

# 2018 Discharge

## The European Committee of the Regions answer to the 2018 Discharge Questionnaire

Hearing: 12 November 2019

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### General questions

1. **Has the Committee extended the performance-based budgeting methodology to relevant parts of its budget and has the Committee informed the Parliament regularly about the achievements related to the application of the principles of performance-based budgeting?**

#### *CoR answer to question 1:*

In the recent years the CoR has gradually developed a culture of performance based budgeting within the Institution, among others to further increase the efficiency of the allocation of resources and to help the management and political level to take more informed decisions in due time on the different resource allocation related matters.

In this context, it shall be kept in mind, that the EU budget is primarily an investment budget. However, the CoR has principally only one activity and its budget is part of the Administrative Heading 5 of the EU Budget (current MFF 2014-2020). Despite the political nature of the CoR's activities and it does not include programmes and the like that can be found in the budget envelopes managed by, for instance, the European Commission. The CoR budget accounts for 1% of the Administrative Heading 5.

The CoR understands performance budgeting as the OECD does, namely as "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".

Different definitions and models of performance budgeting exist. The OECD identifies 4 main models:

- 1) presentational performance budgeting: involves the provision of performance information in parallel with the annual budget as a transparency exercise or for the background information;

2) performance-informed budgeting: presents performance information in a systemic manner alongside financial allocations in order to facilitate policymakers in taking account of this information when deciding on budget allocations;

3) direct performance budgeting: performance information is provided with the financial information and there is the expectation that performance will have direct consequences for the budget allocations, and;

4) managerial performance budgeting: performance information is generated and used for internal managerial purposes with a less link to the budget allocations.

In the CoR case, the elements of the presentational performance budgeting and managerial performance budgeting are applied in the different instances of the reporting and decision making. A number of different performance based indicators can thus be found in the CoR Strategic Management Plan that takes into account the appropriations as finally adopted by the budget authority and especially in the Annual Activity Report, grouped by different areas of operations and even more indicators are used by different services in their daily operations.

The set of the performance indicators used, their visual presentation and use in different policy documents and decision making processes may develop further taking into account developments, implementation and experiences of EU Institutions of similar size and governance structure.

Another key element of the CoR's performance based budgeting application is the use of the budget execution mid-term reviews that for some years have already been transformed into budget execution quarterly reviews. This tool is actively used to:

(i) follow-up in more detail, on a regular basis and timely manner on the progress of the CoR budget implementation during the year;

(ii) timely prepare the necessary decisions and actions to reallocate the resources during the year from the areas that show some flexibilities, decreasing priority levels or underspending to those priority areas, which need additional financing, if and when such opportunities present, and;

(iii) provide an additional set of quantitative data for taking the necessary decisions during the preparation of the draft budget estimates for the coming years.

This tool has proved to be a very effective element in improving the CoR Budget outturn rates (reaching 99.3% in 2018) and allowing the CoR to react quickly during the year (as far as possible) on the changing operational realities and shifting operational or political priorities, in other words to become more efficient and flexible in managing of its resources. This is especially important in the domains of the administration that are designed to directly support the implementation of the CoR's political mandate.

The CoR continuously remains open to assess if implementation of practices developed and tried with a successful result in other EU Institutions of a similar size and with a similar political representation would result in an improvement of the CoR's contribution to the EU decision-making in line with its Treaty role.

- 2. How the Committee strengthened its efforts related to the payment execution rates, especially for Budget Title 2 concerning buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure?**

*CoR answer to question 2:*

The overall CoR 2018 budget outturn rate for the commitments was 99.3% (current appropriations of the year 2018 [C1]). The respective payments execution rate of the current appropriations of 2018 was 91.0%. The CoR commitment outturn was one of the best, if not the best, among all EU Institutions in 2018 and both were among the highest in the CoR history. However, it shall be kept in mind that the final 2018 budget execution payment rate continues increasing during the year 2019 as the carried over C8 appropriations from 2018 to 2019 are still being paid. Ideally, the final 2018 budget execution payments rate (that will be known at the end of 2019) shall come very close to the C1 commitment execution rate observed at the end of 2018.

The financial team dealing with payments related to buildings and other logistic issues has been reinforced and delays have been reduced significantly. Besides a normal daily follow-up by the team members, systematically a weekly overview is sent to all stakeholders in order to identify and anticipate potential problems. Further, the ongoing digitalization process of the workflow will also have a positive effect on the payment execution rate.

- 3. What measures has the Committee introduced to improve coordination of work in relation to files with the Commission, the Parliament and the Council?**

*CoR answer to question 3:*

The CoR cooperates and coordinates its work with the institutions based on the Treaty, its cooperation agreements with the European Commission and the European Parliament, and agreements with the Council presidency.

The cooperation agreements with the European Commission and the Parliament cover the coordination mechanisms at different stages of the legislative cycle.

The Council presidencies regularly present their priorities in the CoR plenary session, participate in Bureau meetings, ask for specific CoR contributions to their priorities by way of referrals or events, and invite the CoR to high level meetings as appropriate.

In addition, the CoR is associated to the meetings of the Inter-institutional Coordination Group. In the field of communication, the CoR actively participates in the informal inter-institutional group of Directors General for communication. The CoR is also invited to the meetings between the Brussels regional government and the EU institutions.

- 4. In 2017, the Committee has committed to undertake further steps to reach a manageable level of translation output. What steps has the Committee taken to accomplish this commitment?**

*CoR answer to question 4:*

As the CoR was already more advanced in terms of translation demand rationalisation, the Directorate for Translation has not yet proposed any additional CoR-specific rationalisation measures. However, in the context of the new CoR digital

strategy, the process of drafting and amending opinions will be streamlined using structured document formats, such as XML. When implemented, this will allow achieving a further reduction in translation demand and output.

- 5. Has the Committee completed the adjustment of its translation units with a view to reaching the outsourcing target of at least 20 %?**

*CoR answer to question 5:*

Translation outsourcing reached 20.10% in 2018. It will be stabilised in the coming years at between 20% and 25% in order to maintain a certain level of internal flexibility. Following the last annual monitoring of the workload and productivity levels in the Joint Services against inter-institutional benchmarks, it was concluded that the size of translation units should no longer be reduced. Nearly all translation units have thus already reached their final target size.

- 6. Have there been further steps to make translation output more sustainable?**

*CoR answer to question 6:*

Please see the answer to question 4.

- 7. What was the cost of outsourcing of translation in 2018? What would have been the cost if the translations had been carried out by in-house services?**

*CoR answer to question 7:*

According to the KIAPI methodology, the total cost of outsourced translation for the CoR and EESC was EUR 7 669 468 in 2018 (CoR costs only: EUR 3 251 855). According to the same methodology, the total cost of translation in-house would have been EUR 12 471 818 (CoR costs only: EUR 5 263 108).

- 8. The Committee estimated that the financial impact of the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the Union amounts to EUR 373 666 in 2019 and EUR 576 559 in 2020 due to the reduction of its membership by the 24 seats currently attributed to the United Kingdom. Has Committee changed the estimation of the financial impact of the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the Union in mentioned years?**

*CoR answer to question 8:*

In its decision of 21 May 2019, the Council stipulated that from the date that the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the Union becomes legally effective, 3 out of the 24 seats currently attributed to the United Kingdom will be attributed to Estonia, Cyprus and Luxemburg. The number of CoR seats would thus only be reduced by 21 with a minimal impact on the above estimations.

In its resolution on the CoR discharge for the financial year 2017, the EP welcomed the establishment of a group to reflect about maintaining close relations with regional and local authorities in the United Kingdom after its departure from the Union. Any such activity would further reduce the above estimations subject to the exact modalities which can only be determined once the withdrawal conditions are clearly defined.

9. **Concerning the investigation by the group “The Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and Doing Less More Efficiently”, what steps have been taken in order to redistribute more efficiently powers at the national and the European level?**

*CoR answer to question 9:*

The European Committee of the Regions sees the Final Report of the Task Force, as well as the Commission's consequent Communication on the role of subsidiarity and proportionality, as important steps in ensuring a more efficient redistribution of powers between the different levels of governance. These documents highlight the fact that the EU is a multi-layered governance system and the Commission's Communication on Better Regulation serves to reinforce this fact with empirical data.

During its mandate, the CoR delegation to the Task Force put forward concrete and attainable recommendations that could facilitate a more active approach to subsidiarity, a proper balance of competences between all actors and an opportunity for all levels to provide substantial input throughout the policymaking process. The CoR hosted a hearing to support the Task Force, and organised a series of consultations where local and regional politicians, experts and stakeholders discussed ways to achieve this goal. The Final report of the Task Force took up many of the CoR proposals aimed at reviewing the distribution of roles between the EU, the Member States and the regions, through a new working method termed as "active subsidiarity". Through this approach, all levels of governance should work together to improve EU decision-making, to increase EU added value and to communicate these efforts to the citizens. An efficient redistribution of powers between levels also depends on how well the relations between these levels are organised, and this is where the principle of multi-level governance must be properly applied. As the Task Force concluded, a deepened cooperation and solidarity between the different levels of governance is vital to respond more effectively to the needs of Europe's citizens.

The European Committee of the Regions looks forward to working closely with the new European Commission and the European Parliament to achieve the implementation of the Task Force recommendations and the subsequent Communication from the European Commission in the upcoming mandate.

10. **Have you considered changing the system of one signature to confirm the presence of members on meetings, to the system of two signatures – one signature at the beginning of the meeting and one at the end of the meeting – to avoid that the members are coming just to sign their attendance list?**

*CoR answer to question 10:*

The issue was part of the discussion on the framework of the revision of the applicable legislation. However, the relevant CoR bodies decided to maintain the existing system until a further revision.

**11. How was the administrative and political cooperation between the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions in 2018? Where there any developments?**

*CoR answer to question 11:*

The cooperation between the CoR and the EP in 2018 revealed once again a satisfactory progress on several levels. The following observations can be made:

- The relations between CoR commissions and EP committees showed a steady progress and produced outcomes, such as increasingly popular exchanges between rapporteurs and new joint meetings and events;
- More efforts were considered essential to increase visibility of the CoR in EP hearings and scrutiny activities regarding EU legislation;
- Cooperation with the EPRS progressed and could be further enhanced via joint projects, such as: support for CORLEAP or ARLEM rapporteurs or rapporteurs working on files relating to the preservation of natural resources (NAT)<sup>1</sup>; .
- New ways of cooperation such as contributions to implementation reports and fact-finding missions were launched. Relevance, timing and advanced planning remain crucial for maximising their success. Meanwhile, a successful and impactful cooperation between the two institutions happened through the cross-party and cross-committee Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development of the European Parliament;
- Cooperation in communication and information was stepped up notably in view of the upcoming elections in 2019.
- In an outlook to 2019, a strong cooperation up to and following the EP elections was considered crucial in order to ensure that the long-term priorities for the next European Commission are closely connected to the needs and expectations identified at the local and regional level.

The cooperation on the administrative aspects of the agreement had equally advanced, notably in the areas of security, interpretation and IT support. The agreement will continue to be the basis for reinforcing synergies between the CoR and EP secretariat also within the context of the EP strategy on Linking the levels and the CoR Regional Hub pilot project. The Regional Hub pilot project aims at establishing a mechanism for systematic feedback from the local and regional level on implementation of EU policy in response to the growing demand of EU institutions for more local and regional evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> One such joint project concerns the work on the Sustainable Development Goals; the CoR will elaborate its own position on a sustainable Europe by 2030 and hope to continue the good collaboration between the EP and the CoR that was started in the framework of the EU multi-stakeholders platform on SDGs where the CoR played a key role. The CoR could participate as relevant in hearings on SDGs as well as co-organise an event on SDGs implementation with the EPRS within the EP library to ensure MEPs are familiar with the role and contributions of regions and cities on SDGs. The CoR could also step up its action within the EP Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development" and build strong contacts with its MEPs in view of exchanges on sustainable development.

**12. Have there been any efforts to speed up the discharge procedure and to publish Annual Activity Report and Annual Accounts earlier?**

*CoR answer to question 12:*

The CoR has continued to respect the Financial Regulation in force and the European Union year-end consolidation instructions issued by the Accounting officer of the European Commission as well as the work of the European Court of Auditors. The 2018 provisional accounts and other requested information was sent to the European Commission's Accounting Officer and to the European Court of Auditors on 1 March 2019. The CoR's 2018 Annual Activity Report was sent to the European Parliament on 28 June 2019. The 2018 certified final annual accounts and other requested information was sent to the European Commission's Accounting Officer and to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Court of Auditors when the European Court of Auditors had finalized its audits and reported the result thereof to the CoR, i.e. on 27 June 2019.

**13. Has there been progress made regarding a new administrative cooperation agreement between the EESC and the Committee, bearing in mind that the old one will be running out in 31 December 2019?**

*CoR answer to question 13:*

In 2018, the CoR discussed its expectations towards the continued administrative cooperation with the EESC. The mid-term assessment concluded that the cooperation agreement was working well and ensured the provision of the necessary services for the Committees. Efforts to update and upgrade the existing relationship with the view creating synergies and savings continued throughout 2018. Negotiations towards a new administrative cooperation agreement were launched in early 2019. The agreement also foresees the possibility of extending the agreement by common consent between the two institutions (article 18.2 of the agreement) to continue the stable relationship beyond 2019.

**14. What progress has been achieved in the cooperation with the EESC based on the cooperation agreement, which entered in force in 2016?**

*CoR answer to question 14:*

The cooperation agreement in force runs for a four-year period from 2016 to 2019. New elements and/or main benefits of this cooperation agreement are the following:

- A simplified governance structure.
- A strong commitment to improving the Committees' environmental performance.
- A roadmap for the future layout of the entrance hall.
- In the area of IT, better governance, including coordination on IT business applications and investment.
- Strengthened coordination on developments in budget establishment and follow-up procedures.

- Close and consistent cooperation on the maintenance and technical management of all meeting rooms, on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding.
- Management of security, states of alert, crisis management and business continuity policy were already coordinated before this cooperation agreement but are now included in the agreement.
- The cooperation agreement provides for in-house translation capacity, providing the Committees with timely, high-quality translations. Both Committees have committed to resource-efficient multilingualism by maintaining and reinforcing the rationalisation measures in relation to translation demand. This continued modernisation of the management of the joint services provides for the gradual internal redeployment of staff, in full respect of the provisions of the Staff Regulations. Regular monitoring and evaluation will take place with full transparency.

Overall, the mid-term assessment completed in early 2018 concluded that the cooperation agreement was working well and ensured the provision of the necessary services for the Committees, their members and the administrations. While maintaining their institutional identity, the Committees delivered substantial synergies at inter-institutional level. There were, however, some procedures and mechanisms that could still be improved in some regards. The bodies in charge of managing cooperation were aware of this and able to ensure that progress was made in the right direction through the established, functioning mechanisms. Thus, the assessment concluded that there was no need at that point in time for changes to the agreement and its appendices.

Examples for further implementation of the agreement in the course of 2018 were

- the evaluation and follow-up to the pilot project on assessing the feasibility and benefits of establishing common management of certain translation units.
- the implementation of the CoR's and EESC's building strategies continued.
- the security-related upgrade of the JDE entrance hall
- the launch of the security-related upgrade of the BvS entrance.

The CoR also prepared its Digital Strategy, which shall help to better define the services required from the Joint IT Services.

**15. What budgetary savings have been achieved through the cooperation with the EESC?**

*CoR answer to question 15:*

The CoR's inter-institutional cooperation is probably one of the best developed among all EU institutions. The important example is the administrative cooperation between the CoR/EESC via the Joint Services, where a bit less than 500 staff (of which around 170 staff belonging to the CoR Staff Chart) and around EUR 50 million yearly (of which some EUR 21 million by the CoR) are pooled together by both institutions, excluding salary related expenditure. Together with the concerned salary related



expenditure, the yearly monetary value of the Joint Services operations exceeds EUR 100 million.

The Joint Services serve both institutions in the fields of translation, infrastructure, logistics and IT. A number of budget lines are subject to the CoR-EESC administrative cooperation agreement, which stipulates that a common sharing key must be used in order to determine each institution's contribution to a specific joint expenditure position. The sharing key used in the 2020 estimates is 42.36% for the CoR and 57.64% for the EESC based upon the provision in the existing cooperation agreement with the EESC.

**16. How has the administrative cooperation between Parliament and the Committee improved in 2018?**

*CoR answer to question 16:*

Please see the answer to question 11.

**17. Which proposals have been developed in 2018 by the Committee together with the Parliament's Secretary-General to better integrate the Committee's opinions into Parliament's work? Since the Committee mainly refers to meetings and concludes that there is scope for further developing the co-operation with Parliament, which measures could in the Committee's opinion enhance its effectiveness towards the Parliament's work and, in particular, its legislative work?**

*CoR answer to question 17:*

At the meeting between CoR President, the EP CCC Chair and EP REGI, AFCE, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE and TRAN Chairs of 30 January 2018, the following topics were considered for further cooperation in 2018 based on prior internal consultation and building on the topics identified in previous years:

***Ongoing items***

- *Digital Union*
- *Horizon 2020 mid-term review and FP9*
- *Reform of the system of EU own resources and the future of EU finances until 2025*
- *European Semester*
- *Collaborative economy*
- *Monitoring of EFSI*
- *Services Package*
- *Energy Union*
- *CAP and Rural agenda*
- *Migration, asylum and anti-radicalisation policy*

***New items***

- *Reflection on the future of the European Union and Reconnecting with young Europeans*
- *Future of cohesion policy and cross-border cooperation/EGTC and the EU Urban agenda*
- *Future of EMU and SDGs in the European Semester (together with MFF)*

- *Future of industrial policy*
- *Pillar of Social Rights*
- *Tourism and European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018*
- *Climate Change, UNFCCC Conference of Parties in Katowice*

For 2019, there is also an opportunity for cooperation in respect to

- *Implementation of the public procurement Directives*
- *Common expectations towards the new commissioners (public hearings)*

The **CoR commissions are key architects** of the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement via their cooperation with the EP committees. Several channels are available to them for this purpose:

- Bilateral meetings and exchanges between Chairs and rapporteurs of individual dossiers,
- EP's involvement in the meetings and activities of the CoR commissions,
- Participation of CoR rapporteurs to EP hearings,
- CoR contribution to EP Implementation reports,
- Participation of CoR members to fact-finding missions of EP rapporteurs
- Participation of CoR member in Jurys with the European Parliament and the European Commission

- 18. Concerning the Committee opinions to the parliamentary committees, how does the Committee match its opinions calendar to the parliamentary committees' schedules? How do you communicate and make sure your opinions are taken into consideration?**

*CoR answer to question 18:*

**On the matching of the calendar:**

The CoR aims to prepare its opinions before is the relevant dossier is discussed at EP level. To this aim, responsible staff members closely monitor discussions' schedule at EP committees. The CoR Commissions' secretariats work in close cooperation with the secretariats of EP committees, by exchanging information via email or by calling the EP secretariat. In that frame, the CoR commissions' meetings are scheduled and aligned, as much as possible, in such a way that after the adoption of a Draft opinion (PAC) by a commission, it can be adopted in the right following Plenary. The rule for the adoption of CoR opinions is to adopt opinions before the responsible EP Committee votes on the corresponding report.

The CoR tries to keep a deadline of 3 months for adoption on a CoR opinion and urgency procedure is used when necessary to go faster.

**On the communication of opinions:**

Communication with our counterparts in EP starts at early stage. In order to ensure our opinions are taken into consideration, the CoR commission secretariats use the following channels:

**During preparation phase of opinions:**

- bilateral meetings between the CoR and EP rapporteurs (and/or shadow rapporteurs and/or other relevant MEPs) are organized;
- CoR political groups are liaising with their EP counterparts;
- Chairs, rapporteurs and other relevant MEPs are invited to CoR commissions meetings;
- (The CoR has adjusted its format of amendments recently, in order to make it compatible with the format used in the EP).

**Following the adoption of opinion (follow-up phase):**

- Official submission of our opinions by the Chair of each commission: letter to the Chair of EP Committee, to EP's rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs and/or other relevant MEPs, to EP secretariats;
- CoR political groups are liaising with their EP counterparts;
- Our rapporteurs are, when possible, invited to EP committees' meetings to present our opinions;
- The CoR organizes numerous meetings and events, to which the EP rapporteurs are invited. EP and CoR engage in direct discussions, often leading to the EP taking up CoR positions.
- Via common communication channels i.e. through Press releases. During the year, the press team prepared and distributed more than 160 press releases (in English), and published some 30 highlights on the CoR website, mostly reporting on the elaboration of opinions. Moreover, they are embedded into accompanying social media and audiovisual activities.

The press releases are, by definition, addressed to the relevant media (Brussels-based journalists, EU media, national media and local media), according to their editorial interest. Depending on the target (media, country, institutions) the press release is previously translated and especially tailored. The press releases are also regularly sent for information to the MEPs of the relevant committees.

Whenever a MEP or a member of another EU institution or body is associated to the event, the debate, or the press conference organised by the CoR, he/she is also quoted in the press release. This happens almost systematically when a Commissioner or an MEP speaks at CoR plenaries. In a few cases, when the event is co-organised, the press release is also co-branded, with the logo of the other institution. This was the case, for instance, on the occasion of the REGI-COTER joint meeting during the European Week of Regions and Cities 2018.

Obviously, press releases are far from being the only tool to reach out to media and promote the CoR opinions. The press team also produces media briefings, organises press conferences and briefings, is in daily contact with interested journalists and regularly liaises with the secretariats of the commissions, the political groups and the rapporteurs themselves, both in the CoR and the EP.

The impact of such activities is regularly monitored through a professional tracking platform and the coverage is analysed in terms of quantity and quality. Despite the reduction of the number of press releases in 2018 (-20%), an increase of media mentions was observed (+30%).

**19. What budgetary savings have been achieved through the cooperation with the European Parliament?**

*CoR answer to question 19:*

The main impact on the CoR budget has been connected to the gradual transfer of staff to the EPRS. In 2015, the budget for salaries was reduced and in turn the budget for outsourcing of translations was partially increased. The full budgetary impact of these operations is visible as of 2016 when all staff transfers from the CoR to the EPRS had taken place. In accordance with Annex II of the agreement, this implies, as compared to the situation before the signature of the Cooperation Agreement, a reduction in staff expenditure of some 2.5 million euro (2018 salary levels), an additional 0.8 million euro for outsourcing of translation and an additional 0.4 million euro for political work, both already included in the CoR budget base as of 2015. All in all, the CoR's budget has been reduced by some 1.2 million euros per year as from 2016.

At the same time, 0.45 million euro from the additional appropriations for the outsourcing of translation (e.g. from 0.8 million euro obtained by the CoR at the time as a compensation for the transfer of its staff to the EPRS) has already been cut during 2018 and 2019 budget processes.

**20. Please name three of the institution's main achievements and successes in 2018. How do they affect in the institution's challenges for the future? Please focus mainly on operations, activities and results achieved.**

*CoR answer to question 20:*

Through its 78 Opinions in 2018 and the impact of opinions, the CoR's annual impact report shows the range and effectiveness of the work of the European Committee of the Regions. The work of the Committee was closely linked to the political agenda of the European Union as a whole, including the Multiannual Financial Framework and monitoring the negotiations for the United Kingdom withdrawal from the European Union, to bring up the views and concerns of regions and cities. Our Plenary Sessions attracted Presidents of European Institutions, Commissioners and national Government ministers.

The 2018 impact report shows the CoR's impact in the fields of

- global challenges (migration, neighbourhood, climate)
- cohesion, industrial policy and investment
- social dimension and cultural heritage
- active subsidiarity and reflecting on Europe.

The work of the CoR in the context of the Task Force on Subsidiarity was strongly reflected in the Task Force's final report. The renewed, inclusive approach to EU decision-making was further recognised in the European Commission's communication on Better Regulation. The CoR's contribution to "Reflecting on Europe" was acknowledged in the European Council conclusions on 14 December 2018.

Regarding climate policy, the role for local and regional governments in global climate governance and in the implementation of the Paris Agreement was acknowledged by the UN Climate Change Conference COP24. The CoR participated in the EU delegation and cooperated closely with its partners at European and international level.

A key impact of the CoR's work in 2018 was a significant damage limitation exercise for the future role and size of cohesion policy beyond 2020. The CoR's message was delivered through an EU-wide campaign branded the #CohesionAlliance endorsed by more than 11,000 signatories.

It is expected that these topics will continue to play a role on the CoR's agenda for the new CoR mandate starting in 2020.

## **Staff**

- 21. The number of temporary staff increased from 64 posts in 2013 to 71 in 2017. Has the number of temporary staff increased even in 2018? If the number has increased, what are the reasons for it?**

### ***CoR answer to question 21:***

The CoR hires three categories of temporary staff members based on the following provisions of the Conditions of employment of other staff of the European Union:

- Art. 2a) staff engaged to fill a post which is included in the list of posts appended to the section of the budget relating to each institution and which the budgetary authorities have classified as temporary;
- Art. 2b) staff engaged to fill temporarily a permanent post included in the list of posts appended to the section of the budget relating to each institution;
- Art. 2c) staff, other than officials of the Union, engaged to assist either a person holding an office provided for in the Treaty on European Union or the Treaty on Functioning of the European Union, or the elected President of one of the institutions or organs of the Union, or one of the political groups in the European Parliament or the Committee of the Regions, or a group in the European Economic and Social Committee.

While the total number of temporary posts 2a) remained unchanged between 2013 and 2017 (4 in total, including the Secretary-General), the number of temporary posts 2c) has increased as a consequence of the implementation of the political priorities of the institution. In this context, an internal redeployment exercise was organised between 2013 and 2018 in several waves aiming to optimize the use of human resources and to generate synergies between operational and support services in order to reinforce the political and core business directorates. Several posts from the linguistic services were liberated in the context of the CoR strategy for a more resource efficient multilingualism and either converted into temporary posts 2c) assigned to the political groups or redeployed to core business directorates (mainly Legislative works and Communication).

As a result, the share of posts dedicated to core business areas increased from 46 % in 2013 to 56 % in 2018.

**Evolution of temporary posts**

2013 43 (4 posts 2a) and 39 posts 2c))

2017 56 (4 posts 2a) and 52 posts 2c))

2018 57 (4 posts 2a) and 53 posts 2c))

<i>Figures on 31/12</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
<b>Temporary staff members in the CoR</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>84</b>
<i>2a</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>2b</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>21</i>	<b>30</b>
<i>2c</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>46</i>	<b>50</b>

Regarding the number of temporary staff members, the figures increased indeed from 64 in 2013, to 71 in 2017 and even 84 in 2018:

In 2018, the CoR converted 1 additional permanent post into a temporary post 2c) which was allocated to the secretariat of a political group.

Several posts for permanent officials were filled by temporary staff members 2b) due to the absence of relevant EPSO reserve lists or suitable candidates on reserve lists in certain function groups and profiles, most notably in function group AST/SC or posts for Irish linguistic staff (AD and AST). When a post cannot be filled by a permanent official, temporary staff members 2b) are recruited to ensure business continuity until new relevant EPSO reserve lists are available.

In addition, in the Directorate for Translation, one post per unit, if falling vacant, was filled by a temporary staff member rather than by a permanent official in order to keep the necessary flexibility for future adjustments in permanent staffing levels.

22. **The amount dedicated to travel expenditure for Members was EUR 8 882 955 in 2017. What was the amount dedicated to travel expenditure in 2018?**

*CoR answer to question 22:*

The amount dedicated to travel and meeting expenditure for members was in 2018 of an amount of EUR 8 746 750 and does include as well their transport expenses as their flat rate meeting and travel allowances.

In 2018, an amount of EUR 4 438 173 was dedicated to transport expenses for members related to meetings held in 2018.

Please note that members are entitled according to the regulation in force, to claim their expenses for meetings held in 2018, until the 1st of December 2019.

23. **What was done to improve the geographical balance in manager positions with a view to reaching the target of 20%, which reflects the proportion of the EU13 population compared to the total Union population?**

*CoR answer to question 23:*

Figures on 31/12	Senior and middle management
EUR15	35
EUR13	10
<b>Percentage EUR13</b>	<b>22,2%</b>

With 22,2% of its senior and middle management being from EU13 Member States, the CoR has exceeded the target of 20%.

24. **What has the Committee done to improve the geographical balance of its staff in order to achieve an appropriate and meaningful presence of nationals from all the Member States?**

*CoR answer to question 24:*

In 2018, the CoR employed staff from all Member States except for Luxemburg. Besides regularly monitoring the geographical balance of its staff members, the CoR ensures that eligible candidates from all Member States have access to information about job opportunities by publishing all its vacancy notices for permanent officials and recruitment notices for temporary staff members 2c) systematically internally, inter-institutionally and on its public website. It is one of the few European institutions to provide bilingual (FR and EN) transparent job information on all those platforms.

Furthermore, by providing selection panels with anonymised job applications with no information regarding gender, age and nationality, it reduces bias that might influence the selection procedure. Therefore it ensures that staff members of the highest standard are recruited regardless of their nationality.

Senior managerial positions (Directors, Secretary-General) are systematically published in the Official journal of the European Union in all 24 official languages. In accordance with Art. 29§2 of the Staff Regulations, Directors' positions are open not

only to established EU officials but also to all citizens meeting the eligibility criteria from all over Europe.

25. Please present a gender and nationality breakdown of your middle and senior management positions.

*CoR answer to question 25:*

<b>Senior and middle management – breakdown by nationality (figures on 31/12/2018)</b>	
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>45</b>
Austria	0
Belgium	6
Bulgaria	1
Czech Republic	3
Croatia	1
Cyprus	0
Denmark	0
Estonia	0
Finland	0
France	6
Germany	8
Greece	2
Hungary	1
Ireland	2
Italy	3
Latvia	1
Lithuania	0
Luxemburg	0
Malta	1
Netherlands	0
Poland	2
Portugal	0
Romania	0
Slovakia	0
Slovenia	0
Spain	3
Sweden	2
United Kingdom	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>

<b>Gender balance</b>		
Senior and middle management		Percentage
<b>M</b>	30	66,7%
<b>F</b>	15	33,3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>



**26. What steps have been done to reach a gender balance in middle management and in senior management positions?**

*CoR answer to question 26:*

The CoR encourages female applicants to apply for all managerial positions. Since 2017, a new functional management structure has been put in place (deputy heads of unit, heads of sector, team leaders) for colleagues carrying out managerial responsibilities below head of unit level. This population, in majority composed of women, represents a pool of potential candidates for formal managerial positions. Specific training sessions are available for female staff who wishes to prepare for a managerial career.

The CoR also made its working conditions and working patterns more flexible in order to allow colleagues of both genders carrying out managerial duties to better reconcile their family and professional responsibilities. With the support of the functional managerial structure, more managers can opt for more flexible working arrangements (part times), telework etc.

**27. Could you please provide a table of all human resources broken down by nationality, type of contract, gender and grade for the year 2018, and an overview of how these figures compare with the year 2017?**

*CoR answer to question 27:*

<b>Staff members by nationality (officials, temporary and contract staff) 2017-2018 (on 31/12)</b>			
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
Austria	4	4	0
Belgium	79	84	5
Bulgaria	17	17	0
Croatia	9	11	2
Cyprus	3	3	0
Czech Republic	18	16	-2
Denmark	6	6	0
Estonia	8	8	0
France	39	39	0
Finland	12	14	2
Germany	32	30	-2
Greece	24	22	-2
Hungary	15	16	1
Ireland	11	13	2
Italy	47	51	4
Latvia	12	13	1
Lithuania	13	11	-2
Luxemburg	1	0	-1
Malta	8	6	-2
Netherlands	8	6	-2
Poland	31	33	2

Portugal	17	18	1
Romania	29	29	0
Slovakia	14	14	0
Slovenia	15	15	0
Spain	34	35	1
Sweden	11	11	0
United-Kingdom	15	12	-3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>5</b>

<b>Human resources by contract type 2017-2018</b>			
<b>Statutory staff by type of the contract</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
Officials	407	404	-3
Temporary staff members	71	84	13
Contract staff members	54	49	-5
Special adviser (doctor)	1	1	0
<b>TOTAL STATUTORY STAFF</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
Seconded national experts	10	12	2
Paid trainees*	23	23	0
Service providers*	26	26	0
Interim*	4	8	4
<b>TOTAL OTHERS</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>6</b>

\*The data in the table is from 31 December of each year and is merely indicative for more flexible and short-term resources.

<b>Statutory staff by gender in percentages</b>			
<b>Gender</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
Women	56,5%	56,2%	-0,3%
Men	43,5%	43,8%	0,3%

<b>Statutory staff by grade/function group</b>			
<b>Administrators</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
AD16	1	1	0
AD15	4	5	1
AD14	15	18	3
AD13	17	15	-2
AD12	27	28	1
AD11	13	12	-1
AD10	20	27	7
AD9	38	43	5
AD8	45	38	-7
AD7	40	37	-3
AD6	31	33	2
AD5	37	37	0

<b>Assistants</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
AST11	4	3	-1
AST10			0
AST9	8	9	1
AST8	12	12	0
AST7	19	18	-1
AST6	23	24	1
AST5	35	36	1
AST4	33	34	1
AST3	37	39	2
AST2	7	5	-2
AST1	6	7	1
<b>Assistants/Clerks</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
SC1	6	7	1
<b>Contract staff</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Evolution</b>
GF11	5	3	-2
GF12	1	3	2
GF13	17	17	0
GF14	3	1	-2
GF15	5	3	-2
GF16		1	1
GF18	2	1	-1
GF19	3	2	-1
GF20	2	2	0
GF21	2		-2
GF22		2	2
GF23	3	4	1
GF24	2	2	0
GF25	4	3	-1
GF26	5	4	-1
GF28		1	1

28. Could you please provide us a table of staff broken down by type of contract for 2013 and 2018? What was the average duration of contractual employments (including renewal of contracts) in 2013 and in 2018?

*CoR answer to question 28:*

<b>Contractual and temporary staff members by type of contract</b>						
	<b>2013</b>	Average duration in months	<b>2017</b>	Average duration in months	<b>2018</b>	Average duration in months
<b>Contract staff</b>	34		54		49	
3a	20	<i>indefinite</i>	23	<i>indefinite</i>	23	<i>indefinite</i>
3b	14	23,3	31	28,7	26	37
<b>Temporary staff</b>	64		71		84	
2a*	4	<i>indefinite</i>	4	<i>indefinite</i>	4	<i>indefinite</i>
2b	23	17,7	21	23,5	30	21,6
2c**	37	<i>indefinite</i>	46	<i>indefinite</i>	50	<i>indefinite</i>

\*Including the post of the Secretary-General who has a mandate of 5 years

\*\*Including posts in the cabinet of the President for the duration of the mandate of the President

29. We would appreciate a comprehensive overview of staff on sick leave in 2018, broken down by the total number of staff member that were on sick leave and by how many days they were on sick leave in total. How many days lasted the three longest cases of sick leave? How many days of sick leave concerned Mondays and Fridays in 2018? What was the evolution since 2013?

*CoR answer to question 29:*

Sick leave is measured in calendar days. When staff is sick on weekends and holidays, this is included in the total.

In 2018, 476 staff members had at least half a day of sick leave. With a reference population of 538 staff members:

- ✓ 62 staff members ( 11.5 % of the total) had no sick leave during 2018;
- ✓ 257 staff members (47.8% of the total) had between 0.5 and 7 days of sick leave;
- ✓ 358 staff members (66.5% of the total) had between 0.5 and 14 days of sick leave.

It follows that nearly 60% of the reference population had between 0 and 7 days of sick leave in 2018, i. e. less than a week including a weekend.

Moreover, 78% of staff had between 0 and 14 sick leave days in 2018. This means that an overwhelming majority of staff have been sick less than two weeks (including weekends) in 2018.

The three longest cases of sick leave respectively lasted 352, 296.5, and 280.5 days and corresponded to serious illnesses.

Two of these cases led to invalidity and the third refers to a staff member subsequently reintegrated in the CoR following the individualised return to work policy based on gradual and accompanied integration.

Below is a comprehensive overview of staff on sick leave in 2018, broken down by the number of staff members that were on sick leave and by how many days they were on sick leave.

<b>Number of days of sick leave</b>	<b>Number of staff</b>	<b>Total of days</b>
0,5	6	3
1	48	48
1,5	9	13,5
2	35	70
2,5	7	17,5
3	41	123
3,5	2	7
4	25	100
4,5	6	27
5	25	125
5,5	5	27,5
6	24	144
6,5	6	39
7	18	126
7,5	2	15
8	19	152
8,5	6	51
9	7	63
9,5	5	47,5
10	14	140
10,5	1	10,5
11	17	187
11,5	2	23
12	7	84
12,5	3	37,5
13	8	104
13,5	3	40,5
14	7	98
14,5	5	72,5
15	3	45
15,5	4	62
16	4	64
16,5	1	16,5
17	3	51
17,5	2	35
18	1	18

18,5	1	18,5
19	3	57
20	6	120
20,5	1	20,5
21	5	105
21,5	3	64,5
22	1	22
22,5	1	22,5
23	2	46
24	1	24
24,5	3	73,5
25	4	100
25,5	1	25,5
26	1	26
26,5	1	26,5
27	1	27
27,5	1	27,5
28	1	28
28,5	1	28,5
29	1	29
31,5	1	31,5
32	1	32
33	1	33
36,5	2	73
37	1	37
40	3	120
42	1	42
42,5	1	42,5
44	1	44
47	1	47
48	1	48
49	1	49
49,5	2	99
50	1	50
51	1	51
52	1	52
52,5	1	52,5
53	1	53
56	1	56
60	1	60
63	1	63
69	1	69
71	1	71

71	1	71
72,5	1	72,5
73	2	146
82	1	82
89	1	89
90	1	90
91	1	91
92	1	92
103	1	103
104	1	104
120	1	120
128,5	1	128,5
140	1	140
149,5	1	149,5
158	1	158
170	1	170
170,5	1	170,5
181	1	181
197	1	197
212	1	212
239	1	239
243	1	243
247,5	1	247,5
248	1	248
255,5	1	255,5
280,5	1	280,5
296,5	1	296,5
352	1	352
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>9183,5</b>

Below is an overview of statistics relating to sick leave on Mondays only and Fridays only, in 2018 :

<b>Weekday</b>	<b>Number of days of sick leave in 2018</b>
Monday only	234.5
Friday only	231
Total	465.5

As part of its absenteeism policy, the CoR has pursued a comprehensive policy on well-being, health and absence management with a tight and personalised follow-up of absences and the implementation of a structured return-to-work policy. In particular, tailored measures are taken to foster smooth return to work after a long-term absence.

The evolution of the situation since 2013 in terms of absences at the CoR should be understood in the light of the average age of staff at that time, when CoR staff was one of the youngest in average in all EU institutions. The absence rate – which was then very low - increased from 2013 to 2014 to reach levels comparable with those of other EU institutions of similar size. With the comprehensive absence management policy that has since then been put in place, all efforts are done to avoid long-term absences and to reintegrate staff at work wherever possible. As a result, the absence rate is decreasing every year from 2015 to 2018.

- 30. How has the Committee informed the Parliament about the conclusions of the workload assessment which was conducted in the Committee in the year 2018?**

*CoR answer to question 30:*

The workload assessment was completed only in July 2019. Brief information on the results will be provided in the Annual Activity Report for the year 2019.

- 31. How has the Committee informed about the mapping of the workload distribution within the organization?**

*CoR answer to question 31:*

The workload assessment has provided data on the workload distribution in five directorates (the directorates shared with the European Economic and Social Committee, namely Logistics and Translation, were not included) for the period from mid-2017 to mid-2018. Brief information on the results will be provided in the Annual Activity Report for the year 2019.

- 32. How many members from 350 members of the Committee have registered address in Belgium?**

*CoR answer to question 32:*

Only the 12 members of the Belgian delegation. The Committee applies the policy to accept only an official address in their member state.

- 33. How many members are employed by a company in Brussels?**

*CoR answer to question 33:*

CoR members are elected politicians at the local and regional level or are responsible towards an elected assembly.

- 34. What is the whole amount of daily allowances (€290 daily allowance) paid in 2018?**

*CoR answer to question 34:*

The meeting allowance per meeting day in 2018 was EUR 312.



A total amount of EUR 2 747 742 of meeting allowances was paid for meetings held in 2018.

In addition, members are entitled to claim a flat rate travel allowance, which is calculated on the total distance of each of their journey (outbound/inbound). The total amount of travel allowances paid to members for participating at CoR meetings in 2018 was EUR 1 501 840 on 10/10/2019.

Please notice that members are entitled according to the regulation in force, to claim their expenses for meetings held in 2018 until the 1st of December 2019.

- 35. Have there been any concrete measures taken to follow-up the workload assessment conducted in 2018? Has there been any progress made to better align the allocation of human resources to Committee's priorities, to further increase internal synergies, and to improve processes?**

*CoR answer to question 35:*

The purpose of the workload assessment was neither to draw any qualitative assessment nor to make direct recommendations on possible re-allocation of resources or restructuring of the CoR, but rather to map resource allocation by activity.

The data collected was meant to be used as a basis for further reflections and discussions at senior and middle management level on possible efficiency gains to be made in rearranging workload and/or optimising processes within and between Directorates or in case potential negative priorities would need to be identified. The result of the exercise will be used in the context of the new CoR mandate, where new political and administrative priorities will be defined.

In the meantime, the workload assessment has served in the context of the CoR Digital Strategy, where several proposals have already been identified, based on findings from the workload assessment, for instance to streamline the preparation and translation of opinions.

- 36. To what extent has staff been involved in carrying out activities that would justify a higher function group?**

*CoR answer to question 36:*

In 2018, no staff members have been involved in carrying out activities that would justify a higher function group.

- 37. What were the three most important actions taken by the Committee in favour of equality?**

*CoR answer to question 37:*

**1/ A more balanced representation of men and women at management level**

- In early 2018, the CoR launched a fully fledged management programme for managers below head of unit level offered to all deputy heads of unit, heads of sector and team leaders of the CoR as well as EESC junior managers in the Joint Services.

- The CoR has supported the creation of a network for gender balance in the CoR supporting female administrators aspiring to become managers. This initiative was prepared in 2018 and officially launched in March 2019.
- To increase interest among women for management positions, EO considerations have been included among the criteria to be used in identifying beneficiaries of a Development Centre to help interested administrators to better understand where they stand in terms of managerial competences.

## **2/ Staff awareness raising on EO matters:**

- Improve awareness on EO issues and enhance EO network within the institution by creating a network of appointed **Equal Opportunities Contact Persons (EOCP) in each directorate**. The guiding principles are gathered under the concept of PARity (Propose, Assist, and Report). The Equal Opportunities Contact Persons have been instrumental in creating contacts in their respective directorates and in bringing forward specific local needs to the attention of the Equal Opportunities Officer.
- Managers are reminded through the new **EO section in the *Toolkit for managers*** about their crucial role in the EO policy area. There is a possibility to organise EO-oriented volunteering-type Away Days. Such an Away Day had already previously been organised in one Directorate. Thanks to the close working relations between managers and the local contact persons in the different directorates, awareness raising activities such as the "Road Shows" have been easier to promote and organise where a team consisting of the EO officer and a confidential councillor is invited to unit meetings to present their activities and which type of assistance can be offered.
- **Raising awareness about unconscious bias:** a pilot training on unconscious bias targeting managers was organised by the European School of Administration in 2017. Based on feedback, the training has been adapted to meet the needs of target groups. This training is considered by all institutions to be central to awareness-raising in the field of EO. Furthermore, a specific training on recruitment to the attention of functional managers is being put in place in order to allow them to recruit efficiently without creating bias and prevent any discrimination. A one hour online training (eLearning) on diversity and bias is also available on EU Learn.

## **3/ An inclusive working environment**

- The CoR faced a case of surrogacy parenting for a same-sex couple and opted to give the CoR official concerned *de facto* the same rights in term of leave as for a regular maternity by granting an ad hoc special leave equivalent in length to maternity leave. The interest of the child was the leading argument for the reasoning.
- Since 2018, a yearly event will be organised in collaboration with the COPEC in the framework of the IDAHOT DAY ( International Day against Homophobia and transphobia) to raise awareness among staff about homophobia and foster an inclusive workplace.

**38. What were the three most important actions taken by the Committee in favour of disabled people?**

*CoR answer to question 38:*

**1/Accessibility:** During renovation works in 2018, accessibility was taken into account. In the visitors' area, the double automatic entrance doors have been designed to fit persons with reduced mobility and in addition, guiding patterns on the floor for persons with a visual impairment has been foreseen. In the entrance hall, the reception is conceived keeping in mind persons with reduced mobility and persons with a hearing impairment (induction loops). Finally, the security gates have been made accessible for persons in wheelchairs.

**2/Collaboration with the other EU institution via the EO Officer network to take action together on disability-related issues (inclusion, employment, reasonable accommodations...) and also high level meetings with the Belgian authorities to improve the accessibility of the EU quarter for people with disability (urban design, transport, smoother official recognition of the disability in Belgium for our staff)**

**3/Reasonable accommodations:** In 2018, the CoR has taken several actions to overcome barriers for staff with a disability, including reasonable accommodation initiated by the Social service in collaboration with the Medical service. An awareness raising conference on Accessibility for All was organised in the premises of the Council in December 2018, and an interinstitutional brochure to the attention of new colleagues with a disability was published. The title of the brochure is AccessAble Brussels

**39. Were there any improvements done to the organisation of workspaces? What chances have there been in 2018?**

*CoR answer to question 39:*

The European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committees' long-term Buildings Strategy deals with strategic questions for the coming years and presents various scenarios for future needs/options for buildings.

This strategy, which was approved by the Committees in 2017, sets out improvement in four key areas related to the organisation of workspace:

- ✓ reorganisation of office allocations – technical audits have been started; Commission's services (DG HR, DIGIT, OIB) have been contacted to exchange experiences in relation to "The Workplace of the Future";
- ✓ refurbishment of existing buildings in view of creating healthier workspaces aligned to ergonomic standards such as renovation of some of the older offices and common areas – technical audits of VMA, BvS and REM buildings have been started;
- ✓ increasing the security level of buildings such as the renovation of the BvS entrance hall and reinforcing the inside windows with an anti-blast film;
- ✓ reduction of electricity consumption and alignment to environmental obligations – improvement of evacuation routes, lighting, replacement of window frames, renovation of heating/cooling installations in some buildings.

In addition, the ergonomist visited more than 50 workstations and made recommendations for improving their ergonomic performance. Afterwards, its recommendations were implemented. For example, the work desks of several staff have been renewed with electrically height-adjustable work desks.

**40. What flexible working arrangements does your institution offer?**

*CoR answer to question 40:*

A flexitime scheme is in place allowing staff (except managers, staff of certain political groups, Cabinet staff, security staff and drivers) to work from 7 to 20.30 provided they are present during core hours defined to be from 10 to 12 and from 14.15 to 16. The working week of 40 hours per week must be respected and staff must register their working time in the electronic application. While the objective is to keep a balanced working time, it is possible to carry-over up to 20 hours a month and debit is possible up to 16 hours a month. Recuperation is possible in half-days in due respect of the provisions of article 55 SR.

The Staff Regulations provide a number of working arrangements, including part-time, parental leave and family leave. Under certain conditions, these flexible work arrangements constitute a right for staff. In terms of working patterns, the part-time decision in the Committee of the Regions foresees a wide range of part-time formulae. Standard part-time (shorter working days) is possible with 50%, 62.5%, 75%, 80%, 90%, 95% (as well as 95% paid 100% in case of serious hardship subject to a particular procedure). Special part-time (time-credit in half-days) can be taken over periods of 1 month, 3 months or 6 months, in: 75% of working time (10 free half-days per month), 80% of working time (8 free half-days per month) or 90% of working time (4 free half-days per month). In terms of rights to part-time, provisions of 55a SR apply. Moreover, statutory provisions such as parental leave (article 42a SR) and family leave (article 42b SR) are applied at the CoR.

Finally, the CoR has rules in place to allow staff to telework be it through structural telework (in 2018, it was through a telework convention over 1 year, based on certain pre-defined formulae) or occasional telework (individual days up to – in 2018 – 28 days a year without prior authorisation by the Appointing Authority, and beyond this maximum if prior authorisation by the Appointing Authority).

**41. How often are these flexible working arrangements used? Has there been a development in the frequency?**

*CoR answer to question 41:*

Flexitime is applied all year long to CoR staff, except managers, staff of certain political groups, staff in the President's cabinet who do not benefit from flexitime.

Statistics show that facilities on working time arrangements (part-time, parental leave, family leave) continue to be used by a relatively limited number of staff members, mostly women. The use of part-time and parental leave has slightly increased as compared to 2017. Statistics for 2018 are illustrated below:

### **Part Time**

Number of staff working part-time	74
% of staff working part-time	13.75%
Number of women working part-time	56
% of women amongst part-timers	75.68%

### **Parental leave**

Number of staff taking parental leave	78
% of staff taking parental leave	14.50%
Number of women taking parental leave	52
% of women taking parental leave	66,66%

### **Family leave**

Number of staff taking family leave	7
% of staff taking family leave	1,13%
Number of women taking family leave	4
% of women taking family leave	57.14%

Telework has been in place since 2012 at the CoR and is on the increase.

In 2018, 57 staff members (10.6% of CoR staff) used structural telework and another 278 (51.67% of CoR staff) used occasional telework. Women made up 77.2% of structural teleworkers and 61.87% of occasional teleworkers.

- 42. What is the share of men and women respectively using these working arrangements?**

*CoR answer to question 42:*

Please see the answer to question 41.

- 43. To what extent does your institution encourage young parents to make use of flexible working arrangements to improve life-work balance?**

*CoR answer to question 43:*

The decisions and arrangements possible for flexible working arrangements are advertised in various ways, such as on the intranet, via brochures and through info sessions to staff, featuring among others "Having a child: what do I need to know?", "What do I need to know about part-time work?", "What do I need to know about flexitime?", "What do I need to know about teleworking?".

Staff Regulations foresee that flexible working arrangements such as parental leave and part-time are a right under certain circumstances.

For the application of these provisions, the CoR favours a good understanding between staff and managers conducive to the best work-life balance possible while ensuring service needs are met.

In 2018, the CoR has launched a wide evaluation and concertation process in order to modernise rules on telework and make them more flexible in order to

accommodate better staff and managers' needs. This revision of telework rules focused inter alia on how to accommodate better young parents' needs wherever this would be compatible with the needs of the service. As a result, a new range of teleworking formulae were developed. These new provisions entered into force in 2019.

**44. Can all categories of staff apply to these working arrangements?**

*CoR answer to question 44:*

Flexitime is applied all year long to CoR staff, except managers, staff of certain political groups, staff in the President's cabinet, security staff and drivers, who do not benefit of flexitime.

All categories of staff can apply for part-time, parental leave and family leave.

All categories of staff may apply for telework, except staff working under shift work (security staff) which is explicitly excluded from the scheme. However, eligibility conditions for structural telework require, inter alia, to perform duties that are compatible with telework, that are mainly carried out using communication and IT tools and can be performed independently, at distance. These eligibility conditions exclude *de facto* some types of jobs such as drivers and ushers.

**45. Was any staff member placed on leave in the interest of the service according to Article 50 of the staff regulations? If yes, what were the reasons?**

*CoR answer to question 45:*

No staff member of the CoR has been placed on leave in the interests of the service based on article 50 of the staff regulations.

**46. The impact on such an agreement in terms of loss of office space is mentioned in the Annual Activity Report 2018. Can you explain how the 200 members of staff will be accommodated? Do you intend to set up open or shared office spaces, and if so, has the staff been consulted? If so, what is the staff response?**

*CoR answer to question 46:*

Exchanging the B68 and TR74 buildings with the VMA in its current state would result in a loss of 10 440 m<sup>2</sup> of office space (13 396 m<sup>2</sup> minus the VMA surface area of 2 956 m<sup>2</sup> currently occupied by the European Commission), which could not be entirely offset by alternative measures in the short-term such as densifying the use of space in the other buildings and increased teleworking.

The total number of staff members housed at both B68 and TR74 buildings is around 400. Presently there is the possibility to house around 200 extra staff members in both BvS and REM buildings without undertaking any works, taking into account the unused offices. Therefore, there will be a need to find extra offices to accommodate the balance of 200 staff members after the exchange of B68/T74 with VMA.

In line with the scenarios presented to members, another office building would be needed to compensate this reduction. Several options of a connected office building might still be possible, for example, the Belliard 100 or VMA18 buildings that can be connected to the Committees' VMA building, or the Remard building of the European Parliament that can be connected to the Remorquer building of the Committees.

It is expected that the cost for the additional office space can be covered by the savings made on the annual rent for B68/TR74. These savings will be higher than the additional cost for renting the part of the VMA which is currently used by the European Commission.

Studies to analyse the scope for a more efficient allocation of space in the VMA, BvS and REM buildings in the medium term (3 to 5 years) have been launched. In parallel, the Secretaries General of the European Committee of the Regions and European Economic and Social Committee have launched a working group for reflection on new ways of working.

With the terms "use of office space in a better way", the Committees mean that several different ways of using the office space are examined. These different scenarios do include shared spaces and collaborative spaces but do not include large open office space.

By the end of 2019, the different possibilities proposed by the studies will be examined on their technical feasibility.

The studies will feed into the analysis to be prepared by a joint CoR-EESC working group that has been recently established by the secretaries-general. Staff representatives will be associated to the activities of this working group.

**47. How many seconded national experts, contract staff, interim staff, consultants, temporary agents and officials were working for the institution in 2016 - 2017 - 2018?**

*CoR answer to question 47:*

<b>Human resources by contract type 2016-2018</b>			
<b>Statutory staff by type of the contract</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Officials	411	407	404
Temporary staff members	63	71	84
Contract staff members	51	54	49
Special adviser (doctor)	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL STATUTORY STAFF</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>538</b>
<b>Others</b>			
	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
Seconded national experts	9	10	12
Paid trainees*	23	23	23
Service providers*	28	26	26
Interim*	2	4	8
<b>TOTAL OTHERS</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>69</b>

\*The data in the table is from 31 December of each year and is merely indicative for more flexible and short-term resources.

**48. Would you say that your institution had a fair recruitment practice policy in 2018? Were there any complaints, lawsuits or otherwise reported cases of non-transparent hiring or firing of staff?**

*CoR answer to question 48:*

In 2018, the recruitment policy was governed by internal rules regarding selection of staff members. These were updated in 2019 and published as a service instruction adopted by the Secretary General in February 2019. The Recruitment sector deploys the necessary efforts in order to ensure its consistent and correct application across the various services of the CoR. In 2018, the CoR received no complaints, lawsuits or otherwise reported cases of non-transparent hiring or firing of staff.

For permanent staff members, all vacancy notices are systematically advertised internally, inter-institutionally and on the CoR public website. It is one of the few European institutions to provide bilingual (FR and EN) transparent job information on all those platforms simultaneously.

Candidates for non-permanent positions can register themselves in an electronic database for spontaneous applications in order to be considered. Selections are usually centrally driven by the Recruitment sector based on specific criteria defined by the client services.

Furthermore, by providing selection panels with anonymised job applications with no information regarding gender, age and nationality, it avoids any possible bias that might influence the selection procedure. Therefore it ensures that staff members of the highest standard are recruited regardless of their nationality.

Selection panels are composed of both genders. Furthermore, they are systematically provided with advice on how to avoid biases. Members of selection panel have access to training on interviewing techniques.

Senior managerial positions (Directors, Secretary-General) are usually published also in the Official journal of the European Union in all 24 official languages and such procedures are open not only to EU officials but to all citizens meeting the eligibility criteria from all over Europe.

The selection procedures implemented by the CoR are fair, transparent and consistently monitored in order to comply with both the Staff regulations and the internal regulations in place.

**49. What were the costs in 2018 respectively for away days, trainings, closed conferences or similar events for staff? How many staff members participated in the respective events? Where did these events take place?**

*CoR answer to question 49:*

The costs and number of participants for away days, and management seminars and team buildings can be broken down as follows:



- away days: EUR 9.818,80 for 264 participants
- Management seminars and teambuildings: EUR 8.597,3 for 33 participants

These events took place as indicated in the table below:

- Brussels: 8 events
- Ghent: 5 events
- Tervuren, De Haan, Durbuy, Genk, Schelle, Mechelen, Dinant: 1 event each

Concerning training courses organized and financed by the CoR (CoR internal courses presented in the EU-Learn catalogue open to CoR and EESC staff), the total cost was EUR 115.298,17, with 1786 participants in total, excluding specific IT courses, own initiative training for individual staff members and special scheme for translators.

## **Buildings**

### **50. What has been done in cooperation with the EESC to assess potential renovation needs and to make an estimation of the costs for the scenario where the two Committees take over the entire VMA building?**

*CoR answer to question 50:*

#### **a) Signature of the Administrative Agreement**

The CoR Bureau gave its agreement on 9 April 2019 to the exchange of buildings and delegated the Secretary-General to sign, along with the EESC, an administrative agreement with the European Commission for the exchange of the VMA building with the B68/T74 buildings.

The administrative agreement on the exchange was signed by the Director of OIB and by both Secretary-Generals of the Committees on 28 August 2019. The exchange will become effective on 16 September 2022. The emphyteutic contract for the building foresees an option to buy that can only be exercised at the end of the year 2028.

#### **b) Technical condition of the VMA building**

In 1985, the VMA building was occupied by the European Parliament, it had been designed and built as a transit offices for Members of Parliament, and was connected by the bridge to the current JDE building. Currently, the VMA building still has several facilities that date back from the year of construction, 1985.

It is clear that the VMA building is very old (more than 30 years old) and that the quality of the internal work environment requires an update in the next years:

- the technical installations are very old and unreliable;
- office surfaces require a short-term renovation given their state of obsolescence of more than 30 years;

On the other hand, the conference rooms still function properly and are in a state of use for a period of about 10 years.

Given that the carrying out of heavy work by leaseholder requires the prior approval of the owner and that it is not very appropriate at the end of a long lease, the Committees decided to proceed only the light renovation of office areas by 2022.

This renovation will have objectives for all areas except conference rooms:

- the technical compliance to allow an extension of life of the building until 2028.
- creating a more modern and adequate work environment.
- securing the building

The security works on the building's entrance hall will begin in 2020 and these works' cost is estimated at one million euro.

### **c) Technical audit of the VMA**

As a first step, in accordance with the real estate strategy, the Committees launched a technical audit of the VMA in order to better understand the constraints of the existing building. In 2019, a specialized engineering and design office was commissioned to carry out the technical audit of the VMA compliant with the European standard NEN 2767 and to finalize it before the end of 2019.

The mission is to perform a technical audit of compliance / non-compliance (regulatory) technical facilities and elements of buildings to be entirely renovated or partially, as well as those to maintain due to their remaining residual life.

The conclusions should enable the Committees to identify the work that is essential in the short term to enable the building to comply with the regulations in force and extend the life of the building for 10 years.

Based on the analyses and conclusions, a list of opportunities for improvement of the building and possible developments will be established.

### **d) Assessment of the scenarios for the occupancy of the building**

In order to explore the possibilities of occupation of the VMA, the Committees have commissioned a specialized architectural and design office to study and establish several scenarios for occupying the building, of different density. This study will reveal several different job scenarios, as well as their advantages, their disadvantages and the cost of their achievements.

Also, the ideal planning of the VMA will be determined, taking into account the current configuration of the exterior walls, the supporting structure and the capacity of technical installations.

This technical study, several renovation scenarios with technical ambitions, opportunities and growing environmental opportunities is underway. The final report and the presentations of this study are expected by the end of 2019.

### **e) Assessment of the upgrading works**

The light renovation works of the VMA will be determined by the conclusions of the technical audit of the building and the assessment of the different scenarios mentioned above

In 2019, the Committees will again be sending a specialized architectural and design office to draw up specifications for the light renovation works that will enable the tender to be issued and the signing of a framework contract for works by the end of

2020. Only after this study will it be possible to make an accurate estimate of the renovation costs.

Renovation work are foreseen to be carried out from the end of 2020 until the summer of 2022.

- 51. Has there been an assessment of potential renovation needs of the VMA building? Does the Committee have an estimation of the costs necessary for renovation? How does the Committee plan to provide the necessary financial resources for the renovation?**

*CoR answer to question 51:*

In its 179th meeting, 29 November 2017, the Bureau decided on a building strategy and future scenarios. Before each building renovation and in line with its parameter "J) *Renovation work and multi-annual planning*", Committees carry out a technical audit in line with a universal technical standard (such as European standard NEN 2767) on all technical installations and building components, in order to determine, in as objective a manner as possible, the capacity of each structure to fulfil the role for which it was designed and built and in order to define the residual service life thereof. The outcome of this audit will make it possible to pinpoint all the technical installations and building components to be fully or partially renovated, and those to be maintained because they still have adequate residual service life. Technical reports drawn up by maintenance contractors and inspections constitute a fundamental source of information for this audit.

As outlined in the scenarios accompanying the CoR building strategy, the VMA building will require a minor refurbishment of the offices' area<sup>2</sup> at the earliest moment possible (2020-2022) and a more thorough renovation when the Committees will totally own the VMA building in 2028 (end of the long term lease contract with option to buy).

The VMA building currently fulfils the legal requirements concerning such issues as air quality and the monitoring of asbestos detected in some installations. At the same time, the age of the building and notably technical installations – in particular ventilation and air tightness of the windows - call for an update in the interest of sustainable safety and well-being of members and staff in the building. Therefore a light renovation of the offices area, to be concluded by 2022, should be foreseen: the cost for the light renovation is estimated at EUR 6 million over a period of 3 years (2020-2022; total for CoR and EESC). Technical audits have been launched beginning 2019 in order to better identify the scope of the works required, taking into account repeated complaints, e.g. about the ventilation and heating installations. In addition to the renovation costs, works for the reinforcement of the security of the building, preparatory studies and project management, as well as possibly IT connection costs should also be taken into consideration.

The costs will be covered by the CoR and EESC according to the sharing key applicable under the administrative cooperation agreement. The budget for the refurbishment works will be asked in the 2021 budget request.

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<sup>2</sup>

Conference rooms can still be used for 10 years without refurbishment.

The studies for the VMA light renovation work program are going on since the summer of 2019 and the works could start by the end of 2020 after publication of a specific call for tender.

52. **Has the agreement between the EESC and Committee and European Commission on the exchange of the Commission's VMA building against the Committees B 68/TRE 74 buildings (rue Belliard 68 and rue de Trèves 74 are adjacent buildings) been signed? What were the advantages of the exchange of buildings for the Committee?**

*CoR answer to question 52:*

**Signing of the Administrative Agreement.**

In its 179th meeting, 29 November 2017, the Bureau decided on a building strategy and future scenarios and, in line with the principle of geographical concentration, the scenario that keeps the VMA building for the use of the CoR and EESC after 2021 was followed-up first.

In this context, the Committees and the OIB agreed in 2017 to explore further the possibility to exchange with the European Commission the VMA building to Belliard 68 (B68) and Trèves 74 (TRE) buildings.

The Bureaus of both Committees gave their agreement (CoR on 9 April 2019 and EESC on 19 March 2019) on the exchange of buildings and on 21 August, the Secretaries General of both Committees informed by letter the budgetary authority about their intention to sign the administrative agreement.

The administrative agreement on the exchange was signed by the Director of OIB and by both Secretary-Generals of the Committees on 28 August 2019. The exchange will become effective on 16 September 2022, date when the value of both sets of buildings will be identical (market value minus lease payments still to be done).

**Advantages of the exchange of buildings for the Committee**

**a) Geographical concentration of buildings**

The main committee building, Jacques Delors, occupies a strategic position between the Parliament, the Council and the Commission, and is close to them. It is an important political asset, to develop contacts and ensure the coordination of political work, but also in terms of the visibility of the Committees in the eyes of other institutions, the media and the general public.

Since the geographic concentration and the physical connection of the buildings with the Jacques Delors building provide significant financial and non-financial benefits, this parameter is the major strategic focus of the Committees' real estate strategy. These advantages are: the reduction of operating costs in terms of security, technical services, conference organization and inland transport, the optimization of the reliability of technical and IT installations, the minimization of the impact on the environment, improving efficiency, profitability, comfort and image.

The geographic concentration is intended to accommodate a maximum of services, including conference rooms, in the central buildings, which are in close proximity to each other and are ideally physically connected to each other. At present, 18% of the offices are not connected to the Jacques Delors building. If Committees leave the Van Maerlant building for a building not connected to the central building, this percentage will increase to 30%.

**b) The VMA offers the following specific benefits:**

- high productivity for members and staff of both Committees, with a large number of office spaces nearby and a physical connection to the Jacques Delors building. Compared to an independent building located at approximately 200 m, this would represent a non-financial benefit (time saving) of approximately 22,000 working hours per year (lost when traveling between buildings);
- low operating costs - in terms of security, computing and conference logistics - for offices and conference rooms, as they are physically connected to the Jacques Delors building;
- a favourable strategic situation for both Committees from the point of view of the internal functioning in the event of a significant increase in the level of alert: it is easier to implement reinforced access controls in one place without hindering the functioning different services;
- Visibility and ease of access to buildings for visitors and the general public remains easy thanks to the maintenance of the footbridge, which is an important element of the urban landscape of Belliard Street and contributes to the visibility of the Committees;
- The effect of "unity" and "synergy" for staff is stronger in the case of a cluster of buildings than in a situation where some staff members are relegated to a peripheral building.
- Maintenance of 3 conference rooms with interpretation booths for 11 languages; infrastructure that is not easy to find in Brussels outside the European Institutions <sup>3</sup>.

**Harassment**

**53. What steps to create the internal complaint mechanism or penalties provided for harassment cases involving Committee Members?**

***CoR answer to question 53:***

The CoR is currently discussing a draft Code of conduct for its members that covers a wide range of issues, including a specific procedure in the event of alleged harassment of a staff member by a CoR member and the ensuing sanctions. This

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<sup>3</sup> The average number of conferences held each year in the different conference rooms is 476 and the average number of participants per conference is estimated at 70.

specific procedure is largely based on the one in place in the Parliament (as laid down in the Parliament's Bureau Decision of 2 July 2018). The adoption of this draft Code of conduct is on the agenda of the CoR plenary session of December 2019.

**54. What were the expenditures in 2018 for the management of court cases and Court sentences? What was the specific amount for harassment cases?**

*CoR answer to question 54:*

The total expenditure paid in 2018 for the management of court cases and court sentences was EUR 23 297,98. Of this total amount, the amount of EUR 18 197,87 (in detail: EUR 3 850,00 for the CoR legal assistance costs, EUR 9 347,98 for the reimbursement to the applicant's legal costs, and EUR 5 000,00 for the applicant's moral damages) was related to case T-567/16 (concerning the occupational origin of the invalidity of a former staff member); EUR 500 were related to the legal assistance costs in the framework of claims in a bankrupt proceeding; EUR 4 600,00 were related to the CoR legal assistance costs in case T-529/16 (pending case concerning the application of a solidarity levy without adjusting staff members' remuneration).

No amounts have been paid for harassment cases in 2018; however the judgment in the above-mentioned case T-567/16 referred to a professional conflict.

**55. Where there any cases related to harassment reported, investigated and/or concluded in 2018?**

*CoR answer to question 55:*

No cases related to harassment have been reported, investigated nor concluded in 2018.

**56. What measures is your institution taking to raise awareness about the possibility to file harassment complaints?**

*CoR answer to question 56:*

The CoR regularly organizes training for all staff on the topic of "Prevention of harassment" focusing on the rules, provisions and procedures in place regarding harassment complaints.

In addition, information can be found at all times in the Newcomers Guide, Newcomers elearning module, on the intranet under "Dignity at work" and in the HR Toolkit for managers.

Together with the EO Officer and a COPEC representative, the coordinator of the confidential counsellors is regularly invited to participate in so called "Road Shows", which refers to structured visits to unit meetings across the institution at the invitation of the manager in question. The purpose of these visits is precisely to inform staff on points related to EO, diversity, conflict, harassment and the support which exists. In 2018, 8 such visits were organized throughout the institution.

- 57. Has there been any recent modifications to your anti-harassment rules, and could you specify to what extent?**

*CoR answer to question 57:*

No recent modifications have been implemented. However, a new decision on "Dignity at work" is under development.

- 58. Do you have a functioning team of the confidential-staff-councillors? Did they and the staff as a whole, receive any special training / seminars on the prevention of harassment?**

*CoR answer to question 58:*

The CoR has a functioning team (panel, according to decision) of confidential councillors. Currently, 6 are appointed and 2 placed on a reserve list. The CoR confidential counsellors have received a 12 days training programme before taking up function. Regular supervision and further training is ensured.

The sessions on preventing harassment are regularly proposed for staff and managers.

### **Whistleblowing**

- 59. Have there been any cases of whistleblowing in 2018?**

*CoR answer to question 59:*

No whistleblowing cases have been reported in 2018 at the CoR.

- 60. How did you follow-up on the most recent court decision and the 2017 Discharge Resolution of the European Parliament regarding the open case of Mr. Robert McCoy?**

*CoR answer to question 60:*

In execution of the General Court's judgment of 23 October 2018 in Case T-567/16 McCoy / CdR, which annulled the CoR decision of 2 December 2014 endorsing the findings of the second Invalidation Committee, that had concluded that Mr Robert McCoy's invalidity was not of professional origin, the Secretary-General adopted, in his capacity of Appointing Authority and pursuant to the decision of the CoR Bureau meeting of 4 December 2018, the decision No 19/2019 of 11 February 2019 giving mandate to a new (the third) Invalidation Committee to determine in a well-motivated and assessed manner the origin of Mr Robert McCoy's disability.

The CoR's administration did its utmost to ensure that the workings of this Invalidation Committee was fully compliant with the procedural requirements developed in the General Court's judgement. The third Invalidation Committee was composed of three independent doctors, being a medical officer appointed by the CoR of and proposed by the European Parliament, the doctor of Mr. Robert McCoy's choice as well as a third doctor appointed by agreement between the two doctors.

This third Invalidation Committee met on 24 May 2019 and concluded unanimously that the invalidity of Mr. Robert McCoy Robert McCoy is the result of an occupational disease.

After having informed the CoR Bureau at its meeting on 25 June 2019, the Secretary-General, in his capacity of Appointing Authority, endorsed the doctors' conclusion by decision n°0133/2019 of 26 June 2019.

As a consequence, the Paymaster Office of the EU (PMO), responsible for calculating and reimbursing the contributions of the pension scheme in accordance with Article 45 of Annex VIII to the Staff Regulations, reimbursed Mr McCoy in July 2019, pursuant to Article 78(5) of the Staff Regulations, of the entire contributions to the pension scheme between the date of his admission to the benefit of the invalidity allowance (1 July 2007) and the day before his admission to the retirement pension (31 July 2010).

In addition, as announced in the 2017 Discharge Resolution of the European Parliament, the CoR fully complied with and duly executed the Court judgement by paying the EUR 5,000 compensation to Mr McCoy and by covering the entire legal costs.

- 61. What steps have been taken to comply with the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union on 23 October 2018 on the case against the Committee lodged by a former internal auditor?**

*CoR answer to question 61:*

Please see the answer to question 60.

- 62. What actions have been taken by the Committee due to the final report of OLAF concerning the whistleblowing case notified to OLAF in October 2016?**

*CoR answer to question 62:*

On basis of the report of OLAF received on 11 January 2019 concerning the whistleblowing case notified to OLAF in October 2016, the person concerned has been invited two times for a pre-disciplinary audition pursuant to article 3 of Annex IX of the Staff Regulations (in May and in September) taking into account the request by the person concerned to postpone the hearing on the basis of a medical certificate.

After having given the opportunity to exercise the right to be heard, the person concerned has been informed by letter with acknowledgment of receipt that the Appointing Authority will as a next step take a decision on basis of article 3 of Annex IX of the Staff Regulations concerning the opening of a disciplinary procedure.

### **Communications**

- 63. What has been done to improve the communication with Union citizens?**

*CoR answer to question 63:*

In 2018, the most important contribution of the CoR to improve communication with Union citizens was through the "Reflecting on Europe" campaign (renamed "Future of Europe" campaign as of October 2018), providing a platform for regions, cities and citizens to engage. This followed up on the good work already carried out since the autumn 2016.



CoR Members were supported to organise – together with MEPs, EU institutions' representatives and local and regional politicians – 75 citizens' dialogues attracting 5,700 people in 23 countries. This brought the number of such event since over 200 local events have been organised in 117 regions and 182 cities, involving 198 CoR Members and reaching out to over 21 500 participants.

Second, the CoR kept using innovative tools such as the "Have Your Say on Europe" online survey and mobile phone "app" to boost local events. These tools were useful in enabling participants to have their say on the future of the EU, reaching beyond the "usual suspects" who attend events, and allowing everyone to see the results in real time in each Member State as they evolved. The survey was also used to reach out to potential voters in the European elections, as part of the CoR's commitment to work with the EP. In 2018, 8,000 replies were received bringing the total to over 23,000 collected since surveys started in 2017.

Third, results of the CoR dialogues fed into two important documents: (i) the CoR's "Reflecting on Europe" final report, and (ii) the CoR Opinion on the future of Europe, both adopted on 9 October 2018. The opinion included the proposal to make citizens' dialogues a permanent and structured format built on inter-institutional cooperation and combined with a feedback mechanism. The final report was the first formal input into the December 2018 European Council. The European Council on 13/14 December discussed about the results of the citizens' consultations or dialogues. The joint report<sup>4</sup> adopted by the Council states that the "success of the dialogues organised in the different member states is also reflected in calls for continued engagement. Encouraging action and debate on EU issues at grassroots level is perceived as particularly important by citizens. In fact, the citizens' consultation initiative does follow in the path of other practices, already well established in several member states, that aim to foster dialogue about the EU at grassroots level."<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the presidents of the CoR and EESC proposed for discussion, in December 2018, the concept of a "permanent structured dialogue mechanism"<sup>6</sup> with citizens, which would ensure that their views directly inform EU decision-making and public policy.

In November 2018, the CoR organised, together with the European Parliament and other EU institutions, the 9th edition of EuroPCom, the largest event on public communication in Europe, under the headline "Campaigning for Europe". The event provided a unique connecting platform in preparation for the election year ahead. Over 1,100 communication professionals from all the EU Member States and beyond attended the conference to share their views and exchange good practices.

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<sup>4</sup> Council of the European Union (2018): Citizens' consultations-Joint Report (14535/18, 3 December 2018): <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14535-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 8

<sup>6</sup> Non-Paper: Bringing the EU closer to its citizens: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Documents/SOTREG/3878-factsheet%20B%20BaT.pdf>

**64. How do you reach out for specific target groups via social media channels? Based on available insights and/or social media analytics can you tell whether this target group has been reached? What difference do you observe in this regards among the different social media channels?**

*CoR answer to question 64:*

The CoR has defined local and regional authorities and EU institutions to be its main target groups in its Communication Strategy 2015-2020 and Digital Communication Strategy 2016-2020, with a special attention to its members as multipliers. The social media actions follow these strategies with member-centric content on the 3 institutional accounts of the CoR: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn. The CoR had by the end of 2018 32,100 followers on Twitter (+20% compared to 2017), 31,400 on Facebook (+90%), and 10,700 on LinkedIn (+60%) with the total mentions standing at 89,600 (+22%).

The CoR builds on the potential of the CoR Members as multipliers, given that the most followed 20 CoR Members and Alternates on social media can reach together more than 2.2 million people.

The CoR gives utmost importance to engage with its members on social media in the frame of its communication campaigns, covering their political activities at the CoR and providing them with content to multiply on their channels. In 2018, we have tested different formats on social media to communicate about the adoption of opinions monitoring their impact each time.

The CoR uses state of the art monitoring and listening technology to understand the impact it makes on its target audiences. The CoR's 2018 analysis showed that total CoR related social media mentions increased by 22% (to 89,600), engagement increased by 50% (to 155,907), and potential reach increased by 24,6% (to 398.7 million) compared to 2017. In general, it is CoR plenaries and the European Week of Regions and Cities that triggered most of the time social media mentions and engagement influenced by current events. Evidence from a comparison of social media monitoring data from 2017 and 2018 shows an increase of outreach despite less frequent postings and indicates that carefully drafted and quality content is more relevant than posting everything indiscriminately. Better targeting on the different social media channels were possible through paid social media campaigns around key events such as the European Week of Regions and Cities and EuroPCom.

The CoR's experience shows that the use of the different social media platform change country by country therefore it tailors its actions according to the specific CoR Member or Member States involved. Among CoR members, Facebook is the most popular social media platform. The CoR considers Twitter a very effective tool for Brussels related events or in the case of specific countries such as Spain, Italy or the Netherlands, as well as a platform to provide fast reactions. The CoR is also actively building a community on LinkedIn where it can connect easily with experts and practitioners of the policy fields the CoR deals with. In 2018, the CoR has set up and continued building closed groups for members and selected events' participant on LinkedIn and Facebook.

**65. Has the Committee accomplished in 2018 the target to publish 15 publications of files/studies?**

*CoR answer to question 65:*

Yes, in 2018 the Committee of the Regions published 27 studies. 26 studies have been published in the CoR studies webpage (available [here](#)) and one study has been published in the brochures webpage (available [here](#)).

All studies are also available at the EU Publication Office website (<https://publications.europa.eu/en/home> - list of CoR 2018 studies available [here](#)).

**66. How has the cooperation improved with the other Union institutions in joint communication campaigns and other initiatives?**

*CoR answer to question 66:*

Beyond the initiatives mentioned below, the SG of CoR has invited the Director-Generals of the EP, the Council, the European Commission and the EESC to working meetings on three occasions in 2018 during which issues of common concern such as the 2019 European election campaign and the cooperation on EU communication more generally were debated. The most important event held jointly by the aforementioned institutions in 2018 was the organisation of the 9<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Public Communication (EuroPCom) on 8/9 November, which focused on the 2019 European elections, too (see below for details).

The CoR communication campaign on the future of Europe and the role of regions and cities was implemented with other EU institutions, notably for the organisation of citizens' dialogues across Europe. On various occasions, the CoR co-organised local events with the European Commission and its Representations, Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs) and European Parliament Liaison Offices. This work was accompanied by media partnership with some target countries. In particular, the cooperation with the European Commission (DG Communication and EDICs) was promoted on a regular basis via the following activities: sharing management and costs for the organization of local events, including preparatory meetings; unique visual identity for "joint citizens' dialogues"; and participation of CoR members and European Commissioners and/or senior officials (e.g. [Florence](#), 11 May 2018, [Bucharest](#) 07 September 2018).

The following MEPs were involved in CoR local events in 2018: Brando Benifei (IT/S&D), Alberto Cirio (IT/EPP), Mercedes Bresso (IT/S&D), Anneli Jäätteenmäki (FI/ALDE), Nicola Caputo (IT/S&D), Martina Werner (DE/S&D), Karine Gloanec Maurin (FR/S&D), Herbert Dorfmann (AT/EPP), Michel Reimon (AT/Greens), Constanze Krehl (DE/S&D), Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (ES/S&D) and Tonino Picula (HR/S&D).

In addition, the CoR worked together with the EP and in particular its Committee on Regional Development (REGI) as well as with the European Commission's Regional and Policy DG and the European Investment Bank on the reform of EU cohesion policy and the 2021-2027 budget. As usual, the most impactful annual activity in this respect

was the European Week of Regions and Cities (8-11 October) involving 7,000 participants including 200 representative from the press and audiovisual media.

Other communication activities with a strong element of cooperation in 2018 included:

- The 2018 edition of the CoR online course (MOOC) entitled "Make the most of EU resources for your region or city" was designed and implemented with several institutional partners, including different Directorates-General of the European Commission (REGIO, BUDG, EMPL, AGRI and Eurostat) and the European Investment Bank, which reached almost 15,000 participants between January and February.
- The inter-institutional Open Day on 5 May in Brussels. All the institutions involved – European Parliament, European Commission, European External Action Service, Council and European Economic and Social Committee – met regularly to organize this event jointly, including designing a common visual identity and coordinating promotional activities. Together with the EESC, the CoR opened its doors to 2,900 visitors.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual EuroPCom conference on 8/9 November held in close partnership with the European Parliament (DG COMM), the European Commission (DG COMM, DG REGIO), the European Council, the European Investment Bank and the EESC. In view of the European Parliament elections in 2019, the event was the CoR's major contribution to the inter-institutional efforts in preparation of the election campaigns and attracted 1,100 communication experts, one third of whom from national and regional authorities.
- The CoR was the first EU institution outside the European Parliament to adopt the "This time I'm Voting" campaign ahead of the European elections, encouraging all its staff and Members to take part in this initiative from November 2018 onwards.

**67. Has the number of subscribers of Committee online course for regional and local authorities increased?**

*CoR answer to question 67:*

The CoR launched a massive open online course (MOOC) in January 2018 under the headline "Make the most of EU resources for your region or city". The course was the third of its kind and divided into six main themes, each online for a week (15/01-23/02/2018), and the whole course was available for one year online, i.e. until January 2019. For the first time, it was made available in three languages (English, French and German), and several partners were involved in co-creating the content:

European Commission (DGs REGIO, BUDG, EMPL, AGRI and Eurostat), the European Investment Bank, as well as the Interreg-Europe and URBACT programmes funded by DG REGIO.

This MOOC had the highest number of followers ever reached for the CoR, with almost 15 000 participants (follower by language: EN: 11,044; FR: 2,426; DE: 1,452 ). For comparison purposes, the 2015 and 2016 editions of the MOOC respectively reached 8,500 and 5,500 participants. The satisfaction levels measured among participants of the 2018 course were rather high with 79% of respondents said the course fulfilled their expectations, 88% found the course 'very to somewhat interesting' and 94% would follow a subsequent course on EU affairs. Other interesting figures to mention include over 22,000 views of the live Facebook chat with then-DG BUDG Director-General Nadia Calviño and 42,300 views of the Facebook live debate on 'advice vs money for regions and cities', organised by the European Investment Bank.

**68. How much did Committee spend overall on communication activities to increase its visibility?**

*CoR answer to question 68:*

In 2018, the CoR's resources for communication included the management of an operating budget of EUR 2,375,225 representing roughly 2.5% of the total CoR budget. The amount included about EUR 475,000 more than initially available for the budget year, which was transferred from other budget lines with lower absorption rates. The operating budget was split across four budget lines (BL):

- Events (BL 2542): EUR 744,850 for the organisation of events (in Brussels or in decentralised locations) in partnership with local and regional authorities, with their associations and with the EU institutions;
- Press and media (BL 2600): EUR 682,210 for media relations with European, national, regional, local or specialised media and partnerships with audio-visual, written or radio media;
- Publications, web, social media (BL 2602): EUR 911,471 for digital content production and distribution of audio-visual, electronic or web-based information support;
- Editions (BL 2622): EUR 36,694 for documentation and library expenditures including subscriptions to specialised media

Almost 62% of the above expenses related to the three communication campaigns and just over 38% to cross-cutting activities. The main fields of expenditure were split as follows:

- Almost 28% was committed to "regions, cities and local authorities working for the future of Europe" including preparations for the 2019 summit in Bucharest;
- Almost 26% was committed to "investing in sustainable growth and jobs in all regions, cities and local authorities" with an equal share spent on press/media and events.

- Almost 8% was committed to "EU regions, cities and local authorities as change agents", the majority of which was for press/media activities;
- Almost 38% was committed to cross-cutting activities, the majority of which (64%) was allocated to web/social media/publications, with 32% being allocated to press/media

The above figures for the communication of the committee itself do not include the communication budgets of the CoR Political Groups. These cover expenditure resulting from the political and information activities of Committee Members in the exercise of their European mandate and in particular in promoting and enhancing the role of the Members of the European Committee of the Regions through the activities of their political groups, which are closely aligned with those of the European Parliament's political families. The budget for political groups' communication activities in 2018 was EUR 315,311.

### **Transparency**

#### **69. What activities has the institution started and what policies implemented in the area of transparency in 2018?**

##### *CoR answer to question 69:*

In view of having more transparency on the transport expenses of its members, the Committee participated in 2018 to a joint call for tender with the PE to install a travel agent.

This travel agent, which is the same as the one for the EP, is in place and operational since the 1st of January 2019.

#### **70. Did the Ombudsman issue any recommendations to the Committee in 2017 or 2018 and how did you follow-up on them?**

##### *CoR answer to question 70:*

On 22 May 2018, the Ombudsman adopted a decision concerning a stakeholder consultation organised by the CoR during the preparation on the CoR opinion on copyright in the digital single market (case 1800/2016/JAP). The complainant alleged that only right-holders were able to submit comments and thus that this consultation was one-sided. The Ombudsman found however that the CoR invited not only right-holders but also other stakeholders and thus decided to close this case with the finding that there was no maladministration. The Ombudsman only advised the CoR to publish in advance in its website more detailed information about these consultations. This advice was incorporated into the CoR Practical guide on the interaction of staff with external entities of July 2018 and is followed in practice by the CoR.

On 6 July 2018, the Ombudsman adopted a decision concerning the access to an exhibition held in the CoR premises (case 810/2018/JF). The complainant regretted not having been given access to the exhibition in question and not having received a reply from the CoR to her messages. The CoR showed that it had replied to her and provided further justification on security grounds to regulate access to its premises. The Ombudsman concluded that the CoR settled the complaint and thus closed the case.

**71. How many call for tenders did your institution organise in 2018? Please indicate the value and the number of applicants for each tender.**

***CoR answer to question 71:***

Below is presented the list of tender procedures of a value above EUR 15.000,00 as a result of which the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) signed a contract in the course of 2018 (with indication of the value and the number of tenders received for each tender).

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title / Scope</b>	<b>Amount in EUR</b>	<b>Number of tenders per call for tenders</b>
<b>Contracts awarded in areas of competence of the CoR 'Own services'</b>			
1	Technical equipment, mobile interpretation booths - NAT external Commission meeting - Costa Navarino, Greece 24/05/2018	<b>24.960,00</b>	1
2	Rental of Interpretation services for the COTER 19th Commission meeting to take place in Sofia, BG on 06 June 2018.	<b>35.948,00</b>	2
3	Technical equipment, mobile interpretation booths - ECON external Commission meeting - 21-22/06/2018	<b>17.725,00</b>	2
4	Services d'interprétation - SEDEC external Commission meeting - 25-26/06/2018	<b>22.800,00</b>	3
5	Rental of Interpretation services for the ENVE Conference on Sustainable Development in the European Lake Regions and the ENVE 19th Commission meeting to take place in Balatonfüred, Hungary on 28 and 29 June 2018	<b>26.260,00</b>	2
6	Location système de vote électronique pour les sessions plénières du CdR	<b>255.000,00</b>	1

7	Multiple framework contract for the provision of studies in the field of External relations (RELEX)	<b>400.000,00</b>	3
8	Rental of Interpretation services for the 185th meeting of the European Committee of the Regions; Extraordinary Bureau to take place in Innsbruck, Austria on 13 and 14 September 2018	<b>28.020,00</b>	2
9	Acquisition of Politico PRO subscription for 1 year	<b>21.848,00</b>	1
10	Rental of Digital Conference and Interpretation Systems, Booths, Audio-Visual Equipment and Accessories for the EPP Group meeting in Klosterneuburg, Austria on 10 December 2018	<b>26.877,00</b>	2
Contracts awarded for CoR in areas of competence of the CoR-EESC 'Joint services'			
11	Study bureau and technical assistance	<b>1.745.500,00</b>	4
12	Cleaning and other related services	<b>6.672.000,00</b>	5
13	Securitisation works to the BVS and to other buildings	<b>2.162.265,00</b>	3
14	Provision of expert appraisal services and technical control of office buildings	<b>88.872,17</b>	2
15	Control of lifting devices	<b>76.000,00</b>	3



16	Audit of carbon balance sheet data	42.000,00	2
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- 72. On 11 December 2018, the rules for data protection in the EU Institutions were brought in line with the rules set out in the GDPR. Did your institution need to proceed to any changes in the way it handles data to adapt to this new legislation? What were those changes?**

***CoR answer to question 72:***

The CoR, for complying with the new rules on data protection, has replaced the notifications to the data protection officer by the records of processing activities, has created a central register of records of processing activities, has updated the privacy statements, has adopted a procedure to be followed in the event of a personal data breach and has created a register of data breaches. A decision on the implementing rules of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 and a decision on the restriction of certain data subjects' rights under Article 25 of the above-mentioned regulation are under preparation and its adoption is expected by the first semester of 2020.

**Fraud & Corruption (including co-operation with OLAF)**

- 73. How did you co-operate with OLAF and ECA in the spheres of prevention, investigation or corrective measures?**

***CoR answer to question 73:***

The CoR keeps OLAF regularly informed about the above-mentioned ongoing case (please see the answer to question 62).

Furthermore, on 10 May 2017, the CoR set up with OLAF administrative arrangements aiming to provide a structured framework for co-operation and facilitate the timely exchange of information between both institutions under Regulation n°883/2013 and CoR Decisions 26/2004 and 508/2015, in order to ensure the effectiveness of investigations led by OLAF and to streamline and improve best practices between both institutions.

**Conflict of Interests (Rules and control mechanism)**

- 74. What measures / rules has (or had been introduced in 2018) the Institution to prevent and fight conflict of interests? How did those rules change until today?**

***CoR answer to question 74:***

The rules on preventing and fighting conflict of interests are since long time set up in the Staff Regulations, in the CoR Decision 419/2005 on deontology and integrity, the CoR Code of Good Administrative Behaviour and Service Instruction 12/2005 on the prevention of conflict of interest, as well as in specific internal decisions such as for example the Decision 66/2014 on outside activities and assignments.

Furthermore, in 2018, the CoR further developed its rules on preventing and fighting conflicts of interest in its Decision 14/2018 on Internal Financial Rules (Appendix I: Charter of Tasks and Responsibilities of the Authorizing Officer by Delegation, Section 7: Fraud, corruption, conflict of interest), as well as in its Practical guide on the interaction of staff with external entities, adopted in July 2018.

Moreover, ethics training accessible to all staff and managers is organized and advertised regularly. An e-learning training with a specific area dedicated to ethics is designed mainly for newcomers and placed in the first page of the institution's intranet for easy access for all.

The CoR is currently discussing a draft Code of conduct for its members that covers a wide range of issues. The adoption of this draft Code of conduct is on the agenda of the CoR plenary session of December 2019.

**75. Do you have a functioning 'Revolving doors Policy'?**

***CoR answer to question 75:***

In 2016, the CoR put in place a reinforced 'Revolving doors Policy' concerning senior management pursuant to the 2014 Staff Regulations reform, completing CoR Decision 66/2014 on outside activities and assignments, and in line with the Ombudsman recommendations pursuant to its inquiry on the implementation of Article 16(3) and (4) of the Staff Regulations.

In order to ensure that the intended outside activities after leaving the service can be duly assessed, all staff leaving the service of the CoR, and senior managers in particular, are proactively and systematically reminded of their obligation to declare their intention to engage in an occupational activity during the period under the duty to behave with integrity and discretion toward the former institution.

In concrete terms, a form called "Declaration of intention to engage in an occupational activity after leaving the Committee of the Regions" has been included in the 'circuit de départ' (departure form), enumerating the various administrative tasks to be fulfilled when leaving the service.

The CoR reminds also staff leaving the service temporarily for unpaid leave (CCP) or for invalidity of their obligations under article 16 SR and COR decision n°66/2014 on outside activities and assignments.

As stated in the annual information, published on Internet and Intranet, the CoR reminds former senior officials, as well as all other former staff members that they are obliged to inform the Appointing Authority without any delay in case any circumstances which were relevant for granting of the permission have changed. In the light of such a change, the Appointing Authority shall examine whether to modify the conditions of its permission or, in exceptional circumstances, to withdraw it.

The scope of the assessment for the individual cases is based on the requirement of article 16(3) SR pursuant to which "the appointing authority shall, in principle, prohibit former senior officials, during the 12 months after leaving the service, from engaging in lobbying or advocacy vis-à-vis staff of their former institution for their business, clients or employers on matters for which they were responsible during the last three years in the service".

The CoR indicates clearly in the annual information that the assessment is not limited to envisaged activities whose sole or primary object is explicitly declared to be lobbying or advocacy, but also examines whether, owing to the nature of the activity, this might entail or involve, in theory or in practice, lobbying or advocacy. Such large interpretation ensures an effective implementation of article 16(3) SR.

**Activities to Lower the Environmental footprint (EMAS rules, energy, water, paper consumption, CO2 offsetting)**

**76. Please present your activities and achieved results in this field.**

*CoR answer to question 76:*

The EMAS activities carried out in 2018 enabled the Committees to reduce electricity and paper consumption compared to 2017. The consumption of gas, water and office waste increased as compared to 2017. At the same time, the overall results are down compared to the reference years namely 2010 for office waste and 2009 for other aspects.

The 2018 environmental results are as follows:



The actions and main events that occurred in 2018 are as follows:

**Electricity:**

- All buildings: Implementation of meters for energy monitoring;
- JDE: Passage of the variable flow ventilation system;

- JDE: Establishment of modulating registers on office drive groups;
- JDE: Installation of a ventilation unit equipped with a cooling battery of reduced capacity, for the cold kitchen (possible shutdown in winter of the restaurant's main cooling production system).
- In response to many complaints of discomfort, all buildings have been subject to an increase in the comfort range. The stop of the installations was fixed at 20h instead of 19h;
- REM: Little occupation of the building (47 people in 2017 and 19 people in 2018) but needs same heating;
- TRE: First year of full consumption for the new gas boiler but maintenance of electrical resistance in the terminal units of the offices (for cases of extreme weather conditions);
- B68: Development and optimization of the new refrigeration system.

**Gas:**

- The gas was shut off in the BvS building during the months of July and August;
- It was cut in the B68 building from June to the end of October;
- These cuts have been made since 2017. These actions were decided by the maintenance following the needs identified in previous years;
- Replacement of the TRE heating system (from electricity to gas) since October 2017. The 2018 was the first full year of use of the new facilities;

**Water:**

- Variation in the number of visitors compared to 2017 that can influence water consumption (including the use of sanitary facilities);
- Renovation and security works on the JDE entrance hall generating a significant increase in water consumption;
- Malfunction of the bamboo watering system at the JDE whilst working in the JDE hall;
- BvS: the increase in the occupancy density (nearly 60 people more) having led to an increase in water consumption (especially sanitary);

Note that this variation is 600L per person more per year, which corresponds to an increase of 2.7 liters per person per working day (the equivalent of half a flush. This is therefore quite reasonable.

**Paper:**

- Replacing most individual printers with high-performance copier-scanners, thus limiting multiple impressions;
- Continued digitization of many work processes: EESC members reimbursement form, e-invoicing, procedure for CoR missions, development of human resources forms, etc.

### **Waste:**

- Increase in waste paper and cardboard: this is mainly due to waste generated by the construction site in JDE;
- For other types of waste, their quantities decreased compared to 2017.

In addition, in 2018, the Committee participated in the European Waste Reduction Week. This awareness campaign was entitled « Une petite Détox? ».

The actions proposed on this occasion were as follows;

- Manufacturing workshop for ecological and economical cleaning products;
  - Zero Waste Stand featuring durable alternatives to disposable products, as well as solutions for repair instead of replacement;
  - Sustainable Christmas Challenge aimed at sharing good practices and ideas to limit waste during end-of-year celebrations;
- Colleagues greatly appreciated the activities, some were renewed in 2019.

In addition, a week of small electrical and electronic waste collection took place in 2018. It was also a success.

### **Carbon footprint:**

In 2018, for the second year, the Committees measured their carbon footprint and emissions in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent were estimated at 15,076 tonnes.

In 2017 the estimated emissions were 13 856 tonnes (estimate rectified according to the new standard used in this area).

### **First CO<sub>2</sub> emitter: Transport of people:**

As in the previous year, the movement of people remains the largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>. Air travel has a very significant impact on emissions as seen in 2016 and 2017. Travel by car is also higher. This is due to a new 2017 staff survey, which showed that staff were using this mode of transport more extensively for commuting. In addition, members travel by car has also increased between 2017 and 2018, from 205 to 235 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

### **Second largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>: Fixed assets:**

Fixed assets include:

- Emissions generated by building construction;
- IT equipment is the second largest issuer;

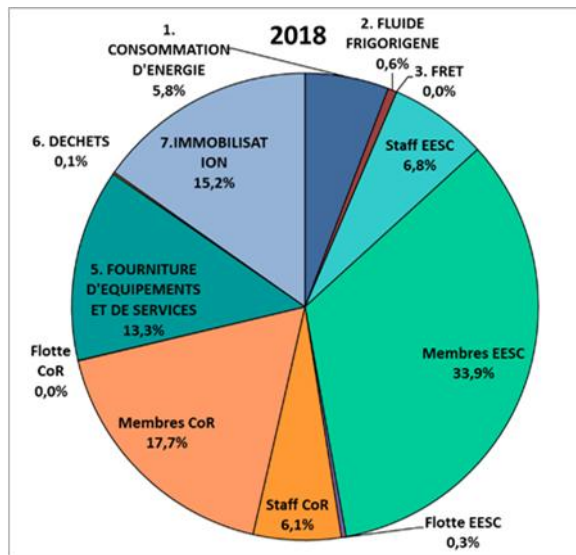


Office equipment.

### Third largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>: Supplies of equipment and services:

Supplies of equipment and services constitute the third largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>. The most important impact comes from the external interpretation, which is an important item and one of the main links of the Committees activity. Indeed, the Committees must be able to interpret all the languages of the European Union at meetings as needed.

The breakdown of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for this area is as follows:



### Evolution compared to 2017:

Decreasing issues:

- energy consumption;
- Freight;
- Waste.

### Emissions that have increased:

- Leaks of refrigerants;
- Transport of people;
- Equipment and service supplies;
- Assets

### CO<sub>2</sub> offsetting:

First objective - reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the field of transport of people, which is the main CO<sub>2</sub> emitter:

A working group has been created between EMAS and the respective units (Services to Members of both Committees) in order to explore the best way to raise awareness to the Members about the impact of different means of transport.

A working group between EMAS and the HR Directorates of both Committees has been created in order to explore possibilities for improvement towards a more sustainable mobility of the staff. In an interinstitutional level, discussions regarding the use of parking places within the institutions (should they continue to be free of charge, or should they be paid?) are going on.

Second objective - offsetting of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:

- CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target:

In the joint CoR-EESC EMAS steering committee, it was concluded that knowing that the Committees' administrations do not control mobility choices made by members and staff, Committees consider to set objectives only for the categories under control (buildings consumptions, IT, staff commuting, etc.). Therefore, Committees are preparing two different studies:

- One study regarding CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target for all the scope of the CO<sub>2</sub> emission calculation ;
- One study regarding CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target for all the scope of the CO<sub>2</sub> emission calculation except those linked to mobility of the Staff and members.

Then, realistic reduction targets will be proposed.

Up to now, no reference year has been decided for the objective. Therefore, Committees are examining:

- to which year it is feasible to go back in time with realistic calculations of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, inspiring on EP's practices.
- how the carbon emissions have evolved in the past in order to know what reduction has been realised already, if possible since 2006

The above-mentioned studies should propose one or several options for the year of reference.

– Joint Offsetting with the EP:

Committees will participate in the Joint Offsetting project with the EP and the ECB and decide later what percentage of their emissions they want to offset (define what percentage is considered unavoidable).

The first evaluation of the cost for the compensation of the total of the CoR and EESC CO<sub>2</sub> is about EUR 20.000.

## **Cybersecurity**

**77. What steps have you taken towards improving cybersecurity in the Committee? Were any of these steps coordinated with any other EU institution or has the Committee started taking such steps on its own initiative?**

*CoR answer to question 77:*

The following describes the measures taken during 2018 to enhance the cybersecurity capabilities of the CoR as well as the cooperation with other EU Institutions.

### **1. IT Security actions**

1.1 The IT Security Officer delivered user awareness sessions aiming to educate the users how to identify phishing emails. Based on cybersecurity threats that become known during 2018 specific communications to users were prepared indicating the threats and the related actions required of them.

1.2 A cloud-based solution that blocks in real-time connections to known malicious web sites was implemented.

1.3 A new Endpoint Security platform was evaluated for Windows 10 workstations. The solution takes advantage of cloud capabilities delivering advanced detection capabilities based on analytics and machine learning algorithms.

### **2. Cooperation with other EU Institutions/Agencies**

2.1 Based on the inter-institutional agreement for the set-up of CERT-EU 2 IT resources of the CoR and EESC work at CERT-EU on half-time basis. In the context of this very important cooperation, the CoR received the following services from CERT-EU:

- Cyber Threat Intelligence information for targeted attacks against EU Institutions
- Incident Response and Forensics Services
- Vulnerability Assessments for Web Applications
- Red Team exercise to assess the technical controls in place
- A Phishing exercise to test end-user awareness

2.2 The CoR participates actively in CII Security subgroup and coordinated the creation of cybersecurity awareness posters that distributed in all EU institutions during the European cybersecurity month in October 2018. The CoR and EESC also hosted the kick-off event for the cybersecurity month October 2018.