financing of projects, selected through a call for proposals in accordance with the Financial Regulation, which are aimed at raising awareness on the role of the EP, its powers and political nature; disseminating information about the EP and its activities and increasing knowledge and understanding of the three pillars around which the EP operates, namely politics, policies, and values.

The proper implementation of actions is ensured through several layers of checks and controls at the various stages of expenditures incurred by DG COMM.

Key components of the internal control strategy are:

- Detailed planning and prior approval of all expenditure through a detailed budgetary planning of all actions and the planning of all procurement procedures. This planning is continuously monitored by management and is subject to regular reviews;
- Ex-ante verification on the legality and regularity of the operations.

DG COMM applies a **partially decentralised financial circuit**: the financial initiators are decentralised at the level of the operational Directorates and Units which are also Authorising Officers for the transactions concerned. The ex-ante verification is carried out centrally by the Finance Unit on all financial transactions to ensure conformity with the applicable rules. In 2017, the Finance Unit examined 10 631 financial transactions: 4 756 invoices, 1 012 commitments, 3 927 payments, 432 regularisations of imprest accounts, 332 recovery orders and 172 decommitments.

For the EP Liaison Offices, a considerable number of payment transactions were settled through imprest accounts, though these are usually transactions of limited amounts.

Since 2012, all **procurement** related activities and management of grants are centralised within the Finance unit. In 2017, the unit managed and reviewed 7 954 contracts and grants (1.100 procurement procedures, 75 framework contracts, 119 contracts and amendments, 2 140 order forms, 4.358 internal order forms, 47 grant agreements, 115 loan agreements for the House of European History and service level agreements).

All these transactions were subject to **ex ante verification** in compliance with the Financial Regulation and Internal Rules. The controls carried out in 2017 did not reveal any payment (amount) errors or major procedural errors. The objective of ex-ante verifications is not only to ensure the compliance with the Financial Regulation and internal rules but also to generate efficiency gains through the continuous and systematic assessment of the aptness of the internal control systems put in place by the Authorising Officer.

In order to enhance efficiency in the processing of a large number of financial transactions, DG COMM continued its efforts to streamline its financial planning, management and reporting procedures. In terms of management, a closer monitoring and the introduction of the electronic signature to validate budgetary transactions significantly improved the delays for processing financial transactions.

The knowledge and awareness of financial rules and procedures is enhanced, inter alia, through the mandatory use of check lists, financial trainings organised in the headquarters and in the Liaison Offices, the various guidelines and instruction notes which are also made available on the intranet.

Since 2016, following the recommendations of the Internal Audit Service, DG COMM has started to carry out ex-post verifications on grants and as of 2017 ex-post checks are carried out on a sample of the expenditure claims from visitors groups (see annex 6.6 for further details).

3.2. Assessment of the implementation of the internal control standards

Internal Control is broadly defined in the Financial Regulation (Article 32.2) as a process designed to provide reasonable assurance of achieving objectives.

The 16 internal control standards adopted by the Bureau in June 2014 rely on the following principles:

- Internal control is a process: it is a means to provide **reasonable assurance regarding achievement of objectives** rather than an aim. It is not a collection of procedures but requires the involvement of staff at any level of the organisation;
- Internal control should provide with the adequate assurance that the **management of operations complies with applicable rules**;
- Internal control is adapted to the **effective achievement of the organisation's targets**.

Further to the guidance on Minimum Internal Controls Standards communicated¹⁰ in 2016 to all AOSD's and a workshop with the EC on this issue (in October 2016), the Inter-DG Steering Group on Finances assessed what measures should be taken to further enhance the awareness and how to assess the effective implementation of the internal control standards. Following the approach endorsed by this steering group, DG COMM launched a survey with both

¹⁰ Geda(2016)14101

management and staff members to assess the awareness and implementation of the following standards:

- ICS 2: ethics and organisational values
- ICS 8: processes and procedures
- ICS10: business continuity
- ICS 11: document management

The results of this survey have been integrated in the summary of the assessment of the individual MICS in annex 6.8. Generally speaking, the survey reveals there is a need for further training and information on the ICS.

3.3. Results of independent audits during 2017

a) Internal audit service (IAS)

As regards financial management, in 2017 the Internal Audit Service (IAS) in accordance with its work programme, assessed a number of risks concerning financial management in DG COMM in the context of the **follow-up of open actions from earlier audits**, in particular:

- the audit of the **visitors groups**: the remaining actions on the Visitors Groups were closed at the end of the first semester 2017 in view of the progress made in the implementation of the actions and the significant changes to the relevant financial provisions with the entry into force of the new rules as of January 2017.
- the audit of the **grants process** in DG COMM: the audit of grants coincided with the finalisation of the 2012-2015 grants programme. This allowed DG COMM to integrate the audit recommendations into the concept and governance of the new 2016-2019 multi-annual grants programme. Some of the efforts made in 2017 to strengthen the programme's legitimacy will only materialise in 2018 and therefore out of the nine actions, three are carried forward for follow-up in 2018.
- the audit on the **audiovisual sector** was carried out in 2016. The IAS found scope for enhancing certain management and control procedures. To continue improvements in the internal management and control framework, the IAS and DG COMM agreed an eight-point action plan for implementation in future years. Two actions out of the three due at the end of 2017 have been closed.

b) European Court of Auditors (ECA)

In the context of the Statement of Assurance 2016, the Court of Auditors proceeded with a control on a sample of DG COMM's transactions. This did not reveal any material error.

3.4. Efficiency and cost effectiveness of controls

The Financial Regulation (art 66.9) requires the Authorising Officer to ensure not only the effectiveness, but also efficiency of the internal control and to make an assessment of the cost and benefits of control.

DG COMM produced an estimation of costs of the main control processes. The overall cost of the aforementioned controls (see section 3.1) is estimated as follows for communication activities for the last four years:

year	% of the budget ¹¹
2014	1.0%
2015	1.1%
2016	0.9%
2017	0.8%

The cost of controls is calculated by estimating the number of FTEs dedicated to the various control stages or processes and the expenditure related to the control activities. They include the cost of resources dedicated to control the procurement procedures, the resources dedicated to ex-ante verification of the financial transactions, the ex post verifications and the resources for supervisory measures to reinforce the control environment.

The benefits of these controls are mainly non-financial and therefore not quantifiable in monetary terms. They cover, inter alia:

- Better value for money;
- Quality assurance to guarantee that the objectives are met, quality standards are respected and public funds are used effectively and for the intended purpose;
- A preventive and deterrent effect of the implementation of both ex-ante and ex-post controls, leading to a limitation of the occurrence of procedural errors or ineligible items and more general to the promotion of sound financial management;
- System improvements and compliance with regulatory provisions.

Finally, in order to determine the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of controls, DG COMM considers the following indicators:

Workload indicators	On average, the Finance Unit carries out ex-ante verification of 46 financial transactions per day with a team of 4 ex ante verifiers and manages 36 contracts/grants per day with a team of 8 staff in the contracts team.
Average time to proceed with ex-ante verification	The average time to proceed with ex-ante verification is 1.8 days for payment files.
% of transactions verified ex-ante	All financial transactions were verified in order to give the Authorising Officers the assurance that transactions comply with their instructions and with the principles of legality, regularity and sound financial management. In respect of payments, it should be noted that an important part of payments (around 1/3) are processed through imprest accounts, in particular the expenditure for visitors groups, journalists and a part of the expenditure of the Liaison offices. For each of the monthly regularisation files, a sample of transactions is verified based on a risk assessment.

¹¹ In principle, the overall costs should include the Direct Costs (staff directly attributable to the control activity) + External contracted costs (e.g. audits) + Overhead Costs (internal audit, management). The estimated cost of 0.8% only includes direct costs. DG COMM does not use external sources for verifications. The overhead costs are included as PM since no information has been made available by the central services on the estimated overheads

Number of critical audit observations and number of significant audit observations which are open for more than 12 months	The audits from the Internal Audit Service have not revealed any critical observations over the past three years. Two significant actions have been open for more than one year in respect of the grants' audit (see section 3.3)
Number of exceptions from the rules	Controls revealed 5 exceptions on transactions out of which 4 on expenses carried out by the House of European History and one related to an "a posteriori" commitment for an EP Liaison Office (see section 6.3.). These exceptions are recorded in DG COMM's exception register.
Average time to pay	19 days
Implementation rate of the commitments appropriations	99.7%

Based on an assessment of the most relevant key indicators and control results, DG COMM considers that the control systems in place are efficient and provide sufficient assurance to adequately manage the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Overall assessment

The current report provides an overview of the work carried out by DG COMM in 2017 in the various areas coming under its responsibility and with the objective to **help build the reputation of the EU** by showcasing its democratic legitimacy.

In 2017, a EU Eurobarometer survey showed the **fortified voice of European citizens as well as a strengthened image of the European Parliament**. 47% of European citizens felt that their voice counts in the EU and 57% of respondents feel that EU membership is a good thing for their country. On 2019 European election awareness, 47% of Europeans call for a more important role for the European Parliament, while 55% of Europeans already declared their interest in the next European elections.

The **awareness on EU's action** was as well measured through the survey *"Two years before the 2019 European elections"*, which showed a very strong call for more action by the EU in a range of key policy areas.

Operating in line with the regulations in force, on the basis of decisions of the political authorities, DG COMM reaffirmed its commitment to continue to implement its own Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) and Project Portfolio whilst striving to respect its objective to **"produce less, communicate better"** was still valid in 2017.

The high level of budget implementation in 2017 - commitments totalling 99.7% - is testimony to the fact that a maximum effort has been made to fully use all resources available to DG COMM to reach a maximum number of citizens through the four communication channels. As detailed in the report, important results have been achieved. A few highlights are listed as examples below.

The EP's **web presence** has been further consolidated with the implementation of a multiplatform approach and a new EP portal and news planet. Essential work has been done regarding increasing **Parliament's visibility** on the internet.

DG COMM invested significant efforts in the implementation of a comprehensive **Visitors' Strategy coordination**, ensuring the communication on and promotion of the global offer to visitors in Brussels and in Member states in order to improve visitors' experiences across different poles of attraction. In Brussels, in addition to the existing premises (Parlamentarium, Hemicycles), the House of European History, Station Europe, Esplanade and Atrium as well as a new Parlamentarium in Strasbourg and a Europa Experience in Ljubljana were added.

An essential element of the outreach to the youth is the EU-wide implementation of the EP **Ambassador School Programme**. In 2017, 700 schools were certified as EP Ambassador Schools with the initiation of a junior ambassadors' network committed to the European project and enthusiastic to disseminate it among their peers.

Finally, DG COMM paved the **way for the 2019 European elections** within the field of media intelligence, completion of externalisation of EP's monitoring and media analysis in EPLOs and the complete renovation of the press room in Strasbourg and substantial progress in the renewal of audiovisual infrastructure in Strasbourg.

4.2. Organisation and resources

From an organisational point of view, Mr Jaume DUCH GUILLOT was appointed Director General of DG COMM on 1st February 2017 and in December 2017 the Bureau adopted a proposal for the **reorganisation of DG COMM**. The most significant changes foreseen include the creation of a Campaigns Directorate and a Visitors Directorate. The new structure of five Directorates - Media, Campaigns, Visitors, EPLOs and Resources - will help us realise our pioneering strategy for European Elections 2019 and ensure that the Directorate-General works as a single entity towards this common goal.

A **new mission statement of the EP Information Offices**¹² was also approved confirming the direction in which the communication strategy of the EPLOs have evolved and approving three pillars on which the work of the EPLOs would concentrate: (1) Citizen engagement; (2) Engagement with the media (including social media) and (3) Engagement with stakeholders and multipliers.

In terms of **resources allocation**, the financial resources proved to be sufficient to provide the appropriate support to DG COMM's activities. The continuous **digitalisation** of processes further reduced red tape, speeding up administrative and financial management.

¹² Liaison Offices as from 1.1.2018

5. DECLARATION BY THE AUTHORISING OFFICER BY DELEGATION

I, the undersigned,

Director-General of Communication

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

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

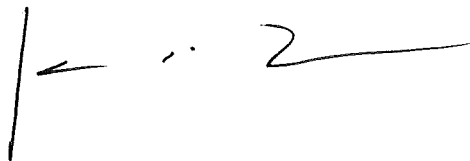
This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgment and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of self-assessment, ex post controls and remarks by the Internal Audit Service, as well as the lessons learned from the reports of the Court of Auditors for financial years prior to that for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

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

Done at Brussels,

on 22/2/2018

Signature



Jaume DUCH GUILLOT

6. ANNEXES

6.1. 2017 budget implementation statement

- 6.1.1. **Current appropriations** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 0)
- 6.1.2. **Automatic carryovers** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 2)
- 6.1.3. **Non-automatic carryovers** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 6)
- 6.1.4. **Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 7)
- 6.1.5. **Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue carried over** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 5)
- 6.1.6. **Specific expenditure commitments/assigned revenue carried over** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 3)
- 6.1.7. **Own revenue** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 8)
- 6.1.8. **Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue** *as at the end of December* - Financial year 2017 (nature 9)

DG COMM - Annex 6.1.1. - Current appropriations - Financial year 2017									
Budget post	Title	Initial appopr.	transfers	Final appopr.	Commitments	% used	Payments	Balance of commitments	Available appopr.
02102-15	Informatique et télécommunications: general user support	277.000,00	0,00	277.000,00	277.000,00	100,0%	126.665,06	150.334,94	0,00
02103-15	IT - management of IT applications	5.907.000,00	0,00	5.907.000,00	5.905.243,48	100,0%	2.141.650,95	3.763.592,53	1.756,52
02105-15	IT - investment in projects	1.305.000,00	0,00	1.305.000,00	1.305.000,00	100,0%	443.510,64	861.489,36	0,00
02120	Oeuvres d'art - centre	80.000,00	-29.000,00	51.000,00	22.800,97	44,7%	19.373,97	3.427,00	28.199,03
02140	Matériel et installations techniques: audiovisuel-achat, renouvellement, maintenance	4.566.600,00	1.900.000,00	6.466.600,00	6.465.333,11	100,0%	1.942.732,53	4.522.600,58	1.266,89
03220	Abonnements, media monitoring	1.820.000,00	0,00	1.820.000,00	1.813.148,22	99,6%	1.212.647,59	600.500,63	6.851,78
03242	Publ, information, manifestations publiques	10.180.000,00	0,00	10.180.000,00	10.084.929,77	99,1%	5.006.417,92	5.078.511,85	95.070,23
03243	Parlamentarium	5.742.500,00	0,00	5.742.500,00	5.725.267,44	99,7%	2.464.419,71	3.260.847,73	17.232,56
03244	Visiteurs	30.645.000,00	1.700.000,00	32.345.000,00	32.311.596,07	99,9%	23.614.715,50	8.696.880,57	33.403,93
03245	Subsides pour organisation de colloques, séminaires nationaux et multinationaux des multiplicateurs d'opinion des Etats Membres; frais d'organisation des colloques et symposiums parlementaires	3.923.000,00	322.500,00	4.245.500,00	4.234.683,20	99,7%	2.321.444,12	1.913.239,08	10.816,80
03246	Chaine télévisuelle parlementaire (WEB TV)	4.600.000,00	0,00	4.600.000,00	4.600.000,00	100,0%	2.426.826,87	2.173.173,13	0,00
03247	Maison de l'Histoire Européenne: dépenses DGCOMM	7.470.000,00	-3.200.000,00	4.270.000,00	4.268.481,81	100,0%	2.069.597,37	2.198.884,44	1.518,19
03248	Productions audiovisuelles	14.490.000,00	0,00	14.490.000,00	14.468.976,24	99,9%	8.784.974,92	5.684.001,32	21.023,76
03250	Dépenses afférentes aux Bureaux d'Information	900.000,00	-125.000,00	775.000,00	741.880,94	95,7%	515.952,72	225.928,22	33.119,06
TOTAL		91.906.100,00	568.500,00	92.474.600,00	92.224.341,25	99,7%	53.090.929,87	39.133.411,38	250.258,75

DG COMM - Annex 6.1.2. Automatic carry-overs - Financial year 2017 (nature 2)							
Budget post	Title	Initial Appopr.	Final appopr.	Commitments	Payments	% used	Available credits
02120	Oeuvres d'art	4.949,33	4.949,33	4.949,33	4.249,33	85,9%	700,00
02140	Matériel et installations techniques audiovisuel	4.441.870,05	4.441.870,05	4.441.870,05	4.416.564,88	99,4%	25.305,17
02300	Consomables audiovisuel	5.601,00	5.601,00	5.601,00	5.601,00	100,0%	-
03220	Abonnements, media monitoring	824.615,20	824.615,20	824.615,20	748.507,53	90,8%	76.107,67
03242	Dépenses de publication, d'information et de participation aux manifestations publiques	9.440.762,09	9.440.762,09	9.440.762,09	8.575.085,87	90,8%	865.676,22
03243	Parlamentarium - Centre des visiteurs du PE	3.940.155,24	3.940.155,24	3.940.155,24	3.807.370,62	96,6%	132.784,62
03244	Organisation et accueil de groupes de visiteurs, programme Euroscola et invitation de multiplicateurs d'opinion de pays tiers	5.528.811,28	5.528.811,28	5.528.811,28	5.350.556,93	96,8%	178.254,35
03245	Subsides pour organisation de colloques, séminaires nationaux et multinationaux des multiplicateurs d'opinion des Etats Membres; frais d'organisation des colloques et symposiums parlementaires	1.467.503,88	1.467.503,88	1.467.503,88	1.323.560,97	90,2%	143.942,91
03246	Chaine télévisuelle parlementaire (Web TV)	2.350.317,09	2.350.317,09	2.350.317,09	2.323.496,60	98,9%	26.820,49
03247	Maison de l'Histoire Européenne : dépenses DG COMM	4.204.311,80	4.204.311,80	4.204.311,80	3.578.820,33	85,1%	625.491,47
03248	Dépenses d'information audiovisuelle	5.816.267,88	5.816.267,88	5.816.267,88	5.345.864,36	91,9%	470.403,52
03250	Dépenses afférentes aux bureaux de liaison	208.086,64	208.086,64	208.086,64	176.449,61	84,8%	31.637,03
TOTAL		38.233.251,48	38.233.251,48	38.233.251,48	35.656.128,03	93,3%	2.577.123,45

DG COMM - Annex 6.1.3. Non automatic carry-overs - Financial year 2017 (nature 6)

Budget post	Title	Initial Appropri.	Transfers	Final appropri.	Commitments	% paid	Balance of commitments	Available credits
TOTAL		0,00		0,00	0,00		0,00	0,00

DG COMM - Annex 6.1.4. Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue - Financial year 2017 (nature 7)

Budget post	Title	Transfers	Cumul	Final approp.	Commitments	%	Payments	Balance of commitments	Available credits
02103-15	IT - management of IT applications	0,00	32.000,00	32.000,00	0,00	0,0%	0,00	0,00	32.000,00
03242	Dépenses de publication, d'information et de participation aux manifestations publiques	0,00	22.020,00	22.020,00	19.000,00	86,3%	19.000,00	0,00	3.020,00
03243	Parliamentarium - Centre des visiteurs du PE	0,00	115.107,83	115.107,83	113.390,25	98,5%	5.958,25	107.432,00	1.717,58
03244	Organisation et accueil de groupes de visiteurs, programme Euroscola et invitation de multiplicateurs d'opinion de pays tiers	0,00	512.204,07	512.204,07	188.250,00	36,8%	0,00	188.250,00	323.954,07
03245	Subsides pour organisation de colloques, séminaires nationaux et multinationaux des multiplicateurs d'opinion des Etats Membres; frais d'organisation des colloques et symposiums parlementaires	0,00	839,00	839,00	0,00	0,0%	0,00	0,00	839,00
03247	Maison de l'Histoire Européenne : dépenses de la DG COMM	0,00	3.200.000,00	3.200.000,00	123.823,03	3,9%	0,00	123.823,03	3.076.176,97
03248	Dépenses d'information audiovisuelle	0,00	4.872,81	4.872,81	0,00	0,0%	0,00	0,00	4.872,81
TOTAL		0,00	3.887.043,71	3.887.043,71	444.463,28	11,4%	24.958,25	419.505,03	3.442.580,43

DG COMM - Annex 6.1.5. Specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue carried over - Financial year 2017 (nature 5)								
Budget post	Title	Initial Apprpr.	Final Apprpr.	Commitments	Payments	% paid	Balance of payments	Available apppr.
03242	Dépenses de publication, d'information et de participation aux manifestations publiques	22.319,36	22.319,36	22.000,00	0,00	100,0%	22.000,00	319,36
03243	Parlamentarium - centre des visiteurs du Parlement Européen	1.221,56	1.221,56	0,00	0,00	0,0%	0,00	1.221,56
03244	Organisation et accueil de groupes de visiteurs, programme Euroscola et invitations de multiplicateurs d'opinion de pays tiers	310.668,08	310.668,08	310.668,08	302.463,91	97,4%	8.204,17	0,00
03245	Organisation de colloques, séminaires et actions culturelles	706,91	706,91	0,00	0,00	0,0%	0,00	706,91
3247	Maison de l'Histoire européenne: dépenses de la DGCOMM	800.000,00	800.000,00	799.450,82	104.082,82	13,0%	695.368,00	549,18
TOTAL		1.134.915,91	1.134.915,91	1.132.118,90	406.546,73	35,9%	725.572,17	2.797,01

DG COMM - Annex 6.1.6. Specific expenditure commitments/assigned revenue carried over - Financial year 2017 (nature 3)							
Budget post	Title	Carried over apppr.	Final apppr.	Commitments	Payments	% used	Balance to pay
03243	Parlamentarium - Centre des visiteurs du PE	95.536,85	95.536,85	95.536,85	95.221,70	99,67%	315,15
3248	Dépenses d'information audiovisuelle	9.221,30	9.221,30	9.221,30	9.221,30	100,00%	-
TOTAL		104.758,15	104.758,15	104.758,15	104.443,00	99,70%	315,15

DG COMM - Annex 6.1.7. Own revenue - Financial year 2016 (nature 8)								
Budget post	Title	Initial Appropri.	Final appropri.	Commitments	Payments	% paid	Unpaid	Uncommitted
TOTAL		0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	#DIV/0!	0,00	0,00

DG COMM - Annex 6.1.8. Specific expenditure appropriations/ assigned revenue - Financial year 2017 (nature 9)								
Budget post	Title	Initial Appropri.	Final appropri.	Commitments	Payments	% paid	Unpaid	Uncommitted
TOTAL		0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	#DIV/0!	0,00	0,00

6.2. Report on compliance with payment deadlines

In 2017, 89% of the total number of invoices were paid in due time. In monetary terms 94% of the total amount of invoices was paid on time and only 6% was paid late, since most of the invoices paid outside the regulatory delays are for relatively minor amounts.

The table below provides a breakdown of the amount of invoices paid within the regulatory time limit (€55.7 million) and the amount of invoices paid outside the time limit (€3.3 million). For invoices paid outside the time period, a late payment interest has to be paid by default if the interest amount is higher than €200 or upon request if the interest amount is lower than €200.

At the end of the year, the amount of late interest to be paid by default is €234. The total amount of late interest to be paid upon request is €5 344. However, the latter is a theoretical amount calculated by the system.

<u>Invoices paid in 2017</u>		Default interest payable automatically (> €200)	Default interest payable on request (<=200€)	No default interest payable	Total
Paid by the time limit	Number of invoices			3.823	3.823
	Total invoiced (€)			55.703.442	55.703.442
Paid outside time limit	Number of invoices	1	442		443
	Total invoiced (€)	71.316	3.228.581		3.299.897
	Amount of default interest (€)	234	5.344		5.578
Total number of invoices		1	442	3.823	4.266
Total invoiced (€)		71.316	3.228.581	55.703.442	59.003.339

The average time limit for paying invoices in 2017 was 19 days. There has been a steady improvement over the past years in the payment time-limits due to close monitoring and the digitalisation of the financial procedures.

Year	Number of invoices	Average time-limit to pay	% of invoices paid within time-limits
2017	4266	19	89%
2016	3967	21	87%
2015	3302	21	88%
2014	3564	29	73%
2013	2931	25	82%
2012	2759	33	74%
2011	2024	44	24%

6.3. List of exceptions - derogations from the rules

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

A. Decisions to make an exception to the applicable procedures and rules							
Document ref. (Finord ref, contract, etc.)	Relevant Authorising Officer	Subject	Amount	Verifiers' opinion		Decision	
				favourable with statement/unfavourable	Justification	Relevant Authorising Officer	Justification
ED 26109 (year 2016)	EVERS R.	Permanent Exhibition House of European History	€75 672,60	Favourable with statement	Delivery of additional services before signature of a Supplementary Agreement by both parties (breach of article 114a(1) of the Financial Regulation and Article I.2(2) of contract). The amendment was covered by an existing financial commitment.	CLARK S.	Additional services were delivered and the expenditure is eligible.
ED 25441	ITZEL C.	Licensing of user rights on the book "European Constitution in Verse" House of European History	€36 000,00	Favourable with statement	The licence agreement was signed after its entry into force (non-compliance with article 114a (1) of the Financial Regulation and Article I.2 (2) of the contract). The agreement was covered from its entry into force by an existing financial commitment.	ITZEL C.	The licenses are due.
ED 25441	ITZEL C.	Production of textile replicas for the permanent exhibition House of European History	€13 000,00	Favourable with statement	Signature of the legal commitment took place after the contract performance started (non-compliance with article 114a (1) of the Financial Regulation). The contract was covered from its entry into force by an existing financial commitment.	ITZEL C.	Goods have been delivered and the expenditure is due.

A. Decisions to make an exception to the applicable procedures and rules

Document ref. (Finord ref, contract, etc.)	Relevant Authorising Officer	Subject	Amount	Verifiers' opinion		Decision	
				favourable with statement/unfavourable	Justification	Relevant Authorising Officer	Justification
ED 25229	ITZEL C.	House of European History - Advertising	€8 000,00	Favourable with statement	The purchase was made without a formal request for offer. The contract performance started before its entry into force (non-compliance with article 114a (1) of the Financial Regulation). The contract was covered from its entry into force by an existing financial commitment.	ITZEL C.	The service has been delivered and the expenditure is due.
ED 25878	IBANEZ P.	EPLO London. - Tacit renewal of a contract for access to a database.	4.700 £	Favorable with statement	The budgetary commitment was signed four months after the start of the tacit renewal. Non-respect of the principle of prior commitment of budgetary expenditure.	IBANEZ P.	As there is a tacit renewal, the legal commitment must be covered by a budgetary commitment.

B. Receivable waiver/cancellation procedures				
Document ref. (Finord ref.)	Relevant Authorising Officer	Subject	Amount	Authorising officer's reasons for waiver/cancellation
OR648/27/7 cancelled by OR729/159/7	DARMIS I.	Cancelling of a recovery order as the foreseeable cost of recovery would exceed the amount to be recovered	180,00 €	In conformity with art. 91 of the RAPs and article 4.9.a) of the internal rules the recovery procedure was stopped by cancelling the amount receivable.

6.4. Long-term contractual obligations

a) Framework contracts and direct contracts for the provision of goods and services

Contractor	Subject	Duration ⁽¹⁾		Overall value of procurement operation	Contract expenditure in 2017	Renewal method(2)	Description of monitoring measures
		Contract	Procurement operation				
ACCIONA PRODUCCIONES Y DISEÑO	Direct contract for the design of the permanent exhibition of the House of European History in Brussels	63 Months	Undetermined	€2.028.600,00	€100.400,00	Automatic	N.A.
ALICE PRODUCTION	Framework contract for EP edited web video and other multimedia services. Lot 3: Architecture, design and hosting	60 Months	60 Months	€4.000.000,00	€1.677.165,00	Automatic	N.A.
CELER PAWLOWSKY	Framework contract for EP edited web video and other multimedia services. Lot 4: translation and subtitling services	60 Months	60 Months	€2.000.000,00	€63.046,46	Automatic	N.A.
EUROPEAN BROADCAST PARTNERS SOCIETE MOMENTANEE	Framework contract to provide audiovisual services (video, radio, multimedia) in the EP premises in Brussels or exceptionally in EP Liaison Offices (Lot 1)	60 Months	60 Months	€30.000.000,00	€4.806.739,00	Automatic	N.A.
EUROPEAN BROADCAST PARTNERS SOCIETE MOMENTANEE	Framework contract to provide audiovisual services (video, radio, multimedia) in the EP in Strasbourg (Lot 2)	60 Months	60 Months	€27.000.000,00	€4.457.560,00	Automatic	N.A.
EUROPEAN SERVICE NETWORK	Framework contract for EP edited web video and other multimedia services - Lot 1: Editorial and creative strategy services and content production – non News	60 Months	60 Months	€13.500.000,00	€1.339.627,75	Automatic	N.A.
OGILVY SOCIAL LAB	Framework contract for Media buying and planning - Lot 1: Digital Campaigns - Rank 1	60 Months	60 Months	€18.000.000,00	€2.303.600,00	Automatic	N.A.

Contractor	Subject	Duration ⁽¹⁾		Overall value of procurement operation	Contract expenditure in 2017	Renewal method(2)	Description of monitoring measures
		Contract	Procurement operation				
HAVAS MEDIA FRANCE	Framework contract for Media buying and planning - Lot 2: Integrated Campaign - Rank 1	60 Months	60 Months	€18.000.000,00	€1.580.865,06	Automatic	N.A.
ISOPIX	Framework contract for photo service to ensure the photographic coverage of the news and institutional activities of the EP in Brussels (Lot 1)	60 Months	60 Months	€3.600.000,00	€508.004,73	Automatic	N.A.
ISOPIX	Framework contract for photo service to ensure the photographic coverage of the news and institutional activities of the EP in Strasbourg (Lot 2)	60 Months	60 Months	€1.500.000,00	€236.012,00	Automatic	N.A.
MEYVAERT GLASS ENGINEERING	Direct contract for the production and installation of the permanent exhibition of the House of European History	Undetermined	Undetermined	€12 410 000,00	€2.275.988,00	N/A	N.A.
PUBLICIS	Framework contract for EP edited web video and other multimedia services. Lot 2 - Editorial strategy services and content production – News	12 months with yearly renewals up to 60 months	60 months	€3.000.000,00	€41.216,00	Automatic	N.A.
VIDEOHOUSE NV	Service framework contract to cover the maintenance of IT systems and audiovisuals equipments of the EP in Brussels and Strasbourg	60 Months	60 Months	€15.000.000,00	€1.714.906,95	Automatic	N.A.

(1) Months, years or open-ended

(2) Manual or automatic

b) Service Level Agreements with other European Institutions

Contractor	Subject	Duration ⁽¹⁾		Overall value of procurement operation	Contract expenditure in 2017	Renewal method ⁽²⁾	Description of monitoring measures
		Contract	Procurement operation				
OFFICE DES PUBLICATIONS (EUROPEAN COMMISSION)	Publications	Undetermined	Undetermined	N/A	€596.810,50	automatic	N.A.
JOINT RESEARCH CENTER (EUROPEAN COMMISSION)	Intellectual Property Rights	Undetermined	Undetermined	N/A	€108.940,00	automatic	N.A.
JOINT RESEARCH CENTER (EUROPEAN COMMISSION)	Media Monitoring Platform (phase V)	Undetermined	Undetermined	N/A	€100.000,00	automatic	N.A.

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

a) Exceptional negotiated procedures (Articles 53 and 134)

In 2017, DG COMM awarded 8 exceptional negotiated procedures without prior publication of a contract notice for a total amount of €1.8 million for cases listed in Article 134 of the Rules of Application of the Financial Regulation.

These procedures concerned the following actions:

- **Audiovisual:** maintenance and IT development of the resources' planning tool and assistance to the users (€1.2 million);
- **Visitors' centres:**
 - Maintenance of the role play game in the Parlamentarium in Brussels and in the mini-Parlamentarium in Strasbourg (€134 500);
 - House of European History: (1) Acquisition of rights on the book "European Constitution in Verse" (€36 000); (2) Maintenance of the permanent exhibition (€134 824,69);
 - Europa Experience in Berlin: Advertising on German public transports (€134 152,50);
- **Lux Prize 2017:** Concession of rights on the 2017 trophy and realisation and production of the project (€17 640) ;
- Diffusion of a TV **advertisement** on RTL Tele Lëtzebuerg and in the two most important cinemas in Luxembourg (€16 131);
- **Strategic advice** in the field of performance optimisation (€130 000);

Details are provided in the following table.

b) Competitive procedure with negotiation (135 RAP)

No procedure for cases listed in Article 135(1) of the RAP was dealt with by DG COMM in 2017.

Name(s) of successful tenderer(s)	Subject	Amount	Legal basis	Grounds	Candidates		Eligibility criteria	Contract reference	PPF opinion date
					Invited	For negotiation			
DCIT, A.S.	Maintenance and IT developments of the resources' planning tool of Audiovisual unit	€1.200.000	PN article 134.1.b)	Absence of competition for technical reasons and existence of intellectual property rights on the core software	1	1	Offer received from DCIT replies to the technical specification and prices are acceptable, taking into account the price charged by the market for this type of deliveries	COMM/DG/AWD/2016/579	29/11/2016
MEDIA FARM	Maintenance of the role-play game in the Parliamentarium in Brussels and in the mini-Parliamentarium in Strasbourg	€134.500	PN article 134.1 b)	The analysis of the JRC confirmed that the contractor had the property rights on the software. The prior permission of Mediafarm being needed for any change in the source code, Mediafarm is the only firm which has the technical capabilities to ensure the maintenance of the software	1	1	Acceptable price.	COMM/DG/AWD/2016/795	21/11/2016
UITGEVERIJ DE BEZIGE BIJ	Acquisition of user rights on the book "European Constitution in Verse"	€36.000	PN article 134 1.b)	Protection of exclusive rights.	1	1	Price considered acceptable.	COMM/DG/AWD/2017/437	N.A.
MEYVAERT GLASS ENGINEERING	Maintenance of the permanent exhibition of the House of European History in Brussels	€134.824,69	PN article 134 1.b)	The use of an exceptional procedures is based on the following grounds: 1. Unsuccessful procurement procedure for the maintenance (May 2014), as a separate lot, in parallel with the production of the permanent exhibition; 2. The production contract provides a warranty period from one to two years after reception. Through the exceptional procedure the risk of conflict with the warranty conditions will be mitigated; 3. Several delays, modifications and unforeseen problems in implementation	1	1	Acceptable price.	COMM/DG/AWD/2017/524	N.A.

				had emerged during the different stages of the project and have complicated the development of the specifications for a new tender for maintenance; 4. Some structural problems in the exhibition remained to be solved					
COSTER JOCELYNE	Lux Prize 2017 Trophy's copyrights	€17.640	PN article 134.1.b	The trophy is the product of original artwork. The trophy symbolizing the Lux Prize is a Tower of Babel made with film. It is a creation made by the Belgian artist Jocelyne Coster, who holds the copyright	1	1	Price offer of 05/07/2017	COMM/DG/ AWD/2017/608	N.A.
WALL	Advertisement on Europa experience in public transport in Berlin	€34.152,50	PN article 134.1.b	WallDecaux has exclusive rights	1	1	Good quality price ratio for high visibility during touristic peak season	COMM/DG/ AWD/2017/661	N.A.
IP LUXEMBOURG	Diffusion of a TV advertisement on RTL Tele Lëtzebuerg and in the two most important cinemas in Luxembourg	€6.131,00	PN article 134.1.b	IP Luxembourg is the advertising department for broadcasting on RTL Télé Lëtzebuerg, unique broadcast of Luxembourg, as well as for cinemas	1	1	Excellent quality price ratio that meets our operational and financial requirements	COMM/DG/ AWD/2017/697	N.A.
PUBLICIS MEDIA FRANCE	Advice in the field of performance optimisation.	€30.000	PN article 134.1.b	Single economic operator with the required expertise.			The offer complies with the specifications and its annexes and the pricing is acceptable.	COMM/DG/ AWD/2017/826	N.A.

6.6. Results of ex-post evaluation

Since 2012, the verification of procurement procedures and financial transactions in DG COMM is centralised in the Finance Unit.

Ex-ante controls are carried out on all transactions from central services and Liaison Offices in the Member States.

Ex-post desk reviews are carried out on a sample basis on the expenditure paid through the imprest accounts by the Liaison Offices and on the final payments for grants.

Based on an overall risk assessment and taking into account the recommendations of the Internal Audit Service, these desk reviews have been complemented as of 2016 by on-the-spot ex-post controls on grants. The objective of these on-the-spot checks are:

- a) to assess whether the action and the provisions of the framework agreement and/or specific agreement were properly implemented;
- b) to proceed with a verification of all supporting documents for the expenditure incurred for these projects and of the funding sources for the projects.

Following a risk assessment, an on the spot check of 5 grants - for an overall amount of €317 744.43 - was carried out in 2017. The overall conclusion of these checks was that the actions were properly implemented and the expenditures were duly justified. The auditors also made some recommendation to further reinforce the control environment.

For imprest accounts, ex-post accounting controls on-the-spot are performed by DG FINS. These controls (9 cases for EP Liaison Offices and 1 for EUVP) performed in 2017 did not reveal any major error or control weaknesses.

As of 1st January 2017 the revised rules for the reimbursement of visitors groups apply. Within 30 days following the visit, the head of the group undertakes to submit a detailed breakdown of the expenditure actually incurred. In addition to the compliance checks on all cost declarations, an in depth review of all supporting documents is carried out for at least 5% of the groups. In 2017, ex-post controls were carried out on

- ✓ 40 visitor groups from the months January/April, representing 7,8% of the cost incurred over this period;
- ✓ 19 Euroscola visits during the months January/May representing 8,5% of the costs incurred over the period concerned.

These reviews did not revealed any substantial control weaknesses.

6.7. Sensitive posts

Since 2012, DG COMM regularly performs an assessment to identify sensitive functions, involving all staff members, both at its central services in Brussels and in the EPLOs. A full scrutiny of all staff members was carried out in the years 2012, 2015 and 2016. DG COMM applies the harmonized methodology proposed by DG FINS, which consists of two parts:

- the assessment of the functions carried out by the job holders on the basis of the job description and the tasks actually carried out;
- the assessment of the control environment to determine the preventive and detective controls in place.

By nature, certain posts are considered as potentially sensitive: management posts, authorising officers and financial actors. Other positions generally considered as sensitive within DG COMM are:

- administrators and assistants who draft tender specifications and participate in evaluation committees are considered occupying sensitive functions in the sense that they can influence decisions, require contacts with third parties as well as specialised knowledge;
- Heads of Liaison Offices as they represent the Parliament in a Member State. Administrators and assistants in the Liaison Offices are also considered sensitive because their role is not only limited to communication activities but also to financial responsibilities;
- "Imprest account administrator" posts;
- Human Resources assistants, as they are highly involved in the selection of candidates from CAST lists and reserve lists to be proposed for a contract or appointment.

Risks resulting from sensitive posts are mitigated by three categories of actions:

- The rotation of staff members holding sensitive posts is closely monitored;
- Re-organisation of services where appropriate in order to reinforce the control environment of supervision;
- The continuous reinforcing and improving of the control environment.

According to the current methodology based on a three year cycle, a complete review was carried out in 2016.

In order to mitigate the risks from sensitive functions, DG COMM implemented the following measures in 2017:

A. Rotation of staff members

- **Imprest account administrators posts in the Liaison Offices**
Three new imprest account administrators took up duties in the Liaison Offices in 2017. In addition to the 15 changes occurred in 2015 and 2016, two-thirds of imprest account administrators have shifted to other tasks over a 3 year-period.
According to DG COMM's internal guidelines on the use of imprest accounts in the EPLOs, staff cannot hold this function for more than five years. The situation is closely monitored with only 5 out of 30 imprest administrators being in place for more than 5 years. However, it should be noted that 2 staff members have held this function for more than 6 years in the same EPLO. It is envisaged to change this imprest account administrator in 2018, according to the human resources available on site.

- **Imprest account administrators for the reimbursement of visitors groups**
In 2017 as in previous years, two imprest account administrators were in charge of such posts. They were appointed in 2008 and 2017 respectively. The payment files and the recovery orders are initiated by staff other than the imprest account administrators.
- **Imprest account administrators posts for the reimbursement of Journalists**
One imprest account administrator is in charge of the “Journalists” imprest account since 2012. The payment files and the recovery orders are initiated by staff other than the imprest account administrator.
- **Staff in Finance and Human Resource units**
There is a regular rotation of responsibilities between staff members within the Finance Unit and the Human Resource Unit.
- **Management posts**
Mobility rules are applied. In the context of the reorganisation of DG COMM, several management posts will rotate early 2018.

B. Reinforcing and improving the control environment

The knowledge and awareness of financial rules and procedures is enhanced, inter alia, through the mandatory use of check lists, the financial trainings organised in headquarters and in the Liaison Offices, as well as the various guidelines and instruction notes that are made available on the intranet. Below is a non-exhaustive list of measures that are in place to reinforce the control environment:

- Comprehensive **manuals, checklists and routing slips** on procurement procedures have been elaborated and are regularly updated by the Finance Unit. They are adapted to DG COMM's working environment and its operational and financial circuits. These documents are available on DG COMM's intranet.
- **Guidelines on the use of imprest accounts** in the EPLOs were drafted jointly by the Finance Unit and the IO Coordination and Programming Unit and entered into force during the course of 2014. Instruction notes were updated in 2016. They are all available on the Finance Unit intranet.
- **Rules governing the payment of financial contributions to sponsored visitors' groups** were revised in October 2016 in order to enhance the transparency and accountability of the process. In 2017, a new IT application was developed in order to calculate the final amounts of the financial contributions. The current rules mention the obligation for the group's leader to keep all supporting documents relating to the costs actually incurred¹³ for a period of three years and the possibility of carrying out checks in a timely manner. These ex-post verifications are carried out by the ex-ante verifiers in the Finance Unit, in cooperation with the Visitors' Unit.
- The use of WebContracts for the **registration of all contracts and order forms** is mandatory as of 01/01/2013. The circuits for contracts and procedures were updated accordingly. This ensures a coherent treatment and verification by the Finance Unit of all procurement procedures/contracts/order forms in the headquarters and in the

¹³ With the exception of the cost of meals and local minor expenses for which no supporting documents are needed, unless those costs and expenses exceed EUR 40 per person (art 15 BUR).

EPLOs. This also allows enhanced monitoring through the use of the reporting modules. As of 1/1/2014, a new module for grants was created in WebContracts. As of this date, DG COMM registered all grants in WebContracts. Other expenditures are also recorded in WebContracts as from 2015. It is the case for reimbursement of invoices (mainly by EPLOs), loans for the House of European History, other agreements (e.g. Service Level Agreements with other Institutions).

- The proper implementation of actions is ensured through several **layers of checks and controls** at the various stages of expenditures incurred by DG COMM. Key components of the internal control strategy are the detailed planning and prior approval of all expenditure and ex-ante verification on the legality and regularity of the operations.
- Since May 2016, the **digitalisation of financial transactions** is in place. All transactions are validated electronically. In addition, a paperless workflow for the validation and payment of invoices was implemented in several pilot units within DG COMM in a first instance which was then rolled out to all units by the end of 2017.
- The **digitalisation of the entire procurement chain** (pre- and post-award) is also being implemented. DG COMM has already started the first phase, the launching of the open tender procedure, which is now entirely electronic by using the e-tendering platform.
- The Head of the Finance Unit **supervises all procurement and financial files** before submission to the Authorising Officers. Members from the Procurement and Contract cell of the Finance Unit attend - as observers - all opening and evaluation committees related to open calls for tenders.
- All the transactions dealt with by DG COMM are subject to **ex-ante verification** on the conformity with the Financial Regulation and Internal Rules. The objective of these verifications is not only to ensure compliancy with the Financial Regulations and internal rules but also to generate efficiency gains through the continuous and systematic assessment of the aptness of the internal control systems put in place by the authorising officer. The findings of the ex-ante verification provide valuable input for the regular revision and update of the procedures and for the drafting of guidelines on financial management.
- As of 2016, DG COMM also launched **ex-post controls** in respect of its multi-annual grants programme, whereby the cost declarations are checked on a sample basis on the spot.
- DG COMM encourages **trainings organised by DG PERS**, in particular for new staff, in order to raise awareness, such as a training on "Developing an ethical way of working" will continue to be encouraged. It aims at a better understanding of the obligations of staff as included in the Staff Regulation and Code of Conduct, and the elements of an ethical decision making process.

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

Self-assessment summary table

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

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

a) Standards assessed as ‘achieved’ – good practices

N°	Title	Comments on execution
1.	Mission	Each staff member is informed of the mission statement of the DG. The mission statement of each unit and Directorate of the DG are up-to-date. The job description and objectives of each member of staff are stated in his/her annual staff report.
2.	Ethic and organisational values	All staff have access by means of intranet, to notes from the DG Personnel and from the Director General about information on all matters related to staff conduct, prevention and reporting of fraud and irregularities, the Staff Regulation, the Rules of Procedure of the EP, the Financial regulation and its implementation rules, the internal rules, the charters, vademeca, etc. Staff are actively encouraged to participate in trainings on these issues by the central services and the Resources Directorate organises, when required, information sessions and trainings to make staff aware of the rules or subsequent changes.

3.	Staff allocation and mobility	<p>Staff allocation is fully integrated in the budgetary procedure to ensure that the allocation of resources is aligned with political priorities and the pre-defined objectives. It follows a bottom up process whereby all units are invited to express their needs in function of the objectives of their activities. The allocations are, when required, re-assessed during the year to meet the changing needs linked with the activities of the DG.</p> <p>Regarding mobility, DG COMM pursues an active mobility policy implementing the guidelines defined by the central services.</p>
4.	Staff evaluation and development	<p>All staff members are recruited on the basis of their knowledge and experience. The performance of all staff members is assessed during the annual staff report procedure. Specific problems arising during the year are dealt with separately and corrective measures are taken if necessary.</p> <p>The need to establish objectives to ensure a clear vision of the contribution expected from each staff and DG priorities is systematically reminded to both managers and jobholders at the time of the appraisal procedure. Objectives are systematically discussed with each staff member during this appraisal exercise.</p> <p>The training service ensures the application in the DG of the European Parliament's professional training policy and it is their responsibility to ensure the development of specialized continuous training particularly for newly recruited staff. Specific training for new officials is discussed with the official upon the taking up of his/her duties and training needs are met as soon as possible. Every year, all staff members working in the DG have their specific training needs discussed during their staff appraisal, where their needs are identified and detailed in their staff report.</p> <p>Given the decentralised structure of DG COMM with staff in central services and in the 36 Liaison Offices and antennas, a special effort is made to ensure that all staff are properly trained and aware of the various procedures and financial rules.</p>
5.	Objectives and performance indicators	<p>The overall objectives of the DG and the expected results are outlined in detail at the beginning of each year and presented in the 1st activity report of the DG. As regards performance management, since 2016 DG COMM implements its reporting matrix linking key activities and related centralized and decentralized operations to different communication channels and in turn to the main strategic objective of awareness raising. An extensive catalogue of indicators and measurements on exposure was developed and periodically reviewed. Specific objectives for individual members of staff are defined during the appraisal exercise and included in the staff report.</p>
7.	Operational structure	<p>DG COMM applies a partly decentralised financial circuit. Operational units are empowered, within certain limits, to authorise transactions which fall under their competence. The financial initiation is decentralised at the level of the operational Directorates. The Finance Unit operates an independent verification on legality and regularity on all financial transactions. These arrangements have been communicated to all staff and are available on Intranet. All financial delegations have been given in conformity with the applicable rules. All delegated and sub-delegated authorising officers have acknowledged receipt of the corresponding charter. Subdelegations are updated, where required, in order to accommodate modifications in the organigram or business continuity. These changes are immediately implemented in the relevant IT applications.</p> <p>Since 2012, DG COMM carries out an annual exercise to identify sensitive functions, involving all staff members, both at its central services in Brussels and in the EPLOs. DG COMM applies the uniformed methodology proposed by DG FINS which takes into account both the functions carried out by the job holder and the assessment of the control environment. The most recent exercise was carried out in the last trimester of 2016.</p>

		<p>Where required, corrective measures are taken either by reinforcing the control environment or by rotating staff members.</p> <p>Information technologies are central in several communication activities, e.g. online and audiovisual; hence more operational units of DG COMM carry out decentralised IT development and maintenance.</p>
8.	Processes and procedures	<p>All relevant processes and procedures are documented either on paper or on the intranet. They are updated where appropriate in order to maintain compliance with rules i.e. regarding modification to the Financial Regulation and its Implementing Rules, internal rules of the Parliament. Financial circuits, checklists are constantly updated and/or improved.</p> <p>User manuals were developed on procurement procedures adapted to DG COMM's working environment and are regularly updated. All this material including internal instructions are also available on the Finance Unit's Intranet website. The Finance Units sends all financial actors concerned 'tips of the week' on a regular basis which provide the latest information on new/revised rules and new available templates/manuals. The documentation on procurement and contract procedures is considered as completed.</p> <p>DG COMM is engaged in the digitalisation of its financial management and procurement procedures. Several steps have already been taken, such as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of imprest account files by the EPLOs, • Electronic signature of budgetary transactions (payments, commitments, regularisation order and recovery orders), • Paperless workflow for the validation and payment of invoices. <p>All financial transactions are registered in FINORD. Derogations from the standard policies, regulations or procedures have to be formally requested, justified and approved. A record is kept of all exceptions which are presented in the monthly financial management reports where considered appropriate, the relevant Periodic Activity Reports and in the Annual Activity Report. 'Notes to file' are also established and kept in the relevant file by the central financial archive.</p>
9.	Management supervision	<p>Management ensures that there is an appropriate reporting which permits adequate supervision of the state of internal control.</p> <p>Supervision of transactions is carried out through a combination of ex-ante controls and regular financial reporting on key indicators such as budget implementation, payment delays, transactions processed and controlled.</p> <p>Supervision of the financial management of the Liaison Offices has been further reinforced i.e. through the revision of the methodology for the programming, linking activities to pre-defined objectives.</p> <p>Before the start of the financial year, each unit has to establish a detailed budgetary planning for the year ahead. This planning is closely monitored by the Finance Unit and is reviewed at least three times per year (mid-term review and at the time of the mopping up exercises).</p> <p>In respect of procurement procedures: a planning is established at the start of the year which is presented to the Director General and reviewed at least twice during the year.</p> <p>The identification of major risks and the actions planned to mitigate the risks as mentioned in the central risk register are subject to a bi-annual review. All sub-delegated authorising officers have been made aware of the guidelines on the relations with external staff issued by the Secretary General and complemented by the Public Procurement Forum on the participation of third parties in tender procedures. Considering that a substantial number of external staff are working in DG COMM premises, these rules were widely disseminated amongst staff involved and were supplemented by specific application rules GEDA D(2015)29213 of 30.06.2015).</p>

		Since 2016, following an overall risk assessment and taking into account the recommendations of the internal audit service, ex post controls are carried out on a sample basis on the grants awarded by DG COMM.
10.	Continuity of operations	Various measures were taken to ensure the continuity of services and to avoid that delays incurred during holidays due to the absence of a financial actor (Geda(2011)49188). The systems of deputising and permanence is closely monitored and enhanced since 2013 (Geda(2013)33569) and an update of rules on subdelegation, imprest account administrators and CAF/BAP habilitations has been disseminated in services (Geda D(2015)40983).
11.	Document management	<p>All incoming and outgoing mail is systematically registered in GEDA. All original financial files are archived in DG COMM's central financial archives in Brussels. An internal system of digital archiving of these files will be maintained until WebContracts, the financial information system, and the Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) to be implemented by the Interdepartmental Group of Document Management Officers (GIDOC), allow for a full electronic archiving of all procurement and financial documents.</p> <p>A document management team was set up in October 2012 and modified in June 2014, May 2015, and January 2017, to comply with the regulatory framework (Bureau Decision PE 422.661/BUR of 2 July 2012 and the implementing measures adopted by the Secretary-General D(2013)44804). One Document Management Officer (RAD), two deputy RADs, and a Local Security Officer have been appointed. A network of responsible persons in the field was also set up for the implementation of the policy and the dissemination of the relevant information.</p> <p>The implementation of the policy is ensured by participation in the works of GIDOC and its various working groups. In the GIDOC working group, DG COMM actively participates in the definition of the European Parliament's Filing plan, as well as in the definition of an IT business case for the development of and in the selection procedure of the ERMS that will be the reference of the Institution in this area. DG COMM also actively participates in the GIDOC working group on the validity of digital and digitised documents which is in charge of preparing a position on the value of digital and digitalised documents for a possible decision by the Bureau, as well as implementing measures for approval by the Secretary General. In 2014, DG COMM adopted its Management Plan and Retention List for documents in agreement with the end users. A revision of the DG COMM Retention Schedule is scheduled to take place in 2018.</p>
12.	Information and communication	<p>Senior and Middle Management are briefed on all key policy or administrative issues at least bi-monthly in a meeting of the "Enlarged Management Committee" (EMC) in Brussels and monthly meetings with the EPLOs in Strasbourg. Information is shared with the rest of the staff through meetings at different levels, intranet, notes and "tips of the day" sent by email. The external communication strategy is outlined in the mission statement and work programme of the DG and put in place through DG COMM website, Liaison Offices' work in their respective countries, visitors' strategy, etc.</p> <p>Necessary measures were taken to ensure procedures for reporting improprieties and staff is informed. Should such a case arise, it is dealt with in a fair and equal manner.</p>
13.	Accounting and financial reporting	In respect of the budgetary planning and financial management, a monthly financial management report is drafted and distributed by the Finance Unit to the senior management and is discussed at the management meetings. These monthly reports include relevant indicators on the financial management, such as: budgetary implementation, payment delays, numbers of transactions and procurement procedures, etc. Throughout the year, regular meetings have been organised with the financial agents to inform and discuss changes in procedures and/or recurring problems in applying the rules.

		New rules and updates are made available on intranet. The Finance Unit maintains regular contacts with AOs to ensure the adequate financial implementation, consistent with the budget and the planning approved. Adjustments are done according to needs. More in-depth analyses are carried out during the mid-term review exercise and at the occasion of the mopping-up exercises launched by DG FINS. Surplus and deficits identified during these exercises are when possible rebalanced between activities of the different directorates.
14.	Evaluation of activities	Evaluations are performed in accordance with the evaluation standards. They are planned and carried out in a transparent and consistent way so that results are available in due time for operational and strategic decision-making and reporting needs.
16.	Audit reports	The Finance Unit is the sole contact point with the Internal Audit Service and the Court of Auditors. It provides the audit services with information/documentation requested and is responsible for the written response to queries raised. Where audit findings require corrective measures to be taken, the Finance Unit works in collaboration with the operational units concerned to ensure that there is an appropriate response to the controlling bodies and that an action plan is established to implement the accepted recommendations.

b) Standards assessed as ‘almost achieved’ – further work required

<i>N°</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Comments on execution</i>
6.	Risk analysis and management	As part of DG COMM’s project on Effective planning, measurement and evaluation of communication activities, DG COMM kept monitoring potential risks having an impact on its strategic objectives. The risk management exercise continued during the whole of 2017 with regular updates of the risk register and further progressed with the establishment of an action plan to mitigate identified risks.
15.	Assessment of internal control systems	In order to verify that processes are working as designed, DG COMM takes into account several sources of information, which are mainly gathered through (a) the discussions during the regular management meetings, (b) the information included in the reports issued by controlling bodies, (c) the results of the ex-ante verifications carried out on all financial transactions which may give rise to remarks or observations and (d) the regular financial reporting. Where potential control weaknesses are identified, appropriate actions are taken to revise or update procedures and guidelines. At the end of 2017, DG COMM performed an internal control self-assessment (ICAT survey). Based on risk assessment, all EP services decided to focus on the functioning of 4 internal control standards: Ethics and organisational values (ICS2), Processes and procedures (ICS 8), Business Continuity (ICS 10) and Document management (ICS 11). Results are given in section 3.2.

c) Standards assessed as ‘partly achieved’ or ‘started’ – weaknesses and practices

N.A.

d) Standards assessed as ‘to be started’ or ‘non-applicable’

N.A.

6.9. Hours of attention accross communication channels

PILLAR	Main Products	Cumulated 1st Quarter	Cumulated 2nd Quarter	Cumulated 3rd Quarter	Cumulated 4th Quarter	Cumulated 2017	Average per month
ONLINE	The Europarl website	159.530	156.500	101.254	145.985	563.270	46.939
	Social media	8.551.281	9.467.947	9.736.842	7.469.280	35.225.349	2.935.446
MEDIA	Written Press	3.689.200	3.045.281	1.938.133	2.185.011	10.857.625	904.802
	TV	10.080.158	7.489.904	8.421.828	8.579.488	34.571.376	2.880.948
FACE-TO-FACE	Media relations	17.834	17.228	8.179	21.796	65.037	5.420
	Visitors	275.141	402.463	325.695	421.068	1.424.366	118.697
	Events	84.061	273.273	139.021	112.000	608.355	50.696
TOTAL		22.857.204	20.852.595	20.670.951	18.934.627	83.315.377	