

11. FOLLOW-UP TO OBSERVATIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT'S 2017 DISCHARGE RESOLUTION

Financial Regulation, Art. 166: Follow-up measures

1. *In accordance with Article 319 TFEU and Article 106a of the Euratom Treaty, the Commission and the other institutions shall take all appropriate steps to act on the observations accompanying the European Parliament's discharge decision and on the comments accompanying the recommendation for discharge adopted by the Council.*
2. *At the request of the European Parliament or the Council, the institutions shall report on the measures taken in the light of those observations and comments, and, in particular, on the instructions they have given to any of their departments which are responsible for the implementation of the budget. The Member States shall cooperate with the Commission by informing it of the measures they have taken to act on those observations so that the Commission may take them into account when drawing up its own report. The reports from the institutions shall also be transmitted to the Court of Auditors.*

11.1 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION OF 26 MARCH 2019 WITH OBSERVATIONS FORMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DECISION ON DISCHARGE IN RESPECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2017, SECTION VI – EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (2018/2172(DEC))

The European Parliament [...]

1. *Welcomes the conclusion of the Court of Auditors (the “Court”), according to which the payments as a whole for the year ended on 31 December 2017 for administrative and other expenditure of the European Economic and Social Committee (the “Committee”) were free from material error;*

No follow-up required.

2. *Notes with satisfaction that, in its annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2017 (the “Court’s report”), the Court identified no significant weaknesses in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Committee;*

No follow-up required.

3. *Notes that in 2017 the Committee’s budget amounted to EUR 133 807 338 (compared to EUR 130 586 475 in 2016), with an implementation rate of 96,5 % compared to 97,2 % in*

2016; notes that the implementation rate of appropriations carried forward from 2016 to 2017 was higher than in 2016, 84,9 % (EUR 7,4 million) compared to 65,7 % in 2016 (EUR 6,8 million);

No follow-up required.

- 4. Notes that the Committee's budget is mostly administrative, with a large amount being used for expenditure concerning persons, buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous running costs;*

No follow-up required.

- 5. Welcomes the commitment of the Committee to extend the performance-based budgeting methodology to relevant parts of its budget; notes the regular review of the key performance indicators (KPIs) along with the secretariat's activities and organisation in this context; asks to be regularly informed about the achievements related to the application of the principles of performance-based budgeting;*

The EESC assessed how to apply the principles of performance-based budgeting (PBB) to its budget, which consists of administrative appropriations only (i.e. the EESC has no operational appropriations to finance public policies).

According to the OECD "PBB is the systematic use of information about the outputs, results and/or impacts of public policies in order to inform, influence and/or determine the level of public funds allocated towards those policies in the budgetary context".

The EESC therefore looks forward to working together with the other EU institutions to define a set of inter-institutional guidelines on the implementation of performance-based budgeting for EU institutions that have only administrative expenditure.

- 6. Encourages the Committee to publish its Annual Activity Report and Annual Accounts by 31 March of the year following the accounting year in question with a view to optimising and speeding up the discharge procedure;*

The EESC is, of course, ready to comply with any new decision in this respect, but it stresses the importance of all institutions to adhering to the same timetable.

- 7. Notes that the final appropriations for travel and subsistence allowances for Members increased to EUR 19 819 612 in 2017 (compared to EUR 19 561 194 in 2016); welcomes the detailed list of travels by Members presented in the Annual Activity Report; welcomes measures that contribute to an efficient planning of meetings and reducing transportation costs;*

No follow-up required.

8. *Notes that the Committee reduced the overall number of posts in its establishment plan by 59 posts, from 727 in 2013 to 665 in 2017, mainly due to the implementation of the 5 % staff cuts decision and the implementation of the cooperation agreement concluded in 2014 with Parliament; notes that the Committee adjusted its organisational structure, in particular through the merger of the directorate for human resources and the directorate for finance in May 2017;*

It has to be noted that a 5 % reduction applied to a relatively small establishment plan is much more difficult to absorb due to the need to maintain some key functions in terms of business continuity. Such an overall reduction percentage requires a greater effort from smaller institutions.

9. *Welcomes the inter-institutional administrative cooperation with Parliament and the mid-term evaluation results on the implementation of the cooperation agreement between the Committee and the Committee of the Regions, which highlights the successful implementation of several measures; notes that in the context of a redeployment exercise, the Committee has already moved 16 posts from the directorate for translation to its own services, and that remaining moves will happen progressively; notes the calculation of the budgetary savings made by the Committee and the Committee of the Regions through this inter-institutional cooperation, such as the savings, inter alia, in infrastructure costs amounting to EUR 12,5 million, in IT costs amounting to EUR 5 million, or in security staff costs amounting to EUR 500 000; calls on the Committee and the Committee of the Regions to continue to improve this inter- institutional cooperation in order to achieve further savings;*

Administrative cooperation between the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions is highly developed. By means of an administrative cooperation agreement, the two Committees have not only set out a large number of procedures for collaboration between their own services but have also established and organised what are known as "Joint Services", in which both human and financial resources from the two Committees are pooled together (namely Translation and Logistics). The current cooperation agreement runs until the end of 2019, and the two Committees have already started a process aimed at continuing cooperation beyond 2019 to the benefit of both institutions and the EU budget.

10. *Takes note that the Committee adopted in 2017 a total of 155 opinions and reports, including 13 exploratory opinions on referral from the EU presidencies or the Commission, 59 opinions on referral from Parliament and Council, and 45 on referral from the Commission;*

No follow-up required.

11. *Notes that translation services are still in transition towards a higher degree of outsourcing*

due to the transfer of staff to Parliament under the cooperation agreement (with 16,61 % of the budget in 2016 being used for outsourced translation and 17,10 % in 2017); calls on the Committee to follow up the areas related to translation management requiring further attention from management highlighted by the internal audit service and wishes to be informed accordingly;

Following the pilot project on the common management of translation units, the Committee, in full agreement with the CoR, is proceeding to further optimise the working methods of the Translation Directorate. In line with this aim, it was decided in March 2019 that the management of the Slovenian and Maltese unit would be merged, following the model of the pilot project on the merger of the FI/SV and CZ/SK for a trial period. Other similar measures might be decided at a later stage, always aiming to ensure better exchange of good practices and to streamline working methods.

- 12. Notes that the rate of unused slots of interpretation services was 3,6 % in 2017 (compared to 4 % in 2016); encourages the Committee to keep a positive trend towards fewer cancellations;*

No follow-up required.

- 13. Is interested in the work of the ad hoc group set up by the Committee's Bureau on the future of the Committee which aims to develop a new vision for the Committee and its role in a changing Union; notes that the group submitted its report in July 2017 with proposals on working methods and on the internal organisation; notes that the ideas presented in the report will progressively result in concrete actions and asks the Committee for more information in the next Annual Activity Report;*

Based on the ad hoc group's final report submitted in July 2017, the Committee Bureau decided to press ahead with the rationalisation of the Committee's structures. A further report on this issue was submitted to the Bureau in December 2017. As a result, the Bureau decided, in January 2018, to reduce the number of members sitting on a large number of the Committee's internal bodies and to limit the number of their meetings held each year. At the same time, the Bureau decided to refocus the remits of some of these Committee structures.

- 14. Highlights that only 11 posts were open in the Committee in 2017 (related to permanent posts) compared to 62 open posts in 2015 and welcomes that development;*

No follow-up required.

- 15. Welcomes the increase in political dialogue between the Committee and Parliament as well as other institutions; notes the Committee's active contribution to the inter- institutional cooperation on assessing Union policies and law in the framework of the agreement on better law-making and the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT);*

encourages the Committee and Parliament to pursue their efforts in strengthening the political cooperation;

The EESC takes note of this observation and remains fully committed to creating quality content, which represents the input of organised European civil society, and to promoting it to the law-making institutions. The Committee aims to pursue stronger relations with the 9th legislature of the European Parliament, engaging new MEPs, rapporteurs and committee coordinators at an early stage, so as to ensure a permanent two-way dialogue and more timely circulation of information relating to both ongoing and future legislative and non-legislative files.

The EESC and the EP share the same approach to the importance of better law-making. Well-established cooperation between the EPRS and the EESC, especially on ex-post evaluations, took a step forward with the establishment by the EPRS of the new "Linking the levels unit".

- 16. Welcomes the inter-institutional administrative cooperation with Parliament; notes with satisfaction the cooperation with the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) and the cooperation of the communication departments; welcomes the Committee's budgetary savings resulting from this inter-institutional cooperation, such as the savings in staff costs amounting to EUR 3,3 million (2016 salary levels) resulting from the transfer of 36 posts from the Committee to the EPRS;**

No follow-up required.

- 17. Notes that as a result with the cooperation with Parliament, a total of 52 opinions were adopted in response to referrals coming from Parliament. Members of the Committee had over 60 meetings with Parliament's rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs as well as other Members of Parliament, and participated in an active role in over 42 events in Parliament and in parallel, Members of Parliament actively participated in 35 Committee legislative work meetings; encourages the Committee to keep on working and increase the cooperation with Parliament in legislative work;**

The Committee will remain actively engaged in cooperating with the Parliament, particularly during the post-electoral period. New members of parliament, as well as returning ones, will be invited to meet with EESC representatives and to engage in joint events in order to continue and to increase legislative cooperation. The EESC will also continue to engage with the Conference of Committee Chairs, providing a regular venue for dialogue and informing the Parliament's committees of possible topics for cooperation, including exploratory opinions.

- 18. As the inter-institutional costs of IT training, in particular in 2017, were influenced by inaccurate indicative prices, calls for a new service level agreement with the Commission in this area to avoid uncertainty by working with a single global amount for all training;**

The service level agreement between the Commission and the Committee on HR services

(including training) has been in place since 2018 and has indeed increased transparency and the predictability of costs related to IT training courses; however, the advantage of increased transparency, is partly offset by a substantial increase in prices charged by the Commission.

- 19. Welcomes the achievements made by the Committee in terms of communication activities to increase its visibility and media impact, including the increase of its outreach on social media; welcomes in particular the local debates organised in 27 Member States in the context of the Commission's reflection on the Future of Europe as well as other cultural events and the 221 Going Local activities;**

No follow-up required.

- 20. Welcomes the efforts in the efficiency of information systems, IT infrastructure and user support services; notes the examples like the development of a new application for staff appraisals, an online staff vademecum, improved usability of the principal operational systems and reporting environments; notes, however, with concern that the Committee, together with Committee of the Regions, dedicated less than 3 % of their total budget to IT, whereas IT projects and equipment have suffered from underfinancing for several years; asks the Committee to prepare a mid-term strategy on the investments in their IT projects and equipment and include it into Committee's next Annual Activity report;**

A digital strategy and a multiannual IT expenditure plan are currently in the process of approval. Both documents will be transmitted to the European Parliament following their adoption by the EESC Bureau.

- 21. Notes the approval of a building strategy by the Committee's Bureau on 17 October 2017 and by the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on 29 November 2017; notes that that building strategy provides a framework for any future decision related to the building policy to be taken and contains a set of guiding principles in the field of real estate; notes that several scenarios have been identified and explored in order to prepare the building policy beyond 2021 with a priority given to scenarios that include the continued use of the VMA building; asks to be kept informed about the ongoing negotiations with the Commission regarding the continued use of the VMA building; encourages the Committee, together with the Committee of the Regions, to carry out an assessment of potential renovation needs and to make an estimation of the costs for the scenario where the two Committees take over the entire VMA building;**

The Committees will inform the budgetary authority on the progress of negotiations on the exchange of the VMA building, on budgetary needs relating to renovations and on other building issues before mid-2019, in particular when submitting the annual report provided for in Article 266 of the Financial Regulation.

- 22. Regrets the low participation of economic operators in the calls for tenders launched by the**

Committee; calls on the Committee to increase the publication efforts and to reduce the number of exceptional negotiated procedures with only one candidate and report back to the discharge authority on the progress;

During 2018, the EESC took systematic action to raise the profile of its call for tenders and to foster competition among candidates. More precisely, for procedures with an estimated contract value below the thresholds laid down in the Directive 2014/24, the EESC published on its web site:

- an ex ante advertisement for each procedure above EUR 15 000;
- the annual list of contracts above EUR 15 000;
- the annual list of specific contracts concluded under ongoing framework contracts.

23. Welcomes the results achieved with regards to the environmental management system through the joint cooperation between the Committee and the Committee of the Regions; notes with satisfaction the significant savings achieved in various fields, including a reduction of electricity consumption by 11 %, of gas consumption by 15 %, a reduction of paper by 11 % and a reduction of waste by 13 %; welcomes that the Committee together with the Committee of the Regions obtained the Label Good Food, awarded by the Brussels region to certify that the canteens of the Committees are managed in a sustainable way;

No follow-up required.

24. Welcomes the Committee's initiative to launch a staff survey on psycho-social risks at the end of 2016 in order to monitor the perception of stress-related issues by its staff; welcomes this close monitoring and actions to raise awareness at managerial and staff level, such as the Safety and Health at Work Week that were organised in October 2017; calls on the Committee to pursue its efforts in this regard, taking into account that the absence rate has been increasing since 2015 from 4 % to a 5,5 % in 2017, and to take all necessary measures to ensure the well-being of its staff; notes in this regard that occasional telework has decreased from 62,5 % in 2016 to 47,6 % in 2017;

The 2016 EESC staff survey on psychosocial risks has been continuously followed up by specific action in the main areas identified for improvement, through initiatives such as workshops for managers on absence management, conflict management and how to handle poor performance. This action has been accompanied by measures to increase staff well-being to counter-balance more difficult working conditions due to staff reductions, 40-hour week and missing replacements for absent colleagues. A campaign on "Respect at work" was launched at the beginning of 2019 to support the Committee's "zero-tolerance" policy towards harassment.

The absence rate seems to have reached its peak in 2017 and decreased slightly to 5.35 % in 2018.

Figures on occasional teleworking for 2016 were particularly high as the Appointing Authority advised all staff to use occasional teleworking in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Brussels in March.

- 25. *Notes a slight increase of women in manager positions from 37,5 % in 2016 to 41,4 % in 2017; welcomes the Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Diversity with around 25 suggested measures; is concerned that more than 80 % of members of staff requesting flexible working arrangements were women; suggests that the Committee adapts its policy with a view to encouraging more men to make use of these arrangements, in particular with a view to promoting their engagement in family life;***

The trend towards increasing the representation of women in managerial positions has continued and reached 52 % for senior and middle management in 2018.

Flexible working conditions are available for all staff, men and women.

The fact that 80 % of the colleagues requesting part-time working patterns were women needs also to be seen in the context of a population where women are overrepresented (55 % of staff are female). While the right to request part-time is the same for men and women, requesting it in a particular family context is a private choice, which is also influenced by culture and societal traditions.

As an employer, the EESC regularly raises awareness of the available working patterns, for example during lunchtime conferences on the topic of "life cycles" (e.g. birth and future parenthood, children with special needs etc.).

- 26. *Notes the efforts made in terms of geographical balance, the percentage of managers coming from Member States who joined the Union in or after 2004 (EU13) increased to 16 % in 2017 and is now at 18,5 %; calls on the Committee to further pursue its efforts with a view to reaching the target of 20 % which reflects the proportion of the EU13 population compared to the total Union population;***

Further efforts have indeed been made with a view to improving the geographical balance in relation to management. 20 % of all current managers are expected to retire by the end of 2023 – most of them are from the EU 15 Member States. This wave of retirements will open up additional possibilities for addressing this issue.

- 27. *Welcomes the appointment by the Committee of a team of four ethics counsellors in July 2018, following the adoption of Decision No 053/2016 of 2 March 2016 on a whistleblowing procedure;***

No follow-up required.

- 28. *Highlights the efforts of the Committee to work towards a consolidation of statutory and internal rules on ethical and respectful civil service behaviour; welcomes that aspects like the use of social media, the IT system and data protection are covered; notes the efforts undertaken together with its counterparts in the Committee of the Regions to apply rules to staff in a coherent manner, in particular where colleagues in the joint services are concerned; calls on the Committee to provide regular updates on the new comprehensive Ethics and Integrity framework;***

Significant steps were made with regard to the EESC members' ethics and integrity framework.

The 2019 campaign on respect at work will feed into a revision of the Ethics and Integrity Framework for Staff, launched at the beginning of 2019. This campaign partly consists of a survey to get staff feedback on the current framework. Furthermore, information linked to ethics and respect will be made more easily accessible to staff via different channels.

In parallel, the Translation Directorate decided to look into the issue of national cultures, their common traits and their differences. All of these activities are meant to raise awareness of the richness and challenges of multicultural working environments.

- 29. *Welcomes that the Committee has published the declarations of interests of the President and Vice-President under these Members' individual profiles on the Committee's website, as requested in the last discharge report;***

No follow-up required.

- 30. *Notes that members of staff must also declare their involvement in external activities in accordance with Article 11 of the Staff Regulations; urges the Committee to swiftly establish guidelines on the prevention of conflict of interests to be provided to all members of staff in response to the Decision of the European Ombudsman in case 1306/2014/OV;***

The EESC adopted guidelines on managing conflicts of interest at work (DRH 001/19) on 2 April 2019. They cover all EESC staff and aim to provide guidance in cases where they need to perform overlapping functions when handling a single subject. This is particularly the case in relation to staff representation activities.

- 31. *Notes that the Director of Human Resources and Finance was appointed to the post of Secretary General on 14 November 2018; notes that he kept his former position, while arrangements are being made for the appointment of a successor; is concerned that the two functions are incompatible and urges the Committee to swiftly appoint a new Director of Human Resources and report back to the discharge authority;***

There was no overlapping of functions between the secretary-general and director of human resources and finance (HRF) following the appointment of Mr. Brunetti to the post of secretary-general of the EESC. The arrangements were as follows:

From 14 November 2018 to 31 December 2018, before his official appointment as secretary-general on 1 January 2019, Mr Brunetti was appointed secretary-general ad interim while continuing to carry out duties as director for HRF.

From 1 January 2019 onwards, until the appointment of the new director of HRF, the deputy-director of HRF was appointed director ad interim and a head of unit from the HRF Directorate was appointed deputy-director ad interim.

The post of director of HRF was published in the official journal on 25 April 2019 under the relevant provision of the EU staff regulations.

- 32. Notes that Members of the Committee have different professional backgrounds and may be used to different management cultures; notes that the political activities of the Members also imply certain management tasks, as their work is supported by their own staff and staff from the Secretariat; underlines the necessity of familiarising Members with the principles of the administrative culture of Union institutions to ensure dignity and respect at work;***

In 2018, preparations started for a campaign for a more respectful workplace ("Fostering respectful workplace relations for all"). In 2019, an awareness-raising campaign with posters, conferences, a survey and a participatory event was launched, with most activities open to both staff and Members.

- 33. Welcomes the work of the network of confidential counsellors to actively prevent and tackle harassment in the working environment; notes that in 2017, 25 members of staff were given informal advice by the network; encourages the Committee to closely monitor the efficiency of its policy in this regard, to continue raising awareness about harassment at the work place and to continue fostering a culture of zero tolerance policy with regard to harassment; takes note of the ongoing reflection on procedures and sanctions concerning Members involved in harassment cases and urges the Committee to introduce rules and procedures in this regard by the next discharge procedure;***

In 2018, various awareness-raising initiatives were organised, e.g. monthly presentations to newcomers and presentations by confidential counsellors to managers and other target groups. Colleagues are encouraged to come to see a confidential counsellor as early as possible about any workplace issue that is causing concern. This has contributed to a climate where in general staff members feel more comfortable contacting confidential counsellors, who – as in previous years – have been consulted on issues such as conflict with other colleagues and/or managers, concerns about management style, perceived harassment, information and other issues.

In 2018, the EESC opened one administrative enquiry in relation to perceived harassment.

The network of confidential counsellors has been expanded in 2019, and now includes additional staff belonging to other administrative entities.

With regard to raising awareness of harassment, the above-mentioned campaign for a more respectful workplace ("Fostering respectful workplace relations for all") was launched in 2019.

The Code of Conduct of Members (annex to the new EESC Rules of Procedure, entered into force in March 2019) for the first time contains sanctions for Members involved in situations where a Member does not fulfil his/her obligations according to the Code of Conduct. The general principles of integrity, openness, diligence, honesty, accountability and respect for the Committee's reputation are stated. The members shall also ensure, in the performance of their duties, the promotion, effective protection and respect of fundamental rights and values. An advisory committee on the conduct of members has been established and aims to give any member who so requests guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the provisions of the Code of Conduct. It will also assess alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct, and advise the president on possible steps to be taken.

- 34. Notes that the Council has not taken a decision yet about any change in the number of Committee Members and delegates following the decision of the United Kingdom to withdraw from the Union; asks the Committee to provide information of the direct budgetary impact of the decision, at the latest in the follow-up to the 2017 discharge; notes, moreover, that the United Kingdom's decision will have no direct consequence on Committee staff; welcomes the ongoing reflection on future relations with the United Kingdom after its departure and the Committee's willingness to maintain good relations with civil society.***

A Brexit Follow Up Group was created in 2017 in order to monitor developments relating to the UK's withdrawal from the EU and to assess the potential need for reactions or positions from the EESC. The Brexit Follow Up Group reports periodically to the Bureau on new developments.

Under the assumption that Brexit would take place, a total of EUR 318 600 was deducted from the 2019 Budget to reflect the "evident changes" to members' travel costs and to the co-financing of IT equipment for members. An additional amount of EUR 173 062 was deducted due to Brexit when preparing the 2020 Budget, this amount was to a very slight extent offset by including the Council's proposal to increase Committee membership by three members from the fourth quarter of 2020 onwards, following the renewal of the Committee.

12. RESULTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CLOSED EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF) CASES IN 2018

Financial Regulation, Art. 66(9): Powers and duties of the authorising officer

The authorising officer by delegation shall report to his or her institution on the performance of his or her duties in the form of an annual activity report containing financial and management information, including the results of controls.

Financial Regulation, Art. 166: Follow-up measures

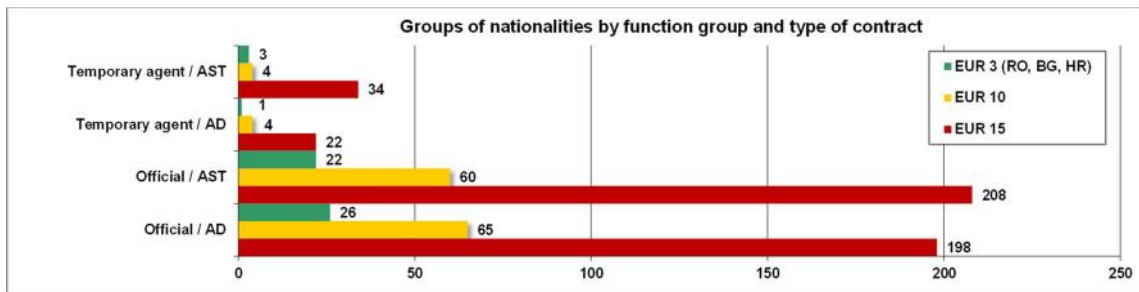
- 1. In accordance with Article 319 TFEU and Article 106a of the Euratom Treaty, the Commission and the other institutions shall take all appropriate steps to act on the observations accompanying the European Parliament's discharge decision and on the comments accompanying the recommendation for discharge adopted by the Council.*
- 2. At the request of the European Parliament or the Council, the institutions shall report on the measures taken in the light of those observations and comments, and, in particular, on the instructions they have given to any of their departments which are responsible for the implementation of the budget. The Member States shall cooperate with the Commission by informing it of the measures they have taken to act on those observations so that the Commission may take them into account when drawing up its own report. The reports from the institutions shall also be transmitted to the Court of Auditors.*

12.1 THE RESULTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CLOSED EUROPEAN ANTI-FRAUD OFFICE (OLAF) CASES, WHERE THE EESC OR ANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WORKING FOR THE COMMITTEE WERE THE SUBJECT OF THE INVESTIGATION

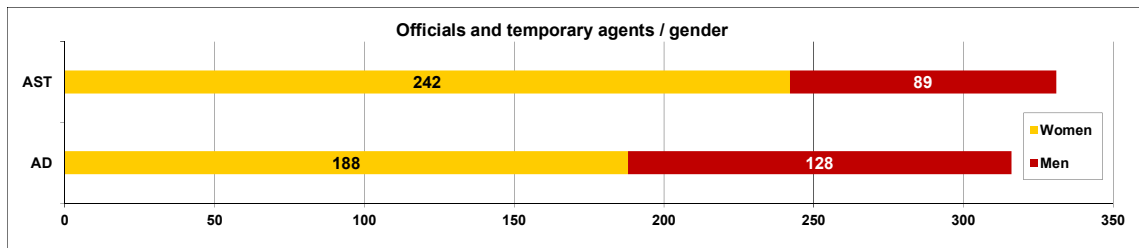
In 2018, no OLAF cases concerning the EESC were closed.

13. DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF BY NATIONALITY, FUNCTION GROUP, TYPE OF CONTRACT AND GENDER

Nationality		Officials		Temporary agents		Contract agents		Seconded national experts and special advisors		Total
		Adminis-trators	Assistants	Adminis-trators	Assistants	Adminis-trators	Assistants	SNE	SA	
AT	Austria	8	1					1		10
BE	Belgium	29	80		5		13			129
BG	Bulgaria	6	8	1						15
HR	Croatia	7	4							11
CY	Cyprus				1					1
CZ	Czech Republic	7	6	1						14
DK	Denmark	11	6							17
EE	Estonia	8	4			1				13
FI	Finland	9	7	1	3					20
FR	France	13	21	5	6	2	1	1	1	50
DE	Germany	23	7	1	2		1			34
EL	Greece	15	10	2	6		2			37
HU	Hungary	9	10							19
IE	Ireland	6	4					1		11
IT	Italy	30	23	6	4	1	10	1		75
LV	Latvia	4	3							7
LT	Lithuania	7	6		1					14
LU	Luxembourg			1						1
MT	Malta	7	3							10
NL	Netherlands	8	2				1			11
PL	Poland	12	10	2	1		1			27
PT	Portugal	11	12	1	4		4	1		32
RO	Romania	13	10		3	1	1			28
SK	Slovakia	7	11							18
SI	Slovenia	4	7	1	1					13
ES	Spain	18	26	1	2	2	6			55
SE	Sweden	7	4		2					13
UK	United Kingdom	10	5	2						17
		289	290	27	41	7	40	7	1	702
		Offic.AD	Offic./AST	TA/AD	TA/AST	CA/IV	CAI-II-III	SNE	SA	
EUR 15		198	208	22	34	5	38	6	1	512
EUR 10		65	60	4	4	1	1	1		136
EUR 3 (RO, BG, HR)		26	22	1	3	1	1			54

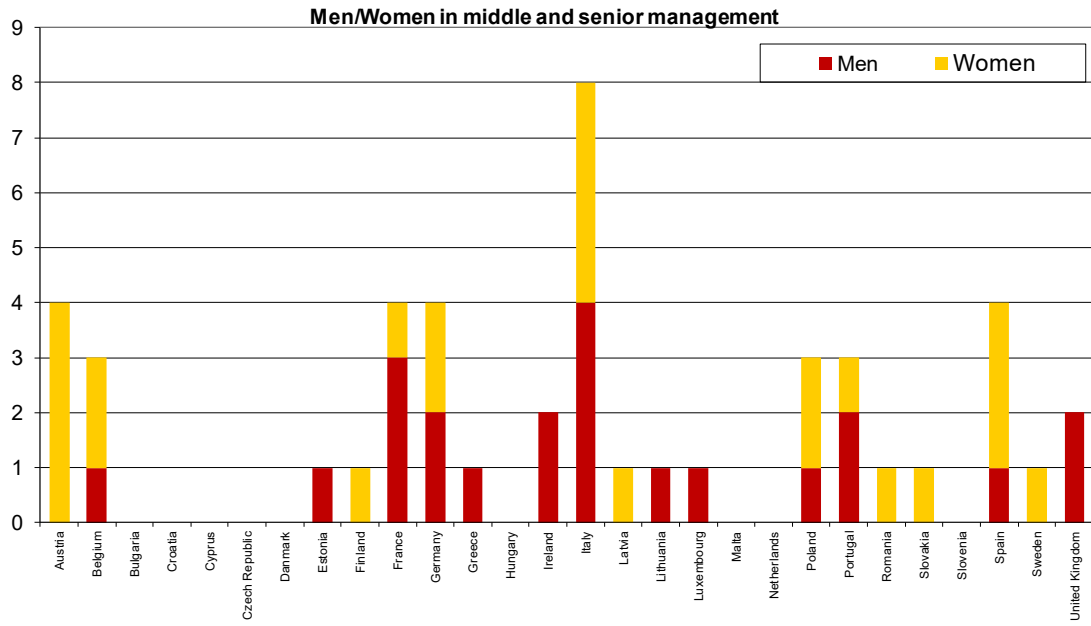


Gender	Officials		Temporary agents		Contract agents		Seconded national experts and special advisors		Total	FS/FT/TP	
	Adminis-trators	Assistants	Adminis-trators	Assistants	Adminis-trators	Assistants	SNE	SA		AD	AST
Women	166	206	22	36	5	21	4	1	461	188	242
Men	123	84	5	5	2	19	3		241	128	89
	289	290	27	41	7	40	7	1	702	316	331



Middle and senior management functions		
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Nationality	Men	Women
Austria		4
Belgium	1	2
Bulgaria		
Croatia		
Cyprus		
Czech Republic		
Danmark		
Estonia	1	
Finland		1
France	3	1
Germany	2	2
Greece	1	
Hungary		
Ireland	2	
Italy	4	4
Latvia		1
Lithuania	1	
Luxembourg	1	
Malta		
Netherlands		
Poland	1	2
Portugal	2	1
Romania		1
Slovakia		1
Slovenia		
Spain	1	3
Sweden		1
United Kingdom	2	
TOTAL	22	24
Share	48%	52%



14. OCCUPATION OF POSTS BY FUNCTION GROUP AND GENDER ON 31 DECEMBER 2018

Occupation of budget posts **96,56%**
 Ratio - temporary agents on posts / total number of posts **8,98%**
 Ratio - temporary agents on perm. posts / number of perm. posts **4,29%**
 EESC occupation of posts in Joint Services **61,01%**

EESC Posts																			
BUDGET			Officials - Women			Officials - Men			Temporary Agents - Women			Temporary Agents - Men			Vacant posts				
HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD
16			1				0				0							1	
15			5				1				3							0	
14			19				2				12							0	
13			32				12				10							0	
12			41				24				19							3	
11		5	23		3		10		1		9		0	0			0	0	
10		6	31		2		11		1		16		0	2			0	1	
9		20	59		14		40		3		13		0	3			1	3	
8		28	47		20		31		7		17		0	1			0	1	
7		43	31		16		16		14		7		2	1			0	1	
6		0	50	23		0	31	14		0	15	10		0	2	4			
5		0	61	21		0	42	7		0	15	8		0	3	7			
4		0	47			0	38			0	11			0	2				
3		13	35			0	26			0	10			0	12				
2		14	0			3	3			0	2			4	0				
1		11	1			6	4			5	1			5	0				
38 296 334			9 199 168			5 80 124			9 21 20			4 1 5			4 3 16				
668			376			209			50			10			23				
Permanent posts																			
BUDGET			Officials - Women			Officials - Men			Temporary Agents - Women			Temporary Agents - Men			Vacant posts				
HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD
16			1				0				0							0	
15			5				1				3							0	
14			18				2				12							0	
13			29				12				10							0	
12			41				24				19							3	
11		5	22		3		10		1		8		0	0			0	0	
10		6	29		2		11		1		16		0	0			0	1	
9		20	52		14		39		3		13		0	0			1	3	
8		28	47		20		31		7		17		0	0			0	1	
7		40	29		16		16		14		7		0	0			0	1	
6		0	48	21		0	31	14		0	15	10		0	0	1			
5		0	56	19		0	40	7		0	15	8		0	0	6			
4		0	45			0	38			0	11			0	0				
3		13	32			0	25			0	10			0	8				
2		11	0			3	3			0	2			3	0				
1		11	1			6	4			5	1			4	0				
35 281 313			9 196 167			5 80 123			7 8 7			3 1 1			4 3 15				
629			372			208			22			5			22				
Temporary posts																			
BUDGET			Officials - Women			Officials - Men			Temporary Agents - Women			Temporary Agents - Men			Vacant posts				
HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD	HC	SC	AST	AD
16			0				0				0							1	
15			0				0				0							0	
14			1				0				0							0	
13			3				0				0							0	
12			0				0				0							0	
11		0	1		0		0		0		1		0	0			0	0	
10		0	2		0		0		0		0		0	2			0	0	
9		0	7		0		1		0		0		0	3			0	0	
8		0	0		0		0		0		0		0	1			0	0	
7		3	2		0		0		0		0		2	1			0	0	
6		0	2	2		0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0	0			
5		0	5	2		0	2	0		0	0	0		0	3	1			
4		0	2			0	0			0	0			0	2				
3		0	3			0	1			0	0			0	4				
2		3	0			0	0			0	0			1	0				
1		0	0			0	0			0	0			1	0				
3 15 21			0 3 1			0 0 1			2 13 13			1 0 4			0 0 1				
39			4			1			28			5			1				

15. DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF MEMBERS' EXPENDITURE CONCERNING ITEM 1004

15.1 COUNCIL DECISION No 2013/471 OF 23 SEPTEMBER 2013

Article 9 of the decision states:

The Committee shall, by 30 April of each year, submit to the European Parliament and to the Council a detailed report on the reimbursement of travelling expenses and allowances paid to beneficiaries in the preceding year. That report shall detail the number of beneficiaries, the number of journeys, the destinations, the travel class and the travel costs incurred and reimbursed, as well as the allowances paid.

The following report has been drawn up in accordance with Article 9 of Council Decision No 2013/471/EU of 23 September 2013 on the granting of daily allowances and the reimbursement of travel expenses to members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and to their alternates.

15.2 EVALUATION REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF COUNCIL DECISION No 2013/471 IN 2018

Number of beneficiaries

In 2018, the EESC reimbursed 442 beneficiaries (members and their alternates).

Number of journeys

The number of journeys carried out by beneficiaries and reimbursed by the EESC in 2018 was:

Destination	Number of journeys
Brussels	9,921
European Union (not Brussels)	1,536
Outside EU	206

Destinations

Meetings of beneficiaries took place predominantly in the countries of the European Union. In addition, some meetings were held outside the EU (see attached table for details).

Travel class

The following classes were used in 2018 for air travel:

Flight classes	%
Business class	78
Economy	19
Low cost	3

- Air travel

The majority of business-class tickets were issued in business class discounted (D-class fare code IATA, or lower Z-class, P-class and I-class). Business-class tickets exceeding D-class were reimbursed only if D-class tickets were unavailable.

- Travel by rail or boat

The first-class fare was reimbursed in this case.

Travel costs and allowances

The following travel costs, travel allowances and daily allowances were paid to EESC members and their alternates:

Destination	Travel costs and travel allowances (EUR)	No of journeys	Average cost per journey (EUR)
Brussels	10,761,987	9,921	1,085
Within European Union (not Brussels)	1,628,208	1,531	1,063
Outside EU	470,621	206	2,285

Destination	Daily allowances* (EUR)	No of meeting days
Brussels	5,591,893	17,337
Within European Union (not Brussels)	821,486	2,625
Outside EU	119,797	369

* Including daily allowances for days in between meetings and overnight stays in order to save travel costs, in accordance with Article 2(2) of the Council Decision.

15.3 REIMBURSEMENTS OF TRAVEL EXPENSES AND ALLOWANCES TO EESC MEMBERS AND THEIR ALTERNATES FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2018

DESTINATION	TRAVEL EXPENSES		ALLOWANCES		TOTAL (EUR)
	Number of journeys to a country and inside the country	Cost (EUR)	Number of meeting days	Cost (EUR)	
Brussels	9,921	10,761,987	17,337	5,591,893	16,353,880
EU not Brussels	1,531	1,628,208	2,625	821,486	2,449,694
Austria	286	306,925	441	136,681	443,606
Belgium	0	0	2	580	580
Bulgaria	322	407,682	620	192,970	600,652
Croatia	7	8,918	14	4,785	13,703
Cyprus	0	0	2	290	290
Czech Republic	34	20,029	41	11,310	31,339
Denmark	4	3,077	7	1,619	4,696
Estonia	3	1,057	8	2,320	3,377
Finland	7	6,321	12	3,625	9,946
France	41	26,537	61	19,285	45,822
Germany	48	41,957	73	22,475	64,432
Greece	150	172,558	264	84,825	257,383
Hungary	3	1,296	8	2,320	3,616
Ireland	7	5,989	8	2,900	8,889
Italy	100	107,914	168	54,230	162,144
Latvia	2	160	11	3,190	3,350
Lithuania	30	16,956	40	12,905	29,861
Luxembourg	58	63,443	61	21,315	84,758
Malta	3	2,649	10	3,045	5,694
Netherlands	18	6,638	25	7,510	14,148
Poland	113	113,508	226	70,180	183,688
Portugal	29	25,378	51	17,110	42,488
Romania	92	113,111	178	54,230	167,341
Slovakia	10	5,719	14	4,495	10,214
Slovenia	6	6,071	6	1,740	7,811
Spain	123	128,630	217	66,555	195,185
Sweden	5	6,459	13	4,495	10,954
United Kingdom	30	29,225	44	14,500	43,725
Outside EU¹	206	470,621	369	119,797	590,418
Albania	12	19,585	21	7,395	26,980
Argentina	1	4,418	3	870	5,288
Benin	1	6,140	6	1,595	7,735
Canada	8	25,823	12	3,480	29,303
Chile	10	42,299	26	7,540	49,839

¹ Detailed tables in appendices 1 and 2

Colombia	1	1,158	2	725	1,883
Dominican Republic	1	1,870	3	870	2,740
Ecuador	4	16,877	9	3,480	20,357
Egypt	1	2,715	2	580	3,295
FYROM	1	720	1	290	1,010
Georgia	11	15,876	22	6,980	22,856
Guatemala	2	11,320	4	1,015	12,335
Iceland	5	10,967	8	2,610	13,577
Japan	13	32,154	18	5,945	38,099
Jordan	6	11,376	10	3,335	14,711
Moldova	3	2,246	3	870	3,116
Montenegro	7	11,517	13	3,915	15,432
Morocco	1	1,438	2	580	2,018
Namibia	11	50,730	20	7,250	57,980
Panama	3	17,437	9	2,755	20,192
Paraguay	3	16,458	6	1,885	18,343
Russia	16	26,073	24	7,540	33,613
Saint Lucia	2	12,744	4	1,885	14,629
Senegal	1	2,411	4	1,160	3,571
Serbia	13	14,614	23	7,250	21,864
South Africa	1	1,536	1	290	1,826
South Korea	4	18,873	9	2,900	21,773
Switzerland	9	8,268	17	5,510	13,778
Tunisia	3	4,357	4	2,030	6,387
Turkey	28	26,403	39	12,905	39,308
Ukraine	10	10,826	11	3,335	14,161
United States	14	41,394	33	11,027	52,421
TOTAL	11,658	12,860,816	20,331	6,533,175	19,393,991

DESTINATION	TRAVEL EXPENSES		ALLOWANCES		TOTAL (EUR)
	Number of journeys	Cost (EUR)	Number of meeting days	Cost (EUR)	
Brussels	9,921	10,761,987	17,337	5,591,893	16,353,880
EU (not Brussels)	1,531	1,628,208	2,625	821,486	2,449,694
Outside EU	206	470,621	369	119,797	590,418
TOTAL	11,658	12,860,816	20,331	6,533,175	19,393,991

APPENDIX 1

Detailed table concerning the reimbursements of travel expenses and allowances to EESC members and their alternates for missions outside the European Union.

- **Missions² in continental Europe**

Country	Missions per country	City	Mission duration (days)	Participants	Travel expenses and allowances (EUR)	<i>of which plane costs (EUR)</i>	Meeting allowances (EUR)	Total mission costs per country (EUR)
Albania	2	Tirana	2	10	19,083	13,619	6,525	26,980
		Tirana	1	1	501	0	870	
FYROM	1	Skopje	1	1	720	0	290	1,010
Georgia	3	Tbilisi	1	1	266	0	165	22,856
		Tbilisi	3	5	10,480	7,479	4,350	
		Tbilisi	3	3	5,131	3,441	2,465	
Iceland	1	Reykjavik	2	5	10,967	7,824	2,610	13,577
Moldova	2	Chisinau	1	2	1,395	417	580	3,116
		Chisinau	1	1	850	0	290	
Montenegro	2		1	1	2,021	1,370	290	15,432
		Podgorica	2	6	9,496	6,075	3,625	
Russia	2	Moscow	2	10	19,039	13,548	5,800	33,613
		Moscow	1	5	7,034	5,084	1,740	
Serbia	3	Belgrade	2	10	12,039	7,602	5,800	21,864
		Belgrade	2	1	1,633	1,125	580	
		Arandjelovac	1	1	942	0	870	
Switzerland	4	Geneva	3	6	5,194	3,633	3,480	13,778
		Geneva	1	1	1,009	458	580	
		Geneva	1	1	759	515	870	
		Geneva	1	1	1,307	852	580	
Turkey	2	Adana, Istanbul	3	13	24,570	15,845	12,615	39,308
		Mersin	1	1	1,833	1,277	290	
Ukraine	6	Kiev	1	2	2,933	1,708	580	14,161
		Kiev	1	1	891	270	290	
		Kiev	2	2	3,899	2,723	1,015	
		Kharkiv	1	1	1,817	1,241	290	
			2	1	1,076	316	580	
		Kiev	2	1	209	0	580	
TOTALS:					147,094	96,422	58,600	205,694

2

A mission includes one or several meeting days in the same city or in different cities of the same country

• Missions outside continental Europe

Country	Missions per country	City	Mission duration (days)	Participants	Travel expenses and allowances (EUR)	<i>of which plane costs (EUR)</i>	Meeting allowances (EUR)	Total mission costs per country (EUR)
Argentina	1	Buenos Aires	3	1	4,418	3,595	870	5,288
Benin	1	Cotonou	5	2	6,140	5,398	1,595	7,735
Canada & USA	1	Halifax, Ottawa, Washington DC	5	4	28,746	23,587 <i>(local flights 3,668)</i>	6,090	34,836
Chile	1	Santiago de Chile	3	10	42,299	35,636	7,540	49,839
Colombia	1	Bogota	2	1	1,158	537	725	1,883
Dominican Republic	1	Punta Cana	3	1	1,870	1,893	870	2,740
Ecuador	1	Quito	3	3	16,877	14,352	3,480	20,357
Egypt	1	Giza	2	1	2,715	2,102	580	3,295
Guatemala	1	Guatemala	2	2	11,320	9,935	1,015	12,335
Japan	1	Tokyo, Kobe	3	6	32,154	24,454 <i>(local transport 236)</i>	5,945	38,099
Jordan	1	Amman	2	5	11,376	8,134	3,335	14,711
Morocco	1	Rabat	2	1	1,438	991	580	2,018
Namibia	1	Windhoek	2	10	50,730	41,299	7,250	57,980
Panama	1	Panama city	3	3	17,437	15,276	2,755	20,192
Paraguay	1	Paraguay	2	3	16,458	13,894	1,885	18,343
Saint Lucia	1		2	2	12,744	11,102	1,885	14,629
Senegal	1	Dakar	4	1	2,411	1,704	1,160	3,571
South Africa	1	Johannesburg	1	1	1,536	977	290	1,826
South Korea	2	Seoul	2	3	15,771	13,441	2,030	21,773
		Incheon	3	1	3,103	2,373	870	
Tunisia	3	Tunis	2	1	1,847	1,415	725	6,387
		Tunis	1	1	1,462	1,045	870	
		Tunis	1	1	1,049	772	435	
United States	4	New York	3	4	14,535	10,821	2,900	46,888
		Washington DC	1	1	4,195	3,388	435	
		New York	4	3	17,331	13,666	4,785	
		Michigan	2	1	2,411	1,715	297	
TOTALS:					323,528	263,502	61,197	384,725

APPENDIX 2

Detailed table concerning the meetings to EESC members and their alternates for missions outside continental Europe

- **Missions in continental Europe**

CITY / COUNTRY	MEETING NAME	REASONS OF MEETING
Tirana (Albania)	Meeting of the Western Balkans Follow-up Committee in Tirana, Albania	Work programme of the Western Balkans Follow-up Committee
Tirana (Albania)	The rapporteur for opinion ECO-464 has been invited to present the EESC opinion at the 3rd Forum on Regional and Local Economic Development (Fo-RLED), in Vlora (Albania) from 20 to 21/11/2018	The rapporteur for the EESC opinion on the European Territorial Cooperation Regulation 2021-2027 (ECO/464), received a personal invitation by the organisers of the Forum to present the EESC's position on this file in a speech aiming to "influence the quality of the debates of the forum".
Skopje (FYROM)	Your Europe, Your Say - visit in school – Fyrom.	In 2016, the main topic of YEYS was immigration. In this context, the Communication Group Members decided to involve not only young people from the 28 EU Member States but also students from the five official candidate countries. Their participation was very fruitful and constructive, that is why the Communication Group decided to continue to invite these five countries for the next editions. Prior to the event, EESC Members visit the selected schools to explain the role of the EESC and prepare the students for the debates in Brussels. Therefore, five visits in the schools based in the candidate countries were organised in 2018.
Tbilisi (Georgia)	Speaker in EU-Georgia Dialogue on Labour, Employment and Social Issues "Labour standards and inspection" in Tbilisi	Request by DG EMPL
Tbilisi (Georgia)	Annual Meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum	Work programme of the Eastern Neighbours Follow-up Committee
Tbilisi (Georgia)	EU-Georgia DAG-to-DAG + Joint Civil Society Dialogue Forum + 3rd EU-Georgia Civil Society Platform	Mandate
Reykjavik (Iceland)	26th meeting of the European Economic Area	Mandate
Chisinau (Moldova)	4th meeting of the EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform in Chisinau	Mandate
Chisinau (Moldova)	Co-chair of the EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform, in the Parliamentary Association Committee	Mandate
Montenegro	Your Europe, Your Say - Visit in school - Montenegro	In 2016, the main topic of YEYS was immigration. In this context, the Communication Group Members decided to involve not only young people from the 28 EU Member States but also students from the five official candidate

		countries. Their participation was very fruitful and constructive, that is why the Communication Group decided to continue to invite these five countries for the next editions. Prior to the event, EESC Members visit the selected schools to explain the role of the EESC and prepare the students for the debates in Brussels. Therefore, five visits in the schools based in the candidate countries were organised in 2018.
Podgorica (Montenegro)	11th Meeting of the EU Montenegro JCC and the Preparatory meeting	Mandate
Moscow (Russia)	Joint seminar EESC - Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation	MoU EESC-RFCC
Moscow (Russia)	Mission to Russia - Conference on economic and social inequality, organised by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation - Moscow	MoU EESC-RFCC
Belgrade (Serbia)	Meeting of the EU Serbia JCC and the Preparatory meeting.	Mandate
Belgrade (Serbia)	Participation of the President of the Western Balkans Follow-up Committee, at a regional conference "Move.Link. Engage. The Enlargement: A Brand Old Story".	Work programme of the Eastern Neighbours Follow-up Committee
Arandjelovac (Serbia)	Your Europe, Your Say - Visit in school – Serbia.	In 2016, the main topic of YEYS was immigration. In this context, the Communication Group Members decided to involve not only young people from the 28 EU Member States but also students from the five official candidate countries. Their participation was very fruitful and constructive, that is why the Communication Group decided to continue to invite these five countries for the next editions. Prior to the event, EESC Members visit the selected schools to explain the role of the EESC and prepare the students for the debates in Brussels. Therefore, five visits in the schools based in the candidate countries were organised in 2018.
Geneva (Switzerland)	EESC delegation to 2018 WTO Public Forum, 2-4/10/2018, Geneva (CH).	Work programme of the International Trade Follow-up Committee.
Geneva (Switzerland)	Intervention of an EESC Member at the Forum Women and Global Migration: Root Causes and innovative Solutions_CH-Geneva.	The EESC Member was invited by the Executive Board of the UN NGO Committee on the Status of Women to speak on the issue of "Women and global migration: root causes and innovative solutions". The mission was authorised as an opportunity to present the EESC's work on migration, entrepreneurship and innovative solutions for empowering women in a UN setting
Geneva (Switzerland)	Speaker at the Conference on Sustainable Housing: smart cities, in Geneva on 29/5/18.	In 2015 the Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN) elaborated an own-initiative opinion on Smart cities as a driver of a new European industrial policy (TEN/568). As a follow-up of this

		opinion, within the framework of the “Smart Cities” project, a delegation of TEN members has carried out study visits to six EU cities that have started or implemented smart project initiatives. In 2017 a Report on the “Smart Cities” Project was published by the TEN Section. The speaker participated in the conference as TEN Section President, and also as a former member of the Study Group TEN/568 and the “Smart Cities” Project
Geneva (Switzerland)	Participation of two EESC members in a conference on media freedoms in Turkey, in Geneva on 2 November.	The participation to this Conference was particular important to explain the EESC work related to JCC EU-Turkey on fundamental rights. Work programme of the EU-Turkey JCC
Adana, Istanbul (Turkey)	EU-Turkey Joint Consultative Committee meeting (JCC).	Mandate
Mersin (Turkey)	Your Europe, Your Say - Visit in school – Turkey.	In 2016, the main topic of YEYS was immigration. In this context, the Communication Group Members decided to involve not only young people from the 28 EU Member States but also students from the five official candidate countries. Their participation was very fruitful and constructive, that is why the Communication Group decided to continue to invite these five countries for the next editions. Prior to the event, EESC Members visit the selected schools to explain the role of the EESC and prepare the students for the debates in Brussels. Therefore, five visits in the schools based in the candidate countries were organised in 2018.
Kiev (Ukraine)	EU-Ukraine DAG to DAG meeting + EU-Ukraine Joint Civil Society Dialogue Forum	Mandate
Kiev (Ukraine)	Participation of the co-president of the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform, in a Round table on the efficiency of technical assistance of the EU to Ukraine, in Kyiv (Ukraine) on the 19 March.	Work programme of the EU-Ukraine CSP
Kiev (Ukraine)	Participation of two EESC members in the 2nd Association Exchange Forum in Kiev.	Work programme of the Eastern Neighbours Follow-up Committee
Kharkiv (Ukraine)	Participation of an EESC member as a speaker in LEGPROMEXPORT” Forum.	The Kharkiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry invited the EESC member to "LEGPROMEXPORT" Forum as a speaker on the 11th of October 2018, in Ukraine. The speaker's participation as representative of the EESC Employers Group focused on reinforcing the relations and cooperation between entrepreneurs of the Ukraine and UE Employers
Ukraine	Participation of an EESC member in 2nd Business Forum of the Ukrainian Diaspora.	Work programme of the EU-Ukraine CSP
Kiev (Ukraine)	Participation of an EESC member at the "Walk for Freedom" and European Day	Work programme of the Eastern Neighbours Follow-up Committee

	against Trafficking in Human Beings in Kiev, Ukraine on 19-20/10/2018.	
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• **Missions outside continental Europe**

CITY / COUNTRY	MEETING NAME	REASONS OF MEETING
Buenos Aires (Argentine)	Invitation of the EESC President at the meeting CTA-T.	The EESC President has been invited to an event organised by the Argentinian Confederation of Workers
Cotonou (Benin)	ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.	MoU EESC-ACP JPA
Halifax, Ottawa, Washington DC (Canada and USA)	Mission to Canada and USA.	Work programme of the Transatlantic Relations Follow-up Committee
Santiago de Chile (Chile)	3rd EU-Chile Joint Consultative Committee	Mandate
Bogota (Colombia)	Speaker at the 11th International Environmental Congress in Bogota, Colombia on 23-24/10/2018.	Work programme of the Latin America Follow-up Committee
Punta Cana (Dominican Republic)	Participation of an EESC member - high level conference in Central America on social innovation - Punta Cana, Dominican Republic	Work programme of the Latin America Follow-up Committee
Quito (Ecuador)	Joint meeting of the Domestic Advisory Groups for EU-Colombia, Peru and Ecuador Trade Agreement	Mandate
Giza (Egypt)	EESC President - ARLEM Plenary in Egypt.	Invitation by the CoR President to address the cooperation with the civil society in the context of the ninth plenary session of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly
Guatemala (Guatemala)	Seminar in Guatemala and joint meeting of the DAGs - 16/17 May.	Mandate
Tokyo, Kobe (Japan)	Mission to Japan - coordination with Japanese counterpart organisations and seminars.	Work programme of the EU-Japan Follow-up Committee
Amman (Jordan)	Mission to Jordan.	Work programme of the Euromed Follow-up Committee
Rabat (Morocco)	Participation of an EESC member in the ESC of Morocco Workshop on "the role of ESCs and similar institutions in addressing the new migration challenges", 30-31 October, Rabat-Morocco.	Work programme of the Euromed Follow-up Committee
Windhoek (Namibia)	ACP-EU Regional Seminar.	MoU EESC-ACP JPA
Panama city (Panama)	EUROLAT - The Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly - Panama city.	MoU EESC-EurLat
Paraguay (Paraguay)	Civil society meeting in Paraguay during the next negotiation round of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement.	Work programme of the Latin America Follow-up Committee

Saint Lucia	Meeting of the EU Cariforum Consultative Committee in Caribbean.	Mandate
Dakar (Senegal)	Speaker at the conference "European and African economic and policies, and partnership agreements", organised by the Confederation National des Travailleurs du Senegal, in Gorée, Dakar, Senegal.	The EESC member was invited by the National Confederation of Senegalese Workers to speak at this conference and to present the EESC position on European economic policies
Johannesburg (South Africa)	4th meeting of the European Union – Southern African Development Community (SADC) Trade and Development Committee.	Commissioner Malmström request
Seoul (South Korea)	Meeting of the EU and Korea DAGs under the EU-Korea FTA - Civil Society Forum.	Mandate
Incheon (South Korea)	Rapporteur - participation at the "6th OECD World Forum on Statistics - Knowledge and Policy -The Future of Well-being" organised by the OECD World Forum, on 27-29/11/2018, in Incheon (South Korea), follow-up opinion ECO/301.	The EESC member participated at this conference as a follow-up to the opinion ECO/301 'GDP and beyond' with the aim to stay abreast of the developments in the area of beyond-GDP indicators. The conference was also highly relevant in the context of the current work of the ECO section on sustainable development. It gave the ECO President the opportunity to strengthen his ties with several speakers and prepare the ground for a thematic debate on this topic with Ms Martine Durand, OECD Chief Statistician within the ECO Section on 4/6/2019
Tunis (Tunisia)	Speaker in the Conference "L'économie Sociale et Solidaire en Tunisie: Le temps de l'action", 18-19/10/2018, Tunisia.	In summer 2018, the EESC President was invited to participate in the Tunisian conference. In the margin of the conference, a bilateral meeting was organised between an EESC member and Christophe Itier, French High Commissioner for Social and Solidarity Economy and Social Innovation, in view of cooperation for the 2019 edition of the EESC European Day of Social Economy Enterprises
Tunis (Tunisia)	Participation of the EESC President as speaker at the Conference "What future for Social Dialogue in Tunisia" - 11/12/2018 in Tunis.	Work programme of the Euromed Follow-up Committee
Tunis (Tunisia)	Participation of an EESC member to the kick-off Seminar of the Enhancing Business Support Organisations and Business Networks in the Southern Neighbourhood project in Tunis on 28 June.	Work programme of the Euromed Follow-up Committee
New York (United States)	Delegation 3 members - High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development - New-York 16-18/7/2018.	The HLPF is the central UN platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. The purpose of the EESC participation was to contribute to two important debates: 1. the realisation of Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production

		<p>patterns, where the EESC holds an important expertise on transforming the economy to a Circular Economy; 2. the implementation and monitoring of SDGs. A delegation of three EESC members attended the HLPF. A side event was organised, in close cooperation with the EC delegation to the UN, the UN bodies as well as civil society organisations from the EESC network. Bilateral meetings were organised with UN Member States' Ambassadors, participating Commissioners, representatives from Major Groups and from UN institutions in order to tighten our networks</p>
Washington (United States)	<p>Rapporteur ECO/459, participating as a speaker in an event on "Reimagining Taxation in the Age of Digital Disruption", in Washington DC, USA, on 3/12/2018</p>	<p>The rapporteur was invited to intervene at this event in his capacity as representative of the European organised civil society. Considering that the opinion recommends a global solution to the digital economy taxation issue and that this topic was among the priorities of the Austrian Presidency of Council, the participation of the EESC's rapporteur was of high importance. It was essential to bring forward the positions of the European civil society ahead of the spring 2019 OECD report on the taxation of the digital economy</p>
New York (United States)	<p>Permanent Study Group on Disability rights Participation of a delegation of the PSG in the conference of States parties (COSP) to the UN Convention/ Organisation of a side event New York.</p>	<p>The State Parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) annually meet in a Conference of States Parties (COSP) at the UN Headquarters in New York in order to discuss progress in the implementation of the Convention. Since 2017, the EESC participates with a delegation of three members of the PSG on Disability Rights and one member of the secretariat as part of the EU delegation to the COSP highlighting the important role of organised civil society in the implementation of the Convention. In 2018, the EESC members participated in the debates, met with other EU delegation representatives, organised a side event and participated in several side events throughout the COSP. The delegation also attended the Civil Society CRPD Forum, which is organised the day before the opening of the COSP</p>

IV.

APPENDICES

Michigan (United States)	Speaker at 2018 Global Human Intelligence Conference, USA 27-28/9/2018.	The EESC member was keynote speaker at the 2018 Global Human Intelligence Conference celebrating NAAAHR's 20th Anniversary. The member was asked to share best practices and strategies as a global leader, on Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a focus on skills and work for the future and how HR professionals can prepare and help their organisations to plan
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European Economic and Social Committee

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2018 AND FINANCIAL REGULATION

The EESC Annual Activity Report 2018 has been established based on the rules stipulated by the Financial Regulation in force in 2018.

The new Financial Regulation "(EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012", of 18 July 2018 and published on 30/07/2018, entered – by way of derogation - only into force on 01/01/2019 as regards the implementation of the administrative appropriations of Union institutions. (Article 282(3) Financial Regulation 2018/1046)

Consequently, the Financial Regulation "(EU, Euratom) No 966/2012" including subsequent amendments and its RAP continued to apply for the administrative appropriations until 31/12/2018, before the entry into force of this new Regulation.

As the main change lies in the lean structure of the new Financial Regulation, the substance of the 2018 reporting remains unaffected by the reference to either legal base.



European Economic and Social Committee



**European Committee
of the Regions**

**Joint Services – Directorate for Logistics
The Director**

Brussels, 14 June 2019
PC/NOH/mp n° 47-19

DIGITAL STRATEGY

A - INTRODUCTION

1. This document presents the **vision** of what the **IT environment and related systems at the EESC** should be from the point of view of the users within the next 3 to 10 years taking into consideration the recent evolutions of the IT technologies. It was adopted by the Members IT Group (MIG) at its meeting of **8 April 2019** and further presented to the Quaestors for consultation at their meeting of 15 April 2019. It is a synthesis of a wider background paper that served in the consultations with the Directors (21 March 2018) and in the discussions held by the Members IT Group in 2018. It will be used as a framework when preparing the "3 Year IT Investment Plan"¹ which presents the estimated budget needed to sustain the IT programme for the coming three years, as well as the annual activity plans that are related.
2. The document is divided into **three main sections**:
 - The General IT framework at the EESC
 - Strategic projects
 - Enablers
3. The Digital Strategy is also the reply of the Committee to the European Council's call of 19 October 2017 for "governments and the public sectors that are fully brought into the digital age and lead by example". Furthermore, every effort should be made to link the digital strategy with the legislative work of the Committee.

¹ <http://team/sites/IT/Meeting%20Documents/03-18%20-%203%20Year%20IT%20Investment%20Plan.pdf> Annex

4. Finally, the Digital Strategy will allow the Committee to reply to the European Parliament request to submit along with the Annual Activity Report a mid-term strategy on the investments in their IT projects and equipment².

B – GENERAL IT FRAMEWORK

B.1 - VISION

Within 10 years the IT systems of the EESC should be user focused and data-driven, endowed with a range of modern applications and flexible solutions supporting its political work and administrative processes with the aims of increasing its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and facilitating the delivery of borderless digital services to both its members and staff.

5. The implementation of this vision should be done in an "open, efficient and inclusive" manner and providing the "borderless, interoperable, personalised, user-friendly, end-to-end digital public services" foreseen by the EU eGovernment Action Plan and the Tallinn Declaration³.
6. These IT systems of the EESC should enable the sharing of data and the collaborative working practices among members and staff. The solutions should be designed to optimise the user experience in terms of functionality, speed and user interface: they should be easy to use, anywhere and at any time. They should also be flexible and adaptable in order to reply to the evolving users' requests.
7. The underlying principles⁴ that should support the Digital Strategy⁵ of the EESC should be the following, which are based on those of the EU eGovernment Action Plan, the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) and the Tallinn Declaration:

- a. Digital by Default & Once Only
- b. Openness & Transparency
- c. Interoperability & Cross-border
- d. Security & Privacy
- e. User-driven, Data-centric and Agile design

B.2 - DIGITAL WORKPLACE

² European Parliament resolution of 26 March 2019 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2017, Section VI – European Economic and Social Committee, paragraph 20:

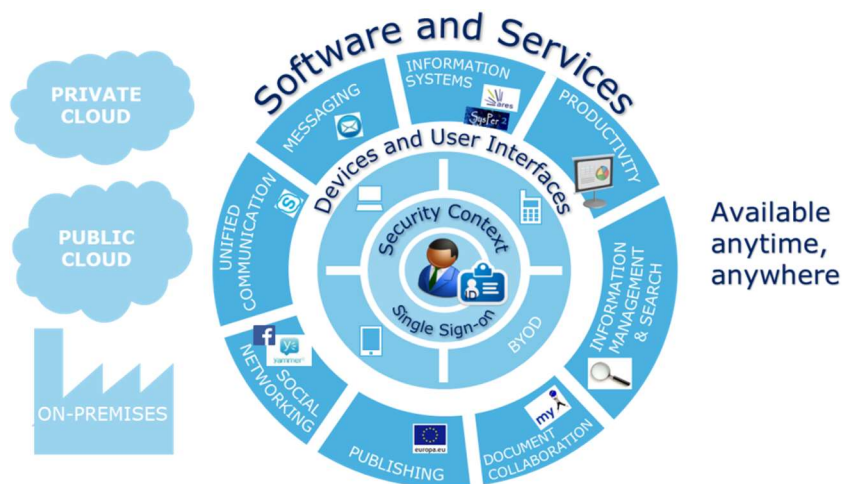
"20. Welcomes the efforts in the efficiency of information systems, IT infrastructure and user support services; notes the examples like the development of a new application for staff appraisals, an online staff vademecum, improved usability of the principal operational systems and reporting environments; notes, however, with concern that the Committee, together with Committee of the Regions, dedicated less than 3 % of their total budget to IT, whereas IT projects and equipment have suffered from underfinancing for several years; asks the Committee to prepare a mid-term strategy on the investments in their IT projects and equipment and include it into Committee's next Annual Activity report."

³ See appendix 5.

⁴ These are general principles that should apply to different types and size of organisations, and that are being used by other EU Institutions, in particular the European Commission. For more details on these principles see appendix 4.

⁵ They should apply to IT design, development and delivery processes.

8. The Digital Workplace⁶ (DWP) is the generic name for all the measures aiming to substantially improve the efficiency, availability and security of the IT infrastructure through deployment of more advanced tools and adoption of new security measures. It will be crucial for the modernisation of EESC working methods and tools, by creating a modern office automation environment with state of the art personalised features.
9. Members' diligence and staff productivity will increase by providing a suitable, modern, effective and efficient digital workplace to each user. Mobility embedded at the core of the digital workplace will also support the work from anywhere at any time, except for documents classified as sensitive by the EESC authorities, that should be particularly secured. For staff it will allow a better balance between professional and private life inter alia by increasing teleworking and allowing for more working time flexibility⁷.
10. DWP inherently entails a refocussing of IT from technologies to an individual user's workplace and their daily activities, taking into account existing processes and workflows as well as new and emerging technologies. This vision is summarised in the diagram below:



6 The Digital Workplace Programme (DWP) is a European Commission's initiative which is not primarily about IT but about modernisation. It has 4 objectives: the first 3 relate to "staff engagement", "staff productivity" and a "more modern and efficient office space design". The 4th objective is to radically improve the efficiency, availability and security of their IT infrastructure through deployment of more advanced tools and adoption of new security measures. For the IT aspects of DWP, the other institutions have been involved through the inter-institutional IT committee (CII) and in particular a technical task-force on the topic has been established in which the Committees' IT unit participates. For more details see:

<http://team/sites/IT/Meeting%20Documents/EC%20Digital%20Workplace%20Strategy.pdf>

7 This process should be done based on an internal dialogue with staff under the coordination of directorate E.

11. The digital workplace of the future at the EESC⁸ will be structured around the following six main areas:

<i>Strand</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Measures at the Committee</i>
1. Devices	Support for "corporate" and private mobile devices to access EESC systems from anywhere and at any time.	Members and staff will be allowed to connect to the EESC information systems with all kind of devices (smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktop PC), being them private or corporate, from anywhere and at any time. An appropriate number of modern computers will be available on members' rooms. Installation of new network printers and improved multifunctional devices allowing for printing via WiFi from mobile devices (smartphones, tablets, laptops). Improvement of WiFi connections and speed in the EESC buildings. Encourage users to adopt "one PC" ⁹
2. Office Automation	Migration to the latest tools including those hosted in the cloud after been tested.	Migration to Windows 10 & Office 2016 – foreseen for 2018-2019. Installation of advanced security tools, accompanied by user awareness raising measures.
3. Mail and Calendars	Migration to the latest tools, including those hosted in the cloud	Migration to Exchange 2016 – foreseen for 2018-2019. This technology is more secure and up-to-date and will have a better integration with the email archive ¹⁰ .
4. Unified Communication	Improve voice communication tools	Voice over IP phones remain but will be complemented by Skype for Business ¹¹ . This will allow for video-conference meetings ¹² with the display of documents in the screen, while fully respecting cybersecurity measures. Please note that these facilities will not allow

⁸ It should be noted that there is no intention to redesign the IT environment of the Committee from scratch, but rather to have the DWP vision in mind as a guiding principle and general concept, in practice to be implemented as a variety of iterative development steps in many different areas.

⁹ One PC – replacement of the desktop PC by a portable PC both for Members having top functions (the precise list of such Members is to be decided by the Bureau) and for staff, allowing to cover different needs including meetings and missions. In relation to staff, it would allow also for telework. Currently there are ± 150 users and it's available on request. It does not exclude the creation of some special configurations for users with specific profiles (cf. "communication" profile or specific requests from Group presidents). In terms of resources, the "one PC" scheme is essentially budget-neutral: within the inter-institutional framework contract used presently by the Committee, the costs of a laptop and of a desktop PC are very much similar.

¹⁰ Members would be able to have access to their email archives from their mobile devices and outside EESC premises.

¹¹ Skype for Business – available on request to all staff. Currently ±200 users. In addition to the desktop conferencing tools, the Committee also has developed "teleconferencing" facilities (a dedicated "teleconferencing" room in JDE and a "Skype" equipped room in BvS). Teleconferencing could be used for bilateral meetings between rapporteurs and section secretariats, between rapporteurs and Commission officials or for some study group meetings. Online interpretation is not available.

¹² As requested by the resolution of the Parliament on the discharge of the EESC for the financial year 2016.

<i>Strand</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Measures at the Committee</i>
		replacing the normal official meetings of the EESC as no interpretation is provided and the number of multipoint connections is limited.
5. Collaboration & Social Media	Document, tasks, communities ...	Make better use of existing tools such as team-sites (SharePoint) & later Strategic Management Tools, and give particular attention to their reliability and adequacy to users' needs.
6. Integration and Identity & Access Management	Support for a hybrid IT environment ¹³ – partially hosted in the cloud and partially in an own Data Centre. Provide high performance networks and operational excellence.	Investigate use of EU Login as a single sign-on system for all IT systems of the Committee, including Members Portal. Investigate possible development of a hybrid IT environment.

B.3 - CYBER SECURITY

12. The cyber threat landscape is becoming increasingly hostile, attacks are more sophisticated and are harder to detect. With the increased use of mobile (access to IT systems anywhere at any time), cloud, social media and data intensive collaborative tools, the attack surface is constantly enlarging. In this hostile environment, the Committee might be a potential target¹⁴ and a major cyber incident could drastically harm its activities and also damage its reputation. IT Security must therefore remain a top preoccupation.
13. The Committee's reinforced foundation for security will be based on the following main objectives:
- (1) Establish key IT security management practices - in particular a very solid **security baseline**¹⁵;
 - (2) Increase **detection and response capabilities**;
 - (3) Adoption of a **risk-based approach** (also central to the new data protection regulation);
 - (4) Increase the endpoint (final users' devices) security, e.g. by introducing multifactor authentication;

13 Today, the Cloud is already transforming IT by enabling greater agility and flexibility, improving accessibility and scalability, while keeping control of costs. The hybrid model consists on one hand, to use public cloud computing for those services that can be done better and cheaper outside, in particular for systems in which data confidentiality is low. On the other hand, the on-premises data centres will be modernised to evolve towards a private cloud model. The entire infrastructure stack from self-service request, middleware platforms and the underlying virtualised infrastructure (compute, storage, and network) will be covered.

14 Although Institutions like the Parliament, the Council and the Commission are more attractive targets, to hack the EESC IT systems could be a mean to infect later a bigger Institution taking into consideration the interoperability of the systems.

15 Notably in-line with the well-known "Top 5" CERT-EU recommendations:

1) Minimising administrative privileges, 2) Application Directory White Listing, 3) Application of Patching on devices, 4) System Patching, 5) Network Segmentation and Segregation.

Implementing the above would prevent approximately 85% of the security breaches dealt with today. Of course, all are to a large extent already in place; but the work is continuous and cyclical.

- (5) by **training and raising awareness on cyber-security** among users, and in particular among members¹⁶, and by re-enforcing the responsibility of the information system owners;
- (6) by pursuing the **inter-institutional cooperation** on IT security via CERT-EU, which offers inter alia stress-tests to the Institutions' IT systems in order to check their resilience to hackers attacks;
- (7) by defining a **recovery plan** and related procedures, in cooperation with the Crisis Management team, in case of an cyber-attack in order to continue assuring a minimum service to both members and staff and to protect the fundamental data. The recovery plan should address issues related to both software and hardware and should be effectively tested on a regularly basis.

14. In particular, the security of the digital workplace will be reinforced, security by design will be embedded in software development practices (in particular for reusable services), secure exchange of data will be a key requirement of the data ecosystem and the operational excellence required for the digital infrastructure will integrate key security practices (e.g. patching, logging and forensics). For mobile devices, specific technical rules will be established in order to avoid saving in those devices sensitive or classified data, in case they would be lost or stolen.

C - STRATEGIC PROJECTS

15. This section concerns the development of new applications and the improvement of the existing ones covering the four domains that compose presently the EESC information systems, which are: 1) political work, 2) document management, 3) Communication and 4) HR and Finance. It pays particular attention to the deployment of digital solutions in the political domain in order to serve members better, because it is at the centre of the work of the Institution.

C.1 - POLITICAL WORK

16. The main applications which support the political work activities are **Agora and Members Portal**. Agora is used by the secretariats organising the Committee's work (back-office application) and Members Portal is used by the members and other participants at Committee meetings. Both applications have been steadily developed over a number of years and are heavily customised to support the working methods of the Committee. Statistics confirm that these applications are heavily used. Taking into account the central role of these applications they will be further improved¹⁷ and new modules will be developed¹⁸.

¹⁶ Appropriate behaviour will be recommended to members in order to combat hacking.

¹⁷ The main ongoing developments for Agora are: new design; new Translation Management System (TMS); new modules for managing Experts & Replacements; budget forecasting, meeting authorisation workflows and "breaking down barriers (making "non-confidential" documents of a specific section available to all members and other users and not only members of that section. The main ongoing developments for Members Portal are: meeting authorisation Status; "On behalf of" feature; link to self-booking tool; declaration per stay.

¹⁸ See summary of the new modules and projects presented by order of priority in annex 5.

NEW MODULES TO BE DEVELOPED FOR AGORA AND MEMBER'S PORTAL

17. **Printing documents on demand** only. The purpose of this module in Member's Portal is to contribute to the reduction of the carbon footprint of the Committee by allowing for the reduction of paper used during meetings. Members will be requested to indicate in their profile on Members Portal if they wish to receive documents (for sections, plenaries and Bureau meetings) only in electronic format or if they wish to continue receiving paper documents. Two separate analyses on the topic were prepared during 2017 and the conclusions were that the available tools can already be used to support paper poor meetings¹⁹. The implementation of this module will allow also for savings of manpower in particular in the print shop and distribution services²⁰.
18. The system will be flexible as members could change their decision in Members Portal at any time. The practical modalities for the implementation of the system will be discussed between members²¹ and the administration and might evolve according to members' needs and the technical progress on the related domains.
19. As regards to the **long-term vision**, both Agora and Members Portal²² should be completely revised around 2022 because the technology used would become obsolete and support will be phased down. This revision will be done on the basis of a comprehensive, up to date business analysis and in line with the technology drivers (digital workplace, cloud & interoperability). In particular, in what Agora²³ is concerned, data ownership should be established along with procedures for the reuse of data: this would allow for a better interoperability and exchange of data with other applications. It is expected that this revision would allow to have better and more user friendly interfaces and screens and to have faster response times.

MAIN GAPS IDENTIFIED IN THE POLITICAL DOMAIN

"Diffing tool"

20. The purpose of a "diffing"²⁴ tool is to allow for an efficient management of amendments by the administration (as a back-office tool) for both sections and plenary meetings. This tool will have no impact in the work of the members and in the way section meetings and plenary sessions are conducted. This tool would allow the secretariat to automate compliance with the applicable rules

19 Report on paperless meetings: <http://team/sites/IT/Meeting%20Documents/06-17%20-%20Paperless%20Meetings.pdf>

Report on experience of other institutions with paperless working environments:

<http://team/sites/IT/Meeting%20Documents/11-17%20-%20Report%20on%20experience%20of%20other%20institutions%20with%20paperless%20working%20environment.pdf>

20 The introduction of such a module in CoR allowed for a reduction of 50% of the documents printed for official meetings.

21 In particular by the Members IT group and by the Quaestors.

22 Including upgrading the Phoenix application. This is the application used to manage the reimbursement of members' meeting expenses and is closely linked to Agora.

23 Agora contains all the key information about the Committee's Members and all the Committee's work. This is a very important and strategic resource. It is exploited to some extent by using "Agora" data to provide input for reporting purposes.

24 "diffing" in the IT jargon refers to a tool that allows for automatic detection of differences in texts.

and procedures and would further improve the translation process. Overall, the work of the administration would be rationalised and would become more efficient.

21. This tool will increase the efficiency of the work of the administration, in particular for the secretariats of the sections and the plenary as well as for translators²⁵, by providing:
 - Automatic "diffing" of texts (comparing differences in texts and marking those differences);
 - Improved quality of the original documents due to reduced risk of copy/paste or referencing errors;
 - Flawless formatting to display changes in the amended text – system does this automatically;
 - Faster translation workflow;
 - Quicker overview of actual workload – improved planning and work organisation;
 - No need for (re)translation of existing portions of text.
22. It is foreseen that in its final version this tool will be using XML standard (improved document management and more efficient translation – see following section) and therefore it will be a step towards the inter-institutional integration of our IT tools with the XML applications that are being developed by the Commission, the Council and the Parliament.
23. The total budget, to cover the needs of external programmers, is approximately EUR 55 000 and is available in the 2019 budget. It is therefore a very cost efficient investment taking into account its low value and the important efficiency gains that it will bring²⁶.

Development of XML tools

24. Document management will be improved by adopting a standards-based approach and notably by the use of XML. XML stands for "eXtensible Markup Language". It is a way of describing both the logical structure and the appearance of a document. It has been in use since 1996, but interest has increased sharply in recent years driven by the opportunities of machine-based document processing.
25. At the level of the EU Institutions, the Publication Offices produces the Official Journal using XML and is leading projects to standardise and use XML documents for all EU legislative documents. The Commission is developing a complete workflow for legislative documents from drafting to publication (EdiT project – target date end 2020). The European Parliament has developed a range of applications for preparing their legislative documents, including amendments (AT4LEX, AT4AM & CAT4TRAD). The Council have also started working on a complete XML workflow. Documents for "Trilogue" meetings are managed using an XML-based tool. In a couple of years **XML will become the standard for the automatic exchange of legislative documents** between the Commission, the Parliament and the Council.

²⁵ The introduction of new IT tools for translation allowed, inter alia, for the reduction of about 40% of the number of translators in the recent years.

²⁶ It would allow reducing the processing of amendments by the secretariats of sections by 30% to 50% and the work of translators by 10% to 20%.

26. If the EESC wishes to **improve the impact of its opinions in the legislative process**, it should develop IT applications that would allow for the automatic exchange of these opinions and other documents with the other Institutions using the XML standard.

Introduction of XML at EESC

27. In fact, some "XML" projects have already been done in EESC, notably "Transport Integration" (translation of titles and labels), "Short Text Service" and the EESC Newsletter. These applications all use XML files and are fully integrated with the computer aided translation tool used by the Translation Directorate.
28. Nevertheless, in order to allow for the automatic exchange of documents with the other Institutions using the XML standard, further developments are needed. In this context, two scenarios can be identified: 1) Full implementation or 2) Gradual implementation.
- a. **In the full implementation scenario**, a new (to be developed) **XML authoring tool** (allowing for creating, editing and further process documents) would be introduced for staff. All applications would be redeveloped to work with that new XML tool (notably the above mentioned diffing tool). The main databases and document repositories would also be adapted. Costs would be very high and many other projects would need to be cancelled or postponed.
 - b. **In the gradual implementation scenario**, interoperability with XML and existing word processing tools would be steadily increased, applications such as the diffing tool would be adapted accordingly. This approach could be managed with the resources available and allows to follow developments, and to benefit from the lessons learnt, at the other EU Institutions.
29. Taking into account the need to insure compatibility with the applications of other Institutions and the huge amount of resources that might be involved, it is proposed to order a study on this topic during 2019 (financed by end of year transfers). The study should provide an assessment of the different options, the risks involved, the resources needed and the roadmap for the introduction of XML at the EESC. The study will be presented to Members IT group and Quaestors for discussion, following what they might come up with a proposal for the implementation of a XML tool to be considered by the Bureau.

Strategic Management Tool

30. A **Strategic Management Tool**²⁷ will be used for collecting, managing and reporting on the political work of the Committee and potentially interoperate with the equivalent tools of the other institutions. While the information can be encoded by the secretariat, the primary audience will be the members. Such a tool will be of great help for members, allowing increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of their work, by offering, inter alia, the following advantages around end of 2021²⁸:
- Global vision of all aspects related to a theme (meetings, documents, events);
 - Global vision of all aspects related to a section (meetings, documents, events);
 - Overview of the work done by other Institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council) related to a specific theme and link to the available documents;
 - Detailed roadmap of the future steps, meetings and events related to a specific theme;
 - Information on communication actions related to the theme (press articles, events, press releases, etc.).

C.2 - DOCUMENT PRODUCTION

31. The strategic objectives of the EESC in relation to Document Management are the following:
- to have an authoring tool for preparing political documents (explanatory memos, opinions and appendices) that is compatible with or integrated in similar tools developed by other Institutions (European Commission, Council and Parliament); integration of this tool with the Trilogue Table Editor (TTE), the tool used for the preparation of the documents for the Trilogue meetings which is also very important;
 - to have performant document translation tools, in particular:
 - a) a Translation Management System (TMS) which allows to manage the requests for translations of documents and subsequent workflows;
 - b) machine translation systems that allow for the automatic translation of documents that are subsequently revised and improved by translators;
 - c) a Computer Aided Translation (CAT) tool that searches in huge databases documents or part of them that are already translated, and by that reducing the work required from translators.

²⁷ **Knowledge Management** is closely related to Strategic Management in the sense of having as objective to systematically collect and then simplify access to all information relating to an organisation: it aggregates and automates the access to information. The development of a Knowledge Management concept would logically come after that of a Strategic Management tool. Nevertheless, it is a very resource intensive project which is far behind the present possibilities of the EESC. The best solution for the Committee would be to have access to the Knowledge Management tool of the Parliament, or at least to part of it, which would imply political negotiations in order to extend the scope of the present cooperation agreement.

²⁸ If sufficient financing is provided during 2020 and 2021.

C.3 - COMMUNICATION

32. The objective in this domain is to improve tools for communicating with citizens and civil society, under the responsibility of the competent Vice-President, in order to increase visibility for the work of the EESC, such as internet site, internal collaborative team sites, social media, programmed sites and a contact management (CRM) application.

C.4 - HR & FINANCE

33. The strategic objective of the EESC in relation to HR and Finance applications is to achieve digital and paperless procedures in all the aspects of these two areas. This implies the generalisation of digital signature, the development of digital work-flows and document archiving where needed as well as the development of on-line platforms for the exchange of information with third parties in the fields of public procurement and contract management.

<i>D - ENABLERS</i>

34. This section underlines the importance of a set of enabling actions (governance, resources, digital skills) without which it will be impossible to achieve the desired digital transformation of the Institution.

D.1 - GOVERNANCE

35. **IT strategy must be created in as close collaboration as possible with the political priorities of the Institution, while also responding to them.** Users and IT should be able to exchange "issues, ideas and insights" which can be used to optimise short, medium and long-term planning. Thus, more exchanges on the overall strategy of the Institution become a new element of IT strategic management. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that humans remain in command at all stages.
36. In line with best practices for digital government, it is also critical for its success that the Digital Strategy benefits from a strong and solid political sponsorship. Rather than reinventing new governance models, the Digital Strategy will leverage the existing IT governance structures, in particular the Members IT Group (for political information systems) and the IT Steering Committee (for administrative information systems). In addition, groups of users and IT services need to meet regularly in the framework of the already existing Domain and Users' groups. The active participation of the users is paramount for the success of any digital strategy. In this framework a specific survey on members IT needs should be regularly launched.
37. Governance should ensure that actions are directed and monitored to support the vision and objectives of the Digital Strategy. For this purpose, an annual implementation plan and a 3 Year IT Investment Plan will be prepared in order to identify a hierarchy of priorities and measurable outcomes as well as the associated costs. The alignment of these actions with the political priorities of the Committee should be respected. Furthermore in relation to systems managed jointly with the Committee of the Regions, in particular Agora and Members Portal, a joint vision shared by the two Committees will be searched.

D.2 - RESOURCES

38. There is a structural low level of IT funding at the EESC since decades: the Committee is only reserving to IT less than 3%²⁹ of its total budget compared to more than 7% at the EP and the Council and 5.12 % at the EEAS and the Court of Auditors. At the Court of Justice the figure is a little bit lower at 4.67 % but still much higher than the one of the Committee³⁰.
39. Also in terms of human resources devoted to IT, the Committee shows proportionally very low figures compared to the other Institutions: in the Committee there is on average one IT staff member³¹ for 16 posts in the establishment plan. At the Council and the Parliament the level of IT staff is proportionally 2.5 higher, as their ratio is of one IT staff member for respectively 6 and 7 posts in their establishment plan.
40. Nevertheless, some parts of the digital strategy can be implemented without increasing the budget but they will take more time:
- the digital workplace could be implemented little by little as different components of the network will be replaced by more performant ones according to the availability of funds; however members should not expect huge improvements in the speed of Wi-Fi connections or of the computers in members offices without additional investments;
 - security systems will be maintained at least at a minimum level;
 - some minor developments will be possible in the next three years (see annex 5) but substantial ones such as the strategic management tool will not be possible to implement.
41. An alternative to an increase in the IT budget would be to use systematically appropriations made available by other departments by the end of the year by way of transfers. This would need a strong support from both the Bureau and the Commission on Financial Affairs (CAF).

D.3 - DIGITAL SKILLS

42. Evolving toward a digitally transformed and data-driven IT environment requires equipping all users (not only Informatics professionals) with the right skill sets in order to allow for its efficient use. Accompanying measures allowing users to truly exploit the new ways of working and the new capabilities offered by digital technologies should be put in place.
43. Furthermore, the leadership role of management is critical to the success of this transformation challenge. Digitalisation of processes exploiting the potential of new technologies, management of information as an asset and the introduction of new working practices will only be achieved if managers have the competences to drive forward these changes.

²⁹ The average for the EESC between 2012 and 2018 is 2.85%: see appendix 2.

³⁰ The percentages for the other Institutions relate to the budgetary year 2018. Figures for the Commission are much higher (around 15%) but are not comparable because of its responsibility to manage the operational budget: the other Institutions mentioned only have administrative budget.

³¹ IT staff in this comparison includes officials, temporary and contractual agents as well as external service providers working *intra-muros*.

44. Therefore new targeted training programmes will be put in place, new staff profiles will be clearly identified, and communities of practice will be established to enable personalised learning experiences, etc. This focus on digital skills and digital literacy represents a challenging cultural change which also requires an internal awareness raising campaign emphasising its benefits.
45. For members, every effort will be made to leverage existing communication channels such as Committee and group newsletters, in order to inform them about IT issues and developments and in particular about IT security recommendations. New channels such as e-learning will be explored. Specific training (including "upgrade" training) or information sessions and information being sent by email will also be organised for all members at the request of the MIG or for a specific group at its request. Materials used in these training or information sessions will be made available to all members on their Intranet page.

E - CONCLUSION

46. This document presents the EESC Digital Strategy, in order to facilitate the shaping of its future IT environment that is compatible with a modern administration. It envisages a digitally transformed, user focused and data-driven Committee with a common culture of data sharing and collaborative working practices and proposes the framework that would allow achieving this vision within the next 10 years.
47. Achieving this corporate transformation requires committed sponsorship at political level, support from senior management and the active participation of all services in this collective endeavour. Furthermore, its success will be critically dependent on senior and middle managers becoming aware of the value of the data they are responsible for and leading the digitalisation of their services.
48. As strategic projects are concerned this document has mainly focussed on the political work domain, because of the need to ensuring a close link between, on one hand the overall strategy of the Committee that should focus on its political work and on the other hand its IT strategy. Other domains are no less important, but there are no major gaps in either the business map or the portfolio and there are well functioning user groups.
49. Finally, in order to obtain the main results from the implementation of the Digital Strategy within the next five years, extra resources will be necessary, especially to maintain momentum after 2020. If no extra resources are made available, not all the objectives will be achieved and after nine years, they might be outdated. The strategy should be regularly assessed and adapted by the Members IT Group in consultation with the Quaestors and the Commission on Financial Affairs (CAF).

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- Appendices:**
- 1 - The Tallinn Declaration on e-Government, 6/10/2017
 - 2 - Comparison of IT expenditure on EU Institutions' budget
 - 3 - General principles of the digital strategy
 - 4 - Summary of new projects in the political domain
 - 5 - Summary of benefits from new projects in the political domain
 - 6 – Summary of the results of the Members IT Needs Survey

Appendix 1: The Tallinn Declaration on e-Government, 6/10/2017

http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/document.cfm?doc_id=47559

The Tallinn Declaration on e-Government

The "**Tallinn Declaration**" confirms the following principles of e-Government:

- Digital-by-default, inclusiveness and accessibility
- Once only
- Trustworthiness and Security
- Openness and transparency
- Interoperability by default
- Horizontal enabling policy steps

It specifically addresses the European Institutions calling in particular for:

- *"... the Commission and other EU institutions to adopt the digital-by-default principle and commitments similar to the annexed "User-centricity principles for design and delivery of digital public services" for all service interactions with EU institutions – by 2019 ...*
- *the EU institutions to apply the once only principle ... to make it easier for citizens and businesses to fully digitally manage their personal data that EU institutions hold – end of 2020 ... to implement the European Interoperability Framework ... by the end of 2021 ...*
- *the EU institutions to improve the inter-institutional cooperation and step up individual efforts for thorough digital transformation of their organisations, following the EU eGovernment Action Plan and the European Interoperability Framework principles ..."*

It highlights a number of strategic **technologies** including cybersecurity and privacy tools, eIDAS compliant solutions and open source solutions. These are to be complemented by **policy initiatives** such as improving digital skills and consolidated indicators.

Appendix 2: Comparison of IT expenditure on EU Institutions' budget (3)

		CoR	EESC	EESC+CoR	CoJ (4)	CoA	Parliament	Council	EEAS
average 2012-2018									
IT budget (1)	€	3.026.818	3.731.134	6.757.952	17.201.087	7.300.143	116.197.768	38.799.438	28.771.386
total budget (2)	€	89.529.100	130.836.691	220.365.791	374.581.452	139.623.596	1.816.391.170	543.736.604	609.970.434
staff in the establishment plan		515	698	1.213	2.019	871	6.732	3.082	1.640
Membres		350	350	700	80	28	754	n/a	n/a
Sub-total Membres+staff		865	1.048	1.913	2.099	899	7.486		
IT budget/staff	€	5.881	5.344	5.572	8.518	8.377	17.259	12.587	17.544
IT budget/(Membres+staff)	€	3.500	3.560	3.533	8.194	8.118	15.522		
ratio IT budget/total budget	%	3,38%	2,85%	3,07%	4,59%	5,23%	6,40%	7,14%	4,72%
IT staff (under staff regulations)				33			508	220	
IT staff (service providers intra-muros)				42			600	250	
IT staff total				75			1.108	470	
staff/IT staff total				16			6	7	
(Membres+staff)/IT staff total				26			7		

Source: Budget of the European Union, EU Official Journal (IT budget, total budget, staff in the establishment plan).
Interinstitutionnel working group on ICT for the figures of Parliament and of the Council related to IT staff.

(1) article 210. For EESC, the IT allowance paid to Membres is not included.

(2) initial budget (before any transfers)

(3) the IT expenses of the Commission are not comparable to the other Institutions because the Commission manages all the operational expenses of the EU

(4) Membres of the Court of Justice include the Judges of the Court, of the Tribunal, of the Public Administration Court and the advocates-general

Appendix 3 General principles

The underlying principles³² that should support the Digital Strategy³³ of the EESC should be the following, which are based on those of the EU eGovernment Action Plan, the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) and the Tallinn Declaration:

- a) Digital by Default & Once Only
- b) Openness & Transparency
- c) Interoperability & Cross-border
- d) Security & Privacy
- e) User-driven, Data-centric and Agile design

a. Digital by default & Once Only

Delivery of services and procedures should be digitalised as the preferred option and via multiple channels. Digitalisation should create new simplified services based on data-centred processes rather than digitise existing silo processes: the same information should be supplied only once, only to the EESC IT systems so that it could be re-used internally, whilst respecting the data protection rules. Services should be designed to be inclusive by default and should cater for different user needs. Users should be asked to provide only the information that is absolutely necessary to obtain a specific service.

b. Openness & Transparency

Services should share data and information between themselves and with other EU Institutions where appropriate. The IT systems should enable users to access, control and correct their own data. Users should be allowed to view and understand easily administrative rules, processes, data, services and decision-making.

c. Interoperability & Cross-border

Systems should be designed to work seamlessly across the organisation and to respect interoperability and data exchange requirements³⁴ (in particular with other EU Institutions such as the Parliament, the Council and the Commission) and should be made available outside the EESC premises.

d. Security & Privacy

EESC's digital solutions should comply with the Cyber Security Policies and Standards as developed by CERT-EU. The EESC should safeguard the availability, confidentiality, authenticity, integrity and non-repudiation of information as requested by data protection rules.

³² These are general principles that should apply to different types and size of organisations, and that are being used by other EU Institutions, in particular the European Commission: See document "Digital Workplace Strategy" prepared by DG DIGIT of the European Commission.

³³ They should apply to IT design, development and delivery processes.

³⁴ The IT unit will concentrate its "interoperability" actions into a new technical domain and have participated actively in the recent revision of the "European Interoperability Framework".

e. User-driven, Data-centric, Agility³⁵

EESC should adopt a development model for digital solutions which emphasises user ownership, user requirements and the user experience. Data and related actions (collection, management, sharing, exchange, protection and preservation) should also be placed at the centre of the process and favour re-use, early delivery and continuous improvement. Particular attention should be attached to the User Interface and to data visualisation. Open source solutions should be preferred when equivalent in functionalities, total cost and cybersecurity. The ultimate goal should be the delivery of trusted, friendly services providing fast, reliable and secure access at the right time to high quality, relevant and protected information personalised to the user's needs.

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The IT unit has been an early adopter of the "PM² Agile" software development methodology elaborated by the European Commission.

Appendix 4: Summary of new projects in the political domain

Summary of the new projects to be developed in the political domain, by order of priority, and depending on the availability of the appropriate budget (cost estimation based on **2018 fixed prices**):

Priority	Political Domain Projects	Budget Year				Comment
		2019	2020	2021	2022	
a)	Projects that could be financed using existing EESC appropriations					
1)	"Diffing" tool for the administration	55,744 €				4 months in Agora
2)	Printing documents on demand	13,936 €				Changes necessary both in Members Portal (10 days) and in Agora (10 days)
3)	Revision of Agora				256,010 €	1 full year for 2 developers
	Revision of Phoenix				143,780 €	1 full year for 1 developer
	Revision of Members Portal				143,780 €	1 full year for 1 developer
	TOTAL	111,488 €			543,570 €	
b)	Projects that would need extra EESC appropriations					
4)	Study on XML authoring tool	50,000 € ³⁶				study to provide an assessment of the different options, the risks involved, the resources needed and the roadmap for the introduction of XML at the EESC
5)	Strategic management tool		265,408 €	265,408 €	132,704 €	2 developers for 2 years for 1st version; 3rd year onwards 1 developer for maintenance. As from 4th year (2023), possible mutualisation of costs with CoR for new features & maintenance. Ideally, these appropriations should be provided in the normal budget. If not possible, the use of end of the year mopping up transfers might be an alternative.
	TOTAL	50,000 €	265,408 €	265,408 €	265,408 €	

³⁶ This is an estimate. The precise cost will depend on the scope of the study.

Appendix 5: Summary of benefits from new projects in the political domain

Priority	Political Domain Projects	Benefits for members	Benefits for the administration	Comments
1)	"Diffing" tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact at all in the work of members 	<p>Increased efficiency in the work of the administration (sections secretariats and translators), by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic "diffing" of texts (comparing differences in texts and marking different text); • Improved quality of the original documents due to reduced risk of copy/paste or referencing errors; • Flawless formatting to display changes in the amended text – system does this automatically; • Faster translation workflow; • Quicker overview of actual workload – improved planning and work organisation; • No need for (re)translation of existing portions of text. 	<p>It would allow reducing the processing of amendments by the secretariats of sections by 30% to 50% and the work of translators by 10% to 20%.</p>
2)	Printing documents on demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning EESC practices with recommendations in EESC opinions; • Choice is given to members; • Possibility to request printed documents for a specific meeting or item of a meeting, even if the electronic format option was chosen; • reduction of the carbon footprint of the Committee and improvement of its image towards the public opinion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • savings of manpower in particular in the print shop and distribution services. 	<p>Saving of costs (less paper printed which cost could be estimated to between EUR 10 000 and EUR 20 000/year) and of about 1 to 3 FTE in the related services.</p>
3)	Revision of Agora, Phoenix and Members Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better and more user friendly interfaces and screens • better interoperability and exchange of data with other applications. • faster response times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better and more user friendly interfaces and screens • better interoperability and exchange of data with other applications. • faster response times. 	<p>This revision will be needed because the technology used presently would become obsolete and the support will be phasedown.</p>

Priority	Political Domain Projects	Benefits for members	Benefits for the administration	Comments
4)	Study on XML authoring tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common vision of possible options, risks, roadmap and resources needed to implement such a tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common vision of possible options, risks, roadmap and resources used needed to implement such a tool. 	After the study, Members IT group and Quaestors will assess if a proposal for a concrete project should be forwarded to the Bureau.
5)	Strategic management tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global vision of all aspects related to a theme (meetings, documents, events) • Global vision of all aspects related to a section (meetings, documents, events) • Overview of the work done by other Institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council) related to a specific theme and link to the available documents; • Detailed roadmap of the future steps, meetings and events related to a specific theme; • Information on communication actions related to the theme (press articles, events, press releases, etc.) 	Similar benefits	The human resources needed the managed the tool within the secretariats of sections may vary from 0,5 to 2 FTE, depending on the extension of features requested. This workload will diminish considerably after the first six months, once the bulk of the information will be introduced.

Appendix 6: Summary of the Final Results of the Members IT Needs Survey

Background

The Members IT Needs Survey was requested by the Quaestors and Members IT Group (MIG) early in 2018. A survey, following the structure of the Digital Strategy, was presented to both of these groups for their approval. It was also presented to the (then) Budget Group for approval. Once approved, the survey was launched in October 2018. It was suspended, and then relaunched at the end of March 2019, following the instructions of the Bureau. The relaunched survey contains three questions less and ran until the end of April 2019. A total of 126 replies to the survey were received.

Main Findings

Digital Workplace – the results confirm the deliverables of the Digital Strategy. They show that the members use a wide variety of devices with almost an equal distribution between smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers. As regards the different comments on the PCs in the Members Areas, Printers and Wi-Fi, it is often a question of addressing residual issues and above all communicating on the services already available (e.g. mobile printing, Wi-Fi tips...). The most pressing question regarding e-mail access has been resolved by the recent migration (access to archived e-mails). As regards online communication tools such as videoconferencing, practically all members would like to see the use of the tools continue at their current level or to increase ($\pm 50\%$ for each option). This is a typical area where extra investment in IT is required to progress further³⁷.

IT Security – the results confirm the deliverables of the Digital Strategy. In particular, members would like to participate in a "false-phishing" exercise and would like to be informed about the procedure of reporting IT security incidents related to their work at the EESC. They would also like to receive regular tips on IT security³⁸.

Strategic Projects in the Political Domain – the most immediate finding is that most of the members who replied confirmed that they would support a transition to "paper poor" as foreseen in the digital strategy (paragraph 16). They would also support the development of a strategic management tool – with an agenda planning module as the priority (paragraph 29 of the digital strategy). The main findings as regards the revision of Members Portal are the need to monitor some technical aspects, to communicate on features which are already available and to follow-up on the numerous offers to provide more detailed input to the process. They will be taken into account in the Members Portal revision mentioned in paragraph 18 of the digital strategy.

Digital Skills – the members consider that they have a good level of Digital Skills. They are interested in following a broad range of training. They ask that within the existing courses there should be more time to deal with specific problems. The digital strategy addresses these issues on paragraphs 41 to 44.

³⁷ See paragraphs 7 to 10 of the digital strategy for the developments of the digital workplace at the EESC.

³⁸ These elements will be taken into account in the framework of the digital skills of the Members – see paragraphs 41 to 44 of the digital strategy.

Specific Points for the Members IT Group (MIG)

The activities of the MIG could focus on "Topics" and "Consultation". The group could usefully follow-up on the topics of most interest to the members (e.g. e-mail & devices, unified communication, exercises to raise cybersecurity awareness ...). It could establish a consultation process with the members willing to provide detailed input.

Conclusions

The main conclusion is that the results of the Members IT Needs Survey confirm the EESC Digital Strategy. There is broad agreement on the deliverables. The detailed results show a need to monitor some operational aspects of the IT system more closely, to generally reinforce information and communication about services which are already available and highlight the need to increase investment in IT.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

March 2019

PART ONE

FOUNDATION TEXTS

Preliminary remarks

1. The Economic and Social Committee was set up by the Treaties establishing the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community, which were signed in Rome on 25 March 1957 and entered into force on 1 January 1958.

Since then, these two treaties have been amended several times.

2. When the codified version of these Rules of Procedure came into force on 15 March 2019, the foundation texts which concern the European Economic and Social Committee were contained in the Treaty on European Union (Article 13) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Articles 300 to 304) as respectively amended and established by the Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed on 13 December 2007 and came into force on 1 December 2009.

N.B.: Any questions or comments regarding the text of these Rules of Procedure or their Implementing Provisions and their application should be sent to the EESC registry (UniteGrefeCESE@eesc.europa.eu)

THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

Article 13

1. The Union shall have an institutional framework which shall aim to promote its values, advance its objectives, serve its interests, those of its citizens and those of the Member States, and ensure the consistency, effectiveness and continuity of its policies and actions.

The Union's institutions shall be:

- the European Parliament,
- the European Council,
- the Council,
- the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'the Commission'),
- the Court of Justice of the European Union,
- the European Central Bank,
- the Court of Auditors.

2. Each institution shall act within the limits of the powers conferred on it in the Treaties, and in conformity with the procedures, conditions and objectives set out in them. The institutions shall practice mutual sincere cooperation.

3. The provisions relating to the European Central Bank and the Court of Auditors and detailed provisions on the other institutions are set out in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

4. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be assisted by an Economic and Social Committee and a Committee of the Regions acting in an advisory capacity.

THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

CHAPTER 3 – THE UNION'S ADVISORY BODIES

Article 300

1. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be assisted by an Economic and Social Committee and a Committee of the Regions acting in an advisory capacity.

2. The Economic and Social Committee shall consist of representatives of organisations of employers, of the employed, and of other parties representative of civil society, notably in socio-economic, civic, professional and cultural areas.

3. The Committee of the Regions shall consist of representatives of regional and local bodies who either hold a regional or local authority electoral mandate or are politically accountable to an elected assembly.

4. The members of the Economic and Social Committee and of the Committee of the Regions shall not be bound by any mandatory instructions. They shall be completely independent in the performance of their duties, in the Union's general interest.

5. The rules referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 governing the nature of the composition of the Committees shall be reviewed at regular intervals by the Council to take account of economic, social and demographic developments within the Union. The Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt decisions to that end.

SECTION 1

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Article 301

The number of members of the Economic and Social Committee shall not exceed 350.

The Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt a decision determining the Committee's composition.

The Council shall determine the allowances of members of the Committee.

Article 302

1. The members of the Committee shall be appointed for five years. The Council shall adopt the list of members drawn up in accordance with the proposals made by each Member State. The term of office of the members of the Committee shall be renewable.

2. The Council shall act after consulting the Commission. It may obtain the opinion of European bodies which are representative of the various economic and social sectors and of civil society to which the Union's activities are of concern.

Article 303

The Committee shall elect its chairman and officers from among its members for a term of two and a half years.

It shall adopt its Rules of Procedure.

The Committee shall be convened by its chairman at the request of the European Parliament, the Council or of the Commission. It may also meet on its own initiative.

Article 304

The Committee shall be consulted by the European Parliament, by the Council or by the Commission where the Treaties so provide. The Committee may be consulted by these institutions in all cases in which they consider it appropriate. It may issue an opinion on its own initiative in cases in which it considers such action appropriate.

The European Parliament, the Council or the Commission shall, if it considers it necessary, set the Committee, for the submission of its opinion, a time limit which may not be less than one month from the date on which the chairman receives notification to this effect. Upon expiry of the time limit, the absence of an opinion shall not prevent further action.

The opinion of the Committee, together with a record of the proceedings, shall be forwarded to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the Commission.

PROTOCOL NO 7 OF THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – CHAPTER IV (EXTRACT)

Article 10

Representatives of Member States taking part in the work of the institutions of the Union, their advisers and technical experts shall, in the performance of their duties and during their travel to and from the place of meeting, enjoy the customary privileges, immunities and facilities.

This Article shall also apply to members of the advisory bodies of the Union.

COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2015/1157 OF 14 JULY 2015 DETERMINING THE COMPOSITION OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (EXTRACT)

Article 1

The number of members of the European Economic and Social Committee shall be as follows:

Belgium	12
Bulgaria	12
Czech Republic	12
Denmark	9
Germany	24
Estonia	6
Ireland	9
Greece	12
Spain	21
France	24
Croatia	9
Italy	24
Cyprus	5
Latvia	7
Lithuania	9
Luxembourg	5
Hungary	12
Malta	5
Netherlands	12
Austria	12
Poland	21
Portugal	12
Romania	15
Slovenia	7
Slovakia	9
Finland	9
Sweden	12
United Kingdom	24

PART TWO

RULES OF PROCEDURE

CODIFIED VERSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (CAME INTO FORCE ON 15 MARCH 2019)

REMARKS

A. This edition combines:

- The Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee adopted at the plenary session of 17 and 18 July 2002 (OJ L 268 of 4 October 2002), which entered into force on 1 August 2002, in accordance with Rule 78 thereof;
- the changes resulting from the following:
 1. amendments of 27 February 2003 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee (OJ L 258 of 10 October 2003);
 2. amendments of 31 March 2004 to the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee (OJ L 310 of 7 October 2004);
 3. amendments of 5 July 2006 to the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee (OJ L 93 of 3 April 2007);
 4. amendments of 12 March 2008 to the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee (OJ L 159 of 20 June 2009);
 5. amendments of 14 July 2010 to the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee;
 6. amendments of 20 February 2019 to the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee;
- the Code of Conduct of the members of the European Economic and Social Committee, appended to the Rules of Procedure of the European Economic and Social Committee, in accordance with the decision of the Committee assembly of 20 February 2019.

- B. This edition has been produced by the general secretariat of the European Economic and Social Committee and incorporates the various amendments approved by the Committee assembly.
- C. The Implementing Provisions of the Rules of Procedure, which have been adopted by the Committee bureau in accordance with Article 86(3), are presented separately.

PREAMBLE

1. The European Economic and Social Committee represents the various economic and social components of organised civil society. It is an institutional consultative body established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome.
2. The Committee's consultative role enables its members, and hence the organisations they represent, to participate in the European Union decision-making process. With views occasionally being diametrically opposed, the Committee's discussions often require real negotiations involving not only the usual social partners, i.e. employers (group I) and wage-earners (group II) but also all the other socio-occupational interests represented (group III). This expertise, these discussions and negotiations and the search for convergence may improve the quality and credibility of the European Union decision-making process, inasmuch as they make it more comprehensible and acceptable for Europe's citizens and increase the transparency which is so vital for democracy.
3. Within the European institutional set-up, the EESC fulfils a specific role: it is the prime forum in which the organisations of civil society in the European Union can have their views represented and discussed, and it is especially well placed to act as an intermediary between organised civil society and the European Union institutions.
4. As a chamber for debating and for drawing up opinions, the EESC helps to strengthen the democratic credentials of the process of building the European Union, including the promotion of relations between the EU and socio-economic groupings in third countries. In so doing it helps to promote genuine identification with Europe.
5. To carry out its missions successfully, on 17 July 2002, the EESC adopted its Rules of Procedure, in accordance with the second paragraph of Article 260 of the Treaty establishing the European Community ⁽¹⁾.
6. On 20 February 2019, the EESC's plenary assembly adopted the latest version of these Rules of Procedure.

⁽¹⁾ These Rules were subsequently amended on 27 February 2003, 31 March 2004, 5 July 2006 and 14 July 2010.

TITLE I

ORGANISATION OF THE COMMITTEE

CHAPTER I

INSTALLATION OF THE COMMITTEE IN OFFICE*Rule 1*

1. The Committee shall hold office for terms of five years.
2. The first meeting of the Committee following each five-yearly renewal shall be convened by the oldest member, if possible not later than one month after the members of the Committee have been notified of their appointment by the Council.
3. The members of the Committee shall not be bound by any mandatory instructions. They shall be completely independent in the performance of their duties, in the general interest of the Union. In the performance of their duties and on journeys to and from the place of meetings, members shall enjoy the privileges and immunities established in the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Union. Specifically, they shall enjoy freedom of movement, personal inviolability and immunity. Members shall respect the Committee's dignity and shall not damage its reputation.
4. In the performance of their duties, the members of the Committee shall respect dignity at the workplace. They shall refrain from any form of harassment and condemn this practice. The members of the Committee shall undertake to respect, and sign, the Code of Conduct which is appended to these Rules of Procedure.

The members of the Committee shall not be elected as office holders of one of the Committee's bodies, be appointed as rapporteur or participate in an official mission if they have not signed the declaration relating to the Code of Conduct.

5. The Committee shall ensure compliance with the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination, as defined by European Union law, in all its policies. The Committee shall ensure that the proportion of women in all bodies of the Committee is greater than that in the assembly. The bureau shall assess developments regarding the gender balance and, if necessary, adopt specific recommendations. At the end of each half term of office, a report shall be presented to the bureau to evaluate such developments.

Rule 2

1. The Committee shall consist of the following bodies: the assembly, the bureau, the president and the sections.
2. The Committee shall be divided into three groups, the composition and role of which are set out in Rule 30.
3. The members of the Committee shall not be bound by any mandatory instructions. They shall be completely independent in the performance of their duties, in the general interest of the Union. During the performance of their duties and on journeys to and from the place of meetings, members shall enjoy the privileges and immunities established in the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Union. Specifically, they shall enjoy freedom of movement, personal inviolability and immunity.

Rule 3

1. The Committee recognises and adopts the following European Union symbols:
 - a) the flag representing a circle of twelve gold stars on a blue background;
 - b) the anthem taken from the 'Ode to Joy' from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony;
 - c) the motto 'United in diversity'.
2. The Committee shall celebrate Europe Day on 9 May.
3. The flag shall be displayed in the buildings of the Committee and to mark official occasions.
4. The anthem shall be played at the opening of every inaugural session at the beginning of a term of office and at other formal sessions, e.g. when welcoming heads of state or government, or new members following an enlargement.

CHAPTER II

BUREAU*Rule 4*

1. The election of the bureau members shall comply with the principle of observing an overall and geographical balance between the groups, with at least one, and a maximum of three, representatives from each Member State. The groups shall negotiate and draft a proposal for bureau membership which shall be submitted to the assembly.

The bureau of the Committee shall comprise:

- a) the president, the two vice-presidents;
 - b) the three group presidents, elected as provided for in Rule 30;
 - c) the section presidents;
 - d) a variable number of members, totalling no more than the number of Member States.
2. The president shall be elected in turn from among the members of the three groups.
 3. The president and vice-presidents may not be re-elected. For the two and a half years immediately following the expiry of his term of office the president may not be a member of the bureau as a vice-president or as the president of a group or section.
 4. The vice presidents shall be elected from among the members of the two groups to which the president does not belong.

Rule 5

1. At its first meeting, held in pursuance of Rule 1, the Committee, with the interim president in the chair, shall elect from among its members a president, two vice-presidents, the presidents of the sections and the other members of the bureau other than the group presidents for a term of two and a half years, commencing on the date of the installation of the Committee in office.
2. Only matters pertaining to these elections may be discussed under the chairmanship of the oldest member.

Rule 6

The meeting at which the bureau of the Committee is elected for the last two and a half years of a five-year period shall be convened by the outgoing Committee president. It shall be held at the beginning of the session of the month in which the term of office of the first bureau expires. The chair shall be taken by the outgoing president.

Rule 7

1. The Committee may set up an election panel, drawn from its members and consisting of one representative per Member State, to receive candidatures and to submit a list of candidates to the assembly, taking due account of the provisions of Rule 4.
2. The Committee, acting in accordance with the provisions of this Rule, shall decide on the list or lists of candidates for the presidency and the bureau.
3. The Committee shall elect the members of the bureau other than the presidents of the groups, holding more than one ballot if necessary, according to the procedure for voting by list.
4. Only complete lists of candidates conforming to the provisions of Rule 4 and accompanied by a declaration of acceptance from each candidate may be admitted to the vote.
5. Those candidates on the list which obtains the highest number and at least one-quarter of the valid votes cast shall be declared elected as members of the bureau.
6. The assembly shall then elect the president and the vice-presidents of the Committee by a simple majority.
7. The Committee shall then elect the presidents of the sections by a simple majority.
8. Lastly, the Committee shall vote on the bureau as a whole. At least two-thirds of the total number of valid votes must be cast in favour.

Rule 8

If a bureau member is unable to discharge the duties attaching to his post or in the cases provided for in Rule 75(2), such a member shall be replaced for the remainder of his term of office in accordance with Rule 7. Replacement shall be subject to a vote by the assembly on the basis of a proposal from the group concerned.

Rule 9

1. Meetings of the bureau shall be convened by the president, acting either *ex officio* or at the request of ten members.
2. Minutes of each bureau meeting shall be drawn up. These minutes shall be submitted to the bureau for approval.

3. The bureau shall lay down its own procedural rules.
4. It shall lay down the organisation and working procedures of the Committee. It shall adopt provisions for implementing the Rules of Procedure after consulting the groups.
5. The bureau and the president shall exercise the budgetary and financial powers provided for in the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union and the Committee's Rules of Procedure.
6. The bureau shall determine the implementing arrangements regarding the travel and subsistence expenses of members, their alternates, appointed in accordance with Rule 21, delegates and their alternates appointed in accordance with Rule 27, and of the experts appointed in accordance with Rule 26, in compliance with the budget and financial procedures.
7. The bureau shall have political responsibility for the general management of the Committee. In particular, it shall ensure that the activities of the Committee, its bodies and its staff are in keeping with its institutional aims.
8. The bureau shall be responsible for ensuring that in carrying out the tasks entrusted to it by the Treaty, the Committee makes good use of the human, budgetary and technical resources available to it. The bureau shall, for instance, take part in the budgetary procedure and in the organisation of the secretariat.
9. The bureau may set up ad hoc groups, drawn from among its members, to examine any questions falling within its competence. Other members may also be involved in the work of these groups, except when issues concerning the appointment of permanent staff are discussed.
10. Every six months the bureau shall examine, on the basis of a report drawn up for this purpose, the action taken on opinions delivered by the Committee.
11. At the request of a member or of the secretary-general, the bureau shall clarify the interpretation of the Rules of Procedure and its Implementing Provisions. Its findings shall be binding subject to the right of appeal to the assembly to make a final decision.
12. At the time of the Committee's five-yearly renewal, the outgoing bureau shall discharge current business until the first meeting of the new Committee. In exceptional cases, it may make an outgoing member responsible for the implementation of specific tasks, or tasks subject to time limits, that require a particular level of expertise.

Rule 10

Within the framework of interinstitutional cooperation, the bureau may instruct the president to conclude cooperation agreements with the institutions and other bodies of the European Union.

Rule 11

1. A commission for financial and budgetary affairs (CAF) shall be set up to advise the president and bureau and to prepare all draft decisions of a financial and budgetary or organisational nature to be adopted by the bureau.
2. The commission for financial and budgetary affairs shall be chaired by one of the two Committee vice-presidents.

It shall have twelve members, appointed by the bureau on a proposal from the groups.

3. The commission for financial and budgetary affairs shall draw up a draft Committee budget, that it shall submit to the bureau for approval, and shall ensure that the budget is properly implemented and accounted for.

The commission for financial and budgetary affairs shall advise on:

- any matter of importance which may compromise the sound management of appropriations or prevent attainment of the objectives set, in particular regarding forecasts on the utilisation of appropriations;
 - the implementation of the current budget, transfer of appropriations, impacts relating to the establishment plan, administrative appropriations and operations concerning buildings-related projects; it shall in particular provide an assessment of the state of play and suggest future steps;
 - the supervision of the discharge process, working closely with the secretary-general and the European Parliament rapporteur.
4. The Committee's budget shall comply with the principles of unity, budget accuracy, annuality, equilibrium, unit of account, universality, specification, sound financial management and transparency.

5. For specified additional matters, the bureau may delegate other powers to the commission for financial and budgetary affairs.
6. The commission for financial and budgetary affairs shall adopt its decisions according to its own procedural rules which should include the following provisions:
 - a) proposals which it adopts unanimously shall be submitted to the bureau for approval without debate;
 - b) proposals which it adopts by simple majority or refusals of such proposals shall be justified in order that they may be examined subsequently by the bureau.
7. The commission for financial and budgetary affairs shall submit an annual report to the bureau.
8. The president of the commission for financial and budgetary affairs shall chair the delegation responsible for negotiations with the European Union budgetary authority and shall report thereon to the bureau.
9. The secretariat shall provide the commission for financial and budgetary affairs with all the information necessary for it to carry out its task of advising the bureau and the Committee president.

Rule 12

1. A communication commission (COCOM) shall be set up, responsible for guiding and monitoring the Committee's communication strategy. Its duties shall include advising the bureau and the Committee president.
2. The communication commission shall be chaired by one of the two Committee vice-presidents. It shall have twelve members, appointed by the bureau on a proposal from the groups.
3. The communication commission shall coordinate the activities of the structures responsible for communication, for relations with the press and media and for culture, and ensure that such activities are consistent with the approved strategy and programmes.
4. Each year the communication commission shall submit an annual activity report to the bureau including the implementation of its duties, together with a work programme for the year ahead.

CHAPTER III

PRESIDENCY AND THE PRESIDENT

Rule 13

1. The presidency shall comprise the president and the two vice-presidents.
2. The Committee presidency shall meet with the group presidents to prepare the work of the bureau and the assembly. The section presidents may be invited to take part in these meetings.
3. In order to define the Committee's programme of work and assess its progress, the Committee presidency shall meet at least twice a year with the presidents of the groups and sections.

Rule 14

1. The president shall direct all the work of the Committee and its internal bodies, in accordance with the Treaty and with these Rules of Procedure. He shall have all the powers necessary to direct the deliberations of the Committee and ensure that they proceed smoothly.
2. The president shall involve the vice-presidents in his activities on a permanent basis; he may delegate to them specific tasks or responsibilities falling within his remit.
3. The president may entrust specific tasks to the secretary-general for a limited period.
4. The president shall represent the Committee. He may delegate this authority of representation to a vice-president or, if appropriate, to a member.
5. The president shall report to the Committee on action and measures taken on its behalf between plenary sessions. These reports shall not be followed by a debate.
6. After his election, the president shall present his work programme for his term of office to the plenary session. He shall also present a review of achievements at the end of his term.

These two presentations may be debated by the assembly.

Rule 15

The two vice-presidents shall be respectively president of the commission for administrative and financial affairs and president of the communication commission and shall perform these tasks under the authority of the Committee president.

Rule 16

1. The enlarged presidency shall comprise the president and the two vice-presidents of the Committee and the group presidents.

2. The role of the enlarged presidency shall be to:

- a) prepare and facilitate the work of the bureau and the assembly;
- b) facilitate the necessary decisions in the event of pressing time constraints or extraordinary circumstances.

To this end the section and consultative commission presidents, as well as other persons, may be invited to take part in its meetings.

3. The enlarged presidency shall meet at least twice a year with the presidents of the sections and consultative commissions to prepare the Committee's programme of work and assess its implementation.

CHAPTER IV

SECTIONS

Rule 17

1. The Committee shall comprise six sections. Other sections may be set up by the plenary assembly on a proposal from the bureau, in the fields covered by the Treaties.

2. The Committee shall set up its sections at the inaugural session following each five-yearly renewal.

3. The list of sections and their terms of reference may be re-examined at the time of each five-yearly renewal.

Rule 18

1. The number of members of the sections shall be decided by the Committee on a proposal from its bureau.

2. Apart from the president, every member of the Committee must be a member of at least one section.

3. No member may belong to more than two sections, except if he comes from a Member State where the number of members is nine or less. However, no member may belong to more than three sections.

4. The members of the sections shall be appointed by the Committee. Appointments shall be for two and a half years and shall be renewable.

5. The procedure laid down for the appointment of section members shall also be followed for the replacement of such members.

Rule 19

1. The bureau of a section, elected for a term of two and a half years, shall comprise twelve members including a president and three vice-presidents, one from each group.

2. Elections of section presidents and of other members of section bureaux shall be conducted by the Committee.

3. Section presidents and other members of section bureaux may be re-elected.

4. The presidency of three sections shall be rotated between the groups every two and a half years. The same group may not hold the presidency of any section for a period exceeding five consecutive years.

Rule 20

1. It shall be the task of the sections to adopt opinions or information reports on questions referred to them in accordance with Rule 37 of these Rules of Procedure.

2. The sections may set up from among their members a study group or drafting group or appoint a rapporteur working alone to deal with the questions referred to them.

3. The appointment of rapporteurs and, where appropriate, co-rapporteurs, and the composition of study and drafting groups shall be decided on the basis of proposals from the groups.
4. In order that study groups may be set up quickly and in the event of agreement between the three group presidents on the proposed appointment of rapporteurs and, where appropriate, co-rapporteurs, and on the composition of study or drafting groups, the section presidents shall take the steps required to ensure that work can begin.
5. The rapporteur, with the help of his expert, where appropriate, shall be responsible for monitoring action taken on an opinion after its adoption at the plenary session. He shall be assisted in this task by the secretariat of the section concerned. The section shall be informed of the findings of such monitoring.
6. Study groups may not become permanent bodies, save in exceptional cases for which the Committee bureau's prior authorisation is required for the same two-and-a-half-year period.

Rule 21

1. Any member of the Committee unable to attend a preparatory meeting may arrange to be represented by his alternate.
2. Alternates shall have no voting rights.
3. However, should a member be president of a section or study group, member of the section bureau or rapporteur, he may not be represented by his alternate in the performance of these duties.
4. The name and capacity of the alternate selected shall be communicated to the bureau of the Committee for its approval.
5. During the preparatory work the alternate shall carry out the same duties as the member whom he replaces and shall be subject to the same rules as regards travel and subsistence expenses.

CHAPTER V

SUBCOMMITTEES AND RAPPORTEUR-GENERAL

Rule 22

1. On the initiative of the bureau, the Committee may, in exceptional cases, set up subcommittees drawn from its members to produce, for submission initially to the bureau and then to the assembly, draft opinions or information reports on strictly horizontal general matters.
2. In the periods between plenary sessions the bureau may set up subcommittees, subject to subsequent confirmation by the Committee. In no case may a subcommittee be set up for more than one matter. A subcommittee shall be automatically dissolved as soon as the draft opinion or information report which it has prepared is voted on by the Committee.
3. Subcommittees set up for questions coming within the purview of two or more sections shall be made up of members of those sections.
4. The rules governing sections shall be applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to subcommittees.

Rule 23

In the event of referrals covering topics of secondary interest or of an urgent nature, the Committee may appoint a rapporteur-general, who shall address the plenary assembly alone and without first addressing the section.

CHAPTER VI

OBSERVATORIES - HEARINGS - EXPERTS

Rule 24

1. The Committee may set up observatories when the nature, extent and complexity of the subject to be dealt with calls for particular flexibility in the working methods, procedures and instruments to be used.
2. An observatory shall be set up by a decision of the plenary assembly, ratifying a decision taken earlier by the bureau on a proposal from a group or from a section.

3. The decision to set up an observatory shall define the object, structure, composition and duration in each case.
4. The observatories may draw up an annual information document on the application of the horizontal clauses in the Treaty (the social clause, environmental clause and consumer protection clause) and their impact on the policies of the European Union. This report may be forwarded to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, if the assembly so decides.
5. Each observatory shall work under the oversight and supervision of a section.

Rule 25

If an issue under discussion is of sufficient importance, the various bodies and working units of the Committee may invite guest speakers from outside the Committee to a hearing. If the presence of guest speakers involves additional costs, the body or unit concerned must seek prior authorisation from the Committee bureau and submit a programme giving reasons why it considers that certain aspects call for outside assistance.

Rule 26

1. Where necessary for preparing certain tasks, the group presidents may appoint experts on a proposal from the rapporteurs and/or co-rapporteurs.
2. The group presidents may also appoint group experts.
3. Experts taking part in preparatory work shall be subject to the same conditions as those laid down for members as regards travel and subsistence expenses.
4. When their presence is useful, experts of rapporteurs and co-rapporteurs may, on a proposal from the rapporteur or co-rapporteur, attend section or consultative commission meetings during which the opinions or information reports for the preparation of which they were appointed will be examined.

The president of the section or consultative commission concerned must give his prior approval.

5. Experts do not represent the Committee and shall not be authorised to speak on its behalf.
6. Committee members may not be appointed experts.

Their alternates may be appointed, subject to temporary suspension of their tenure of office as alternate.

Consultative commission delegates may only serve as experts for the group which has appointed them or for a rapporteur belonging to that group.

CHAPTER VII

CONSULTATIVE COMMISSIONS

Rule 27

1. The Committee shall have the option of setting up consultative commissions. These shall be made up of members of the Committee and of delegates from areas of civil society that the Committee wishes to involve in its work.
2. Such commissions shall be set up by a decision of the plenary assembly which shall confirm a decision taken by the bureau. The decision setting up such commissions shall define their object, their structure, their composition, their duration and their rules.
3. In accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Rule, a consultative commission on industrial change (CCMI) may be set up, made up of members of the Committee and delegates from organisations representing the various economic and social sectors as well as civil society organisations concerned by industrial change. The president of the commission shall be a member of the Committee bureau, to which he shall report every two and a half years on the activity of the CCMI. He shall be chosen from among the members of the bureau referred to in Rule 4(1)(d) of these Rules of Procedure. Delegates and alternates participating in preparatory work shall be subject to the same rules as members as regards travel and subsistence expenses.

CHAPTER VIII

DIALOGUE WITH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS IN EU AND NON-EU STATES*Rule 28*

1. The Committee, on the initiative of the bureau, may maintain structured relations with economic and social councils and similar institutions and with civil society organisations of an economic and social nature in the European Union and non EU countries.
2. In the same way, it shall undertake actions designed to foster the establishment of economic and social councils or similar institutions in countries which do not yet have them.

Rule 29

1. The Committee, on a proposal from the bureau, may appoint delegations to maintain relations with the various economic and social components of organised civil society in states or associations of states outside the European Union.
2. Cooperation between the Committee and partners from organised civil society in the candidate countries shall take the form of joint consultative committees if these have been formed by the Association Councils. Otherwise it shall take place in contact groups.
3. The joint consultative committees and contact groups shall draw up joint information reports and declarations, which may be forwarded by the Committee to the relevant institutions and to the actors concerned.

CHAPTER IX

GROUPS*Rule 30*

1. The Committee shall be made up of three groups of members representing respectively employers, employees and the various other economic and social components of organised civil society.
2. The groups shall elect their presidents and vice-presidents. They shall participate in the preparation, organisation and coordination of the business of the Committee and its constituent bodies, and help supply them with information. Each group shall be provided with a secretariat.
3. The groups shall propose to the assembly candidates for election as president and vice-presidents, in accordance with Rule 7(6) and respecting the principle of equality between men and women as defined by the institutions of the European Union.
4. The group presidents shall be members of the Committee bureau in accordance with Rule 4(1)(b).
5. The group presidents shall assist the Committee presidency in the formulation of policy and, where appropriate, in the monitoring of expenditure.
6. The group presidents shall meet with the Committee presidency to assist in preparing the work of the bureau and the assembly.
7. The groups shall make proposals to the assembly for the election of section presidents under Rule 7(7) and of section bureaux under Rule 19.
8. The groups shall make proposals for membership of the commission for 11(1).
9. The groups shall make proposals for the membership of observatories and consultative commissions to be set up by the assembly under Rules 24 and 27 respectively.
10. The groups shall make proposals for the membership of delegations and joint consultative committees to be set up in accordance with Rule 29(1) and (2) respectively.
11. The groups shall make proposals for rapporteurs and for the composition of study and drafting groups to be appointed or set up by the sections under Rule 20(3).

12. In applying paragraphs (7) to (11) of this Rule, the groups shall take account of the representation within the Committee of the Member States, the various components of economic and social activity, terms of reference and the criteria of good management.

13. Members may, on a voluntary basis, join one of the groups subject to the approval of their eligibility by the members of that group. No member shall belong to more than one group at the same time.

14. The general secretariat shall provide members not belonging to a group with the material and technical support required for the performance of their duties. Their participation in study groups and other internal bodies shall be the subject of a decision by the president after consultation of the groups.

CHAPTER X

CATEGORIES

Rule 31

1. Members of the Committee may, on a voluntary basis, form categories representing the various economic and social interests of organised civil society in the European Union.
2. A category may be made up of members from the three groups within the Committee. No Committee member shall belong to more than one category at the same time.
3. The creation of a category shall be subject to approval being granted by the bureau, who shall inform the assembly.
4. The bureau's decision approving the creation of a category shall define its object, structure, composition, duration and procedural rules.

This decision may subsequently be amended or revoked by the bureau.

The minimum number of members required to form a category shall be ten.

TITLE II

PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE

CHAPTER I

CONSULTATION OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 32

1. The Committee shall be convened by its president to adopt opinions requested by the European Parliament, the Council or the Commission.
2. It shall be convened by its president, on a proposal from its bureau and with the agreement of the majority of its members, to deliver, on its own initiative, opinions on any question pertaining to the European Union, its policies and their possible developments.

Rule 33

1. Requests for opinions referred to in Rule 32(1) shall be addressed to the president. The president, in consultation with the bureau, shall organise the work of the Committee, taking account as far as possible of the time limits set in the request for an opinion.
2. The bureau shall determine the order of priority of opinions, allocating them among categories.
3. The sections shall draw up a proposal for allocating opinions among the three categories below. They shall give a provisional indication of the size of the study group. After discussions between the Committee presidency and the group presidents, the proposal shall be submitted to the bureau for a decision. In special cases, the presidents of the groups may propose that the size of the study group be modified. At its next meeting the bureau shall confirm this new proposal and lay down the final size of the study group.

The three categories shall be defined according to the following criteria:

Category A (referrals on topics identified as a priority). This category includes:

- all requests for exploratory opinions (European Parliament, future Council presidencies, Commission);
- all adopted proposals for own-initiative opinions;
- certain mandatory or optional referrals.

Such referrals shall be handled by study groups of various sizes (6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21 or 24 members) and possessing appropriate resources.

Category B (mandatory or optional referrals covering topics of secondary interest or of an urgent nature).

Such referrals shall normally be handled by a rapporteur working alone or a rapporteur-general. In exceptional cases, following a decision by the bureau, a category B referral may be handled by a three-member drafting group (category B +). The number of meetings and working languages shall be decided by the bureau.

Category C (mandatory or optional referrals of a purely technical nature).

Such referrals shall be dealt with in a standard opinion, which the bureau shall submit to the assembly. This procedure shall not involve either the appointment of a rapporteur or examination by a section, but simply the adoption or rejection of the opinion at the plenary session. When such items come up at the plenary session, the assembly shall first of all be asked whether it is in favour of or against them being handled according to the above-mentioned procedure, and then to vote for or against the adoption of the standard opinion.

4. For urgent matters, the provisions of Rule 63 of these Rules shall apply.

Rule 34

The Committee may, on a proposal from the bureau, decide to prepare an information report with a view to examining any question pertaining to the policies of the European Union and their possible developments.

Rule 35

The Committee may, following a proposal from a section, a group or a third of its members, issue resolutions on a current topic, which shall be adopted by the assembly in accordance with Rule 61(2). Draft resolutions shall be given priority on the agenda for the plenary session.

Rule 36

1. The bureau may govern activities directly or indirectly linked to its consultative function by general decisions and authorise such activities by specific decisions. This applies in particular to:

- the establishment, composition and management by the Committee of forums, platforms or other thematic consultation structures, and the format for the participation of the Committee and its members in the consultation structures set up by the institutions of the Union or in which such institutions take part;
- the preparation or commission of studies and their publication;
- the organisation of working visits and events away from headquarters;
- the evaluation of policies, decided by the bureau or requested by Union institutions, in particular in the form of opinions or information reports as defined in these Rules of Procedure; 'evaluation of policies' shall be understood as ex post evaluations, concerning policies or laws which are already being implemented. They shall express the assessments and requests of the organisations represented on the Committee⁽²⁾.

2. In providing its own ex-post assessments (information reports), the EESC shall transmit the views of organised civil society on the impact of Union policies. Ex-post evaluation shall be qualitative and targeted. This evaluation exercise shall take account of social, economic and environmental impacts.

3. Members' participation in external bodies shall be decided by the bureau, regularly monitored and evaluated. Members' representation in external bodies shall be balanced and on a rotational basis.

CHAPTER II

ORGANISATION OF WORK

A. WORK OF THE SECTIONS

Rule 37

1. When an opinion or information report is to be produced, the Committee bureau, in accordance with Rule 9(4), shall designate the section which is to be responsible for preparing the work in question. Where the matter for consideration is clearly within the purview of a given section, the president shall designate that section and inform the bureau of his decision.

⁽²⁾ The complete definition in keeping with the bureau decision of 19 January 2016 will be set out in the Implementing Provisions of these Rules of Procedure.

2. Where a section that has been designated to prepare an opinion wishes to hear the views of the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change (CCMI) or where the CCMI wishes to set out its views on an opinion allocated to a section, the Committee bureau may authorise the CCMI to draw up a supplementary opinion on one or more of the issues covered by the referral. The bureau may also take this decision on its own initiative. The bureau shall organise the Committee's work in such a way that the CCMI is able to prepare its opinion in good time to be taken into consideration by the section.

The section alone shall be responsible for reporting to the Committee. It shall however append to its opinion the supplementary opinion drawn up by the CCMI.

3. The president of the section concerned shall be notified by the Committee president of the decision and of the time limit for the completion of the section's work.

4. The Committee president shall inform the members of the Committee of the referral to the section and of the date on which the subject is to be dealt with by the plenary session.

Rule 38

The Committee president, in agreement with the bureau, may authorise a section to hold a joint meeting with a European Parliament committee, or a Committee of the Regions commission.

Rule 39

Sections to which a question has been referred in accordance with these Rules shall be convened by their president.

Rule 40

1. Meetings of the sections shall be prepared by the section presidents in consultation with the section bureau.
2. Meetings shall be chaired by the section president or, in his absence, by one of the vice-presidents.

Rule 41

1. A quorum shall exist at section meetings if over half of the full members are present or represented.
2. If there is not a quorum, the president shall close the meeting and convene a further meeting to be held at a time which he considers appropriate, but during the course of the same day; at that further meeting a quorum shall exist irrespective of the number of members present or represented.

Rule 42

The sections shall adopt opinions with reference to the draft opinion submitted by the rapporteur and, where appropriate, the co-rapporteur.

Rule 43

1. Section opinions shall contain only texts adopted by the section in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 61 of these Rules of Procedure.
2. The text of proposed amendments which have been rejected, together with the result of the voting thereon, shall be appended to the opinion if the amendments received at least one-quarter of the votes cast.

Rule 44

Section opinions, together with all the documents appended thereto in accordance with Rule 43, shall be sent by the president of the section to the president of the Committee and shall be laid before the Committee by its bureau as soon as possible. These documents shall be made available to the members of the Committee in good time.

Rule 45

Concise minutes of each section meeting shall be drawn up and submitted to the section for approval.

Rule 46

The president, in agreement with the bureau or where appropriate the assembly, may refer a question back to a section if he considers that the procedure laid down in these Rules of Procedure for drawing up opinions has not been adhered to or that further study is necessary.

Rule 47

1. Without prejudice to Rule 20(2), the preparatory work of the sections shall be carried out, in principle, within a study group.
2. The rapporteur, assisted by his expert and, where appropriate, by one or more co-rapporteurs, shall study the question referred, take account of the views expressed and, on this basis, draw up the draft opinion, which shall be sent to the president of the section.
3. There shall be no voting at study group meetings.

B. PROCEEDINGS OF THE PLENARY SESSIONS

Rule 48

The assembly, comprising all the members of the Committee, shall meet in plenary session.

Rule 49

1. Sessions shall be prepared by the president in consultation with the bureau. The bureau shall meet before each session, and where appropriate during a session, to organise the proceedings.
2. The bureau may set a time limit for the general discussion of each opinion at the session.

Rule 50

1. The draft agenda drawn up by the bureau on a proposal from the Committee presidency in collaboration with the group presidents shall be sent by the Committee president to all members and to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission at least fifteen days before the opening of the relevant session.
2. The draft agenda shall be submitted to the assembly for approval at the opening of each session. Once the agenda has been adopted, the items must be examined during the sitting for which they are scheduled. The documents necessary for the Committee's deliberations shall be made available to the members in accordance with Rule 44.

Rule 51

1. A quorum shall exist at session sittings if more than half of the members of the Committee are present or represented.
2. If there is not a quorum, the president shall close the sitting and convene a further sitting to be held at a time he considers appropriate but during the same session; at that further sitting there shall be a quorum whatever the number of members present or represented.

Rule 52

When the agenda is submitted for adoption, the inclusion of any topical item shall be announced, where appropriate, by the president.

Rule 53

The Committee may amend the draft agenda for the purpose of examining draft resolutions submitted in accordance with the procedure referred to in Rule 35.

Rule 54

1. The president shall open session sittings, preside over discussions and ensure that these Rules are observed. The president shall be assisted by the vice-presidents.
2. If the president is absent, the vice-presidents shall deputise. If the vice-presidents are absent, the oldest member of the bureau shall deputise.

3. The Committee shall base its deliberations on the work of the section competent to report to the assembly on the questions concerned.

4. Where a text has been adopted by a section with less than five votes against, the bureau may propose that it be included on the plenary session agenda among the items to be voted on without a discussion.

This procedure shall not apply if:

- at least twenty-five members signify their objection,
- an amendment is tabled for discussion during the plenary session, or
- the section concerned decides that the text should be discussed at the plenary session.

5. If a text fails to secure a majority of votes in the assembly, the president may, with the consent of the assembly, refer the text back to the competent section for re-examination or appoint a rapporteur-general, who shall submit a new draft text at the same or another session.

Rule 55

1. Proposals for amendments must be drawn up in writing, signed by the proposers and lodged with the secretariat before the opening of the relevant session.

2. In the interests of efficient organisation of the proceedings of the assembly, the bureau shall fix the arrangements for the lodging of proposals for amendments.

3. The Committee shall, however, allow proposals for amendments to be lodged up to the opening of the relevant session sitting, provided such proposals are signed by at least twenty-five members.

4. Proposals for amendments must specify the part of the text to which they refer and be supported by a brief explanatory statement. Amendments that are repetitive in their form and content shall be examined together.

5. As a general rule, for each amendment the assembly shall hear only the proposer, a member who is against the proposed amendment and the rapporteur.

6. When a proposal for an amendment is examined, the rapporteur may put forward compromise proposals orally with the agreement of the proposer of the amendment. In such cases the Committee shall only vote on these compromise proposals.

7. Where appropriate, the president of the Committee, in consultation with the president and the rapporteur of the competent section, may propose to the Committee that any amendments be dealt with in such a way as to ensure that the final text is consistent.

Rule 56

1. Any amendment or set of amendments which aim to set out a generally divergent view to an opinion presented by a section or consultative commission shall be described as a counter-opinion. A counter-opinion must be short and concise and constitute a self-sufficient document: it must contain conclusions and explanations.

2. The groups may ask the bureau to describe one or more amendments as a counter-opinion.

3. The bureau shall take its decision after hearing the views of the president of the section or consultative commission concerned.

4. The bureau may decide, having described one or more amendments as a counter-opinion, to refer the opinion, together with the counter-opinion, back to the section or consultative commission for further study, should the time limit set for adopting the opinion allow.

5. Where an amendment was not presented in sufficient time to allow the bureau to take a decision on whether to describe it as a counter-opinion, this decision, as well as any decision to refer the matter back to the body concerned, shall be taken by the assembly on a proposal from the enlarged presidency and following consultation with the president of the body concerned.

6. If, in the situation mentioned in paragraph 5 of this Rule, the matter is not referred back to the body concerned or the proposed text is not considered to be a counter-opinion, the plenary shall vote on the submitted amendments in the same way as for group amendments.

7. If the counter-opinion obtains a majority of the votes in the plenary, it shall be adopted.

In order to decide whether the original text should be appended to the adopted opinion, a new vote shall take place. The original text is appended to the new text if it obtains at least one quarter of the votes cast.

8. If the counter-opinion does not obtain a majority but obtains at least one quarter of the votes cast, it shall be appended to the original opinion.

Rule 57

1. The president, either on his own initiative or at the request of a member, may invite the Committee to decide on a limitation of speaking time or the number of speakers, the adjournment of a sitting or the closure of a discussion. Once a discussion has been declared closed, no member may speak except to explain his vote; such explanations of voting shall be made after the relevant vote has been taken and shall not exceed the speaking time allotted by the president.

2. A member may at any time request and be given precedence to speak during a discussion for the purpose of submitting a procedural motion.

Rule 58

1. Minutes of each plenary session shall be drawn up and submitted to the Committee for its approval.
2. The final version of such minutes shall be signed by the president and the secretary-general of the Committee.

Rule 59

1. Opinions of the Committee shall consist of, in addition to the legal basis of the opinion, an explanatory statement and the views of the Committee on the question as a whole.

2. The result of the voting on the opinion as a whole shall be set out in the procedural section of the opinion. Where a recorded vote is held, the names of the voters shall be given.

3. If proposed amendments are rejected by the plenary session but receive at least one quarter of the votes cast, their texts and explanatory statements shall be appended to the relevant Committee opinions, together with the results of the voting. This requirement shall also apply to counter-opinions.

4. Section opinion texts that are rejected in favour of amendments adopted by the assembly shall also be appended to Committee opinions together with the results of the voting, provided that at least one quarter of the votes cast were in favour of retention of the section opinion texts.

5. When one of the groups formed within the Committee under Rule 30 or one of the categories of economic and social activity formed under Rule 31 adopts a divergent but uniform standpoint on a matter submitted to the assembly for examination, its position may be summarised in a brief statement to be appended to the opinion, where the debate on that matter has been concluded by a recorded vote.

Rule 60

1. Opinions adopted by the Committee and minutes of Committee plenary sessions shall be sent to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

2. Opinions adopted by the Committee may be forwarded to any other institution or concerned entity.

TITLE III

GENERAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER I

METHODS OF VOTING

Rule 61

1. The valid forms of votes shall be: votes for, votes against and abstentions.
2. Except where otherwise provided in these Rules, adoption of the texts and decisions of the Committee and its constituent bodies shall be by a majority of the votes cast for and against.

3. Voting shall be by open ballot, by recorded vote, or by secret ballot.
4. Voting on a resolution, a proposed amendment, a counter-opinion, an opinion or any other text shall be by recorded vote if one quarter of the members present or represented so request.
5. Election to the various representative posts shall always be by secret ballot. Other votes may be taken by secret ballot if a majority of the members present or represented so request.
6. If the vote is a tie (an equal number of votes for and against), the chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
7. The acceptance by the rapporteur of an amendment shall not constitute a reason for not voting on that amendment.

CHAPTER II

URGENCY PROCEDURE

Rule 62

1. Where the urgency results from a deadline for the submission of its opinion imposed on the Committee by the European Parliament, by the Council or by the Commission, the urgency procedure may be applied if the president finds that this is necessary to enable the Committee to adopt its opinion in good time.
2. In cases of urgency at Committee level the president may, immediately and without consulting the bureau beforehand, take all requisite steps to enable the Committee to carry out its work. He shall inform the members of the bureau of the steps which he takes.
3. Arrangements made by the president under the urgency procedure shall be submitted to the following session of the Committee for confirmation.

Rule 63

1. Where the urgency results from the deadlines imposed on a section for issuing an opinion, the president of that section may, with the agreement of the three group presidents, organise the work of the section otherwise than as provided in these Rules of Procedure.
2. Arrangements made by the president of a section under the urgency procedure shall be submitted to the following meeting of that section for confirmation.

CHAPTER III

ABSENCE AND REPRESENTATION

Rule 64

1. Any member of the Committee who is unable to attend a meeting to which he has been duly invited must give the president concerned advance notice of his absence.
2. Where a member of the Committee fails to attend more than three consecutive plenary sessions of the Committee without appointing a member to represent him and without providing a reason recognised as valid, the president may, after consulting the bureau and inviting the member concerned to explain his absence, call upon the Council to remove that member from office.
3. Where a member of a section fails to attend more than three consecutive meetings of the section without appointing a member to represent him and without providing a reason recognised as valid, the president of that section may, after inviting the member concerned to explain his absence, call upon him to yield his seat on the section to another member and shall inform the Committee bureau of this fact.

Rule 65

1. Any member of the Committee who is unable to attend a Committee session or a section meeting may, after notifying the president concerned, delegate his voting right, in writing, to another member of the Committee or section.
2. No member may hold more than one delegated voting right at a plenary session or section meeting.

Rule 66

1. Any member who is unable to attend a meeting to which he has been duly invited may, after giving written notice to the president concerned directly or through his group secretariat, arrange for another member of the Committee to represent him at the relevant meeting. This possibility does not apply for meetings of the Committee bureau or of the commission for financial and budgetary affairs.
2. Such proxies shall be valid solely for the meeting in respect of which they are issued.
3. At the time of the constitution of a study group, any member designated as a member of that study group may ask to be replaced by another member of the Committee. Such replacement shall apply for a specific question and for the duration of the work of the section on that question. However, should the work of the study group continue beyond the end of a two-and-a-half or five-year term, the replacement shall only remain valid until the end of the term during which it was decided.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF COMMITTEE TEXTS - ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC*Rule 67*

1. The Committee shall publish its opinions in the *Official Journal of the European Union* in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Council and the Commission after consultation of the Committee bureau.
2. The names of the members of the Committee, its bureau and its sections, and all changes in the membership thereof, shall be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and on the Committee's website.

Rule 68

1. The Committee shall ensure the transparency of its decisions, in accordance with the second paragraph of Article 1 of the Treaty on European Union.
2. The secretary-general shall be responsible for taking the measures necessary to guarantee the public's right of access to the corresponding documents.
3. Any citizen of the European Union may write to the Committee in one of the official languages and receive a reply written in the same language, in accordance with the fourth paragraph of Article 24 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Rule 69

1. Plenary sessions of the Committee and meetings of the sections shall be public.
2. Certain debates that do not concern consultative work may be declared confidential by the Committee, acting on a request from a concerned institution or body or on a proposal from the bureau.
3. Other meetings shall not be public. However, in duly justified cases at the discretion of the chairman of the meeting other persons may attend as observers.

Rule 70

1. Members of the European institutions may attend and address meetings of the Committee and its constituent bodies.
2. Members of other bodies and duly authorised officials of the institutions and these other bodies may be invited to attend, address or answer questions at meetings, under the direction of the president of the meeting.

CHAPTER V

TITLES, PRIVILEGES, IMMUNITIES AND MEMBERS' STATUTE - QUAESTORS*Rule 71*

1. Members of the Committee shall have the title 'member of the European Economic and Social Committee'.
2. The provisions of Article 10, Chapter IV of Protocol No 7 on the privileges and immunities of the European Union, annexed to the Treaties, shall apply to the members of the European Economic and Social Committee.

Rule 72

1. The Members' Statute shall contain the rights and duties of Committee members, as well as the rules governing their activity and their relations with the institution and its services. This shall include sanctions in the event of inappropriate behaviour.

The Members' Statute shall also determine the measures that may be taken in the event of violations of the Rules of Procedure or of the Statute.

2. The Code of Conduct, which defines and clarifies the obligations applicable to members and alternates of the Committee, is appended to these Rules.

3. At the beginning of their mandate, members shall undertake to comply with the Code of Conduct adopted by the assembly and shall sign it. The conduct of members shall be characterised by mutual respect, and shall be based on the values and principles laid down in the Treaties. They shall conduct themselves with dignity, respecting the reputation of the Committee. In debates, members shall not resort to defamatory, racist, sexist or xenophobic language or behaviour.

Failure to comply with these standards and rules may lead to the application of the measures set out in the Code of Conduct.

The application of this Rule shall not restrict members' freedom of speech.

It shall be based on full respect for members' prerogatives, as laid down in Union primary law and the Members' Statute.

It shall be based on the principle of transparency and ensure that the relevant provisions are made clear to members, who shall be informed individually of their rights and obligations.

Where a person employed by a member, or another person for whom the member has arranged access to the Committee's premises or equipment, fails to comply with the standards of conduct set out above, the sanctions provided for in the Code of Conduct may, where appropriate, be applied to the member concerned.

Sanctions in the event of non-compliance with the standards of conduct are set out in the Code of Conduct adopted by the assembly.

The Committee shall align itself with the rules of the European Parliament insofar as they are compatible with the Committee Members' Statute and shall set up the appropriate bodies to this end.

An advisory committee on the conduct of members shall be established (in accordance with the Committee members' Code of Conduct).

4. Upon appointment, members shall draw up a declaration of any interest, financial or other, that might have an impact on their work at the Committee.

They shall explicitly confirm the validity of its content at least once a year and revise it as soon as any change in their situation occurs.

The Members' Statute and the Code of Conduct of members and alternates shall also determine the measures that may be taken in the event of violations of these Rules of Procedure, the Code of Conduct or of the Statute.

Rule 73

1. On a proposal from the bureau, the assembly shall elect, for each two-and-a-half year period, six members, three women and three men, who have no other permanent responsibilities within the Committee structure, to form the advisory committee.

2. In the event of an alleged breach of the Committee's Code of Conduct by a member, the advisory committee shall give any member who so requests, in confidence and within 30 calendar days, guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the provisions of the Code of Conduct. The member in question shall be entitled to rely on such guidance.

3. At the request of the Committee president, the advisory committee on the conduct of members shall also assess alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct, and advise the president on possible steps to be taken.

Rule 74

On a proposal from the bureau, the assembly shall elect, for each two-and-a-half-year period, three members, who have no other permanent responsibilities within the Committee structure, to form the quaestors' group with the following functions:

- a) to monitor and ensure the proper implementation of the Members' Statute;
- b) to draw up appropriate proposals for perfecting and improving the Members' Statute;
- c) to endeavour, by taking appropriate steps, to resolve any cases of doubt or dispute arising from application of the Members' Statute;
- d) to be responsible for relations between the members of the Committee and the general secretariat as regards application of the Members' Statute.

CHAPTER VI

TERMINATION OF MEMBERS' TENURE OF OFFICE, INCOMPATIBILITIES*Rule 75*

1. Membership of the Committee shall expire at the end of the five-year term laid down by the Council at the time of the Committee's renewal.
2. Individual membership shall cease on resignation, on removal from office, through death, in the case of force majeure or in the event of an incompatibility of functions arising.
3. The functions of a member of the Committee shall be incompatible with those of a member of a government, a parliament, an institution of the European Union, the Committee of the Regions or the board of directors of the European Investment Bank, and with the post of official or other servant of the European Union in active employment.
4. Resignations shall be in writing and shall be addressed to the president.
5. The circumstances in which members may be removed from office are laid down in Rule 64(2) of these Rules of Procedure. In such cases the Council shall initiate the replacement procedure, if it decides to terminate membership.
6. In the case of resignation, death, force majeure or incompatibility of functions, the president shall notify the Council, which shall verify the vacancy and initiate the replacement procedure. In the case of resignation, however, the resigning member shall remain in office until the date on which the appointment of his replacement takes effect, unless the resigning member indicates otherwise.
7. In all the cases referred to in paragraph 2 of this Rule, the new member shall be appointed for the remainder of the current term of office.

Rule 76

1. On a proposal from the bureau adopted by at least three quarters of the members of the bureau, a motion of no confidence with regard to the president may be submitted to the assembly, for serious and duly verified reasons.

In such cases, this motion shall be the first item on the agenda of the next plenary session.

2. The assembly shall take a decision by secret ballot, with no provision for delegation of votes, having heard in succession a member of each group and then members of the presidency wishing to speak, and lastly the president.

The motion shall be deemed adopted if a majority of three quarters of the members present support it. Otherwise it shall be deemed rejected.

3. In the event of the adoption of a motion of no confidence, the assembly shall immediately arrange for the replacement of the president by a member of the same group.

For this purpose, the assembly shall be temporarily chaired by the Committee vice-president from the group due to take over the following Committee presidency.

4. If the assembly cannot make this replacement immediately, proceedings shall be suspended to enable the groups to formulate a proposal and it shall be reconvened, if possible the same day, by the member temporarily in the chair.
5. The member replacing the president, and belonging to the same group, shall remain in place until the end of the scheduled term of office.

CHAPTER VII

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMITTEE*Rule 77*

1. The Committee shall be assisted by a secretariat headed by a secretary-general, who shall discharge his duties under the direction of the president, representing the bureau.
2. The secretary-general shall attend the meetings of the bureau in an advisory capacity and shall keep the minutes of those meetings.
3. He shall give a solemn undertaking, before the bureau, to discharge his duties conscientiously and with complete impartiality.
4. The secretary-general shall be responsible for giving effect to decisions taken by the assembly, the bureau and the president pursuant to these Rules of Procedure; he shall report in writing every three months to the president on the criteria and implementing provisions which have been adopted or are envisaged for handling administrative or organisational problems and staff matters.
5. The secretary-general may delegate his powers within the limits decided by the president.
6. The bureau, acting on a proposal from the secretary-general, shall draw up the establishment plan for the general secretariat in such a way that it can ensure the efficient functioning of the Committee and its constituent bodies and help the members in the performance of their duties, in particular in the organisation of meetings and the preparation of opinions.
7. The powers conferred on the secretary-general in accordance with the delegation of powers of the president shall be temporary: they shall end at the latest at the end of the term of office of the president.

Rule 78

The procedure for appointing a new secretary-general shall be as follows:

1. The bureau shall:
 - decide on the secretary-general's status (official or temporary member of staff), appoint a drafting panel made up of three members and then adopt the vacancy notice;
 - appoint a screening panel made up of six members of the Committee and set the time limit by which the panel must present its findings to the bureau.
2. The mandate of the screening panel shall consist of examining applications, conducting interviews, drawing up a reasoned report listing the candidates in order of preference, in the light of their skills and in accordance with the procedure and criteria set out in the vacancy notice, and proposing a candidate or a list of candidates for the post.
3. The screening panel shall be fully independent and its work shall be impartial, confidential and based on criteria defined by the bureau when the panel is set up.

The panel shall be assisted by the competent services of the Committee secretariat and may, if necessary, call on the services of outside experts.

4. After consulting the report of the screening panel, the bureau shall take the final decision by means of a vote, if necessary with several rounds.

A candidate receiving, in the first round, votes exceeding half the number of members of the bureau, including those who are absent, shall be appointed without the need for a second round.

If no applicant meets this condition in the first round, the bureau shall hold a second round of voting for the two candidates who obtained the largest number of votes; the candidate receiving the largest number of votes from the members present in the second round shall be appointed.

In the event of a tie making it impossible to identify only two candidates after the first round or to appoint the secretary-general after the second round, a new meeting of the bureau shall be convened at a next possible date to appoint the secretary-general.

Rule 79

1. All the powers which the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union confer on the appointing authority and which the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants (CEOS) of the European Union confer on the authority empowered to conclude contracts shall be exercised, with respect to the secretary-general, by the bureau.
2. The powers which the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union confer on the appointing authority shall be exercised as follows:
 - with respect to deputy secretaries-general and directors, by the bureau, on a proposal from the secretary-general, as regards the application of Articles 29, 30, 31, 40, 41, 49, 50, 51, 78 and 90(1) of the Staff Regulations; by the president, on a proposal from the secretary-general, as regards the application of the other provisions of the Staff Regulations, including Article 90(2);
 - with respect to:
 - deputy directors,
 - heads of unit,by the president, acting on a proposal from the secretary-general and following consultation with the enlarged presidency,
 - with respect to officials in the AD function group who do not have a management post at the level of head of unit or above and officials of the AST and AST/SC function groups, by the secretary-general.
3. The powers which the CEOS confer on the authority empowered to conclude contracts shall be exercised as follows:
 - with respect to temporary staff appointed to the post of deputy secretary-general or director, by the bureau, on a proposal by the secretary-general, as regards the application of Articles 11, 17, 33 and 48 of the CEOS; as regards the other provisions of the CEOS, by the president, on a proposal from the secretary-general;
 - with respect to temporary staff appointed to the post of deputy director or head of unit, by the president, on a proposal from the secretary-general;
 - with respect to temporary staff in the AD function group who do not have a management post at the level of head of unit or above and temporary staff of the AST and AST/SC function groups, by the secretary-general;
 - with respect to special advisers and contract staff, by the secretary-general.
4. The president shall exercise the powers conferred on the institution by Article 110 of the Staff Regulations with a view to implementing the general provisions for giving effect to the Staff Regulations and the rules adopted by agreement between the institutions. With regard to the other provisions of a general nature, these powers shall be exercised by the secretary-general.
5. The bureau, the president and the secretary-general may delegate the powers vested in them by this Rule.
6. Decisions to delegate adopted pursuant to the above paragraph shall specify the scope of the powers delegated, their limits and period of validity, as well as stating whether they may be subdelegated.
7. For the appointment of officials to the posts of deputy secretary-general, director deputy director, head of unit of consultative work:
 - the vacancy notice shall be published simultaneously in all the EU institutions;
 - before applications are examined, the secretary-general shall establish an assessment grid based on the vacancy notice;
 - when the various applications are examined, the secretary-general shall be assisted, in particular, by three members of the bureau;
 - at the end of the procedure, he shall present a proposal for appointment to the bureau, who shall decide on that basis.

Rule 80

1. The groups shall each have a secretariat which reports directly to the group president.
2. The powers of the appointing authority shall be exercised, with respect to officials seconded to the groups in accordance with the second indent of Article 37(a) of the Staff Regulations, on a proposal from the group president concerned, as regards the application of Article 38 of the Staff Regulations, including decisions relating to their career development within the group.

When an official seconded to a group rejoins the Committee secretariat, he shall be classified in the grade to which he would have been entitled as an official.

3. The powers of the authority empowered to conclude contracts of employment shall be exercised, with respect to temporary staff seconded to the groups in accordance with Article 2(c) of the CEOS, on a proposal from the group president concerned, as regards the application of the third paragraph of Article 8, Article 9 and Article 10(3) of the CEOS.

Rule 81

1. The president shall have a private secretariat.
2. The staff of the secretariat shall be engaged under the budget as temporary staff, the powers of the authority competent to conclude contracts of service being exercised by the president.

Rule 82

1. Before 1 June of each year the secretary-general shall submit to the bureau the draft estimates of the expenditure and revenue of the Committee for the next financial year. The commission for financial and budgetary affairs shall examine the draft before the bureau discussion and, where appropriate, make remarks or propose modifications. The bureau shall draw up the estimates of the expenditure and revenue of the Committee. It shall forward these in accordance with the procedure and within the time limits laid down in the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union.
2. The president of the Committee, acting in accordance with the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union, shall implement or cause to be implemented the statement of expenditure and revenue.

Rule 83

1. An audit committee shall be set up with the task of advising the president and bureau on audit matters. It shall perform its tasks in complete independence, in compliance with the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union and, in particular, with the powers and duties of the internal auditor.

The audit committee shall in particular have the oversight of all reporting processes, systems of internal control and all monitoring processes with respect to compliance with laws, regulations, professional and ethical standards and codes of conduct.

2. The audit committee shall submit its reports to the president, who shall forward them to the bureau without delay.
3. The structure, membership, responsibilities and procedural rules of the audit committee shall be determined by a decision of the bureau.
4. The members of the audit committee shall be appointed by the bureau on a proposal from the groups.

Membership of the audit committee shall be incompatible with membership of the Committee bureau, of the commission for financial and budgetary affairs or of the quaestors' group.

5. The audit committee shall adopt its own procedural rules to ensure the fulfilment of its role and purpose and the implementation of its responsibilities, rights and obligations as described in this Rule.
6. Should a member of the audit committee have to be replaced, the procedure shall be that laid down in the first subparagraph of paragraph 4 of this Rule.

Rule 84

Correspondence to the Committee shall be addressed to the president or the secretary-general.

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL PROVISIONS*Rule 85*

The terms used in these Rules of Procedure for the various offices are not gender-specific.

Rule 86

1. The Committee may decide by an absolute majority of its members that these Rules of Procedure should be revised.
2. If such a decision is taken, the Committee shall set up a panel, which shall be known as the Rules of Procedure Panel. The Committee shall appoint a rapporteur-general to produce a draft text of the new Rules of Procedure.
3. After the adoption of the amended Rules of Procedure by an absolute majority, the assembly shall renew the mandate of the Rules of Procedure Panel for a maximum period of sixty days so that, if necessary, it may draw up a draft amendment of the Implementing Provisions and submit it to the bureau, who will take a decision after receiving the views of the groups.
4. The date on which the new Rules of Procedure and the changes to the Implementing Provisions shall enter into force shall be decided at the time of their adoption by the Committee.

Rule 87

These Rules of Procedure shall enter into force on 15 March 2019.

PART THREE
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PART FOUR

CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

The members of the European Economic and Social Committee, hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee',

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles 2 ⁽³⁾, 3 ⁽⁴⁾ and 13(4) ⁽⁵⁾ thereof,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 300 to 304 ⁽⁶⁾ thereof,

Having regard to the provisions of Chapter IV, Article 10 of the Protocol (No 7) annexed to the Treaties, on the privileges and immunities of the European Union,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular to Articles 8, 10, 19, 25, 43(2), 46, 50, 59(1), 91(1), 95(3), 100(2), 113, 114, 115, 148(2), 149, 151, 153, 156, 157(3), 159, 164, 165(4) (first indent), 166(4), 168(4) and (5), 169(3), 172, 173(3), 175, 177, 178, 182, 188, 192 and 194(2) ⁽⁷⁾ thereof, concerning the Committee's advisory capacity,

Having regard to the Committee's Rules of Procedure ⁽⁸⁾ and the Members' Statute ⁽⁹⁾,

Having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,

Whereas without prejudice to the applicable provisions of the Members' Statute and the Rules of Procedure, certain obligations arising under those provisions should be set out in a Code of Conduct,

Whereas during their membership in accordance with Article 300 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, members of the Committee shall be completely independent in the performance of their duties, in the general interest of the European Union and the European public. During the performance of their duties and on journeys to and from the place of meetings, members shall enjoy the privileges and immunities established in the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of the European Union ⁽¹⁰⁾. They shall in particular behave with respect and integrity during their tenure of office,

Whereas the Code of Conduct, which defines and clarifies the obligations applicable to members and alternates of the Committee, should be revised in order to take account of the experience gained in its application and to meet the high ethical standards that are expected of members of the Committee,

have decided by a vote of their plenary assembly, on a proposal from the quaestors of the Committee and after consulting the Committee bureau, to adopt this Code of Conduct.

It shall apply to their conduct towards each other and towards any other person working in the Committee.

At the beginning of their term of office, members shall sign up to this Code of Conduct, as adopted by the assembly at its meeting of 20 February 2019.

*Article 1***General principles**

1. This Code of Conduct shall apply to members of the Committee and their alternates.
2. The members of the European Economic and Social Committee represent various categories of economic and social actors. They are nominated by their governments and appointed by the Council ⁽¹¹⁾ for a five-year term.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 13 – In particular, Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union states that '[t]he Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail'.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 13 - Article 3 further specifies that '[t]he Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples'.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 13 - The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be assisted by an Economic and Social Committee and a Committee of the Regions acting in an advisory capacity.

⁽⁶⁾ JO C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 47.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 47.

⁽⁸⁾ Rules of Procedure, 2019.

⁽⁹⁾ Members' Statute, 2012, in particular Article 2 on incompatibilities, and Rules of Procedure, 2019, Rule 75.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Rule 2(3) of the Rules of Procedure, 2019, and Article 9 of the Members' Statute.

⁽¹¹⁾ Article 302(1) and (2) TFEU.

3. The members of the Committee 'are completely independent in the performance of their duties' ⁽¹²⁾ and, under the Treaty, they may not be bound by any mandatory instructions.
4. The members of the Committee shall be guided by and observe the following general principles of conduct: integrity, openness, diligence, honesty, accountability and respect for the Committee's reputation.
5. The members of the Committee shall act with full independence in the performance of their duties, in the general interest of the European Union and the European public.
6. In accordance with Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union, and with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the members of the Committee shall ensure, in the performance of their duties, the promotion, effective protection and respect of fundamental rights and values such as human dignity, non-discrimination, tolerance, freedom, solidarity, the principle of the rule of law and equality between women and men ⁽¹³⁾.
7. In their participation in the Committee's activities, members must not put their individual interests ahead of the general interest of the Union ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Article 2

Scope of tasks

1. The members of the Committee serve the advisory role of the Committee ⁽¹⁵⁾.
2. Although they represent the Committee on a permanent basis, they are not continuously present at its headquarters.
3. Members shall carry out their duties in a spirit of fruitful cooperation.
4. In their work, members shall promote democracy and values based on human rights.
5. Members shall perform their tasks as Committee members to the full and shall contribute to advisory work.
6. Members shall undertake to ensure follow-up of the opinions of the Committee.

Article 3

Freedom, independence and respect

In performing their tasks, and with regard to Article 1(4) above, members shall commit themselves to building the best possible consensus among themselves, in a spirit of mutual respect for the freedom of each person and in the interests of all, regardless of the choices that they make in their private lives ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Article 4

Dignity

1. Without prejudice to their freedom of expression, in the exercise of their duties members shall commit themselves to performing their tasks with dignity in the workplace. They shall refrain from any form of harassment and condemn this practice ⁽¹⁷⁾.
2. They shall commit themselves to making appropriate use of their immunity and the facilities provided in the interests of the Committee and their advisory role.
3. They shall comply with the requirement of confidentiality where the Treaty and their Statute so provides ⁽¹⁸⁾.

⁽¹²⁾ Article 300(4) TFEU and Rule 2(3) of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee.

⁽¹³⁾ OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 13, Charter of Fundamental Rights.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Articles 300(4) and 304 TFEU.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Articles 300(1) and 304 TFEU.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 11(1).

⁽¹⁷⁾ In this matter EESC personnel are bound by Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulation of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Article 339 TFEU; Article 8 of the EESC Members' Statute.

*Article 5***Integrity and financial transparency**

1. For exercising their advisory role, members are entitled to allowances as determined by the Council ⁽¹⁹⁾, but do not receive any remuneration from the Committee.
2. Missions for which they have been reimbursed by the Committee shall not be the subject of double reimbursement by a third party ⁽²⁰⁾.
3. Although their opinions are of a purely advisory nature, members shall, in accordance with the principle of transparency, submit a declaration of their financial interests to the president upon taking up their duties.
4. The obligation to declare financial interests entered into force during 2011 for the members of the Committee at the time. The declaration of financial interests shall contain the information stated in Article 5a of the Members' Statute ⁽²¹⁾.

*Article 6***Conflicts of interests**

Members of the Committee shall avoid any situation which may give rise to a personal conflict of interest or which may be reasonably be perceived as such. A personal conflict of interest arises where a personal interest may influence the independent performance of their duties as set out in Article 300 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in the Committee's Rules of Procedure 2019, in particular Rule 2(3), and in Article 9 of the Members' Statute.

*Article 7***Advisory committee on the conduct of members**

1. An advisory committee on the conduct of members (the 'advisory committee') is hereby established.
2. On a proposal from the bureau, the assembly shall elect, for each two-and-a-half year period, six members, three women and three men, who have no other permanent responsibilities within the Committee structure ⁽²²⁾, to form the advisory committee.
3. The advisory committee shall give any member who so requests, in confidence and within 30 calendar days, guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the provisions of this Code of Conduct. The member in question shall be entitled to rely on such guidance.
4. At the request of the president, the advisory committee shall also assess alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct, and advise the president on possible steps to be taken.

*Article 8***Procedure in the event of possible breaches of the Code of Conduct**

1. Without prejudice to the presumption of innocence and the protection of victims, where there is a reason to think that a member may have breached this Code of Conduct, the president shall inform the members concerned in writing and promptly refer the matter to the advisory committee ⁽²³⁾.
2. The advisory committee shall examine the circumstances of the alleged breach and shall hear the members concerned in complete confidentiality. On the basis of its conclusions, it shall make recommendations to the president on a possible decision.
3. Taking into account the advisory committee's recommendations, and having invited the member concerned to submit written observations, the Committee president shall consult the enlarged presidency and then ask the bureau to make a decision on the measures that may be taken in accordance with the Members' Statute and the Committee's Rules of Procedure.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Article 301 TFEU.

⁽²⁰⁾ EESC Decision of 11 October 1999 and Interinstitutional Agreement of 25 May 1999 (OLAF internal investigations).

⁽²¹⁾ Members' Statute of the EESC, 2012 - Article 5a (Declaration of financial interests).

⁽²²⁾ EESC president and vice-presidents, group and section/CCMI presidents, and the quaestors.

⁽²³⁾ The Committee president shall promptly submit any complaint he receives to the advisory committee.

According to the degree of severity of the member's behaviour, the following sanctions may be applied:

- a written warning;
- inclusion of the written warning in the bureau minutes and, where applicable, in the plenary session minutes;
- temporary suspension of the member from any duties as rapporteur, president or member of a study group, and from any participation in missions and extraordinary meetings.

Article 9

Application of the Code

The president shall be responsible for ensuring that members comply with this Code. In the event of difficulties in applying the Code, the president shall consult the enlarged presidency and then ask the bureau to take a decision.

Article 10

Entry into force

This Code of Conduct shall enter into force upon its adoption by the plenary assembly of the Committee.
