

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT



Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences

20
18

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2. ENVIRONMENT OF THE DIRECTORATE- GENERAL, OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS	5
2.1 The general objectives of DG LINC for 2018	5
2.2 Key results and progress towards achieving objectives	10
3. RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	18
3.1 Human resources	18
3.2 Financial and budgetary management	19
4. EVALUATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL, INCLUDING OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS	22
4.1 Assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of internal control	22
4.2 Assessment of the costs and benefits of the controls	23
4.3 Summary of internal and external audits	23
5. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE	25
6. ANNEXES	
I. Budgetary implementation overview	27
II. 2018 Budget implementation statement	28
III. List of exceptions - derogations from the rules -Exceptions to procedure	35
IV. Results of assessments	37
V. Assessment of the implementation of the minimum internal control standards	38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1. Executive summary

2018 was marked by the transformation of the Directorate-General as a result of a strategic decision by the Bureau to enhance European Parliament capacities in conference organisation and by the completion of the process of establishing new working conditions for interpreters.

The Strategy for the Modernisation of Conference Management, approved by the Bureau in December 2017 largely focused on enhancing and adapting service provision in the EP based on user needs, developing a single interface for organisers for a number of essential conference services, most notably the booking of meeting rooms and developing new conference services.

It has led to the establishment of the new mission and name for the DG: Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences, DG LINC. As a result of restructuring the Directorate for Conference Organisation was created, grouping together services working directly with the management and servicing of conferences. The goal of this restructuring and rebranding was to professionalise conference management in the EP and to build up the

activity of providing logistical support for meetings, events and conferences across the institution.

A long period of discussions on interpreter working conditions, lasting nearly five years, concluded over the summer and then came into effect on 8 September 2018. This revised set of assignment rules for interpreting activities constituted a more flexible and efficient framework in which to ensure the provision of conference interpreting.

DG LINC also continued its work to modernise the interpreting service, monitoring productivity as a Key Performance Indicator, adapting the skills of its staff to a changing environment, and working with partner institutions to enhance synergies in the field of interpreting services.

DG LINC activity in 2018 was aligned with the Strategic Execution Framework of the European Parliament, which was reflected in the DG's mission, goals, strategy and operations.

ENVIRONMENT OF THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL, OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS



2. Environment of the Directorate-General, objectives and results

2.1 The general objectives of DG LINC for 2018

DG LINC supports European Parliamentary Democracy by facilitating the legislative process and contacts with citizens. In accordance with the European Parliament's policy on multilingualism, DG LINC enables the Members of Parliament to communicate across linguistic barriers, thus helping to underpin the democratic legitimacy of the Institution.

The mission of DG LINC is to provide linguistic, technical and logistical support for the organisation of parliamentary and political meetings of EP Members and bodies and to provide the framework for a professional and user-oriented conference service.

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF DG LINC FOR 2018 WERE:

- a) To launch the implementation of the Strategy for the Modernisation of Conference Management, as adopted by the Bureau on 11 December 2017, and to take all necessary measures to adjust workflows and procedures to reflect the structural changes detailed therein;
- b) To develop and consolidate the new identity and structure of the DG, through a targeted and inclusive communication campaign to external and internal stakeholders;
- c) To continue the modernisation of the DG, in order to adapt to the changing environment, with special emphasis on identifying and acquiring new skills, streamlining resources and administrative work processes and providing

state of the art IT tools to support them, and to promote an efficient use of the working time of all staff categories;

d) To ensure full implementation of Resource Efficient Full Multilingualism based on the following principles: efficient workflows, optimised individual and unit output, guaranteed social protection, high quality standards and fairness. To consolidate the implementation of the revised interpreter working conditions, with a special focus on resource-efficiency, workload distribution and work-life balance of staff;

e) To build further the system of metrics and indicators to measure the workload of interpreters with a view to ensuring compliance with the 40-hour working week, as laid down in the staff regulations, and to continue to apply the provisions of the Cornerstones;

f) To work in close cooperation with the client services of DG LINC and other stakeholders, in order to improve efficiency in the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism and competitiveness as a service provider;

g) To continue to improve services to Members, bodies, political groups and other clients by means of organisational measures to enhance resource-efficiency and capacity usage in the area of meeting and conference management, upgrading the technical facilities in the meeting rooms, and more particularly, by further developing and implementing the project on One-Stop Conference Organisation;

h) To provide assistance to Members and other clients, external organisers and EP staff for the

preparation and running of meetings and events, including safety in the meeting rooms, and to provide support to the EP Protocol Service during high-level visits;

i) To take measures to promote the use of best practices in multilingual meetings in order to encourage users of interpretation to contribute to facilitating the provision of high quality interpretation;

j) To develop further the competencies of all professional categories in the DG, in order to continuously improve outcomes and client satisfaction;

k) To engage in efficient, targeted and needs-based succession planning in order to match the long-term supply of interpreters to the future needs of the Institution, with a particular focus on implementing the DG LINC outreach strategy;

l) To actively accompany technological developments in all areas of DG LINC activity. To strengthen resource-efficiency in the field of conference organisation, meeting management and interpretation by upgrading IT tools and technical facilities;

m) To foster innovative and collaborative working methods inside the DG and inter-DG cooperation, in particular through the creation and implementation of a Community of Innovation;

n) To use inter-institutional cooperation where savings and efficiency gains are possible as well as to exchange best practices and mutual operational assistance.

THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE DG

Changed mission, structure and name for the Directorate General

On 11 December 2017, the Bureau adopted the Strategy for the Modernisation of Conference Management. As a result of this decision the Directorate General for Interpretation and Conferences (DG INTE) became the Directorate General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (DG LINC).

New Directorate

In line with the Strategy for the Modernisation of Conference Management and building on existing resources, a new Directorate for Conference Organisation was created on 1 February 2018, which was tasked inter alia with the implementation of the project for the One-Stop Conference Organisation (OSCO). The management of MEP exhibitions was integrated in the Directorate in July.

Modernisation in interpretation

The development in the interpretation services area remained an important centre of attention in 2018. The groundwork for modernisation in interpretation in DG LINC was completed and full implementation started. The conferral process launched by the Secretary-General in 2017 on the revision of interpreter working conditions continued until the summer recess in July 2018 and resulted in a new set of provisions which entered into force on 8 September 2018.

The demand for meetings and interpretation services in 2018

In parallel, the DG put considerable effort into providing meetings and interpretation facilities at the disposal of users in the last full year of

the legislative period. The second part of the year, in particular, was marked by added pressure on interpretation services due to Parliament's increased legislative activity.

Projects

DG LINC continued to build enhanced service provision for Members and client DGs through its work within the Parliamentary Project Portfolio:

Ñ *Meeting and Interpretation Management System for the Future (MIMS)*: for the management of all operational aspects related to conferences, meetings and events.

Ñ *Electronic Room Reservation System (ERRS)*: the creation of a single point of entry for all meeting requests, via the Meetings Request System (MRS) facility.

Ñ *One Stop Conference Organisation (OSCO)*: a project aiming at professionalising and bringing together all conference services in the EP.

Ñ *Registration of participants to events (REGIS)*: a project designed to streamline the registration and management of participants at conferences and events.

Ñ *Provision of Services – Measuring and monitoring client satisfaction*: this project aims to develop an overall approach to the measurement of client satisfaction with the services of DG LINC.

Ñ *Best Practices for Working in Multilingual Meetings*: an Awareness-Raising Campaign on how to use the interpretation service to add value to the multilingual democratic debate.

Ñ *Knowledge Profiles*: a project which aims to give interpreters deepened specialised

knowledge in Parliaments broad policy streams.

Ñ *An Increased Automation of Conference Room Installations*: concerns a substantial modernisation of the technical installation in the EP's meeting room.

Ñ *e-Poster*: a project to phase out the display of official notices on paper and to replace it with an electronic system.

RISKS

DG LINC existing risk register was complemented in 2018, in line with corporate guidance, with additional targeted risk assessments on DG LINC flagship projects i.e. OSCO and REGIS as well as on DG LINC potential exposure to fraud. Emerging risks relating to the increased pressure on resources at the end of the current legislative term, as well as the new regulatory framework stemming from the adoption of the new working conditions for interpreters, were also given particular attention.

The following key risks have been identified and are subject to mitigating measures:

Ñ In the field of IT, DG LINC considerable dependency on the PERICLES application and satellite applications was flagged again. The accelerated obsolescence of the PERICLES application and the risk of a PERICLES system failure (particularly in relation to the EP IT infrastructure) still figure highly in the risk register. Steady progress is being made to renovate the system via the PPP *Meeting and Interpretation Management System for the Future* while the action plan developed for key data safeguarding in the wake of the October 2017 outage was progressively moving to completion.

Moreover, access to IT in terms of quality and quantity is considered to be an important risk. This is particularly true for the OSCO project which relies on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and innovation to a great extent.

The shortage of suitable human resources on the freelance interpreters market and succession planning issues in interpretation also constitute major risks. Increased competition for resources is observed between key actors on the market while the EP's linguistic needs for 2019 still remain difficult to predict (completion of legislative agenda, Brexit, impact of May 2019 elections and the composition of the next Parliament). Strategies have been devised to develop existing resources and broaden the pool of interpreters (organisation of internal competitions, recruitment of temporary agents) as well as to further optimise the ACI accreditation procedures via the use of pre-selection testing. These strategies rely, whenever possible, on enhanced cooperation with key partners (European Commission and Court of Justice, universities) and, overall, on a strong investment in training combined with a strict monitoring of requests for interpretation services. In this respect, close coordination with DG IPOL and DG EXPO remain essential, particularly via the Operational Coordination Group.

The risk related to adverse conditions for delivering high quality interpretation has been mostly dealt with in the framework of the PPP "Best practices for working in multilingual meetings - Awareness Raising Campaign", via proactive outreach to the main stakeholders (MEPs - in particular in preparation to the new

legislature, Committees), via awareness-raising campaigns (e.g. Multilingualism Day) and also via technical improvement.

Resistance to change and absorption capacity for new tasks are considered inherent risks in any ambitious initiative such as the OSCO project. Particular efforts have therefore been made to ensure proper understanding of the project momentum by all stakeholders concerned as well as to equip front-line and back office staff with the required skills and efficient IT tools.

With regard to the new working conditions for interpreters, a follow-up group comprising representatives of DG LINC management, staff interpreters' delegation as well as one observer representing the freelance conference interpreting agents (ACI) has been established by article 25 of the provisions which entered into force in September 2018. The work processes and ICTs supporting the planning and programming of interpreting resources will also be adjusted as much as needed and taking into account the resource-efficiency principle.

As to fraud prevention, some inherent risks were detected in relation to DG LINC core activities. DG LINC recruits specialised staff on a regular basis and at a rather large scale for its core business, as well as manages a part of the EP budget. A joint assessment carried out by representatives of a number of units most directly involved in supervisory tasks (like Total Quality Management, HR, Budget, Legal Adviser) and complementary individual interviews with selected heads of unit concluded that significant mitigating measures are already in place. The residual risk is therefore considered low in most areas analysed. Some complemen-

tary measures could nonetheless be implemented mostly in relation to awareness-raising and training. Reflection on these aspects is ongoing.

Finally, notable progress was also made in the field of Business Continuity Management. The Business Impact Analysis completed in the framework of the elaboration of DG LINC Business Continuity Plan was particularly useful from a risk mitigation perspective. In the same

spirit and in line with the Business Continuity Institute guidelines, lessons are systematically drawn from real major incidents such as the October 2017 IT outage or the December-2018 attack in Strasbourg. The lessons learned further enhanced DG LINC's preparedness to potential disruptive events and will progressively enrich the Directorate-General's Business Continuity Plan.

2.2 Key results and progress towards achieving objectives

OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	RESULTS FOR THE 2018 EXERCISE
	MEETINGS	
	Meetings booked in the PERICLES database	23530
	Out of which number of meetings booked via the new MRS interface	4528
d	Average weekly number of interpretation hours per interpreter (lead indicator)	13:47
	EP meeting sessions with interpretation provided	5240
f	Brussels:	3045
	Strasbourg:	2187
	Luxembourg:	8
	EP missions outside 3 work places with interpretation provided	195
	Meetings outside of places of work organised by the conference service (political groups, Conf. of Presidents and Bureau)	39
	Meetings with interpretation organised for other institutions total:	229
	Commission (EP buildings)	8
	Court of auditors (Bxl, Lux, outside)	0 / 27 / 10
	Comm. of regions (Bxl, outside)	100 / 0
	Eur. economic and social committee	81
	Ombudsman	0
	Translation centre	1
	Commission meeting in Strasbourg	2
g	Requests for meetings in the EP premises by outside bodies:	
	Brussels	74
	Luxembourg	34
	Members' exhibitions (since July 2018)	
	Requests processed	209
	Events supported	124
	Meeting attended by a conference technician	5088
	Meetings requiring set-up in the meeting room	3811
	Meetings managed remotely from central control room	6043
	Meetings attended by ushers	14.622
	Brussels: meetings / plenary mini sessions	11.425 / 3
	Luxembourg: meetings	2
	Strasbourg : meetings / plenary sessions	3.180 / 12
	INTERPRETATION	
i	Contract days of conference interpreting agents (ACI)	52.106
	INTERPRETER LANGUAGE SKILLS ENHANCEMENT	
	Language enhancement training in cooperation with EP services and other institutions :	
	Events (one or more sessions)	12
	Participants staff / ACI	150 / 10
	Number of participants in language courses 2018-2019 :	
j	In-house specific staff / ACI	80 / 8
	e-learning staff / ACI	10 / 9
	Private tuition staff	10
	External language courses for staff :	
	Short term	43
	Long term	5

	Exchange scheme with EP liaison offices	2
	Thematic training organised in cooperation with EP's services, permanent representations and other institutions :	
	Events	32
	Participants staff / ACI	258 / 18
	Knowledge Profiles (for interpreters)	
	Participants	21
	Security training	
	Sessions	13
	Participants	250
	Professional skills training for staff interpreters (feedback, quality control, pre-selection, selection board training)	
	Events	7
	Participants	58
	TESTING	
j	Languages added by staff	23
	Languages added by ACI in 2018	38
	SUCCESSION PLANNING	
	Grants awarded to universities in 2018	7
	Universities who received pedagogical assistance at final exams	15
	Remote teaching assistance (virtual classes)	
	Virtual classes sessions	43
	Universities in the sessions	26
k	Visits by universities	26
	Virtual coaching	
	Staff interpreters coached	7
	Students coached	3
	Bursaries granted to ACIs for language learning/enhancement	33
	INTER-INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	
	Participants to structured exchange programme with SCIC (EP & SCIC)/Exchange days of interpretation	648
	LINC to SCIC	302
	SCIC to LINC	346
m, n	Inter-institutional accreditation procedure	
	Preselected candidates	
	Passed	94
	Accredited candidates	
	Passed	55

RESULTS ACHIEVED - GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Since the creation of the Conference Organisation Directorate in February, the one-stop conference organisation approach has been rolled out to support a growing number of events taking place on Parliament's premises (High-level conferences, authorised third party events, events under the lead of DG PRES and DG EXPO). The Directorate for Conference Organ-

isation now provides a modular range of services, from the usual technical and logistical support to handling the invitations and registrations, managing and running the preparation of the event and providing additional consultancy services to clients.

The entry into force of a new set of interpreter working conditions on 8 September 2018 has allowed DG LINC to provide interpreter teams in a more flexible and resource-efficient way given the unpredictable and varied meeting patterns in the European Parliament resulting

from the increased legislative competences established in the Lisbon Treaty and, more specifically, during the very busy period in the run-up towards the European elections which started during the last quarter of 2018.

RESULTS ACHIEVED - SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

a) In line with the Strategy for the Modernisation of Conference Management, the new Directorate for Conference Organisation was created, comprising the Conference Technicians Unit, the Conference Ushers Unit and the Meeting and Conferences Unit. The latter was split on 15 June 2018 in two units, the Request Management Unit and the Conference Coordination Unit. The Request Management Unit focuses on request processing, compliance assessment and booking. The Conference Coordination Unit is in charge of interfacing with the clients and liaising with the competent entities in DG LINC and other DGs to ensure smooth and coordinated service delivery.

Initiatives were taken in a number of areas. For instance, on participation management, a software procurement procedure was launched in cooperation with DG ITEC to acquire a professional registration management tool. On an integrated approach to infrastructure planning, efficiency gains were achieved on the management of videoconferences and other meetings, notably by increasing automation.

b) The change of the name and of the structure of the Directorate-General were announced and outlined to DG LINC staff by the Director-General at a town hall meeting on 29 January 2018. This was followed by 10 information sessions between March and May 2018, featuring activities of different units and strategic projects

in support of the modernisation process in DG LINC. A DG-wide inclusive Reflection Day on 9 November 2018 focused on four topics: the future of the conference professions, the impact of technologies, meeting client expectations and making the best use of existing and developing new skills. These actions to consolidate the identity of the DG were strengthened by intensive internal communication activities, through new visuals or slogans (such as *#poweredbyDGLINC*, *DG LINC Meeting Expectations*, *DG LINC Interpreters: get your message across*). Finally, a new DG LINC intranet website was prepared to reflect the changed name and structure and the broadened mission of DG LINC.

c) The modernisation process of interpretation services in DG LINC also continued in 2018.

Through the clean days principle, non-interpreting tasks undertaken by interpreters have to be scheduled for days of low parliamentary activity, and the Staff Interpreter Annual Leave Guidelines, which limit the number of annual leave days staff interpreters can take during periods of parliamentary activity, the availability of staff interpreters for interpretation assignments was enhanced. The language score system, which requires all staff interpreters to have a minimum of five passive or retour languages over the course of their career, was fully implemented and embedded in the DG LINC training and appraisal systems. The output measurement methodology was further developed and implemented and output benchmarks were used while programming interpreters' assignments, in close collaboration between the different services of DG LINC, to increase productivity in interpretation while ensuring fairness and balance workloads between interpreters.

In 2018, output reached 13:47 hours, compared to 11:54 hours in 2014, when this indicator was first calculated, but the modernised assignment system was still not in place. This represents a productivity gain of 14%. To promote the efficient use of staff interpreters' working time whilst enhancing interpreters' professional experience and increasing their skillset, a number of interpreters were seconded on a temporary and voluntary basis to DG LINC operational units on low activity days. In addition, the participation of DG LINC staff in activities such as DG TRAD's *Audiocapacity* project started gaining momentum. Finally, an awareness raising campaign was prepared to familiarise MEPS and other participants with the constraints of working in multilingual meetings.

In 2018 a review of a number of internal work processes in DG LINC was also completed, which lead to the following actions to rationalise working methods:

- Ñ Streamlining mission order approval and processing according to the new organisation chart

- Ñ Centralising the financial initiation functions

- Ñ The external ACI payment processing was restructured.

- Ñ DG LINC started using temporary placements intra and inter-DG to temporarily reinforce some units or delegating colleagues to other units in view of enhancing their career and alleviating peaks in workload

- Ñ Process of ACI recruitment confirmations was further digitalised.

d) The new interpreter working conditions, whose implementation started on 8 September

2018, together with the management commitments already in place regarding workload balancing allowed DG LINC to better reconcile the obligation to support Members in their parliamentary work by providing interpreter teams in an increasingly complex environment with the commitment to ensure a working environment for all staff that is resource-efficient, fair and in compliance with the principles of work-life balance.

Further language and thematic training initiatives as well as documentation support measures were put in place to allow interpreters to perform their duties to the required high quality standards.

e) The lead indicator for DG LINC is the average output of the interpretation units, i.e. the number of hours/week of interpretation. The system and methodology for calculating and implementing the output indicator were further developed. In addition, work started on a diversification of the performance indicators in use in the DG.

f) On the basis of the recommendations by the Internal Audit Service, the Operational Coordination Group was created. This body, chaired by DG LINC and comprising representatives of the client DGs, was tasked with improving efficiency and cooperation in the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism and met regularly to exchange views and ideas for improvements.

In addition, a draft SLA between EP and the EESC for the provision of interpreting services was agreed at an operational level.

g) The first event fully coordinated under the responsibility of the Directorate for Conference Organisation was the High-Level Conference

on Cultural heritage on 26 June 2018. Since that date, new conferences and events have been added to the OSCO portfolio. While the ownership of each event remains with the requestor, the OSCO team can offer tailor-made, modular assistance, from standard venue booking and conference services to task force management, full back-office coordination and support and consultancy services on request. In parallel, project teams have been working on completing and enhancing the OSCO model through increased automation of installations and making meeting room functionality available directly to end-users. Additionally, a streamlined management model for meeting room facilities (with a DG LINC operator providing end-user support in the meeting room for simple videoconferencing links) is being progressively deployed in Brussels and Strasbourg conference rooms, facilitating the remote participation of Brussels based staff during Strasbourg sessions.

The continuation of the PPP for *Increased Automation of Conference Room Installations* was also underway in 2018. 11 additional rooms were renovated in Strasbourg as well as the Central Control Room to facilitate the remote supervision of the meeting rooms.

Towards the end of the year, preparations were ongoing for a pilot *Meeting Officer* project, aiming at leveraging the presence and expertise of conference ushers in meeting rooms to improve the range of services and assistance on offer.

As part of OSCO, DG LINC started developing a solution to offer a local meeting room interactive reservation system for small and medium meeting rooms.

h) The restructuring of the DG and the creation of the Directorate for Conference Organisation facilitated the further integration of the Conference Ushers Unit in DG LINC, moved to DG LINC in 2017, to leverage their expertise in the ongoing reflection on improving and professionalising conference services and providing better assistance to clients and meeting participants. The Conference Ushers Unit responded to requests for assistance from the Protocol Service and was involved in high-profile events alongside colleagues from the Protocol and from the Conference Coordination Unit.

i) A project to raise awareness of best practices for working in multilingual meetings was developed. It included a number of actions, such as the production of animations explaining best practices for working in multilingual meetings and facilitating access for Members and their assistants to the application for uploading plenary speeches. Awareness raising also took place regarding the need to limit the use of plastic bottles within the Parliament, most notably via a dedicated Water Working Group aiming to forge a transition from plastic bottles in the booth to a more sustainable solution to water provision for interpreters.

j) To ensure that language learning by staff interpreters remains aligned with the needs of the service and to facilitate long-term workload balancing, the obligation for every staff interpreter to achieve a target of five passive or re-tour languages over the course of his/her career was introduced as part of the modernisation process in the interpretation service. Language learning paths were agreed and the necessary practical support was organised for language learning (courses, lectures, etc.).

Professional skills trainings for interpreters, in specialized areas like quality control and assessment, pre-selection and selection board training were also organised.

The Knowledge Profiles project was completed in 2018 with a course focusing on economic and scientific policy stream and a second course on citizens' rights and constitutional affairs policy stream. These training courses were opened up to other DGs to increase horizontal cooperation across them.

k) Conference interpreters constitute a scarce resource and constant efforts are needed to guarantee the continued ability of the Directorate-General to provide the service in the future. In 2018, further efforts were therefore made to support universities training interpreters through a system of grants, student visits, virtual classes and assistance at final exams.

Special outreach actions were undertaken for specific deficit languages, in cooperation with the interpretation services of the European Commission and the Court of Justice. For instance, the age structure in the DA language unit and the absence of an interpreting course in Denmark for the last 10 years have resulted in a severe shortage of DA interpreters. Contacts at political and administrative level were made and a targeted communication campaign was deployed to attract suitable candidates for the newly announced interpreting course at Aarhus University which opened in the fall of 2018. DG LINC participated at language fairs in the Netherlands (Drongo Talen Festival) and the United Kingdom (London Language Show) with the aim of launching further targeted and intensified communication actions for the English and the Dutch languages, which are also at risk of shortages.

In addition, DG LINC continued to support EP communication activities, through its presence at the EP Open Days held in Brussels in May and in Strasbourg in June. The DG was present at the European Youth Event in Strasbourg also held in June, to reach out to students potentially interested in becoming linguists or interpreters. DG LINC also co-organised the European Parliament Multilingualism Day in Brussels in September, together with DG TRAD and DG COMM.

In the framework of cooperation with universities a number of students and trainers groups visited DG LINC, as well as received other pedagogical assistance (virtual classes, coaching via virtual coaching tool, trainings for trainers, on site pedagogical assistance at final exams, etc.).

The Pre-Selection Tool (PST) managed by DG LINC is intended to contribute to the improvement of the success rate and to lower the costs of inter-institutional freelance interpreter accreditation tests. The PST was used continuously for all inter-institutional accreditation tests in the 2017-2018 cycle. In 2018 it was accepted as an established part of the accreditation test procedure.

The Virtual Coaching Tool (VCT), a web-based e-learning application for providing one-to-one remote interpretation coaching assistance developed by DG LINC, has been tested in 2018 as pilot project. In 2018, first ten VCT coach-student pairs used the VCT for the training, including students from ESIT school (Paris) and staff interpreters who were adding a language, working both in synchronous and asynchronous mode sessions.

l) A new in-room audio recording software was implemented in eight conference rooms. This

system will provide greater autonomy to end-users.

Work also continued in the area of IT, with the development of specific tools for streamlining meeting requests and for the recruitment of ACIs.

In 2018, Meeting Information and Notes Application (MINA) now a stable application, was enhanced with e-Teamleader reports. SAM developments concentrated on the new interpreter working conditions and online confirmation of contracts for ACI. MRS was rolled out to all EP committees and delegations and 7 out of 9 political groups. Developments also started for the enrichment of the request form. A multi-purpose speech bank was developed and LINCnet, the new DG LINC website on the EP-intranet, was implemented.

m) DG LINC together with DG ITEC built and started animating the EP Conference of the Future innovation space, in the context of the project on mainstreaming innovation. In this space, EP staff can share ideas for the improvement of conference management.

n) In 2018, DG LINC chaired the Inter-Institutional Committee on Translation and Interpretation (ICTI), which is the framework for cooperation between the language services of the EU Institutions and. DG LINC participated in meetings of the ICTI-based Executive Committee on Interpretation (ECI), cooperating closely with the interpretation services of the EU institutions, which provides for comprehensive approach and operational synergies.

DG LINC held the presidency of the ECI's Inter-Institutional Test Group in 2018.

DG LINC was also an active member of IAMLADP (International Annual Meeting on

Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications, a UN-lead organisation), chairing its Working Group on Training and being a member of its Executive Committee. DG LINC participated in both International Annual Meeting on Computer-Assisted Translation and Terminology (JIAMCATT) and IAMLADP annual meeting.

DG LINC also coordinates the HINTS network, a network of Chief Interpreters in National and International Organisations, with attendance at bi-annual meetings.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



3 Resources management

3.1 Human resources

ESTABLISHMENT PLAN

	on 01/01/2018			
	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Permanent posts	366	140	18	524
Temporary posts	0	0	0	0
Total	366	140	18	524

	on 01/01/2017			
	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
	372	111	8	491
	0	0	0	0
Total	372	111	8	491

STAFF NUMBERS AT 31.12.2018

	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Officials	309	130	16	455
Temporary staff	13	15	2	30
- in temporary posts	0	0	0	0
- in permanent posts	9	3	1	13
- offsetting staff working part time	4	12	1	17
Contract staff				49
Seconded national experts (SNE)				0
Agency staff				0
Total				534

3.2 Financial and budgetary management

FINAL APPROPRIATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTED

Overall, initial appropriations, amounted to EUR 59 853 033. Following the two mopping up procedures, a series of 'S' transfers and one 'C' transfer, the final total appropriations amounted to EUR 60 712 283. The details of the transfers are as follows:

Result of Mopping up and Transfers

Budget line	Movement €
1404	-70 000
2105	-86 750
2140	+800 000
3042	+436 100
3042	-36 100
3245	-184 000
Total	+859 250

The increase is mainly attributable to increases on the item 3042 *other meetings and conferences* to meet increased demand for meetings by the political groups and for item 2140 *maintenance and renewal of conference equipment* for further modernisation of the meetings rooms.

FINAL APPROPRIATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTED

Committed appropriations against final appropriations represent an overall utilisation rate of 100%. This includes large provisional commitments on the budget item 1405 *"Expenditure on interpretation: Freelance Interpreters"*.

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTED AND PAYMENTS MADE

90% of committed appropriations was paid during the exercise.

Remainders on commitments on current appropriations amount to EUR 6 121 788 and mainly concern the following items:

Ñ EUR 2.39 million on 1405;

Ñ EUR 2.87 million on 2140;

Ñ EUR 163 222 on 2105;

Ñ EUR 240 585 on 3042;

Ñ EUR 178 594 on 3245.

These remainders will be carried forward to 2019, to cover outstanding legal obligations, notably:

1405: to honour payments of Conference Interpreter Agents remuneration and travel costs, related to services provided in 2018.

2140: for payments for the last quarter 2018 in respect of the maintenance contracts for Brussels and Strasbourg, and more significantly for payments of large orders of materials, equipment, and contracts for installation, relating to the plan for further modernisation of the meeting rooms.

2105: To honour payment of legal commitments entered into during 2018, due to end in August 2019.

3042: To honour payment of legal commitments entered into in 2018 with the contractors who have provided services related to organising meetings of political groups outside of the three working places.

3245: To cover final payments on the grant programme 2018/2019.

USE OF AUTOMATIC AND NON-AUTOMATIC CARRYOVERS FROM 2017 TO 2018

The overall rate of payments against automatic carry-overs 2017 to 2018 is 97 %. The total amount of unused carried forward appropriations amounts to EUR 312 760. Here are the reasons why:

EUR 126 835 not utilised on item 2140 (2% of the amount carried over). This unused balance at the end of 2018 is mainly the result of the commitments for the maintenance contracts of Brussels and Strasbourg. The amounts committed initially were based on the offer price of the contractor in his reply to the call for tender. Given that the specific terms and conditions of the contract mentions that only the hours really executed can be paid, the amount remaining at the end of 2018 corresponds to the hours that were included in the estimation by the contractor but that were not required for the execution of the contract. For 2018, the commitments were revised based on the experience from 2016 / 2017.

EUR 90 835 on item 3042. There is an ongoing issue with one of the contractors who provided services to the Meetings and Conference unit in 2016/2017. The contractor contends that the Parliament should bear the VAT applicable to the sub-contracts, and because of this issue, the contractor has withheld a number of final invoices. There are some outstanding legal commitments, specific orders where the services were ordered and delivered in 2016 and 2017 but the final invoices have not yet been presented. The outstanding amount is estimated to be in the region of EUR 60 000.

EUR 54 214 on item 3245 represents the remaining carried forward appropriations

deemed necessary at the start of 2018 to pay the remaining amounts due on the grant agreements from the 2017/2018 grant programme. Final amounts paid were less than foreseen as beneficiaries had overestimated the cost of their projects.

USE OF APPROPRIATIONS CORRESPONDING TO ASSIGNED REVENUE

Situation with regard to specific expenditure appropriations/assigned revenue

The amount of assigned revenue for 2018 is EUR 2 640 057 of which 83% has been committed in 2018. Of the committed amount 81% was already paid in 2018. This largely concerns the budget item 1405.

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

Ñ Carried forward revenue amounts to EUR 163 649 (type 5).

Ñ Carried forward committed revenue amounts to EUR 440 303 (type 3).

Ñ Carried forward assigned revenue (type 5) was utilised at 100%.

Ñ Committed carried forward revenue (type 3) was utilised at 98%.

EVALUATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL, INCLUDING OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS



4. Evaluation and effectiveness of internal control, including overall assessment of cost-effectiveness

4.1 Assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of internal control

In 2018, a major change in the internal control framework of DG LINC has been the centralisation of the financial initiation function in the Budget Unit for all budget lines but one. As a result, two separate and distinct teams were created in the latter to underpin the different nature of the two functions, financial initiation and ex ante financial verification. This has resulted in efficiency gains and increased flexibility. Moreover, there is an added benefit in the context of preparing for the transition to the new financial management system as most of the expertise required to manage this will be concentrated in the Budget Unit. Also, the Budget Unit took over the task of registering and assigning the invoices and payment requests for the whole DG.

A key additional control function is the systematic check carried out by the *'procurement help desk function'* concerning the DGs procurement procedures above the threshold of EUR 15 000 (before launch) and those procedures above EUR 60 000 (two stage check, the first before publication and the second before the award of the contract). The procurement help desk and the ex ante verifiers give advice to the operational units on an ongoing basis (includ-

ing in 2018 concerning the first tender procedure in the Parliament using an all-electronic system).

These controls are complemented by the ex post control activities (see Annex 4). The two units in charge of ex ante and ex post controls meet and discuss on a regular basis, issues to be addressed and for input to the control findings and recommendations.

The Budget Unit organised meetings for financial actors in the DG during the course of the year to share best practices and to facilitate a consistent approach to the application of financial rules and procedures.

Internal control matters are also regularly considered in the framework of DG LINC Service meeting and Management Team. To this regard, in 2018, a specific attention was drawn to data protection with a view to the entering into force of the new Regulation 2018/1725.

The overview of the application of the minimum control standards is set out in Annex 5.

DG LINC has set up an organisational structure and internal control systems tailored to the performance of its tasks, taking into account the risks associated with the management environment. The authorising officer by delegation continuously assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control systems with a view to ensuring that they are functioning as

expected and that any detected weaknesses in the controls are corrected.

4.2 Assessment of the costs and benefits of the controls

Regarding the cost/effectiveness of controls, in the absence of a methodology specifically adapted to the needs of the Parliament, it is difficult to provide a reliable analysis. In 2018, the number of staff directly involved in controls remained unchanged. There are currently two FTE ex ante verifiers of financial transactions and checking tender files, all working in the Budget Unit. The decision to centralise the financial initiation function in the Budget Unit allows the pooling of expertise and the creation of a knowledge base in the DG.

Maintaining the focus on giving individual support and advice to file managers in operational units when files are at the preparation stage has reaped benefits. It reduces the risk of errors and it keeps the error rate very low.

There is also one ex post controller working in the Total Quality Management Unit (following a combined approach of transaction testing and system review). If, however, the definition of controls is considered in a broader sense then one could include, as a control function, part of the work done by both operational and financial initiators whose role also includes verification work and their respective heads of the units and eventually directors, all of whom have a verification role.

4.3 Summary of internal and external audits

As far as the audit report carried out by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) on the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism

is concerned, the IAS is carrying out a follow-up exercise every six months. As of the end of 2018, two actions have been closed and eight are still ongoing (all with a residual risk assessed as “moderate”). Although full implementation of the remaining recommendations is not yet completed given that they are wide-ranging, a number of strong and positive developments deserve to be highlighted in 2018, namely:

– the operational coordination group (OCG) which comprises representatives from DGs LINC (chair), IPOL and EXPO met on a regular basis and has helped identifying measures to address actions recommended by the IAS and more generally has contributed to foster cooperation and dialogue on issues relating to the demand and supply of interpretation facilities;

– the increased use of the Meeting Request System (interfacing PERICLES), in force for all parliamentary Committees and inter-parliamentary Delegations as of year-end, provide for a better overview of the interpretation demand as well as provide for better/clearer information regarding meetings with interpretation of the users concerned;

– the derogations process has been streamlined.

It should be noted that DG LINC also shared views with the Internal Audit Service in the framework of their cross-DG Internal Audit engagement related to the decentralised information technology (IT) activities and in the framework of their planning process.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE



Statement of assurance

I, the undersigned, Agnieszka WALTER-DROP,

Director-General of Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences hereby declare, in my capacity as authorising officer by delegation, that I have reasonable assurance that:

- the information contained in the report presents a true and fair view;
- 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;
- the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

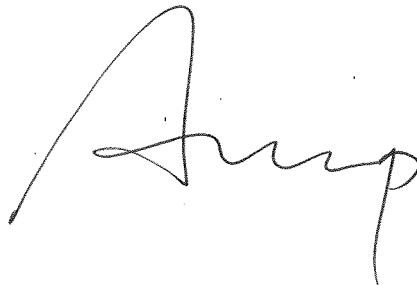
This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of self-assessment, ex post controls and remarks by the Internal Audit Service, as well as the lessons learned from the reports of the Court of Auditors for financial years prior to that 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 **18 FEB 2019**

Signature



ANNEXES

6

I. Budgetary implementation overview

Code	Appropriation type	EUR ou %	Formule
Appropriations of 2018			
A	Initial appropriations	59.853.033,00	
B	Final appropriations	60.712.283,00	
C	Commitments	60.420.313,13	
D	Commitments in % of final appropriations	100%	D=C/B
E	Payments	54.298.525,08	
F	Payments in % of commitments	90%	F=E/C
G	Cancellations of 2018 final appropriations	291.969,87	G=B-C-K
H	Cancellations appropriations in % of final appropriations	0%	H=G/B
Appropriations carried over from 2018 to 2019			
I	Automatic carryovers from 2018 to 2019	6.121.788,05	I=C-E
J	Automatic carryovers from 2018 to 2019 in % of commitments	10%	J=I/C
K	Non-automatic carryovers from 2018 to 2019	0	
L	Non-automatic carryovers from 2018 to 2019 in % of final appropriations	0%	L=K/B
Appropriations carried over from 2017 to 2018			
M	Automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	9.345.843,77	
N	Payments against automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	9.033.083,05	
O	Payments against automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018 in % of automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	97%	O=N/M
P	Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	312.760,72	P=M-N
Q	Cancellations of automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018 in % of automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	3%	Q=P/M
R	Non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	0,00	
S	Payments of non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018		
T	Payments against non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018	-	T=S/R
U	Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018		U= R-S
V	Cancellations of non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018 in % of non-automatic carryovers from 2017 to 2018		V=U/R
Assigned revenue in 2018			
W	Appropriations from assigned revenue in 2018 (current)	2.640.057,23	
X	Assigned revenue carried over to 2018	163.648,86	
Y	Balance of commitments on assigned revenue carried over to 2018	440.303,50	
Z	Payments in 2018 against appropriations from assigned revenue (current and carried-over)	2.352.694,40	
AA	Payments in 2018 against assigned revenue in % of assigned revenue in 2018 (current and carried-over)	73%	AA=Z/(W+X+Y)

II. 2018 Budget implementation statement

ANNEX II.1

DG. LINC		Situation des Crédits courants Exercice: 2018 (en EUR)						Edité le 15/01/2019 à 10:23		Page 1/1
Poste	Intitulé	Crédits Initiaux	Virements+ Budg. Suppl.	Crédits Actuels	Engagements Contractés	% Util.	Paiements Effectués	Solde des Engag. E.C.	Crédits Disponibles	
01404-04	STAGES, SUBVENTIONS ET ECHANGE DE FONCTIONNAIRES : SUBVENTIONS POUR FORMATIONS ET BOURSES ACCORDEES POUR LE PERFECTIONNEMENT D'INTERPRETES DE CONFERENCE ET FRAIS ANNEXES	176.000,00	-70.000,00	106.000,00	92.049,63	86,84	76.956,35	15.093,28	13.950,37	
1405	DEPENSES D'INTERPRETATION	50.801.533,00	0,00	50.801.533,00	50.801.533,00	100,00	48.321.258,76	2.480.274,24	0,00	
02103-19	INFORMATIQUE ET TELECOMMUNICATION - ACTIVITE RECURRENTE DE GESTION DES APPLICATIONS TIC	245.500,00	0,00	245.500,00	219.009,64	89,21	45.877,60	173.132,04	26.490,36	
02105-19	INFORMATIQUE ET TELECOMMUNICATION - INVESTISSEMENTS EN PROJETS-INTE-PROJETS IT DECENTRALISES	250.000,00	-86.750,00	163.250,00	163.222,16	99,98	0,00	163.222,16	27,84	
02140-04	ACHAT, RENOUVELLEMENT, LOCATION, ENTRETIEN ET REPARATION DE MATERIEL ET D'INSTALLATIONS TECHNIQUES - CONFERENCES	6.500.000,00	800.000,00	7.300.000,00	7.299.249,73	99,99	4.428.362,89	2.870.886,84	750,27	
3042	REUNIONS DES GROUPES POLITIQUES ET AUTRES REUNIONS ORGANISATION DE COLLOQUES, SEMINAIRES ET ACTIONS CULTURELLES : SOUTIEN AU MULTILINGUISME Y COMPRIS LE PROGRAMME DE SUBVENTION DESTINE AUX UNIVERSITES, ECOLES ET AUTRES QUI FOURNISSENT UNE FORMATION EN INTERPRETATION	1.165.000,00	400.000,00	1.565.000,00	1.324.573,54	84,64	1.083.988,39	240.585,15	240.426,46	
03245-04	PROGRAMME DE SUBVENTION DESTINE AUX UNIVERSITES, ECOLES ET AUTRES QUI FOURNISSENT UNE FORMATION EN INTERPRETATION	715.000,00	-184.000,00	531.000,00	520.675,43	98,06	342.081,09	178.594,34	10.324,57	
	Total Général	59.853.033,00	859.250,00	60.712.283,00	60.420.313,13	99,52	54.298.525,08	6.121.788,05	291.969,87	

ANNEX II.2

DG. LINC		Situation des Crédits reportés automatiques Exercice: 2018 (en EUR)						Edité le 15/01/2019 à 10:23 Page 1/1	
Poste	Intitulé	Crédits Reportés	Crédits Actuels	Engagements Contractés	Paiements Effectués	% Util.	Crédits Disponibles	Reliquat de Conversion	
01404-04	ACTIONS DE FORMATIONS (Y COMPRIS LES SUBVENTIONS ET BOURSES ACCORDEES	1.485,58	1.485,58	1.485,58	135,82	9,14	1.349,76	0,00	
1405	DEPENSES D'INTERPRETATION	2.537.508,73	2.537.508,73	2.537.508,73	2.498.078,50	98,45	39.430,23	0,00	
02103-19	INFORMATIQUE ET TELECOMMUNICATION - ACTIVITES RECURRENTES DE GESTION DES APPLICATIONS TIC	80.584,94	80.584,94	80.584,94	80.489,99	99,88	94,95	0,00	
02105-19	INFORMATIQUE ET TELECOMMUNICATION - INVESTISSEMENTS EN PROJETS-INTE- PROJETS IT DECENTRALISES	162.331,70	162.331,70	162.331,70	162.331,70	100,00	0,00	0,00	
02140-04	ACHAT, RENOUVELLEMENT, LOCATION, ENTRETIEN ET REPARATION DE MATERIEL ET D'INSTALLATIONS TECHNIQUES - CONFERENCES	6.131.517,19	6.131.517,19	6.131.517,19	6.004.681,38	97,93	126.835,81	0,00	
3042	REUNIONS DES GROUPES POLITIQUES ET AUTRES REUNIONS	240.906,89	240.906,89	240.906,89	150.070,95	62,29	90.835,94	0,00	
03245-04	ORGANISATION DE COLLOQUES, SEMINAIRES ET ACTIONS CULTURELLES: SOUTIEN AU MULTILINGUISME Y COMPRIS LE PROGRAMME DE SUBVENTION DESTINE AUX UNIVERSITES , ECOLES ET AUTRES QUI FOURNISSENT UNE FORMATION EN INTERPRETATION	191.508,74	191.508,74	191.508,74	137.294,71	71,69	54.214,03	0,00	
	Total Général	9.345.843,77	9.345.843,77	9.345.843,77	9.033.083,05	96,65	312.760,72	0,00	

ANNEX II.3

DG. LINC		Situation des crédits reportés non automatiques Exercice: 2018 (en EUR)					Edité le 15/01/2019 à 10:23 Page 1/1	
Poste	Intitulé	Crédits Initiaux	Virements+ Budg. Suppl.	Crédits Actuels	Engagements Contractés	Paiements Effectués	Solde des Engag. E.C.	Crédits Disponi- bles
	Total Général	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANNEX II.4

DG. LINC		Situation des Crédits de dépenses spécifiques/RA Exercice: 2018 (en EUR)					Edité le 15/01/2019 à 10:23		Page 1/1
Poste	Intitulé	Crédits an. cumulés.	Crédits Actuels	Engagements Contractés	% Util.	Paiements Effectués	Solde des Engag. E.C.	Crédits Disponibles	
01405-01	DEPENSES D'INTERPRETATION	2.619.502,58	2.619.502,58	2.174.480,81	83,01	1.751.130,81	423.350,00	445.021,77	
03042-03	REUNIONS DES GROUPES POLITIQUES	12.137,98	12.137,98	139,35	1,15	139,35	0,00	11.998,63	
03245-04	ORGANISATION DE COLLOQUES, SEMINAIRES ET ACTIONS CULTURELLES: SOUTIEN AU MULTILINGUISME Y COMPRIS LE PROGRAMME DE SUBVENTION DESTINE AUX UNIVERSITES , ECOLES ET AUTRES QUI FOURNISSENT UNE FORMATION EN INTERPRETATION	8.416,67	8.416,67	8.416,67	100,00	8.416,67	0,00	0,00	
	Total Général	2.640.057,23	2.640.057,23	2.183.036,83	82,69	1.759.686,83	423.350,00	457.020,40	

ANNEX II.5

DG. LINC		Situation des Crédits reportes dep. spec RA Exercice: 2018 (en EUR)					Edité le 15/01/2019 à 10:23 Page 1/1	
Poste	Intitulé	Crédits Initiaux	Crédits Actuels	Engagements Contractés	Paiements Effectués	% Util.	Solde des Engagements	Crédits Disponibles
01404-04	ACTIONS DE FORMATIONS (Y COMPRIS LES SUBVENTIONS ET BOURSES ACCORDEES	506,72	506,72	506,72	0,00	0,00	506,72	0,00
01405-01	DEPENSES D'INTERPRETATION	154.159,12	154.159,12	154.159,12	154.159,12	100,00	0,00	0,00
02103-19	INFORMATIQUE ET TELECOMMUNICATION - ACTIVITES RECURRENTES DE GESTION DES APPLICATIONS TIC	1.418,36	1.418,36	1.418,36	1.418,36	100,00	0,00	0,00
03042-03	REUNIONS DES GROUPES POLITIQUES ET AUTRES REUNIONS	7.564,66	7.564,66	6.233,90	6.233,90	100,00	0,00	1.330,76
	Total Général	163.648,86	163.648,86	162.318,10	161.811,38	99,69	506,72	1.330,76

ANNEX II.6

DG. LINC		Situation des engagements reportés de dépenses spécifiques /RA Exercice: 2018 (en EUR)					Edité le 15/01/2019 à 10:23	Page 1/1
Poste	Intitulé	Crédits re- portés	Crédits ac- tuels	Engage- ments Contractés	Paiements Effectués	% Util.	Reste à payer	
01405-01	DEPENSES D'INTERPRETATION	409.457,00	409.457,00	409.457,00	403.677,15	98,59	5.779,85	
02103-19	INFORMATIQUE ET TELECOMMUNICATION - ACTIVITES RECURRENTES DE GESTION DES APPLICATIONS TIC	28.483,50	28.483,50	28.483,50	25.825,04	90,67	2.658,46	
03042-03	REUNIONS DES GROUPES POLITIQUES ET AUTRES REUNIONS	2.363,00	2.363,00	2.363,00	1.694,00	71,69	669,00	
	Total Général	440303,5	440303,5	440303,5	431196,19	97,93158356	9107,31	

ANNEX II.7

DG. LINC		Situation des crédits de dépenses spécifiques /RA externes Exercice: 2018 (en EUR)						Edité le 15/01/2019 à 10:23 Page 1/1	
Poste	Intitulé	Crédits Initiaux	Virements+ Budg. Suppl.	Crédits Actuels	Engagements Contractés	Paiements Effectués	Solde des Engag. E.C.	Crédits Disponibles	
	Total Général	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

III. List of exceptions - derogations from the rules

Exceptions to procedure

DECISIONS TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION TO THE APPLICABLE PROCEDURES AND RULES							
DOCUMENT REF.	RELEVANT AUTHORISING OFFICER	SUBJECT	AMOUNT	VERIFIER'S OPINION	VERIFIER'S OPINION	DECISION	DECISION
FINORD REF., CONTRACT, ETC.				UNFAVOURABLE	JUSTIFICATION	RELEVANT AUTHORISING OFFICER	JUSTIFICATION
ED 70141	Katerina DARA LEPOURA	Virtual coaching tool support helpdesk	€ 42.000	non conforme/ passer-outre	Budgetary commitment request ED 70141 for EUR 42.000 to cover the costs for the provision of help desk support and related services for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 was presented for verification on 12/04/2018. When the file was examined by the ex ante verifier, she noticed that the proposed starting date had already passed, the contract being a renewal of an existing one, had tacitly commenced since the 1st April 2018. The related budgetary and legal commitment should have been prepared, verified and validated before the 31st March 2018, the date the previous contract ended. The ex ante verifier had no option but to place a 'visa non-conforme' on the transaction.	Passer outre / validation	This was a simple human error. AOS decision to overrule was taken as there was an obligation to pay the legal commitment.

WAIVERS/CANCELLATIONS OF RECEIVABLES - NONE - NOT APPLICABLE

RECEIVABLE WAIVER/CANCELLATION PROCEDURES				
DOCUMENT REF. (FINORD REF.)	RELEVANT AUTHORISING OFFICER	SUBJECT	AMOUNT	AUTHORISING OFFICER'S REASONS FOR WAIVER/CANCELLATION

IV. Results of assessments

[Financial Regulation (FR) Art. 74(6)]

Ex post controls were carried out on the basis of the 2018 annual work programme approved by the Director-General in her capacity of Authorizing Officer by Delegation.

Control work was carried out on two most important budget items (representing altogether more than 95% of DG LINC budget) and a follow-up on past recommendations arising from financial transactions testing was also performed.

Firstly, financial transactions testing was performed on budget sub-item 02140-04¹. Controls related to the period covering the first semester 2018. The total value of transactions verified represented 5% of the payments made on carry-over and current credits as of end June 2018. Based on the work performed, there was no financial error detected. Some further enhancements of current procedures in place were discussed with the Authorising Officer by Sub-delegation in charge. They mainly related to training activities (ensure continuous training activities for financial actors to complement internal training already organised in the past) and to the level of details provided by contractors in some documents (to facilitate the reconciliation between invoices and the operational information available in “timesheets” and “compte-rendu d’activité”).

Secondly, ex post control work was performed on budget sub-item 01405-01². It related to committee week four of 2018 and consisted in reviewing the information concerning external interpreters (ACIs) communicated by the ACI Payments Unit to the European Commission

based Joint Payment Office (which ensures individual payments to ACIs) and checking its consistency against the information encoded in the IT-application PERICLES (and with information maintained by operational Units) as well as the timeliness of this communication. The control work also aimed at confirming the existence of underlying contracts as well as at identifying and assessing any additional data encoding that may have occurred after the week under review. No significant issue was detected for the week analysed. More specifically, it was confirmed that the procedure is documented (existence of a comprehensive and regularly updated description of the weekly procedure in place in the Unit in charge as well as documentation of specific IT-related issues encountered). Additionally, there was no issue concerning the timeliness of the submission of the data for the week concerned. The same applies to the consistency of data transmitted. With regard to contracts, it was noted that the online confirmation of ACIs contracts and their signature became operational in Webcontracts in August 2018, thus mitigating risks inherent to late or no return of paper contracts to DG LINC. Moreover complementary consistency checks on reference values (number of ACIs recruited, number of ACIs paid, number of contract days issued, number of contract days paid, average retributions per day) did not evidence any issue to report. Lastly, past recommendations were followed up as per usual practice and the outcome was satisfactory.

¹ Technical equipment and installations: purchase, replacement, hire, maintenance and repair of technical equipment and installations - conferences
ANNEXES

² Expenditure on interpretation: external interpretation.

V. Assessment of the implementation of the minimum internal control standards

[Financial Regulation (FR) Art. 74(9)]

standard	achieved	almost	partly	started	to be started/n.a.
Section 1: mission statement and values					
1. Duties	■				
2. Ethical and organisational values	■				
Section 2: Human resources					
3. Allocation of staff and mobility	■				
4. Staff assessment and development	■				
Section 3: Planning and risk management					
5. Objectives and performance indicators			■		
6. Risk management process	■				
Section 4: Operations and control activities					
7. Operational set-up	■				
8. Processes and procedures	■				
9. Supervision by management	■				
10. Business continuity	■				
11. Document management	■				
Section 5: Information and financial reporting					
12. Information and communication	■				
13. Accounting and financial information			■		
Section 6: Evaluation and auditing					
14. Evaluation of activities	■				
15. Evaluation of internal control systems	■				
16. Audit reports	■				

COMMENTS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT OF MICS PERFORMANCE

Standards assessed as ‘achieved’ – good practices

ICS 1: The mission, role, objectives and tasks of the Directorate-General and each of its services are set out on the DG’s intranet site EPIWeb. The job description and individual objectives of all staff are set out in the annual staff reports.

ICS 2: All rules and regulations relating to staff conduct and responsibilities, and the official statute which includes matters relating to conflict of interest, are available to all staff on the intranet of the Institution. Furthermore, most links are also provided on the intranet site EPIWeb.

In 2018, a specific risk assessment exercise was carried out in relation to DG LINC potential exposure to fraud. The exercise was chaired by the Total Quality Management Unit. A number of colleagues most directly entrusted with supervisory tasks (e.g. HR, Budget, Legal Adviser) were involved in this exercise. The outcome was positive and no significant or critical risk were identified. Awareness-raising measures, particularly increased publicity on ethics and fraud prevention related training offer, were decided by DG LINC Management team and are currently being implemented.

In July 2018, a certified and experienced mediator has been appointed. The service is accessible to all staff, irrespective of the status, category, grade, job or function and ACIs.

ICS 3: Mobility affects only part of the staff of DG LINC. Interpreting staff, conference technicians and conference ushers are not mobile. Other posts follow the normal rules and instructions issues. In 2018, AST colleagues were mobile for the very first time. Their mobility was organized in accordance with the instructions of DG PERS and with the cooperation of the Local Career Guidance Officer.

Post allocation is strictly according to the needs of the service and, of course, can in any case only be within the “envelopes” granted by DG PERS to each DG.

ICS 4: Staff assessment is made each year in the annual staff reporting procedure. The Human Resources Unit’s Training Officer and Local Career Guidance Officer is available to assist and advice on all matters related to career and training. The Human Resources Unit is responsible for coordinating the annual training programme for the DG, and a dedicated unit ensures appropriate career-long training for staff interpreters. The Budget Unit follows up and advises operational units on financial training matters in coordination with the Training Officer.

ICS 6: In terms of internal governance and risk management techniques, the following elements should be noted:

DG LINC risk register is regularly updated (at least once a year and whenever deemed necessary by risk owners) and particular attention is paid to emerging risks considering the fast-evolving responsibilities of the Directorate-General.

While taking an active part in DG LINC Business Continuity and Risk Management Team (together with the Director for Resources and the Adviser to the Director-General), the Total Quality Management Unit has been entrusted with the progress monitoring of DG LINC PPPs. This set-up is deemed to ensure a more continuous follow-up of DG LINC key risks as those are usually strongly linked with a PPP.

The risk assessment performed on OSCO / REGIS and in the field of fraud prevention allowed to expand the risk-detection and reporting techniques used so far. In this respect, more emphasis was put on bilateral interviews, workshops and brainstorming including, for the latter aspect, at DG LINC Management Team level.

ICS 7: All sub-delegations (permanent and temporary) are the subject of a written and registered document. All financial delegations and empowerment decisions are recorded in writing and up-dated on the central register maintained by the Budget Unit.

There is a central list of all financial actors published on EPIWeb (DG LINC Intranet), this is regularly updated.

In 2018, DG LINC followed the guidelines issued by the Secretary-General on 19 May 2016 and decided to launch a limited exercise to update the analysis of sensitive posts in DG LINC. An internal monitoring working group was set up under the lead of the Director for Resources. It comprised representatives of the HR, Budget and Total Quality Management units of DG LINC. Following central guidance the 2018 exercise

was limited to units where, in the 2016 exercise, posts with a residual risk higher than 0 were found and/or where the working/control environment has been substantially modified. It was also agreed that it should be carried out for new functions. Where needed, bilateral exchanges took place with directors and heads of unit in order to clarify any methodological issues and to provide additional guidance. The results were presented to the hierarchy for a final review. Mitigating measures were recommended for one post with a residual risk above 0 not accepted by senior management.

ICS 8: DG LINC financial circuit operates according to a semi-decentralised model. Financial and operational initiators and operational verifiers are working in the operational units. The ex ante verification of files is dealt with in the Budget Unit. All procurement procedures above EUR 15 000 are checked before launch by the Procurement Help Desk function, also within the Budget Unit.

ICS 9: Most of the financial transactions in DG LINC are the result of a procurement procedure. All awarded contracts where the value is greater than EUR 15 000 are subject to a prior approval by the procurement help desk before launch. Both the ex ante verification team and the pre-checking of the procurement procedures are documented in a monitoring and workflow table enabling regular follow up and analysis.

Ex post controls were carried out in 2018 on the basis of an annual work programme (see annex IV). The satisfactory implementation by AOSDs

of ex post control recommendations over the years is an indicator of the constructive approach towards continuous improvement.

ICS 10: In 2018, notable progress was also made in the field of Business Continuity Management. The Business Impact Analysis carried out in 2017 allowed to pro-actively contribute to the EP Business Continuity Plan and to the elaboration of DG LINC Business Continuity Plan. In December 2018 and after consistency checks with the EP central BCM unit, the draft BCP for the Directorate-General was presented to and agreed by DG LINC Management Team. In this framework, particular attention has been paid to formally drawing lessons from real incidents namely the October-2017 IT outage and more recently the December-2018 attack in Strasbourg. Lessons learned are incorporated in DG LINC BC arrangements and contribute to enhance the DG preparedness. DG LINC is also highly involved in BC tests organised at corporate level.

ICS 11: The rules and good practices in document management have been regularly the subject of awareness-raising actions for the attention of various stakeholders of the DG. The Retention Schedule has been updated and the DG is actively preparing for the arrival of the new Electronic Record Management System (ERMS), in accordance with the instructions received from DG PERS, in particular through training actions and workshops.

ICS 12: A full service meeting (DG, Directors and all HoU) is held on a regular basis by the Director-General. Each unit holds team meetings frequently. Regular meetings are held between the Budget Unit and the financial actors (from the operational services). The intranet site of the DG, EPIWeb, is a well-used platform for communicating issues and information and for providing a first reference for administrative matters

and work-related documents for both staff and freelance interpreters.

ICS 14: In 2018, work continued on streamlining resources. The financial initiation function was centralised in the Budget Unit for most activities

ICS 15: Monitoring and evaluation are on-going exercises. Section 4 of the report provides a more detailed account. Following an in-depth analysis and screening of the financial initiation function in DG LINC, it was decided in April 2018 to rationalise the financial initiation function in the Budget Unit by providing a centralised service to operational units. Two separate and distinct teams were created to underpin the different nature of the two functions, financial initiation and ex ante financial verification. This has resulted in increased flexibility and efficiency gains and by focusing on core tasks, the expertise and knowledge base will grow. Another key element of the rationalisation resulted in the Budget Unit taking over the task of registering and assigning the invoices and payment requests for the whole DG. This has resulted in fewer invoices going astray and helped to achieve a better average time to pay than EP average.

There is an added benefit to the DG in the context of preparing for the transition to the new financial management system as most of the expertise required to manage this will be concentrated in the Budget Unit.

In addition to taking an active part in DG LINC Business Continuity and Risk Management Team (together with the Director for Resources and

the Adviser to the Director-General), the Total Quality Management Unit has been entrusted with the function of Internal Control Coordination in the last quarter of 2018. Coordination of related activities as well as guidelines provided by the Risk Manager of the EP and close cooperation with DG LINC Directorate for Resources will be key for the successful development of this new function.

ICS 16: DG LINC is following up on actions recommended by the Internal Auditor in his report on the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism and regularly reports to the Internal Audit Service on progress made (see part 4 for more details about current state-of-play).

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

ICS 5: The objectives of the DG are established overall for the Directorate-General, and detailed between each directorate and each unit. These are sent to all staff and are also published on the intranet site of the DG. In the meantime the modernisation process of DG LINC also proceeded. In this context, the average interpretation unit output became DG LINC lead indicator. Work has started on a performance lead indicator for non-interpretation activities.

ICS 13: The accounting data, annual accounts and financial reporting are prepared in accordance with the Financial Regulation and its rules of application, with the general accounting principles and with the internal rules of the Parliament.

DG LINC budget implementation is monitored and reported on periodically in accordance with the relevant EP decision and resolutions, mainly

addressed by the SG and DG FINS. It includes activity reports, preparation of budget estimates, discharge procedures, mopping up exercises.

Work is underway to review the existing Manual of Procedures for financial actors into a helpful and user-friendly guide. Due to re-organisation and lack of resources, it has not yet been finalised, work is ongoing and will continue into the new exercise. Observation notes, file notes and comments on budget transactions are systematically registered in a workflow table used by the Budget Unit. All details of budgetary transactions and contracting are registered in Finord and /or Webcontracts.