



2018 Discharge

Answers by the **European External Action Service**
to the written questions of the Committee on Budgetary Control

Committee on Budgetary Control
Hearing of 28 November 2019

1 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?

As reflected in the Annual report on the implementation of the CFSP, the EEAS continued in 2018 to advance work on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy guided by the EU Global Strategy, the direction of the HR/VP and Foreign Affairs Council conclusions.

In a global context marked by increased tensions in our wider neighbourhood, global turbulences and rising insecurity, three of the EEAS' main policy achievements have been:

i) to advance and consolidate the implementation of an ambitious **Security and Defence agenda**. The Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) is being implemented and the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) in place. The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) adopted 34 projects in 2018 with the 25 participating Member States which will be supported by the European Defence Fund (EDF). The European Peace Facility proposed in June 2018 - a new off-budget fund worth EUR 10.5 billion - should fund the common costs of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations and contribute to the financing of military peace support operations. The EEAS conducted a major restructuring of its services to address the new and multifaceted security challenges. Important progress was made in conflict prevention and mediation. The Civilian Compact adopted in 2018 reenergised the civilian dimension of the CSDP. Situational awareness greatly improved within the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) framework and major progress was made through the Hybrid Fusion Cell. All this happened while deepening cooperation between the EU and NATO, with 74 common actions to date.

ii) to reinforce the **resilience of states and societies and the integrated approach** to conflicts and crises especially in the EU's eastern and southern close and wider neighbourhood. The EEAS invested also heavily in the resilience of the Eastern partners, beginning with Ukraine. In the Balkans, the EU has directly engaged in resilience-building in areas such as rule of law, economic development, employment and connectivity. The EU reconfirmed the European perspective of the Western Balkans and the historic Prespa Agreement between Greece and North Macedonia is certainly one of the highlights of 2018.

The EEAS worked tirelessly to step up an EU response to the Sahel crisis. Investing in the resilience of the MENA region remained key in 2018, through the enhancement of the security and defence sectors to counter violent extremism and terrorism, strategic communication, and civil society support. The adoption of the EU strategy for Iraq in January 2018 was important.

iii) The EEAS played a crucial role in ensuring that the EU maintains its strong support to and united voice in the **multilateralism** system. The EU strongly supported United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres' reform agenda adopted in 2018 and

stepped up its funding for the UN system at a time when others have reduced or cancelled their contributions. The EEAS worked tirelessly and the EU invested significant political capital in the pursuit, achievement and defence of multilateral rules-based solutions like keeping the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran functioning, a key contribution to the international non-proliferation agenda. More and more, international organisations have to adapt to a changing world to better defend and implement international agreements and law. The EEAS promoted multilateral fora in areas currently lacking effective multilateral governance such as digital, cyber, artificial intelligence, natural resources, oceans and space and partnered with non-state actors, for example on connectivity, the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to fight violence against women or the EU Global Tech Panel.

Ultimately the ability of the EEAS to deliver effectively its mission rests on a well-administered and motivated staff. In this regard, the EEAS focused on the **overall well-being of staff** and guaranteeing their **safety and security**. This includes the growing challenge of ensuring secure communications. The EEAS has the "duty of care" for its staff, meaning that it has to take all the reasonable steps to implement security measures in order to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to EEAS staff and assets. The on-going introduction of a formal Security Risk Management methodology will contribute to the professionalisation of the security management of the EEAS and to the alignment with international best practices. Security management in Delegations was considerably improved in 2018. Security of information is also key. Even though it remains a challenge to keep up with the evolving threat landscape, the EEAS is continuously adapting its capacity to detect and deter cyber-attacks. Thanks to the additional funds granted by the European Parliament that have been allocated to security in the past years, the EEAS has been able to implement a number of actions to reinforce the defence mechanisms.

Concerning safety in the work environment, since its establishment, the EEAS has applied a **zero-tolerance policy against harassment**. In 2018, the EEAS Secretary General launched an anti-harassment awareness raising initiative with the aim of providing more information on the EEAS anti-harassment policy and on the support structures in place. In particular, EEAS managers at Headquarters and in Delegations were instructed to give a presentation to staff on the EEAS anti-harassment policy, to distribute relevant information and awareness material as well as to collect and report comments or questions raised during and after the respective presentations.

Challenges can also create opportunities: in 2018, the pilot phase of the **Regional Centre Europe** reached its end and its **evaluation** led to the conclusions that there will be no more regional centres in the future and also that there is a need for deeper reforms on the functioning of the administration in order to modernise the EEAS. This led to a comprehensive reflection on the future of the business processes within the Directorate for Budget and Administration (DG BA) aiming for modernisation, simplification and efficiency. The most important of these proposals, 20 in total, were branded as "**Innovative 2019**", sponsored by DG BA. For each proposal, relevant Divisions participated in working group meetings that examined the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposals. By mid-May 2019, these working groups have reached their conclusions and

the results were presented to the DG BA hierarchy. EEAS senior management is currently working on the way forward for these actions.

2 *What improvement has been made in the consistency and coherence of the Union's external and internal action, as well as the need to strive for common positions and coordinated responses for the Union to be efficient in this role?*

There is no hard line separating internal and external dimensions of EU policies. In 2018, the Commissioners Group on External Action (CGEA) acted to ensure coherence in all aspects of the external action of the Commission and supported the HRVP in her task of assisting the Council and Commission in providing consistency between the Union's external policy and external aspects of internal Union policies.

The CGEA met on several occasions, addressing not only EU relations with international partners such as Latin America and the Caribbean and the African Union and developments and EU action in Myanmar, but also the strengthening of EU capacity to act in the world. Examples of the latter include the EU's approach to trade and torture, the role of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in sustainable development, and the Multiannual Financial Framework as concerns external action.

Nowhere is the link clearer between internal and external policies than in the migration partnerships, which provided an institutional framework to organize inter-institutional cooperation across policy sectors, vertical cooperation between groups of Member States and EU institutions, as well as cooperation between the EU, third countries, international organizations and NGOs. A wide set of policies have contributed to this success, from Home Affairs to CSDP, from development to traditional diplomacy.

The work done on civilian CSDP, leading to the Civilian Compact in 2018, is another key case in point. Justice and Home Affairs agencies such as Europol, Eurojust and Frontex are increasingly engaged by and through CSDP. Progress has been made as well on the internal-external nexus in the context of the integrated approach. The EEAS contributes to the definition of the Commission Work Programme and co-decide which policy initiatives should be prepared jointly.

Credibility is measured first and foremost through consistency and the collective will and capacity to implement together agreed decisions. This is a matter of political will. The EU effectiveness is higher when Member States speak, and above all act united and different policy communities work together. The joined-up approach is essential if we want to be credible and achieve results.

Public diplomacy and communication, including strategic communication and the fight against disinformation, are also critical. The establishment of three Strategic Communications Task Forces (East, South, and Western Balkans) within the European External Action Service signals the political importance attributed to this domain. Looking ahead, the EU can invest even more in countering disinformation and positively

communicating who we are and what we seek to achieve in the world, as much to our partners as to European citizens.

The last years have seen the emergence and gradual consolidation of the joined-up approach on economic diplomacy, climate diplomacy and digital diplomacy. This can be deepened and become the norm across all policy areas and initiatives. The Cultural dimension of the EU external relations and cooperation actions - cultural diplomacy - is fundamental to promoting better mutual understanding, dialogue, peacebuilding and inclusive development. Cultural diplomacy requires a joint-up approach with Member States and working with civil society, foundations and artists to promote EU values to our target audience, youth in particular.

3 *Are there any new developments regarding the creation of a common approach to improve the interconnection of security systems with other institutions and Member States?*

In 2018, The EEAS continued to improve its security by reinforcing the rationalisation and modernisation of its security systems.

New secure networks were developed: interconnecting these networks with the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) was one of the first priorities. The EEAS, the GSC and the Commission have agreed to install workstations of their respective high-classified networks in order to facilitate a smooth exchange of information. Furthermore, during the first half of 2020, the EEAS is planning to provide secure phones to the GSC and to the Commission to cover secure communications needs. Regarding the low-classified systems, there is a strong collaboration with the Commission for the exchange of documents at the level EU-Restricted, which accounts for the majority of classified documents. In practice, the Commission and the EEAS will be using in the future the same document management tool, allowing a smooth transfer between institutions.

The interconnection with Member States is a more complex issue: this subject has been discussed informally with several Member States and a number of issues and obstacles have been noted, such as the harmonisation and understanding of the different security levels and their implementation in the Member States. The number of Member States' national networks using the common connection system with the EEAS has been increased, with the ultimate goal of having all the Member States connected to the system. The EEAS is also exploring the possibility of expanding its secure phones network to the Member States.

4 *Concerning the development of a future corporate classified platform internal to EEAS, could this platform be then transposed to an Institution such as the European Parliament?*

The EEAS Corporate Classified Communications and Information System (EC³IS) was built to fulfil the EEAS' internal needs. The EC³IS could be installed in the Central Registry of

other Institutions, who hold a valid security agreement or arrangement with the EEAS, in order to support the inter-institutional exchange of information. Any security arrangement should explicitly foresee the possibility to exchange EU Classified Information in electronic form at SECRET UE/EU SECRET classification level.

The EU-Restricted solution used by the EEAS could also be transposed to other Institutions. The Commission will use part of the EEAS' solution for their EU-Restricted system. An inter-institutional working group has been established to ensure that the EU Institutions can purchase the same systems if deemed necessary. This is already partially possible via a framework contract.

5 *What measures have been taken in respect to the safety of staff, security of buildings and communications, including cybersecurity? Have the objectives been met? What are the remaining challenges in this respect? What were the additional expenses for security in 2018?*

Providing a safe working environment to all staff at Headquarters and in Delegations, and reducing the risk of accidents and injuries at work is a priority for the EEAS. In 2018, the total of the additional budget allocated for security was EUR 15 million, covering both Headquarters and the Delegations.

In Headquarters, a comprehensive Security Awareness Programme was launched. The programme concerned all aspects of security, including cyber security and was launched with a survey to assess the perceptions of staff on security behaviours and on management of security. The aim is to influence staff behaviour across the board, to make staff more aware of security risks and more knowledgeable on how to reduce/avoid those risks. On the basis of the survey conducted in 2018, a series of innovative initiatives were prepared for implementation in 2019 (posters campaign, videos, campaigns to draw attention to the danger of phishing) to educate staff, advise them on the correct behaviour and build a sustainable security culture throughout the EEAS. Furthermore, risk management methodology was introduced and applied in order to define the security layout of a new rented building in Brussels (Belliard 100).

Protective measures related to the Alert Status Level 2 in Belgium continued to be implemented in all Headquarters' buildings. The EEAS continued to work together with the Commission services, such as the Office for Infrastructures and Logistics in Brussels and the Internal Service for Prevention and Protection at Work for the provision of all health and safety related services (risk analysis, mitigation, prevention, evacuation drills, safety training and emergency management).

In Delegations, the EEAS introduced the Security Risk Management (SRM) system for the security of Delegations, which includes standardised reporting on local security threats and risks which affect Delegations. The SRM system is in line with the EEAS Security Rules (ADMIN(2017)10) that requires the risks to EEAS security interests to be managed as a process following the SRM methodology.

A new technical support position was created within the EEAS Infrastructure and Safety Division to provide direct support to Delegations on building safety matters. Since this recruitment, Health and Safety issues have received particular attention, with a focus on ensuring adequate follow-up and implementation of Health and Safety inspection reports' recommendations; addressing air quality concerns in Delegations; and drafting health and safety guidelines for selecting buildings and awareness-raising.

Thanks to the additional resources made available by the Budgetary Authority, additional armoured vehicles (AVs) were purchased and deployed in 2018. Regional Security Officers and Local Agent drivers received specialised training in the driving of these vehicles. In total 18 additional armoured vehicles were purchased for an amount of EUR 4 million, which includes spare parts and training of drivers. Additional radio communications and personal protective equipment has been purchased and deployed for an amount of EUR 300,000 and EUR 50,000 respectively.

The EEAS also worked with the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF) to provide training on 'Psychological First Aid', 'Tactical Emergency Combat Care' and 'Management of Close Protection Teams' to the EEAS Regional Security Officers.

Covering both Headquarters and Delegations, the EEAS policy regarding the vetting and screening of its personnel was reviewed and reinforced in 2018. All personnel in Delegations need to be in possession of a valid Personal Security Clearance. The identification of posts in Headquarters requiring a Personal Security Clearance was launched.

Briefings on counter intelligence continued to be delivered to staff in order to raise awareness and ensure protection against hostile intelligence gathering activities. Personal coaching was also provided to staff highly exposed to the risk of espionage.

Four new Secure Speech Rooms were installed at Headquarters and in Delegations, for a total of 14 Secure Speech Rooms.

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

Important investments have been made in highly classified networks in 2018.

The EEAS is currently developing the Corporate Classified Communication and Information System (EC³IS) with the deployment foreseen by the end of March 2020. The EC³IS will replace the previous high-classified networks that are currently in use. Secure phones, which allow phone calls up to the level of SECRET UE/EU SECRET, have been made available to Senior Management staff in Headquarters and Delegations. There are regular readiness tests for classified communication tools at Headquarters and in Delegations to ensure that all users remain familiar with the operating procedures. The EEAS will also deploy new laptops which host both the EU-Restricted and unclassified environments in

one system. The protection of the unclassified environment has been also constantly improved. The on-going EEAS Security Awareness Programme incorporates aspects of cyber security, including a compulsory interactive online training that will help EEAS staff to recognise and report phishing attempts.

See answer to question 3 on coordination and interconnection with other Institutions.

7 *Has the EEAS taken up any leading role in this sphere among the other EU institutions?*

The EEAS has a leading role with regard to high classified systems. The network of secure telephones is being extended to all Delegations, the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC), the Commission and it is expected to also cover Member States in the future.

The EEAS is also supporting the exchange of high classified information with Member States by linking the networks of the EEAS, the European Defence Agency and the Secretariat of the Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defence (PESCO) with the Ministries of Defence of the Member States. The EEAS is also in the lead for the EU element of the NATO Battlefield Information Collection and Exploitation System (BICES) allowing the exchange of classified military intelligence related products between the EU and NATO.

On the Cyber-Security, the EEAS is an active partner of the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-EU) and shares incidents reports, indications of compromising, intelligence and best practices with other Institutions.

8 *Concerning the Permanent Annual Review Mechanism and the strategic approach to the allocation of posts for delegations, could you specify what criteria are applied for allocation?*

The strategic approach to the allocation of posts for Delegations was based on the political priorities as defined by the HR/VP in the EU Global Strategy and the priorities for the EEAS, as indicated in the Annual Management Plan.

Other elements were taken into consideration such as the staffing levels of the Delegations, the inspection reports, and staffing requests. In all cases, multiple consultations with relevant services took place.

9 *Has the EEAS taken any measure in 2018 to improve procurement procedures organised by delegations? What type of errors did "reputational procurement errors" cover in 2018?*

2018 saw improved public procurement in Delegations, through the following measures:

Training: An e-learning module on low and middle-value contracts, mainly oriented to Delegations, was released and is available on the EU Learn platform since March 2018.

Furthermore, the training of Heads of Administrations continued via the annual seminars. Specific coaching sessions have also been organised in Headquarters and in Delegations relating to security services contracts in Delegations.

Templates: Specific templates of tender documents and evaluation reports have been developed for (very) low and middle-value contracts. Furthermore, a full set of step-by-step guides were developed for all types of procedure where the value is above the Directive thresholds. These detail every step of the process, from the market assessment to the signature of the contract.

Digitalisation: Delegations have begun using the eProcurement system to improve the general management of the procedures. eTendering entered into force for all high-value contracts and eSubmission for all open procurement procedures.

The yearly procurement plan for 2018 was, for the second time, compiled with contributions from Delegations in the Public Procurement Management Tool (PPMT), thereby encouraging them to proceed to a more sound planning of their procedures. As of April 2019, PPMT is being used for the launch and management of the procurement procedures above directive thresholds. This allows an effective follow-up on all ongoing high-value procurement procedures.

Security contracts: The internal task force on security contracts continued to support Delegations intensively in the preparation of the procurement procedures and in their management. The management and the monitoring of the performance of the security services contracts have been reinforced at field level with the promotion of key performance indicators and the monitoring of non-compliance by the expanded Regional Security Officers' network.

The reputational errors in procurement procedures (breach of key principle) are detected during the ex-post control performed by the EEAS. The EEAS follows the Commission approach: even though acknowledging the seriousness of such errors, their actual financial impact cannot be quantified in a manner consistent with the other errors (where the amount that would have been paid in the absence of the error is quantifiable). Therefore, such errors should not be added to the financial exposure (amount at risk) nor considered for a potential financial reservation. In 2018, the procurement errors identified were related to infringement of public procurement rules (inappropriate tendering or assessment of bids affecting the outcome of the tender; substantial change of contract scope; artificial splitting of contracts) and to missing or incomplete procurement documents.

As from 2019, new errors codes are being used to identify with more accuracy the errors in this area.

10 In the 2017 discharge, the EP called for the creation of an institute dedicated to the education of future European diplomats:

- ***What improvement has been made in the creation of an institute dedicated to the education of future European diplomats?***
- ***What are the possibilities of using the facilities of the European Parliament in Strasbourg to house this diplomatic institute?***
- ***Do you have a feasibility study?***

The EEAS is currently assessing different options that take into consideration the needs, the challenges, the budgetary constraints and the small number of recruitments. In this regard, the EEAS is examining the structural models of the European School of Administration and the European Security and Defence College, as well as the institutional specificities and processes of diplomatic academies in the Member States. The EEAS is considering the establishment of a virtual diplomatic academy which, where appropriate, will link with universities and academies from Member States.

In light of the above, no feasibility study has been carried out on the possibility to use the facilities of the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

11 *What improvement has been made in setting the annual review mechanism dedicated to the analysis of EEAS resources and their effective employment? How do you reflect new operational or political priorities or other additional challenges?*

As mentioned in the answer of question 8, the strategic approach to the allocation of posts for Delegations was based on the political priorities as defined by the HR/VP in the EU Global Strategy and the priorities for the EEAS as indicated in the Annual Management Plan.

Important operational and political aspects were taken into consideration during the implementation of this exercise, such as the limited margin of manoeuvre the Administration disposes following the implementation of the 5% reduction in staff posts; the difficulties to identify posts to be transferred to Delegations without compromising the operational continuity in Headquarters; the opening of the new Delegation in Mongolia; the challenges encountered by Delegations considered under-staffed.

12 *Have there been any evaluations regarding the effects on health and quality of life of members of staff, especially in light of the 5% staff reduction over the period 2014-2018?*

The annual Staff Opinion Survey is the main tool for collecting feedback on staff well-being at work. A close follow-up is made of its results.

Regarding absences, there is no indication that the number of absences has increased during the period 2014-2018.

13 *Were there any measures taken in 2018 to address the increasing workload of EEAS because of staff cuts?*

A number of measures were taken to alleviate the impact of staff cuts, including the reorganisation of work, merging of Divisions, and a clearer establishment of priorities through the introduction of Annual Management Plan in Headquarters.

14 *Would you say that the EEAS 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?*

The EEAS has followed the selection and recruitment policies as determined by the relevant rules and guidelines. In 2018, there were six complaints lodged under Article 90.2 of the Staff Regulations concerning the recruitment of staff and two complaints lodged under Article 90.2 of the Staff Regulations concerning termination of contracts of staff.

It should be noted that, while these complaints focused on aspects related to particular recruitment and termination of contract cases, none of the complaints questioned the transparency of the procedures.

15 Could you provide us explanation on recruitment procedures at the External Delegations? How do you ensure a fair selection process? Could you provide us information on concrete steps in such recruitment process?

Administrators (AD) Posts (EU Officials and Temporary Agents)

AD posts in Delegations are published either in the context of the annual rotation exercise or individually on ad hoc basis, if they become available outside of the rotation period.

The annual rotation exercise publishes the available posts either internally or externally.

Internal posts

- Internal posts are filled through publication in accordance with Article 98 of the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union, by considering applications from EEAS officials and from current EEAS temporary staff to whom Article 2(e) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union applies.
- Specific details on the posts are set out in the accompanying vacancy notices.
- After the deadline for applications, an administrative screening is done by the Human Resources Directorate in order to verify the eligibility of staff members who have submitted applications. This is followed by an evaluation carried out by the CV Committee, composed of representatives from the different EEAS departments, who evaluate all eligible applications in accordance with the selection criteria defined in the vacancy notices.
- On the basis of the results of the CV Committee, an overview of persons and posts is then presented to the Rotation Committee, taking into account the candidates that best meet the selection and mobility criteria and, where possible, the preferences expressed by individual candidates.
- In parallel, the relevant Heads of Delegation are also consulted for their opinion.
- This preparation process is followed by the Selection phase carried out by the high-level Rotation Committee, chaired by the Human Resources Director, and composed of members mandated by each geographic and thematic Managing Director/Senior Manager. The Rotation committee examines the applications evaluated by the CV Committee and proposes the final matching for decisions, post by post to the Appointing Authority. Where it considers necessary, the Rotation Committee may consult the staff appraisal report contained in the applications.
- If needed, and to assist in a final matching decision, the Rotation Committee may request that a candidate is interviewed. Based on the outcome of such an interview, the Rotation Committee may propose additional matching. For each post, the Rotation Committee will either make a matching proposal or recommend external publication (notably in case of insufficient number of applications).
- Finally, the relevant Appointing Authority takes the final decision on the list of transfers.

External posts (including all management posts in Delegations):

- Posts are filled through publication in accordance with Article 98 of the Staff Regulations, by considering applications from EEAS officials, officials of the EU Institutions, current EEAS temporary staff to whom Article 2(e) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS) applies, and staff from the diplomatic services of the Member States.
- Details on the posts in rotation are set out in the accompanying vacancy notices.
- The pre-selection is carried out by a panel on the basis of the qualifications and the professional experience described in the CV and in the motivation letter and it produces a shortlist of a limited number of eligible candidates who, in its opinion, best meet the selection criteria for each post.
- The candidates who have been shortlisted are invited for an interview, so that the selection panel can evaluate them objectively and impartially on the basis of their qualifications, professional experience and linguistic skills, as listed in the vacancy notice.
- Finally, the relevant Appointing Authority takes the final decision on the list of recruitments. For the Head of Delegation posts, the selection panel recommends a shortlist of candidates to the HR/VP, who will make the final selection after consulting with the Commission's College.

The process for individual publications outside the rotation exercise is similar to the external posts' rotation, i.e. it includes an interview by a panel of the pre-selected candidates.

The EEAS applies an equal opportunities policy and may, in the interest of this policy, decide to postpone or reopen a deadline, should the list of applicants contain, for example applicants of only one gender.

Assistants (AST) posts (EU Officials)

AST posts in Delegations (Heads of Administration and Assistant to the Head of Delegation) are published either in the context of the annual rotation exercise or individually on ad hoc basis, if they become available outside of the rotation period. The AST posts are open to EU officials from the EEAS and other Institutions:

- After the submission of applications, the EEAS Human Resources Department verifies and confirms the eligibility of staff members for the posts to which they have applied.
- All the eligible candidacies undergo a pre-selection process by a panel on the basis of the qualifications and the professional experience described in the application and supporting documents. The panel proposes a limited number of eligible candidates who best meet the selection criteria to be invited for interview.
- Candidates who have been pre-selected are invited for an interview. The selection panel evaluate the candidates objectively and impartially on the basis of their qualifications, professional experience and linguistic skills, as listed in the vacancy notice.
- On the basis of the results from the panel, the Human Resource Directorate proceeds to a matching exercise of candidates deemed able to occupy the function of Head of Administration or Assistant to a Head of Delegation with the list of posts they have applied to. The Panel proposes a matching list to the Appointing

Authority. The Appointing Authority may decide to interview the candidates on the final shortlist before taking a final decision.

- The Appointing Authority takes a final decision on the appointment after consultation with the respective Head of Delegation.

Contract Agents

In the case of the Contract Agents in Delegations, after the publication of the vacancy notice, the Head of Administration of the Delegation and the Headquarters receive the applications. The Delegation is responsible for the pre-selection of the candidates and shares with Headquarters a list of pre-selected candidates for their administrative eligibility check. Pre-selected and eligible candidates are then invited by the Delegation to a panel interview. The Head of Delegation submits the final selection report to Headquarters with the recommendation to recruit a candidate. The final decision is taken by the Authority Authorised to conclude contracts (AACC), and the recruitment of the selected candidate is then launched. The Commission's Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security (DG HR) handles the recruitment process.

Regarding Contract Agents for Regional Security Officers and Advisers and for Heads of Administration and administrative assistants, the pre-selection procedure, panel interviews and selection are conducted at Headquarters.

In the case of Regional IT Officers, the selection procedure is conducted by the Delegations, with the participation of staff from Headquarters in the interviews.

Local Agents

While the creation of Local Agent posts in Delegations lies with the EEAS or the Commission in Headquarters, the power to conclude the contract of employment with each local agent has been delegated to the Head of Delegation concerned, reflecting the fact that the employment contract is governed by the local law of the host country. The primary responsibility for the recruitment of Local Agents thus lies with the Delegations themselves. The EEAS has however provided Delegations with very detailed, step-by-step administrative guidance and best practices on how to conduct recruitment procedures, through the online "EU Delegations Guide" which is updated regularly. The key principles underlying this guidance are that recruitment procedures for Local Agents must ensure openness and transparency.

The main steps for Local Agent recruitment are:

- The Delegation obtains the authorisation to publish the vacant Local Agent post from EEAS or Commission as appropriate, on the basis of a draft vacancy notice template detailing the job profile and core functions.
- The Delegation publishes the approved vacancy notice both internally and externally as widely as possible, to ensure transparency.
- The Delegation sets up a Selection Committee composed of Officials, Temporary Agents or Contract Agents as voting members, in which it is recommended to include the presence of a staff representative as observer. Local Agents may only assist the Selection Committee in an observer capacity.

- The Selection Committee compiles a table of all applicants with a preliminary assessment of eligibility based on the minimum requirements, and from this draws up a shortlist of candidates for interview/testing.
- After the interviews and/or tests, the Selection Committee produces a report for the Head of Delegation with its short-list of candidates recommended for the post in order of merit.
- The Head of Delegation selects the person for recruitment. If the Head of Delegation's choice does not follow the recommendation of the Selection Committee, s/he has to seek authorisation from the Human Resources (HR) Director of the 'home' Directorate-General or the EEAS to recruit the shortlisted candidate s/he proposes: the final choice is made by the HR Director and the Head of Delegation is requested to sign the contract in accordance with this decision. Upon request, the Delegation must be in a position to provide the rejected applicants with the reasons for not having been selected.
- The Delegation signs the contract of employment with the selected candidate using a centrally-prepared template, after verifying the candidate's documents and medical fitness for the post.

16 Do you have a functioning team of the confidential-staff-counsellors? What progress has been made in extending the network of confidential counsellors?

- ***Did they and the staff as a whole, receive any special training / seminars on the prevention of harassment?***
- ***How many confidential counsellors are currently at EEAS? How many of confidential counsellors were posted in delegations?***
- ***How does the EEAS decide on which delegations confidential Counsellors should be chosen from? Has the EEAS envisaged having one confidential Counsellor by delegation? What are the setbacks for having one Counsellor by delegation?***

The EEAS Confidential Counsellors are staff members having taken on this responsibility on a voluntary basis. During their term of office, confidential counsellors are coordinated and supported by the EEAS Mediation Service and benefit from the technical support of Commission's Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security (DG HR). They remain attached to their original department and retain their duties there. There are 13 EEAS Confidential Counsellors, among them 7 based in Headquarters and 6 based in Delegations.

Their role is notably to assist colleagues by listening to them, providing information and supporting them. The Confidential Counsellors' network dealt with 13 cases of conflict at work or alleged harassment in 2018, compared to 11 cases in 2017. The network complemented the work of the Mediation Service by dealing mostly with cases from local and contract agents who preferred as a first step to contact a colleague from the network to solve their problem.

The EEAS Confidential Counsellors received specific training to carry out their role and are part of a network of men and women of different categories, grades, nationalities and

departments. The network takes part in supervised sessions proposed on a monthly basis.

Meanwhile, it is considered a priority to share information on the anti-harassment policy and to address all staff's questions and concerns. Therefore, an awareness raising initiative on the EEAS anti-harassment policy has been carried out in all entities of the EEAS, both in HQ and in Delegations, and a model Code of conduct referring to the standards of behaviour expected by EEAS staff, is in process of being launched at headquarters and in Delegations. Furthermore, presentations on the topic are systematically delivered during the regular seminars for staff posted in Delegations, for example for Local Agents, Heads of Political Section, and Deputy Heads of Delegation.

The EEAS does not decide on which Delegations the Confidential Counsellors are chosen from, since they are nominated *ad personam* and can move from a Delegation to Headquarters (or vice-versa) or between Delegations during the rotation exercise. In this context, the EEAS does not envisage having one Confidential Counsellor per Delegation; furthermore it has also to be noted that a Confidential Counsellor posted in a Delegation can only deal with cases in Delegations other than their own, in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

17 Could you please provide a table of all human resources in delegations and headquarters 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?

EEAS Human Resources by category

EEAS Population		Headquarters		Delegations		Total	
		2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
AD	AD Officials	391	385	229	236	620	621
	AD Temporary Agents Member States Diplomats	153	148	167	159	320	307
	AD Temporary Agents Others	7	6	1	1	8	7
	Total AD	551	539	397	396	948	935
AST - AST/SC	AST Officials	387	408	191	180	578	588
	AST Temporary Agents	9	6	1	0	10	6
	AST/SC Officials	38	32	0	0	38	32
	AST/SC Temporary Agents	1	4	0	0	1	4
	Total AST, AST/SC	435	450	192	180	627	630
CA	GF IV	99	60	67	64	166	124
	GF III	55	49	74	75	129	124
	GF II	55	53	85	88	140	141
	GF I	30	30	2	1	32	31
	Total Contract Agents	239	192	228	228	467	420
LA	1	0	0	186	178	186	178
	2	0	0	218	222	218	222
	3	0	0	286	287	286	287
	4	0	0	144	151	144	151
	5	0	0	219	218	219	218
	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Local Agents	0	0	1,053	1,056	1,053	1,056
STG	Total Stagiaires	31	39	109	26	140	65
JPD	Junior Professionals in Delegations	0	0	41	41	41	41
SNE	Seconded National Experts	392	387	57	62	449	449
Other							
PRE	Prestataire de Service	400	383	1	1	401	384
IND	Interim staff	0	0	43	87	43	87
Total		2,048	1,990	2,121	2,077	4,169	4,067

EEAS Human Resources by nationality

EEAS Staff by nationality HQ & DEL 2018	AD	AST & AST/SC	Contract Agents	SNE	Total
Austria	25	7	9	10	51
Belgium	74	159	102	12	347
Bulgaria	9	9	13	11	42
Croatia	6	3	5	6	20
Cyprus	4	0	5	5	14
Czech Republic	20	10	6	12	48
Denmark	26	11	0	23	60
Estonia	10	8	2	4	24
Finland	27	13	4	20	64
France	131	63	84	53	331
Germany	94	34	23	44	195
Greece	26	27	11	11	75
Hungary	25	11	6	12	54
Ireland	24	10	6	7	47
Italy	116	50	69	41	276
Latvia	13	3	3	3	22
Lithuania	13	5	4	10	32
Luxembourg	2	0	1	1	4
Malta	11	4	0	1	16
Netherlands	31	22	5	18	76
Poland	45	26	11	27	109
Portugal	25	26	20	8	79
Romania	27	25	26	19	97
Slovakia	9	3	5	5	22
Slovenia	15	11	2	3	31
Spain	76	54	37	21	188
Sweden	38	21	1	32	92
United Kingdom	26	12	7	24	69
Other	0	0	0	6	6
Grand Total	948	627	467	449	2491

EEAS Staff by nationality HQ & DEL 2017	AD	AST & AST/SC	Contract Agents	SNE	Total
Austria	25	9	7	11	52
Belgium	71	157	93	11	332
Bulgaria	9	6	12	10	37
Croatia	7	2	1	4	14
Cyprus	5	0	3	3	11
Czech Republic	22	12	3	16	53
Denmark	26	12	0	22	60
Estonia	9	10	1	4	24
Finland	23	15	3	20	61
France	123	57	82	53	315
Germany	94	27	18	37	176
Greece	26	26	10	8	70
Hungary	26	12	3	17	58
Ireland	22	9	5	6	42
Italy	114	55	57	41	267
Latvia	10	3	1	3	17
Lithuania	9	4	3	10	26
Luxembourg	3	0	0	1	4
Malta	10	4	0	1	15
Netherlands	32	23	4	24	83
Poland	44	31	15	28	118
Portugal	25	26	21	8	80
Romania	23	23	22	21	89
Slovakia	9	3	5	4	21
Slovenia	12	12	1	3	28
Spain	77	52	37	23	189
Sweden	34	23	1	27	85
United Kingdom	45	17	10	29	101
Other	0	0	2	4	6
Grand Total	935	630	420	449	2434

EEAS Human Resources by gender

		AD	AST & AST/SC	CA	SNE	LA	Grand Total
2017	Female	309	425	251	105	573	1663
	Male	626	205	169	344	483	1827
2018	Female	331	411	272	98	568	1680
	Male	617	216	195	351	485	1864

EEAS Human Resources by grade

AST & AST/SC												
2018	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total
HQ	11	37	59	64	69	57	64	32	39	2	1	435
DEL		2	15	38	22	16	30	20	21	16	12	192
Total	11	39	74	102	91	73	94	52	60	18	13	627

2017	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total
HQ	17	44	63	56	71	53	65	28	43	5	5	450
DEL		5	19	39	14	22	25	18	16	12	10	180
Total	17	49	82	95	85	75	90	46	59	17	15	630

AD													
2018	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
HQ	21	24	53	42	45	39	41	123	79	72	10	2	331
DEL	1	7	37	20	56	26	35	80	65	57	10	3	617
Total	22	31	90	62	101	65	76	203	144	129	20	5	948

2017	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
HQ	17	26	44	31	51	38	52	112	84	72	10	2	539
DEL	4	7	32	28	47	28	26	80	74	57	10	3	396
Total	21	33	76	59	98	66	78	192	158	129	20	5	935

18 *European External Action Service staffing arrangements should ensure an "appropriate and meaningful presence of nationals from all the Member States" and equal opportunities for women and men. How will the EEAS ensure that all Member States are adequately represented by respecting the competences and merits of the candidates?*

Recruitment to the EEAS is based on merit whilst ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance. The EEAS organises its selection procedures based on merit.

With the aim of ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance, the EEAS:

- Monitors carefully the information on gender and geographical origin per type of post. The annual Human Resources report outlines these figures.
- Applies an equal opportunities policy and may, in the interest of this policy, decide to postpone or reopen a deadline, should the list of applicants contain, for example applicants of only one gender.
- Informs systematically the Member States about the profile of the candidates and of the recruited staff with the view to promote adequate candidates.
- Promotes, through institutional, formal and informal activities, both within the organisation and in its contacts with the Member States, the notion of attracting applicants covering adequate gender and geographical balance.

19 *Have any incentives been put in place by Member States in 2018 to encourage national diplomats to join the EEAS?*

The EEAS interacts regularly with the Member States, not only at the political level and through the Human Resources Directors Network, but also in bilateral contacts or visits, in order to ensure the promotion of EEAS posts among the national diplomat networks and to stimulate applications from the best candidates.

20 *What progress has been made in ensuring the geographical balance of representation of each Member State?*

- ***How many EU ambassadors/ heads of delegations were in office in 2018, and of which nationalities?***
- ***Could you please provide a table of how has the situation of ensuring the geographical balance of representation of each Member State in EEAS evolved since 2014?***

Recruitment to the EEAS is based on merit whilst ensuring adequate geographical and gender balance. The EEAS organises its selection procedures based on merit.

Heads of Delegation 2018	
Austria	5
Belgium	9
Bulgaria	2
Croatia	0
Cyprus	0
Czech Republic	2
Denmark	5
Estonia	1
Finland	3
France	16
Germany	15
Greece	2
Hungary	1
Ireland	4
Italy	21
Latvia	2
Lithuania	1
Luxembourg	2
Malta	1
Netherlands	2
Poland	5
Portugal	6
Romania	2
Slovakia	2
Slovenia	2
Spain	13
Sweden	7
United Kingdom	4
Total	135*

* = This figure does not include the Acting Heads of Delegation.

Geographical balance: Officials, Temporary Agents, Contract Agents, SNE					
Nationality	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Austria	60	59	52	52	51
Belgium	330	331	339	332	347
Bulgaria	37	37	35	37	42
Croatia	4	8	12	14	20
Cyprus	10	6	9	11	14
Czech Republic	62	59	55	53	48
Denmark	61	70	67	60	60
Estonia	30	31	28	24	24
Finland	57	54	59	61	64
France	292	295	305	315	331
Germany	183	188	173	176	195
Greece	75	75	75	70	75
Hungary	45	47	53	58	54
Ireland	50	49	42	42	47
Italy	243	253	264	267	276
Latvia	14	15	15	17	22
Lithuania	22	24	25	26	32
Luxembourg	4	5	5	4	4
Malta	15	14	14	15	16
Netherlands	81	79	66	83	76
Poland	101	110	112	118	109
Portugal	80	77	81	80	79
Romania	63	66	85	89	97
Slovakia	17	19	18	21	22
Slovenia	29	30	28	28	31
Spain	204	198	203	189	188
Sweden	88	81	83	85	92
United Kingdom	110	106	126	101	69
Total	2367	2386	2429	2428	2485

Geographical balance: Management					
Nationality	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Austria	9	9	9	10	8
Belgium	15	18	20	17	18
Bulgaria	2	2	1	1	2
Croatia	2	2	2	2	0
Cyprus	0	0	0	0	0
Czech Republic	4	3	3	3	2
Denmark	9	10	12	10	9
Estonia	1	3	3	1	1
Finland	5	5	4	4	6
France	30	27	27	33	35
Germany	22	24	23	27	28
Greece	8	5	4	9	7
Hungary	6	5	3	3	2
Ireland	9	9	10	9	9
Italy	35	38	38	42	44
Latvia	1	0	1	2	2
Lithuania	1	1	1	2	2
Luxembourg	0	0	2	2	2
Malta	1	1	1	2	3
Netherlands	13	11	12	10	8
Poland	7	6	7	11	9
Portugal	7	9	10	10	9
Romania	2	3	3	3	2
Slovakia	0	0	0	2	2
Slovenia	2	3	2	3	4
Spain	28	27	28	24	22
Sweden	10	10	12	12	16
United Kingdom	27	26	21	15	10
Total	256	257	259	269	262

21 What progress was made in order to improve the gender balance, in particular in middle and senior management positions and in positions of head of delegations? Please present a gender and nationality breakdown of your middle and senior management positions as well as the EU ambassadors.

In order to support gender balance and increased diversity, the EEAS:

- Further improved the panels for selection and recruitment, notably in deploying training on interview techniques and unconscious bias, with a view to making the training compulsory for all selection panel members.
- Ensured that all the panels include members from both genders.
- Applied an equal opportunities policy; in the interest of this policy, the EEAS may decide to postpone or reopen a deadline, should the list of applicants contain, for example applicants of only one gender.
- Informed systematically the Member States about the profile of the candidates and of the recruited staff with the view to promote adequate candidates.
- Promoted through institutional, formal and informal activities, both within the organisation and in its contacts with the Member States, the notion of attracting applicants covering adequate gender and geographical balance.
- Continued to develop talent-spotting and the mentoring process, not only for women but also for inter alia all newcomers in the EEAS Headquarters.
- Undertook an awareness campaign against harassment, to emphasise the zero-tolerance policy against harassment. The campaign included the development of information material on the rules and procedures related to harassment in the workplace, which EEAS Managers presented and discussed with staff both in Headquarters and Delegations. The feedback from the presentations is used in the work towards an improved anti-harassment policy.
- Worked on facilitating better work-life balance, for instance through improved flexible working arrangements with the introduction of flexitime and teleworking in Delegations.
- Launched a thorough reflection with Member States on how to improve possibilities for spouse employment in Delegations, so that both persons in a couple can work when one is posted in a Delegation. The EEAS also strengthened the policy for dual postings. The aim of these actions is to attract particularly more women to Delegations.
- Continued dedicated trainings for women in management and those aspiring to management.
- Actively reviewed notices of competitions and vacancy notices to ensure that the formulations used were not gendered.
- Created a network of focal points on diversity in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the Member States. The main objective of the network is to exchange information and prepare the discussions on equal opportunities and diversity for the regular meetings among State Secretaries and Secretaries General, where equality in management is a standing point on their meeting agendas. The network is a useful vehicle for communicating and comparing best practices and is an occasion to remind Member States of the need for good female candidates in the EEAS.

EEAS management – Middle and Senior management positions by gender

EEAS Management	Male	Female	Total
Senior Management	40	11	51
Middle Management	151	60	211
Total	191	71	262

EEAS Heads of Delegation by gender

Heads of Delegation 2018		
Male	Female	Total
101	34	135*

* = This figure does not include the Acting Heads of Delegation.

EEAS Managers by nationality and management level

Nationality	Middle Management	Senior Management	Total
Austria	5	3	8
Belgium	14	4	18
Bulgaria	2	0	2
Croatia	0	0	0
Cyprus	0	0	0
Czech Republic	2	0	2
Denmark	6	3	9
Estonia	1	0	1
Finland	4	2	6
France	29	6	35
Germany	21	7	28
Greece	5	2	7
Hungary	1	1	2
Ireland	8	1	9
Italy	36	8	44
Latvia	2	0	2
Lithuania	2	0	2
Luxembourg	1	1	2
Malta	2	1	3
Netherlands	7	1	8
Poland	7	2	9
Portugal	7	2	9
Romania	2	0	2
Slovakia	1	1	2
Slovenia	4	0	4
Spain	19	3	22
Sweden	14	2	16
United Kingdom	9	1	10
Total	211	51	262

22 *Apart from helping women build self-confidence for applying to management positions, did the EEAS identify any other possible barriers preventing women from applying? If so, how will these be addressed?*

One third of the EEAS AD staff comes from Member States. The EEAS, including at the level of the Secretary General, is in regular contact with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Member States and encourages them in particular to propose more female applicants for management posts.

Unconscious bias can be a barrier. A pilot project was launched in the EEAS to ensure that selection panel members are trained in interview techniques to raise their awareness on the risks of unconscious bias. The training is gradually being deployed with the objective to make it compulsory for all panel members.

A lack of self-confidence is often the result of a lack of support. The EEAS created a network for women in pre-management posts to facilitate peer support, speed training and information. The existing network for Women at management level which has been launched by the Secretary General, WEEAS, is continuing its work to spot potential talents.

With regard to management positions in Delegations, the lack of opportunities for spouses/partners to work in a third country can be a barrier. Work has begun on facilitating conditions and employment opportunities for spouses/partners was initiated. In 2018, the Heads of Delegation were encouraged to engage with other diplomatic missions, international organisations and with their host country in order to support employment possibilities to spouses/partners of expatriate staff.

Lack of work-life balance can also be a barrier, both at Headquarters and in Delegations. To encourage a better distribution of workload, the EEAS is promoting flexible working arrangements such as flexitime, part-time and teleworking. A pilot scheme of teleworking in Delegations was launched in 2018. In parallel, a reflection is currently ongoing on the opportunities to increase teleworking options for certain functions and for staff members with specific family constraints. The first results are encouraging and will feed an EEAS Decision on teleworking.

23 *How many staff members of the EEAS had been promoted in 2018 more than one grade? If there are cases of fast-track promotions: Which grades in the respective DGs are concerned? What were the reasons? Could you show the promotions of the grades by nationality?*

No EEAS staff member has been promoted more than one grade in 2018.

24 *What progress has been made in improving the monitoring system for the timely updating of the personal situation and data of members of staff, with a potential impact on the calculation of family allowances? Is this monitoring system regularly updated?*

The EEAS has continued to work closely with the European Commission on this issue, in particular through regular exchanges with the Paymaster Office (PMO), other Commission services as well as the Delegations.

A systematic ex ante control of the data encoded by the staff member in the different Human Resources applications has continued. This is in order to verify the correctness and consistency of the data before proceeding to the payment of financial entitlements for staff and their families.

The system of ex-post controls has been reinforced for payment/reimbursements to ensure consistency and sound financial management, which inter alia includes a systematic cross-check between different financial entitlements.

25 *Could you clarify what are the three main changes brought by the reform of the rules concerning local agents?*

The first main change brought by the reform is the greater legal certainty for all local agents regarding their access to complementary EU social security cover, through the adoption of Joint Decision C(2019) 5684 of the Commission and the HR/VP of 7 August 2019 on autonomous or complementary medical cover for Local Staff in Union Delegations in countries where coverage by the local system either does not exist or is insufficient (LA-Medical), and Joint Decision C(2019) 5685 of the Commission and the HR/VP of 7 August 2019 on autonomous or complementary pension benefits for Local Staff in Union Delegations in countries where coverage by the local system either does not exist or is insufficient (LA-Provident Fund). Enshrining these two social security schemes in decisions at the highest level has given them a legal permanency and an enforceability that they did not previously possess.

The second change is the improved employment benefits for local agents: All local agents affiliated to the current complementary EU medical insurance and Provident Fund schemes will automatically be affiliated to LA-Medical and LA-Provident Fund when the Joint Decisions mentioned above enter into force on 1 June 2020, bringing them automatic benefits without requiring them to sign anything (including a cap on the maximum LA Medical contributions, extensions in LA Medical coverage, more flexibility for out-of-country treatments under LA Medical, and the possibility to increase contributions to LA-Provident from 5% to 10% of salary gradually over time). Meanwhile, those local agents who sign the addendum to their employment contract accepting the application of Joint Decision C(2019)5686 of the Commission and the HR/VP of 7 August 2019 on the Conditions of Employment of Local Staff of the European Union engaged in places outside the European Union (LA Conditions of Employment) will gain additional, concrete benefits reserved only for them, including: doubling of the value of a promotion, a new minimum of 20 days paid leave per annum, extension of paid maternity leave from 8 weeks to 20 weeks, better financial protection if a contract is ended due to medical incapacity, better financial protection for dependents when a local agent dies in service, a new legal basis for determining an accident at work or an occupational disease, opening the way to lump

sum compensation if this results in total permanent invalidity necessitating termination of employment, and extended appeal rights, including the possibility to re-open an appeal within 12 months if new facts emerge.

The third main change brought by the reform is the greater flexibility in the future for the EU as employer to keep up with employment market norms: The reform will only change the EU minimum conditions that form part of each local agent's contract. The principle that the employment of local agents is based primarily on local law, complemented by EU minimum conditions, remains the same, so their local law entitlements will remain untouched. In addition to the content changes mentioned above, the structure of the EU minimum conditions will change so that these can be amended more easily and quickly in the future. This will be achieved by eliminating the old global Framework Rules and the Delegation-specific Specific Conditions of Employment that had become too unwieldy to update. The "pillars" of the new structure are the three Joint Decisions mentioned above, on Conditions of Employment, LA-Medical and LA-Provident Fund, adopted at the highest level and containing the core elements. The remaining details will be fleshed out in a number of accompanying implementing decisions adopted at lower levels so that in future these are easier to update.

26 *What is the current state of play of the negotiations on a new framework of rules for local agents in delegation to modernise and improve social security schemes? In particular, was there already an agreement concerning the issue of protection of local agents invalidity and medical protection after retirement? If yes, could you explain the terms of the agreement?*

The current state of play in October 2019 is that the three Joint Decisions on Conditions of Employment, LA-Medical and LA-Provident Fund were adopted on 7 August 2019 and will enter into force 1 June 2020. All of these will automatically apply to all new local agents recruited from that date onwards. In accordance with Article 33(1) of the Joint Decision on Conditions of Employment, on 1 December 2019 the "window" will open for existing local agents to decide whether to sign a contract addendum accepting the new conditions of employment in replacement of the old. This "window" is due to run for 5 months. Local agents ought therefore to receive by 1 December 2019 all the subsidiary decisions furnishing the details missing from the three Joint Decisions. Many of these subsidiary decisions are almost ready to be submitted for social dialogue or consultation, though the EEAS is still awaiting the Commission's decision delegating to the EEAS the power to legislate for the Commission in most areas of local agent employment.

The agreement relating to protection of local agents' invalidity and medical protection after retirement is captured in Commissioner Oettinger's letter of 11 February 2019, which closed the social dialogue on the three Joint Decisions with the Commission's representative trade unions or staff associations (note Ares(2019)804386 of 11/02/2019). As he explained there, the *"(w)orking conditions of each and every staff member are considered of the utmost importance for the Institutions, irrespective of their place of employment and of the nature of their employment relationship. Current context requires however that the proposed reform package for local agents takes into account the current*

budgetary constraints. The reform should also fully consider the nature of the employment relationship between the Institutions and local agents, who are employed under national law." In this context, the Commissioner agreed to create in the Joint Decision on Conditions of Employment a dedicated legal basis for granting payment of a lump sum to cover medical costs and compensate salary loss in the event of total permanent invalidity resulting from a work accident or occupational disease. Concerning medical protection after retirement, however, the Commissioner stated that, *"I have currently no margin of manoeuvre to grant a lifelong EU social security cover, as this would call for significant additional resources to be requested from the budgetary authorities in the current context of difficult negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework."* He further noted, though, that *"as a concession granted during the concertation process, a 5-year review clause was introduced in the proposed texts to assess in due time the possibility to meet this request. I hereby take the commitment that the data and relevant information necessary to assess the solidity and evolution of the EU medical scheme will be communicated to you as soon as available."*

27 On page 15 of its Annual activity report, EEAS lists the number of recruitments of local agents from 2018, as well as medical expenditures, etc. What was the equivalent data for 2017?

The equivalent figures for 2017:

- 262 local agents were recruited, while 224 left including 8 dismissals;
- 340 local agents were promoted, while 46 changed to a higher function group;
- 121 Delegations saw their salary grids revised, with an average 4,7% increase of salaries;
- EUR 1.8 million in medical expenditures were reimbursed to local agents through the dedicated insurance scheme;
- EUR 3.15 million were disbursed under the Provident Fund for those agents whose contracts ended.

28 Has the EEAS taken any measure in 2018 to improve recruitment procedures of local agents in delegations?

While the creation of local agent posts in Delegations lies with the EEAS or Commission at Headquarters, the power to conclude the contract of employment with each local agent has been delegated to the Head of Delegation concerned, reflecting the fact that the employment contract is governed by the local law of the host country. Thus, the primary responsibility for the recruitment of local agents lies with the Delegations themselves.

The EEAS has provided Delegations with very detailed, step-by-step administrative guidance and best practices on how to conduct recruitment procedures, through the online "EU Delegations Guide" which is updated regularly. The key principles underlying this guidance are that recruitment procedures for local agents must ensure openness, fairness and transparency.

29 Did the EEAS develop a coherent strategy or the British staff to provide certainty for the contract and temporary agents concerned?

The EEAS aligned itself to the Commission decision of 28 March 2018 regarding the application of the provisions of Article 49 of the Staff Regulations (SR) and Articles 47 and 119 of the Conditions of Employment of other servants (CEOS). This means that British EEAS officials will not be asked to resign because they no longer possess an EU nationality and will be able to continue their employment within the EEAS.

For contract and temporary agents, Articles 47 and 119 CEOS provide that, in principle, employment is terminated if an agent no longer has the nationality of a Member State. The EEAS follows a case by case approach to allow the Appointing Authority to grant exceptions to the nationality clause to extend contracts (before the UK leaves the EU), seeking the best solution in the interest of the service and of the individuals concerned.

There is however another consequence of Brexit which has a major impact on the workings of the Delegations. Article 1(2) of Annex X of the Staff Regulations provides that only nationals of the EU Member States may be recruited to serve in Delegations in third countries.

Consequently, the High Representative and the Commission have decided the following measures with regard to contract and temporary staff in Delegations (and Headquarters) with only British nationality:

- Contracts of Temporary Agents seconded from the UK diplomatic service to the EEAS under Article 2(e) of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants will be terminated on the day the UK leaves the EU (or, at their normal contract end date, if that is earlier).
- Regarding Contract Agents serving in Delegations, in view of their specific status, in particular the fact that their reassignment to Headquarters is only possible for a limited period, it was considered in the interest of the service, as well as in the interest of the contract agents concerned, to extend their presence in Delegations. The EEAS and Commission services were asked to consider the possibility of an extended stay until 1 September 2020 (provided that the host country does not raise objection) , after having spoken to the colleagues concerned and taken into account in particular their preferences.

30 How many of the 449 seconded national experts working for the EEAS in 2018 were located in Brussels?

SNE 2018	HQ	Delegations	Total
Civilian	195	56	251
Military	197	1	198
Total	392	57	449

31 Could you provide a list of the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) by gender, nationality and duration of the contract? What is the yearly cost of each EUSRs? And an overview of how these figures compare with the year 2016? Could you provide us with a total overview of the costs of the offices and cost of the staff employed for EUSRs?

The EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) are not financed from the EEAS budget and in consequence the EEAS is not in a position to report on the EUSRs budgets or their contracts.

The EUSRs are employed by the Commission as Special Advisers and their costs, as well as the costs of the EUSR Offices are financed from the CFSP budget managed by the Commission. The EUSRs conclude Delegation/Contribution agreements with the Commission for that purpose. The agreements are concluded for periods corresponding to the duration of the EUSR mandates as defined by the relevant Council Decisions appointing the EUSRs or extending their mandates.

Nationality	Number
Bulgarian	1
Spanish	1
Estonian	1
Greek	2
Slovak	1
Swedish	1
Dutch	1
Total	8

Gender	Male	Female	Total
	6	2	8

Duration of the contract (in months)	Number of contracts
17	1
19	3
23	1
47	1
52	1
No end date of assignment encoded (AD Official)	1
Total	8

32 Adding to public allegations that several recruitment procedures have been violated in favour of relatives of high officials at the Albanian government being employed at the delegation, we kindly ask you to provide is information on the process of recruitment of these officials. What improvement has been made in EEAS' hiring policy since then?

The EEAS is not aware of any allegations of such nature in 2018 (or more recently) concerning recruitment of local agents at the EU Delegation to Albania. As mentioned in the answer to question 28, the recruitment of local staff in Delegations is carried out by the Delegation in line with the established administrative guidelines, which are aimed at ensuring openness and transparency. Moreover upon recruitment, local agents are bound by detailed rules on ethics and prevention of potential conflict of interest. The EEAS does not investigate recruitment procedures unless an irregularity is brought to its attention.

33 What progress has been made in offering paid traineeships in EEAS?

- **What types of internships are offered?**
- **Under what conditions are these traineeships offered (period, monthly allowance, job description)?**
- **How many interns of the EEAS were employed: a) within which EU-delegations, b) within the headquarters in the year 2018? c) How many interns were paid for their internship respectively?**
- **What was the total amount paid on internships in 2018? What was the average salary? Which criteria determine whether an internship is paid or not?**
- **Could you please provide a table of how has the situation evolved since 2013?**

The EEAS offers paid traineeships at Headquarters and at Delegations.

Headquarters:

The EEAS offers the three following traineeships at Headquarters:

1. "Blue Book" 5-month traineeship: The programme takes place twice a year, starting in March and October. It is based on a Service Level Agreement with the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), by which the EEAS receives 30 trainees per session (in total 60 trainees per year). The Commission decision C(2007) 1221 of 21 March 2007 establishes the amount of trainee grant at 25% of the remuneration of an AD5/1 grade, applicable at the end of each year and subject to indexation. The monthly allowance for "Blue Book" Trainees amounts to EUR 1,250. The job description of each trainee is prepared by their hosting division.
2. "Bruges" 5-month traineeship: This is offered by the EEAS as an award for the best thesis on EU external relations and based on the Administrative Arrangement with the College of Europe in Bruges. The traineeship is paid EUR 1,300 per month, and the job description is prepared by the hosting Division.
3. Others: National Expert in Professional Training and Junior Diplomats programmes: These are secondments for cost-free young diplomats from Member States and cost-free traineeships based on bilateral agreements with third countries, international organisations and public schools of administration.

In 2018, for the 60 "Blue Book" trainees, the EEAS paid a total of EUR 376,995 [2 x EUR 188,497.50/session]. The payment of the "Blue Book" trainees is determined by the Service Level Agreement mentioned above. The amount per trainee, paid by the EEAS to DG EAC, has so far been a fixed lump sum covering the monthly payment of grants and insurance premiums, the payment of travel allowances and the administrative expenses of DG EAC.

The payment for the "Bruges" trainees is determined by the Administrative Arrangement with the College of Europe. The first trainee (02/10/2017 until 28/02/2018) was paid the amount of EUR 2,600 for the 2 months in 2018. The second trainee (01/10/2018 until 28/02/2019) was paid the amount of EUR 3,900 for the 3 months in 2018.

Overall, the total amount paid for trainees in Headquarters was EUR 383,648.88 [EUR 376,995 for Blue Book trainees + EUR 6,500 for "Bruges" trainees + EUR 153.88 for expenses for welcome sessions.

Blue Book trainees payment per session:

2013 March	2013 October	2014 March	2014 October	2015 March	2015 October
EUR 175,260	EUR 175,260	EUR 175,260	EUR 175,260	EUR 175,260	EUR 175,260

2016 March	2016 October	2017 March	2017 October	2018 March	2018 October
EUR 175,260	EUR 175,260	EUR 188,497.50	EUR 188,497.50	EUR 188,497.50	EUR 188,497.50

Bruges trainees payment per month:

2015	2016	2017	2018
EUR 1,300	EUR 1,300	EUR 1,300	EUR 1,300

Delegations:

The EEAS restructured its programme for traineeships in Delegations (Decision ADMIN(2017)28 on the Rules related to Traineeships in the EUDEL). This entered into force on 22 December 2017 and was officially launched in February 2018, when the budget was allocated to these Delegations selected by the geographical Managing Directors. Under this new scheme, the EEAS offers 4 types of traineeships in Delegations, for nationals from the Member States, host country or pre-accession States:

1. Paid traineeship for young graduates with less than one year of professional experience. The monthly grant corresponds to 25% of the basic monthly salary of a Local Agent Function Group I. The ceiling of the grant is limited to EUR 1,200/month.
2. Compulsory traineeship for students already residing and studying in the host country.
3. Traineeship for students of national administration schools of Member States or of a candidate country after signing the accession treaty.
4. Traineeship for trainee civil servants of an administration in a Member State as part of their professional compulsory training.

The average grant paid to trainees in Delegations amounted to EUR 891 in 2018. The period covers from one month to a maximum six months. The job description is linked to the activities of trainees and the level of responsibilities differs depending if they are students or young professionals.

Description		Number	%
Type of traineeship	Funded by the EEAS	233	57.67%
	Funded by Others	45	11.14%
	Compulsory traineeships for students not funded by the EEAS	126	31.19%
	Total	404	100.00%

In Delegations, there were 730 unpaid trainees in 2016. Following the European Ombudsman's recommendation to pay all trainees an appropriate allowance, the EEAS discontinued the unpaid traineeship programme in 2017. Upon the EEAS request, the Budgetary Authority provided EUR 1.2 million for traineeships in Delegations in 2018.

34 What is the average monthly remuneration and duration of internships not covered by a scholarship from the EU institutions?

The EEAS is not in possession of such information.

35 How many cases of harassment were reported, investigated and concluded in 2018? How many cases were there in 2017?

In the EEAS, mediation works as an informal process, in which the Mediator assists parties in working together to identify their respective interests, explore options and seek mutually agreeable solutions to the problems they are encountering. Therefore, the EEAS Mediation Service does not formally judge or investigate on the alleged facts.

In 2018, the EEAS Mediation Service dealt with 135 requests and cases, representing a slight decrease from 2017. The cases concerned either unsolved disagreements around rights and obligations or different kinds of conflict at work including alleged psychological and sexual harassment.

With regards to the use by EEAS staff of the formal procedure set out in article 24 of the Staff Regulations, 3 harassment claims were reported in 2017, 1 of which was investigated and concluded in 2017 and 2 of which were concluded in 2018. In 2018, 3 harassment claims were reported by EEAS staff members, 1 of which was investigated and concluded in 2018 and 2 of which were concluded in 2019.

36 Were any anti-harassment measures put in place in EEAS delegations in 2018?

In 2018, the EEAS Secretary General launched an anti-harassment awareness raising initiative with the aim of providing more information on the EEAS anti-harassment policy and on the support structures in place. In particular, EEAS managers at Headquarters and

in Delegations were instructed to give a presentation to staff on the EEAS anti-harassment policy, to distribute relevant information and awareness material as well as to collect and report comments or questions raised during and after the respective presentations. The exercise was completed in 2019.

As additional preventive measures, the EEAS Human Resources Policy Division delivered regular presentations on the anti-harassment policy to colleagues posted in Delegations in the framework of the different seminars, for example for Deputy Heads of Delegation, Heads of Political Section and local agents. During these seminars the EEAS Mediation Service also intervened, describing their potential role in the management of internal conflicts and allegations of harassment. The Mediation Service also met with staff newly nominated for Delegation posts during their pre-posting training programme.

37 *What was the main outcome of the staff opinion survey for staff in delegations?*

The EEAS conducted its 4th annual Staff Opinion Survey in 2018, following past surveys in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The objective of the survey is to collect information from staff members about their perceptions of the EEAS as a workplace in order to identify trends, monitor evolutions and address possible challenges. It is a very important management tool with the capacity to enhance the quality and the effectiveness of the management.

The novelty in the 2018 Survey is that it consisted of two separate surveys run in parallel: one for EEAS staff at Headquarters and for the first time one joint EEAS-Commission staff survey in Delegations, which allowed the EEAS and the Commission to receive a global feedback from all staff on how they experience their working environment, current job and career prospects. 41% of EEAS staff in Delegations participated in the survey, with the response rate of Commission staff in Delegations being 36%.

Staff in Delegations generally feel they have a positive work environment characterised by good working relations, high individual commitment, pride to work for the EU, and there is recognition that the Delegations are good employers. Staff clearly understand the Delegations' objectives and purpose, know what is expected from them and feel that their work contributes to achieving EU objectives. Relative weaknesses relate to work-life balance, career perspectives and learning and development opportunities, and communication and interaction with the management. The results also reveal that there is a demand for a more open flow of information and communication between senior management and staff.

Overall, the staff in Delegations demonstrated a high level of engagement and positive appreciation of the working environment and the functioning of the Delegations.

Following the publication of the detailed report with the results of the survey in 2019, the EEAS has been working together with the Commission's RELEX-family DGs on the follow-up to the 2018 Staff Survey. The aim is to identify a set of common, concrete actions and messages that will efficiently address the challenges and expectations of all staff working in Delegations.

38 One of the six social dialogue meetings held in 2018 focused on the mobility of contract agents in delegations. Since then, did EEAS propose any changes in that respect?

There were two social dialogues on the mobility of Contract Agents in Delegations in May 2018 and September 2018.

No changes were made to the mobility exercise for Contract Agents. This is based on the Decision concerning the Mobility for EEAS Contract Agents in Delegations – ADMIN (2017) 019 of 8 November 2017 and the respective Implementing Rules and Guidelines for the Mobility Exercise, which are revised on an annual basis.

The EEAS intends to start a reflection process after the 2020 mobility exercise on the possible options for the future, based on lessons learned.

39 Five EP staff Members were posted in EU Delegations as part as a short-term secondment programme with European Parliament. How are those staff Members selected?

The EEAS-EP short-term secondment programme is based on the Administrative Agreement between the EEAS and the EP for short-term assignments of their staff members.

EP candidates submit applications providing their curriculum vitae and motivation letters, indicating the EEAS Divisions and Delegations of their preference. The selection of successful applicants and the proposal on their possible destination Division and/or Delegation belongs with their respective Directors General. The complete file of all EP applications is then submitted to EEAS Headquarters.

EEAS Headquarters consults the chosen Delegations on the possibility to host an EP colleague, given their workload and space availability. Short-term assignments of EP colleagues in Delegations are always limited to 7 working days and are very often combined with a mission. Once Delegations respond positively to candidates' requests, both sides discuss the most suitable periods of assignments.

40 What was on average the sick leave of staff in 2018? How many days (at the level of the institution) in total? How many of these concerned Mondays and Fridays in 2018?

In 2018, the total of the sickness absences was 19,419. 6,504 days of sick leave concerned Mondays and 6,318 days concerned Fridays.

Absence Monday				Absence Friday			
Single Day	Start	in Period	Finish	Single Day	Start	in Period	Finish
988	1643	3667	1194	757	952	3667	1699

Start on Friday and Finish on Monday = 57

41 Please provide us in percentages, how much of the EEAS's budget is allocated to: a. Administrative costs, b. Over-head costs, c. Operational costs, d. Staff remuneration, e. Staff entitlements/benefits, f. Paid leave.

- a. 100% - The entire EEAS budget constitutes administrative appropriations, as it falls under Heading V of the multiannual financial framework (MFF).
- b. The term "overhead" is defined in a business context: all costs on the income statement except for direct labour, direct materials, and direct expenses. This definition is not applicable in the context of an administrative budget.
- c. 0% - Operational appropriations are only present in the Commission's section of the budget.
- d. & e. The EEAS employs the Common Nomenclature for its classification of expenditure which is relevant for these questions. "Remuneration of statutory and external staff" (which includes both salaries and benefits) corresponds to 52% of the EEAS' 2018 budget.
- f. Paid leave is an integrated part of the salary expenditure and is not isolated as such in the budget systems.

42 Whereas some budgetary lines such as "missions" can be more unpredictable than others, "computer systems, equipment and furniture" seems of a rather predictable nature. Could you explain why only 61,78% of this budgetary line was paid ?

Under Article 111 of the Financial Regulation (FR), a budgetary commitment for the full amount is required before entering into legal commitment with third parties. Moreover, under Article 12(7) of the FR, non-differentiated appropriations legally contracted at the end of a financial year may be paid until the end of the following year.

The large majority of IT purchases are the result of open call for tender procedures which are complex and take between six months and one year. A framework contract signed, for example, in September of year N as a result of a procedure launched year N-1 will allow the signature of a specific contract in October, a delivery of the goods in December and a payment of the invoice in January year N+1.

Also, for all service contracts (e.g. telecommunications), the invoice is trimestral. The services provided for the last trimester are always invoiced in the year N+1, meaning that at best, 75% of the annual service can be paid in the same year. The remainder will be paid in N+1 under the aforementioned Article 12(7) and will contribute to the total payment rate.

As an illustration, the overall payment rate for this budget Chapter (21) from 2017, taking into account the payments in 2018, is roughly 94%.

43 *What carry-over of appropriations has been made in 2018? Does the EEAS plan to make carry-over operation to the following year?*

The Financial Regulation (FR) allows various types of carry-overs, both automatic and subject to a decision by the institution. At year-end 2018, the following carry-overs took place in the EEAS budget, which also include the amounts related to contributions received from the Commission, the European Development Fund and the EU Trust Funds to finance their staff in Delegations:

- Carry-over of corresponding payment appropriations under FR 12(7) (cf. Question 42): EUR 145,655 million (automatic).
- Carry-over of unused assigned revenue under FR 12(4)(b) and (c): EUR 58,687 million (automatic).
- Carry-over of unused voted appropriations on decision by the institution under FR 12(2)(a): EUR 0 (on decision).

The EEAS would expect automatic carry-overs to take place in 2020 in the normal course of its budget execution. It does not, based on current information, plan any carry-overs on decision to 2020.

44 *Has there been any progress made regarding the simplification of the budget lines to reduce the complexity of budget management?*

The complex budgetary management of the Commission's staff in Delegations has already been considerably simplified.

This work began with the budget-neutral transfer of the so-called "common costs", the first phase of which was achieved in the budget procedure for 2015.

The second phase, which was negotiated in the budget procedure for the 2016 budget, simplified the management of the European Development Fund (EDF) contribution to the common costs, by treating it as a definitive and fixed-amount per staff member, based on real, average costs. The simplifying agreement with the EDF also covers the Trust Funds, and its simplifying effects therefore increases with each new Trust Fund.

The remaining contribution from the Commission to the currently (in 2018) 35 lines finance direct costs only (costs directly attributable to a particular staff member) for Commission, EDF and Trust Fund staff in delegations; examples are salaries, missions and training. The management of these direct costs is more difficult to simplify than the common costs. However, the EEAS is actively considering further simplifying measures and would aim at raising its suggestions with the Commission in the framework of the development of the Union budget's nomenclature post-2020.

45 In 2016, the European Court of Auditors published a special report on 'The European External Action Service's management of its buildings around the world', in which it gave several recommendations. EEAS states that tangible progress was made on the implementation of ECA's recommendations on EEAS Building management. Could you specify what progress was made? And where this is not the case, for what reason?

On the basis of the recommendations from the European Court of Auditors and discussions with the European Parliament, the EEAS adopted an Action Plan in December 2017, which led to the following results:

Recommendation 1. Complete objectives of office buildings

Environmental factors and access for people with reduced mobility were explicitly introduced as criteria for selecting buildings.

Recommendation 2. Ensure charges to co-located organisations recover full costs

The EEAS developed consistent cost-recovery systems and calculation methods which were integrated into co-location arrangements. In parallel, the EEAS designed new legal frameworks and centralised the recovery of costs at Headquarters. As a direct result, recoverable amounts were determined more accurately, their recovery was better structured, and the amount of co-location fees recovered grew steadily. The trend is set to continue and to be further consolidated.

Recommendation 3. Strengthen the application of the procedure for selecting buildings

The EEAS reinforced the building file procedure for selecting buildings at Delegations level and strengthened the decision-making process for analysing buildings through an update of the rules for processing building files.

Recommendation 4. Verify market rates

The Delegations consistently analyse the local market as a key component of each building file, and the EEAS has introduced new monitoring processes and tools.

Recommendation 5. Improve the real-estate management information system

The EEAS worked on improving the IT tool for real-estate management and data quality. A new version of the IT tool was released in April 2018 and information campaigns, training sessions and on-the-spot checks were performed during inspections leading to more reliable data. A new version of "Immogest" application is expected to be implemented in the first semester of 2020 to further improve the system's functionality.

Recommendation 6. Reinforce real-estate management expertise

The recruitment of 14 staff members with technical profiles (architects and engineers) contributed to the reinforcement of in-house real estate management expertise and provides better support to Delegations.

Recommendation 7. Establish medium-term plans

The EEAS introduced a multi-annual planning and priority setting process incorporating infrastructure and security considerations.

Recommendation 8. Identify where purchasing offers better value for money and manage owned buildings effectively

Since 2018, building files must include a comparison of purchase options versus rentals.

46 What amount has the EEAS spent on renting of buildings in 2018? Could you please provide list of building contracts concluded in 2018 including details of the contracts, the country where they were concluded and their duration? Could you provide us overview under which preferences does the EEAS rent buildings for its delegations?

In 2018, the EEAS spent EUR 70.8 million on renting office buildings and residences in Delegations and EUR 18.8 million on renting office space in Headquarters. These amounts include unrecoverable taxes, parking spaces and rental related costs.

As per the Working Document 2019 on the EEAS Building Policy and annexes (June 2018 - June 2019), 253 lease contracts for office buildings and residences in Delegations were in force in 2018. The total number of lease contracts concluded in 2018 for Delegations offices and residences amounted to 68. This number includes new contracts as well as lease renewals.

The decision to rent, purchase or build office space and residences in Delegations is always made on a case-by-case basis. The EEAS applies selection criteria of stability (purchase versus rent), visibility (representativeness), functionality (size), safety and security, best value for money, environmental factors and access for persons with reduced mobility.

Office Lease Contracts concluded in 2018

Delegation	Real Estate Town	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Amount Lease in EUR	Monthly Lease in EUR	Short Description
AFGHANISTAN	Kabul	01-09-2018	31-08-2022	676.800,00	56.400,00	Stand-alone five floor office block
AFGHANISTAN	Kabul	01-03-2018	31-08-2023	84.000,00	7.000,00	storage
AFGHANISTAN	Kabul	01-03-2018	31-08-2023	576.000,00	48.000,00	storage
AFGHANISTAN	Kabul	01-07-2018	31-10-2023	96.000,00	8.000,00	storage
BELARUS	Minsk	01-05-2018	30-04-2021	395.458,35	32.954,86	offices
BELIZE	Belmopan	01-11-2018	31-10-2019	41.440,04	3.453,34	Technical Office
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	Banja Luka	01-03-2018	29-02-2020	28.800,00	2.400,00	offices
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	Sarajevo	01-01-2018	30-06-2020	1.334.000,00	111.166,67	offices
CAMEROON	Yaoundé	01-01-2018	30-09-2023	198.106,00	16.508,83	offices
COLOMBIA	Bogota	01-05-2018	30-04-2024	294.601,52	24.550,13	offices
CONGO	Brazzaville	29-05-2018	28-05-2033	344.748,21	28.729,02	offices
CUBA	La Habana	01-01-2018	30-07-2021	74.670,69	6.222,56	offices
CUBA	La Habana	01-01-2018	30-07-2021	32.176,97	2.681,41	Store Facility Annex
ETHIOPIA	Addis Ababa	22-01-2018	21-01-2019	74.007,04	6.167,25	offices
ETHIOPIA	Addis ababa	23-01-2018	22-01-2019	27.202,82	2.266,90	Office Annex
GEORGIA	Tbilisi	01-01-2018	30-09-2019	439.983,00	36.665,25	offices
ICELAND	Reykjavik	01-05-2018	31-10-2018	111.745,12	9.312,09	offices
INDIA	New Delhi	07-10-2018	06-10-2022	388.312,96	32.359,41	offices
ISRAEL	Ramat Gan	01-04-2018	31-03-2019	443.387,47	36.948,96	offices
IVORY COAST	Abidjan-Plateau	11-07-2018	17-10-2022	624.513,23	52.042,77	offices
JAMAICA	Kingston	01-01-2018	31-12-2019	245.397,21	20.449,77	offices
KOSOVO	Pristina	01-02-2018	31-01-2025	6.000,00	500,00	Archive
LEBANON	Beirut	21-11-2018	20-11-2028	1.100.000,00	91.666,67	offices
MALI	Bamako	04-07-2018	31-03-2026	427.978,24	35.664,85	offices
MAURITIUS	Port-Louis	01-09-2018	31-08-2026	104.064,03	8.672,00	offices
MAURITIUS	Port-Louis	01-09-2018	31-08-2019	61.692,74	5.141,06	offices
MAURITIUS	Port Louis	01-09-2018	31-08-2026	112.144,10	9.345,34	offices
NORTH MACEDONIA	Skopje	15-01-2018	14-01-2028	695.736,00	57.978,00	offices
SERBIA	Belgrade	01-05-2018	30-04-2023	809.739,96	67.478,33	offices
SOUTH AFRICA	Pretoria	01-02-2018	31-01-2020	63.001,32	5.250,11	offices
SRI LANKA	Colombo 7	01-01-2018	31-12-2035	81.812,46	6.817,71	offices
TAIWAN	Taipei	01-10-2018	30-09-2028	195.208,99	16.267,42	offices
TAJIKISTAN	Dushanbe	01-01-2018	31-12-2035	286.576,17	23.881,35	offices
TAJIKISTAN	Dushanbe	01-01-2018	31-12-2035	6.033,18	502,77	offices
THAILAND	Bangkok	31-07-2018	30-07-2021	849.936,54	70.828,05	offices
VENEZUELA	Caracas	03-11-2018	02-11-2024	248.550,12	20.712,51	offices
YEMEN	Amman	01-01-2018	31-12-2019	286.444,35	23.870,36	offices
ZAMBIA	Lusaka	01-01-2018	31-12-2021	58.320,76	4.860,06	offices

Residence Lease Contracts concluded in 2018

Delegation	Real Estate Town	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date	Amount Lease in EUR	Monthly Lease in EUR
AFGHANISTAN	Kabul	01-01-2018	30-06-2025	126.000,00	10.500,00
ARMENIA	Yerevan	01-02-2018	31-01-2028	51.600,00	4.300,00
BELARUS	Minsk	01-05-2018	31-10-2019	68.400,00	5.700,00
CAMEROON	Yaoundé	01-01-2018	31-12-2022	64.028,59	5.335,72
COLOMBIA	Bogota	25-07-2018	24-07-2028	124.932,00	10.411,00
COSTA RICA	San Jose	15-02-2018	14-02-2026	61.347,72	5.112,31
CUBA	Havana	01-01-2018	30-10-2021	80.442,43	6.703,54
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	Santo Domingo	21-06-2018	20-06-2026	119.304,06	9.942,00
EGYPT	Cairo	01-08-2018	31-07-2021	236.220,47	19.685,04
EL SALVADOR	San Salvador	01-03-2018	29-02-2024	40.933,90	3.411,16
ESWATINI	Mbabane	19-11-2018	18-11-2027	28.235,29	2.352,94
GEORGIA	Tbilisi	01-01-2018	30-09-2026	55.347,41	4.612,28
HONDURAS	Tegucigalpa	01-09-2018	31-08-2026	79.536,04	6.628,00
HONG KONG	Repulse Bay	20-12-2018	19-12-2021	330.047,82	27.503,99
ICELAND	Reykjavik	01-01-2018	31-12-2021	85.200,00	7.100,00
KOSOVO	PRISTINA	01-01-2018	31-12-2020	54.000,00	4.500,00
LIBERIA	Monrovia	15-06-2018	14-02-2020	74.565,04	6.213,75
NIGERIA	Abuja	01-02-2018	31-01-2022	82.318,83	6.859,90
NORWAY	Snarøya	01-05-2018	31-08-2021	105.783,89	8.815,32
PHILIPPINES	Makati	15-08-2018	14-08-2020	122.014,20	10.167,85
SERBIA	Belgrade	01-01-2018	31-08-2021	100.800,00	8.400,00
SIERRA LEONE	Leicester	01-12-2018	30-11-2023	42.132,26	3.511,02
TAJIKISTAN	Dushanbe	01-01-2018	31-12-2035	60.331,83	5.027,65
TANZANIA	Dar es Salaam	01-03-2018	31-08-2021	136.886,82	11.407,24
TOGO	Lome	16-06-2018	15-06-2026	64.344,00	5.362,00
TURKEY	Ankara	01-08-2018	31-01-2023	81.842,28	6.820,19
UN/GEN	Chambésy	19-12-2018	18-09-2024	192.394,00	16.032,83
UN/NY	New York	15-05-2018	14-05-2020	201.027,29	16.752,27
VENEZUELA	Caracas	01-06-2018	31-05-2020	143.851,87	11.987,66
ZAMBIA	Lusaka	01-01-2018	31-12-2025	65.359,48	5.446,62

47 *Is the EEAS planning to terminate functioning of some of its representation offices in countries of little interest to our foreign policy?*

The EEAS is constantly trying to ensure the optimal allocation of resources and, in this context, also reviewing the scope of the network of Delegations. In 2018, the Delegation to Solomon Islands was closed.

There are currently no concrete plans to close any Delegations or Offices.

48 *After accusation of EEAS of being involved in the corruptive affairs, could you provide us explanation on following tenders? With regards to principles of transparency, could you provide us relevant documentation (analysis, market survey, evaluation of other relevant aspects) and define process of selection of these particular buildings with regards to the best relation of price/quality?*

- ***EU Delegation in Albania- Vlahutin's Villa***
- ***EU Delegation in Tanzania***
- ***EU Delegation in Indonesia***

Concerning the Delegation to Albania, the residence of the Head of Delegation was purchased in 2015 following a real estate market prospection, as foreseen in the Financial Regulation, for rental and/or purchase offers. Nine real estate agencies were contacted; five of them sent 15 offers in total, out of which five offers were shortlisted for site visits. Based on an independent evaluation of an external expert, a visit of Headquarters' staff in charge of buildings and an evaluation of the security aspects by the Regional Security Officer, it was concluded that the purchased building was the most attractive in terms of quality of the construction, size, separation between private and representation area, location, functionality, representation and security. The initial price for the proposed residence was EUR 1,750,000, which, following negotiations, was lowered to EUR 1,649,000. Other potential buildings in the same area were rejected mainly because of security reasons, as they did not comply with the EEAS security requirements.

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) was informed about allegations raised on this case but, after preliminary investigations, they decided there were no grounds to open an investigation. The European Ombudsman closed a case related to this issue when the EEAS agreed to provide partial access to a list of properties offered to the Delegation to Albania in the context of a procurement procedure to acquire a residence for its Head of Delegation. The EEAS provided its answers to several questions raised by the EP about the residence in the context of the 2016 discharge

The EEAS is not aware of any kind of corruption or controversial issues concerning the buildings of the Delegations to Tanzania and to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. The buildings have been selected in line with established administrative guidelines by using a negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice, after prospecting the local markets, as foreseen in the Financial Regulation.

49 In the 2017 Discharge report, the EP acknowledged the preference to purchase rather than rent buildings for its delegations. A new building is foreseen for the delegation in Washington. Will it be bought or rented? Can you provide more information?

In March 2019, the EEAS acquired the building where the Delegation to the United States of America is located. The financial analysis showed that buying the building would offer better value for money than renting: annual rent of EUR 3.2 million in 2018 versus annual loan payment of EUR 2.8 million until 2039. The Budgetary Authority approved the purchase in July 2018.

50 How many offices did the EEAS rent and how many did it own in 2018?

In 2018, the EEAS owned 34 office buildings in Delegations and rented 143.

In Headquarters, 6 buildings were rented: the main EEAS building (Schuman), 3 buildings on Avenue Kortenbergh (150, 115 and 158), the MERO building, and the building located on Belliard 100 (rented as from September 2018).

51 How many offices, rented or owned by EEAS, remained to be upgraded in terms of security? What was the amount spent on the upgrading of security in 2018?

The amount spent on upgrading security in Delegations in 2018 was EUR 8.6 million. This figure does not take into account the amount spent on Iraq and Somalia (EUR 9.3 million), since such costs, which are paid directly by Headquarters from the security budget line, are not limited to security costs but also cover costs for office space, accommodations, and other compound related costs.

The upgrading of security is a continuous process, based on priorities. 13 Delegations benefited from security installations in 2018. Plans for 2019 foresee security installations in another 14 Delegations.

52 What were the full costs of the US Delegation in 2018 (i.e. staff salary costs including all allowances and mission expenses, office and overhead costs, mission costs within the United States, mission costs between the United States and the European Union, costs relating to the office's programme of activities)? Were there changes in posts in 2018?

The budget which can be directly attributed to the Delegation to the United States of America in 2018, as reported in the official working document VIII to the 2020 draft budget, amounts to EUR 11,981,265.

It must be underlined that not all EEAS expenditure for the Delegation network is split by Delegation and that the EEAS can only provide figures for the amounts that have been directly attributed to and spent by the Delegation to the USA. For example, common costs

for telecommunications or software are financed from Headquarters for the entire network. The largest part of salaries and allowances for officials and contract agents is also paid centrally for officials and contract agents. None of these costs is tracked by Delegation and can therefore not be included in the figure quoted above. The amounts executed globally for the Delegation network by Headquarters services in 2018 amounts to EUR 209.4 million out of a total of EUR 445.8 million.

Concerning the changes in posts in the Delegation to the USA, there were 3 posts created and 1 post removed in 2018:

Posts created in 2018:

- 1 EEAS LA-3 fixed-term in Administration Section.
- 1 EEAS AST Deputy Head of Administration.
- 1 ECHO FP-AD.

Post removed in 2018:

- 1 AST in the Head of Delegation section.

53 What has the EEAS done to strengthen the systems, particularly in view of EEAS plans to invest in purchasing, rather than renting, buildings? Could you please provide an overview of new buildings that were bought in 2018 with a break down by country, size and cost?

Purchase decisions are taken on a case by case basis and take into account market opportunities. Delegations are requested to systematically compare the financial opportunities of purchase options versus rental options in building files.

This policy has proved successful, leading to a gradual increase in ownership. In 2018, the EEAS worked on building projects which materialised in 2019. The latest purchases took place in Colombia, Nepal, Somalia, USA (Washington), South Africa and Ecuador.

Country	Building Type	Usable Surface Area (m ²)	Purchase Price	Date of Purchase
Nepal	Office building	841	EUR 5,000,000	11/2017
Colombia	Office building	1405	EUR 4,912,000	10/2017
Somalia	Office Compound	1060	EUR 11,361,282 (USD 12,500,000 in initial capital investment over 10 years)	2016-2017
South Africa	Office building	2110	EUR 3,055,405	02/2019
USA-Washington	Office building	4990	EUR 90,995,700	03/2019
Ecuador	Office building	581	EUR 1,518,942	06/2019

54 Could you provide us a comprehensive analysis to determine in which countries it would be more cost-effective for the delegations to buy office or residence buildings instead of renting them?

The opportunity to purchase buildings in Delegations is always checked against the particular situation of a country when analysing a Building project. Whilst the EEAS believes in principle that ownership is more sustainable than rental in the long run, and sees the purchase of Delegation buildings as strategic investments, country specificities may contravene this principle. In certain countries, impediments for foreign and diplomatic entities to become property owners apply, and in countries where real estate prices suffer significant increases, long-term rentals can prove more effective than purchases. Delegations are therefore requested to carry out a systematic local analysis of the cost-effectiveness of purchasing offices/residence buildings as opposed to renting, when preparing building files.

55 Has the EEAS put in place an effective management of recovery of costs in the case of co-locations?

The EEAS took significant steps towards developing an effective management of recovery of costs in the frame of co-location, amongst which:

- A progressive centralisation of revenues at Headquarters to better control operations.
- The development of a new legal instrument (the Service Level Agreement) to unify the legal basis for colocation and regularise the hosting of EU Agencies and Institutions in Delegations. Through this instrument, the terms of co-location are agreed with each partner in a single framework document, the recovery of co-locations costs is simplified and a standardised system of payments is created.
- The introduction of an administrative fee into colocation arrangements. 65 agreements out of 114 include the recovery of an administrative fee to co-location partners, representing an amount of around EUR 27,000 per month. These numbers are expected to increase with the application of administrative fees to new co-location agreements and to the renewal of old agreements.

Training Costs

56 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?

In 2018, the costs of the mentioned activities were as follows¹:

Training	Costs
Training HQ	EUR 1,203,573
Training Delegations	EUR 1,522,387

Costs of certain training activities were as follows:

Activity	Costs
Team Building in HQ	EUR 202,012
Team Building in Delegations	EUR 129,460
Seminars for Delegation Staff in Brussels and Regional seminars organised in Delegations ²	EUR 211,402

A total of 9,511 participants in training were counted in 2018: 4,783 in classroom (on-site and videoconferencing facilities) and 4,728 to e-learning courses.

The EEAS training guidelines do not foresee funding for "Away-Days". In line with the principle of sound financial management, only activities with a professional objective of team building and organisational development can be funded. In 2018, Team-Building activities were organised in the following locations:

- 12 events in the greater Brussels region (target group: staff at Headquarters). A total of 312 staff participated.
- 20 events were organised for the following Delegations: Azerbaijan, Benin, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guyana, Iraq, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jordan, North Macedonia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Venezuela. A total of 872 staff participated.

In 2018, 635 Delegation staff participated in Delegation seminars organised in Brussels. These seminars were organised for Local Agents, Heads of Administration, Deputy Ambassadors/Heads of Delegations, Ambassadors/Heads of Delegations as well as for several staff categories in the context of pre-posting seminars.

371 staff participated to the following regional seminars:

- Trade Seminar for Delegations in Latin America, Peru.
- Finance and Contract Regional seminars in Malawi, Guinea and Myanmar.
- Head of Delegation regional seminar MENA, Tunisia.
- Regional seminar MENA, Morocco.
- Regional seminar Asia-Pacific, Republic of Korea.
- Regional seminar Americas, Colombia.

¹ Costs were covered by the Learning & Development budget.

² Regional seminars' costs were covered by the Learning and Development and Press & Information budgets. These amounts cover logistics and trainers costs.

57 What was done to improve the communication in relation with Union citizens with regards to the importance of public diplomacy and strategic communications as an integral aspect of the Union's external relations?

In line with its mission and the priorities set by the HR/VP, the EEAS Strategic Communications Division (Stratcom) delivered targeted communication actions, proactively positioning the EU narrative and engaging citizens and partners across the board. These related to geographic priority regions (in particular the Eastern Partnership, Middle East and North Africa and Western Balkans) and key topics (e.g. security and defence, migration, human rights). The Division continued the modernisation and professionalization of its communication activities with a significant focus on digital capabilities and campaign style communication.

In parallel, Stratcom reinforced the capabilities of the three Task Forces (East, South and Western Balkans) to be able to address the growing challenges of disinformation among others. Roughly one thousand new cases were registered by the euvsdisinfo.eu in 2018, while the East StratCom Task Force (ESTF) continued to increase disinformation awareness through a number of outreach actions offline and online; over 600,000 people visited euvsdisinfo.eu in 2018, generating more than 1.2 million page views.

Stratcom invested in developing its analytical assets and improved understanding of information environments. In that respect, in 2018 the ESTF was assigned a dedicated budget in the form of the Preparatory Action.

In 2018, the EEAS further developed its campaign style of public communications, combining high quality media assets with a story-telling approach on digital platforms. Stratcom campaigned to mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The campaign reached over 2 million people, through videos capturing testimonies of human rights defenders from across the world.

Facts-based and proactive communications about the EU's role in key policy priorities remained at the core of Stratcom efforts. Stratcom designed and ran a communications campaign around the 2018 Brussels conference on Syria, shedding light on the human aspect of the crisis and shaping the narrative. The campaign largely surpassed its goals, reaching around 12 million people online in Europe and the wider region.

The EEAS' campaigns-led communications was similarly reflected on the EEAS website where key policy priorities were promoted in an innovative way, combining human stories with EU's external action themes. The website was also revamped in 2018 while continuing to deliver press material, news and features to readers worldwide. The website was visited more than 6 million times, for a total of roughly 14.7 million pages viewed. The

website of the EEAS Headquarters alone was visited 3.1 million times, and had 7 million of pages viewed, recording an increase of 16% compared to 2017.

Stratcom firmly embedded social media engagement and community building in its public outreach. Investments made on the digital front had concrete deliverables, increasing viewership and followers, while in-house video production significantly innovated EEAS online platforms and reached new audiences. For the third year in a row, EEAS has according to the 'Twiplomacy' study remained the best-connected government institution on Twitter, mutually following 132 ministries and world leaders.

As part of marking the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the EEAS launched "The EU-Western Balkans Cultural Heritage Route" bringing together through a virtual itinerary a series of over 50 public diplomacy initiatives and cultural events that highlighted the common European culture and identity the European Union shares with the Western Balkans.

Overall, Stratcom invested in advancing the EU's public diplomacy in third countries including by building and strengthening the communications expertise of EU Delegations, providing them with continuous strategic guidance and expert tailor-made trainings.

The EEAS organised visits for university students, government officials, international organisations, political groups and journalists from Member States as well as third countries, receiving 91 groups of students, 38 groups of government/international organisation officials and diplomats, and 8 groups of journalists in 2018 totalling 3,219 visitors. It further expanded its network of stakeholders involving media, bloggers, civil society and non-governmental organisations leaders, and academics.

Finally, Stratcom continued regular exchanges with Member States through meetings with Directors of Strategic communications or Spokespersons of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. It has further strengthened its cooperation with the European Commission, notably DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, DG COMM, DG MARE, DG CLIMA, and established a good working relationship with the network of Commission's Representations. It invested further in stronger cooperation with the European Parliament particularly ahead of the 2019 elections, and expanded on exchanges with international partners, such as United Nations agencies, NATO, and the European Investment Bank.

58 How does the EEAS continue to strive for the best use of various communication channels to raise awareness among citizens?

Through a wide range of actions, from strategically engaging multipliers to running Europe-wide public campaigns, Stratcom continued to build awareness and support for EU's external action, while promoting the role of the Union as a strong global actor.

The strategic approach to communications is reflected in a smart combination of tools and messages, based on a sound understanding of our audiences and information spaces. This is supported by public diplomacy activities through which Stratcom engages with

opinion makers and thought leaders, and builds partnerships in support for EU policies, goals and values.

Online and digital communications, be it with citizens or journalists, remained an extremely important part in raising awareness about the EU. The campaign-driven communications that tell powerful and personal stories most often proved to be the high impact communications vehicle. Finally, proactively communicating about the EU while in parallel addressing disinformation remained a key feature of Stratcom approach.

59 What was the EEAS's budget for communication activities in 2018?

The EEAS was allocated EUR 10.5 million for its information and outreach efforts across Delegations and EUR 1.1 million at Headquarters. The budget covers press and public diplomacy activities across the Delegations network and provides the means to fulfil identified priorities, including in the areas of advancing multilateralism and strengthening partnerships through campaigns; the EU's strategic responsibility as global actor and strong partner on security and defence; economic diplomacy and; cultural diplomacy amongst others.

At Headquarters, a combined budget of EUR 3.39 million allows the EEAS to implement communication campaigns, targeted communication actions and curated events. It assures outreach via the EEAS websites and those of the Delegations, and other forms of digital presence and social media outreach. These campaigns and events may include the production of audio-visual outputs as well as print and publications. Its public outreach efforts in the form of events and press trips allow the EEAS to reach both targeted and wider audiences.

The budget also allows for the dissemination of best practice exchange, training and internal capacity building in terms of strategic communication abilities, and knowledge management within EU staff. The budget also allows for access to information sources, including print and digital/online sources (databases, newswires, subscriptions to online periodicals, newspapers) media monitoring tools and aggregators, supporting the needs of staff at Headquarters, Delegations, the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN) and EU Military Staff (EUMS).

A EUR 1.1 million preparatory action (rising to EUR 3 million in 2019), which was available thanks to the support of the EP, allowed the East Stratcom Task Force (ESTF) to strengthen its capacity vis-a-vis the phenomenon and prevalence of Russian/Pro-Kremlin disinformation about the EU and its policies. The action is intended to better evaluate the disinformation challenge and to counter disinformation more systematically, effectively and efficiently. The budget may be used towards raising awareness of disinformation and disinformation campaigns; monitoring of disinformation campaigns both within and outside the EU; data-based analysis of the challenge and ways forward and; better output for the product of that analysis, i.e. translation and dissemination in local languages.

60 What is the EEAS's strategy for countering disinformation and radicalisation online?

The EEAS strategy for countering disinformation is defined in the EU's Action Plan against Disinformation³ which was drafted jointly by the HR/VP and the Commission. The strategy defined therein is based on the whole of society approach protecting EU's democratic institutions and tackling disinformation, emphasising the key role played by civil society and the private sector (notably social media platforms) and coordinated Member States' approach.

The EEAS has strengthened East, Western Balkans and South Strategic Communications Task Forces involved in tackling disinformation in line with their mandates and implementing the EU's Action Plan against Disinformation. In terms of practical steps, the EEAS has increased capabilities to detect, analyse and expose disinformation campaigns online and help raising awareness for this issue. The EEAS also has established the Rapid Alert System, which connected all Member States and EU Institutions in a unique network, which allows sharing best practices, insights and also raising alerts on the specially built online platform. The EEAS has also invested in awareness raising activities on the threat of disinformation, both within the EU and outside.

The Report on the implementation of the Action Plan Against Disinformation⁴ provides a first assessment of the progress achieved so far and sets out the main lessons for the future, including preparations put in place fighting disinformation in the context of the European elections.

As for radicalisation online, the EEAS research, experience and people-to-people contacts have shown that approaches to counter radicalisation narratives are best done at a grassroots level. Therefore, the EEAS Stratcom Task Force South has worked with a network of multipliers in a complementary way with the Global Coalition against Da'esh, the Delegations on the ground and civil society partners, such as the Anna Lindh Foundation who are active in the region and offering positive messages.

Also, there is widespread disinformation about and misperception of the EU and its policies, as well as of its Member States. The EEAS therefore developed positive narratives and promoted understanding of what the EU does and its impact on the ground in close connection and support to local support media organisations..

61 In 2018, the budget for the East StratCom Task Force (ESTF) comprised 1,1 million Euro. For 2019, this budget comprised 3 million Euro:

- ***On which aspects did the 1,1 million Euro budget fall short in achieving ESTF's targets?***
- ***Will the increased budget be sufficient to achieving ESTF's targets for 2019?***

³ JOIN(2018) 36 final, 5 December 2018.

⁴ JOIN(2019) 12 final, 14 June 2019.

➤ ***What lessons did the EEAS learn from the implementation of the 2018 budget for ESTF, and how does it ensure that future budgets are implemented in the most effective and efficient way?***

The 2018 budget allowed the East Stratcom Task Force (ESTF) to more systematically focus on the detection, analysis, and exposure of pro-Kremlin disinformation across the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and in key EU languages. Services were procured of a team of more than 20 experts for providing targeted and tailored media monitoring and delivering big data analysis towards the detecting and exposing of disinformation. Outputs are shared with key stakeholders, including Member States. These include:

- Daily monitoring reports of the media landscape, covering online and traditional (television and radio) media as well as localised media narratives in key EU and EaP languages.
- Weekly analysis reports of trends in the disinformation data ecosystem and bi-weekly analysis of the reach and potential impact of disinformation.
- Exposed disinformation narratives continue to be publicly available via the weekly Disinformation Review as well as on the 'euvisinfo' website, which contains a rich catalogue of over 6,000 disinformation cases.

The relatively small budget of 2018 did not allow covering the full range of EU languages, or languages from countries in the Western Balkans and the South Neighbourhood. Nor did it allow for more complex analysis of the information environment, beyond media monitoring, important for the development of a more comprehensive and sustainable set of response or resilience measures to be undertaken.

The increased budget for 2019, for which the support of the EP is key, will allow extending this analysis, detection, and exposing of disinformation to the Western Balkans and the South Neighbourhood. It will also allow for outreach to disinformation experts and practitioners as well as international partners, to better understand the evolving and future tactics of Russia's disinformation campaign and what is needed for a relevant EU response, thereby working towards the development of a future-looking approach to address pro-Kremlin disinformation in the EU and in its immediate neighbourhood. Finally, it allows for the launch of the new 'euvisinfo' website, which will provide news and analysis, studies and reports, highlighted media stories and access to the flagship Disinformation Review.

There are still grounds for improvement: the preparatory action budget does not adequately cover the resources needed for a coherent approach to research and explore the actions necessary to understand the wider phenomenon of disinformation from external sources, at a time when other global actors are known to be playing a role in influencing the disinformation sphere. It does not allow for more sustained and systematic campaigns towards strengthening coordinated and joint responses to disinformation nor similar sustained and systematic activities regarding raising awareness and improving societal resilience. Furthermore, it is still necessary to ensure more efforts in coordinated response and building resilience to disinformation at the local level, namely across Delegations. The EU's Action Plan against Disinformation foresaw the

provision of Disinformation Officers across key Delegations, who would work in close coordination with operations at Headquarters. The EEAS has requested posts needed at Headquarters and Delegations under the EU Budget 2020.

Lessons learned highlight the following key areas that need to be addressed immediately to improve the EU's capacity to tackle disinformation:

- Further analysis and research needs to be undertaken to better understand other key actors beyond Russian-source disinformation, including resource for operations to undertaken research and big-data analysis.
- Further enhanced and coordinated efforts across the EU institutions, including Commission Representations and the European Parliament's Liaison Offices, should be fostered, building on the successful partnership with the Parliament in the lead up to the 2019 elections.
- Systematic consultation and coordination with Commission Instruments and programmes should be fostered.
- A longer-term vision for the Rapid Alert System and fostering coordination with Members States and other key partners.
- More targeted responses at the local level are needed; Delegations should be adequately staffed to ensure local responses and resilience to disinformation, with an immediate priority for the neighbourhood Delegations, in strong coordination with Headquarters.
- The EEAS should be allocated a stand-alone spend programme beyond the life of the preparatory action, under the new Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) to assure the sustainability of operations and measures already in place and capacity to build upon these.

62 In 2018, the ESTF placed news articles from three media companies on its blacklist by falsely accusing them from spreading fake news. How does the ESTF prevent this from happening again?

The ESTF has continuously improved and professionalised its working methods, taking into account also situations as mentioned in question 61, which were quickly addressed and rectified. This professionalisation has been significantly facilitated with the allocation by the European Parliament of a specifically dedicated budget (preparatory action) in 2018. The ESTF has been given the opportunity, through this funding, to set in place a professional, resourced operation to support its work. In effect, it is directed to ensure professional media monitoring, disinformation analysis and data analysis. The objective is to gain a more comprehensive, regular and reliable picture of disinformation campaigns coming from pro-Kremlin sources. It allows the ESTF to focus on the detection and exposure of trending narratives in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood, on the disinformation channels and disinformation techniques in order to increase resilience within the EU, in close cooperation with Member States.

63 *Were there any whistle-blower cases coming out of the EEAS and in such a case how did you follow-up on them?*

In 2018, the EEAS had one reported case of alleged whistleblowing.

The case was referred to Headquarters by a Delegation, which had been contacted by an external person raising allegations against a member of the Delegation's staff. The EEAS informed the external complainant about the different possibilities to make a substantiated complaint. Following additional information on the concrete allegations, the EEAS transferred the case for follow-up to the Appointing Authority (Commission) of the staff member concerned by the allegations. The external complainant was informed accordingly.

64 What activities has the EEAS started and what policies implemented in the area of transparency in 2018?

In 2018, the EEAS Transparency team continued to thoroughly implement the rules regarding Access to documents in the framework of Regulation 1049/2001 and the HR/VP's Decision of 19 July 2011. In order to further increase internal transparency awareness and to provide guidance to EEAS Divisions and Delegations, the existing internal guidelines have been actively circulated, also to facilitate the handling of initial requests and confirmatory applications.

The EEAS Transparency team continued to promote and improve the e-EEAS Register, a search tool established by the EEAS which enables citizens to search for EEAS documents online. Internal efforts to make the register more functional and to promote increased contents in the register have been successful, since, in 2018 the citizens used the e-EEAS Register on a higher frequency compared to 2017. In the e-EEAS Register, citizens can also access public EEAS documents directly i.e. without launching a formal request.

The number of initial requests for access to documents received by the EEAS in 2018 and of confirmatory applications can be summarised as follows:

A. Initial applications for access to documents

2018	Number of initial requests received
1 st Quarter	53
2 nd Quarter	50
3 rd Quarter	38
4 th Quarter	29
Total	170 of which 57 requests (33.5%) came from the academic sector

A positive reply and full access to the documents requested was given to 95 of the initial applications (56%). Partial access was granted in 21 requests (12,4%). In 21 cases (12,4%), there was no document held by the EEAS matching the request. Also, it is important to note that in some cases, the EEAS had to ask for clarifications in order to understand which precise documents the requestor wished to obtain. While in some cases, the requests could be further processed in the light of the clarifications received, there were 5 cases in 2018 (2,94%) where the EEAS did not receive any reply to its clarification request and therefore could not process the request any further. Finally, in only 28 requests (16.5%), access to documents was fully denied.

The most frequently reason for (partial or total) refusal was the protection of the public interest as regards international relations (Art. 4.1.(a) third indent of the Regulation 1049/2001). This related to 37 out of the 49 cases in which access was partially or totally denied.

B. Confirmatory applications for access to documents

The EEAS received 17 confirmatory applications in 2018, which required review and a decision by the Director-General for Budget and Administration of the EEAS. In nine cases the documents requested could not be disclosed to the general public. In four cases partial access was allowed, and in four cases there was no document held by the EEAS matching the request.

Request for information from citizens

Requests for information from the public were handled in accordance with the rules of the Code of Good Administrative Behaviour. The EEAS, through its cooperation with the Commission (DG COMM), responded to questions arriving through the information service Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC). In 2018, the EDCC replied to 1,673 questions on foreign policy and external relations. Of these, 313 replies were drafted by EEAS services. In addition, Delegations received direct requests and questions from citizens, to which they replied directly.

65 Did the Ombudsman issue any recommendations to the EEAS in 2017 or 2018 and how did you follow-up on them?

From the European Ombudsman (EO) cases concerning access to documents, there were three cases in 2017 (stemming from the 168 initial requests and 14 confirmatory applications handled in 2017) and two cases in 2018 (stemming from the 170 initial requests and 17 confirmatory applications handled in 2018) in which the EO decided to open an inquiry. Two EO inspections have been carried out in 2017 and three in 2018, following which the European Ombudsman concluded that no maladministration occurred, i.e. that the EEAS had rightly denied access to documents or that outstanding issues had been settled with the complainant, e.g. by the EEAS granting partial access. The EEAS replied positively to additional suggestions raised by the EO in this context. There has been no court proceeding against the EEAS regarding public access to documents.

66 How did the EEAS co-operate with OLAF and ECA in the spheres of prevention, investigation or corrective measures?

The mission and prerogatives of the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) are set by Regulation 883/2013. At a more operational level, relations between the EEAS and OLAF on investigations are governed by an 'Administrative Arrangement' concluded in January 2015 and updated in October 2017. This arrangement provides for adequate channels of information as well as regular high-level exchanges between the two services and guidelines for practical day-to-day co-operation regarding access to information, notification procedures, external investigations, cooperation with judicial authorities etc. In addition the EEAS is a member of the Fraud and Detection Network chaired by OLAF and attends its periodical meetings where info is exchanged with other stakeholders.

Relations with the European Court of Auditors (ECA) are governed by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and the Financial Regulations related to the general budget of the EU.

The ECA produces a wide range of documents each with specific modalities for consultation of stakeholders prior to adoption and different needs for follow up. The EEAS is committed to provide full cooperation and transparency to the activities of ECA and has appointed a specific contact person for this purpose.

Regarding follow-up, the OLAF reports may include administrative and/or operational and/or financial recommendations. These may involve in particular identified systemic risks requesting corrective measures, recovery orders, and disciplinary measures. The EEAS is requested to report on their implementation six months after the document has been issued.

In the case of ECA reports, recommendations are normally discussed with the pertinent services in the framework of the adversarial procedure. Following their adoption, these measures are recorded in the RAD system (managed by the Commission), a data base which enables tracking their follow up. The ECA periodically asks the Commission and the EEAS to report on the follow up to their recommendations.

67 What progress has been made in cooperation between the EEAS and the OLAF? Please detail your cooperation with OLAF regarding prevention/investigation of fraud and corruption cases?

The Horizontal Coordination Division within the Directorate-General for Budget and Administration is the EEAS focal point for all wrong doing and/or disciplinary issues, the entry point for the OLAF, the Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission

(IDOC) and the ECA and ensures proper liaison and follow up to their recommendations in Headquarters and Delegations.

The EEAS has introduced specific training modules with the support of OLAF and IDOC on tackling fraud and corruption for Heads of Administration and Heads of Delegations in the framework of their pre posting training.

Awareness raising sessions are also organised with the Bureau of Heads of Delegations and Heads of Administration on the occasion of their missions to Brussels.

68 What progress has been made in cooperation on fraud related issues between the EEAS and the Directorates General acting in external affairs, such as the FPI, DG NEAR and DG DEVCO?

The EEAS and the other Directorate-Generals (DGs) adopted a common action plan for tackling fraud and corruption back in 2014. Following the adoption of the new Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy, the EEAS and the other members of the RELEX Family started working on an updated action plan in this area.

In addition, the EEAS closely coordinates with these DGs in the implementation of OLAF's reports, when it comes to general working methods, and other horizontal initiatives in particular related to Delegations.

69 How many OLAF investigations were ongoing in 2018? How many of those concerned EEAS delegations?

This information is only available through OLAF. The EEAS has no access to it.

70 What measures / rules has (or had introduced in 2018) the EEAS to prevent and fight conflict of interests? How did those rules changed up until today?

Since its establishment, the EEAS has been applying in its entirety Article 11a of the EU Staff Regulations and the related implementing provisions. Situations involving a potential conflict of interest have to be reported to the Appointing Authority.

New rules on outside activities for EU staff entered into force on 1 September 2018, together with more flexible implementing procedures.

In 2018, the EEAS has continued to put emphasis on the systematic awareness-raising of staff about ethical rules: in addition to the information available on the Intranet page and the advice provided by the ethics correspondents, a training module was developed (also available on-line), especially directed at newcomers and the Heads of Administration. Ethics is on the agenda of all pre-posting meetings for all categories of staff.

The EEAS is preparing on a specific decision on ethics, which will take the specificities of work in Delegation into account. It will notably address the challenges faced by Heads of Delegation, who – given their visibility, political and representation functions – are at a greater risk of exposing themselves and the EU to criticism.

71 Could you provide us updated information on three ongoing investigations by OLAF related to potential conflict of interest in the EEAS?

Information on the state of play of on-going investigations by OLAF is restricted and not available to the EEAS.

72 Could you please provide the Parliament with a list of inspections carried out in the delegations in 2018 and an overview of the number of recommendations broken down by qualifier (critical, very important, important or desirable)? What was the implementation rate to the recommendations issued in inspection reports? What are the results of the system of regular inspections in EEAS in 2018?

The following 26 Delegations and Offices were inspected in 2018:

Gabon, Gambia, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Saudi Arabia (special follow-up mission), Nicaragua, Ecuador, DR Congo/Kinshasa, Jordan, Yemen, Vienna (UN/IAEA/OSCE), Burundi, Rwanda, Syria (in Lebanon), Lebanon (special follow-up mission), Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cape Verde, Iraq, Paraguay, Uruguay, Norway, Afghanistan, Rome (FAO, Holy See), Israel, and West Bank/Gaza Strip.

The breakdown, by qualifier, for the total of 1224 recommendations is as follows:

- Critical: 8
- Very important: 174
- Important: 893
- Desirable: 149

The deadline for the implementation of the recommendations ranges from immediately to several months. A follow-up process to monitor the implementation of the recommendations is launched six months after the inspection mission. The assessment of the implementation of recommendations from inspections carried out in 2018 is almost finished; only 2 Delegations' files (Afghanistan and Uruguay) are not closed as of October 2019. In two other cases special follow-up missions were necessary in order to clarify with those Delegations at the spot, the implementation of previous recommendations (Saudi Arabia) and of additional ones (Lebanon). Consequently, out of the 22 inspections, where the follow-up has been finished, the average rate of implementation of recommendations excluding desirable ones was at 77%: the first two categories of recommendations, critical and very important, are fully implemented.

The results of regular inspections of the EEAS in 2018 were in general quite positive. This is reflected in the very low number of critical (8) and a relatively average number of very important recommendations (893). Where problems have been identified, the root cause was often of a personal or interpersonal nature. Those cases have been followed up by Headquarters as well as by the Delegations themselves through targeted coaching and/or mediation, as well as specific staff management measures including disciplinary procedures. When problems encountered were related to structural or logistic reasons (human resources, offices, equipment, other administrative issues, etc.), they were addressed by the relevant services. They provided further analyses and solutions where possible, in close cooperation with the Delegations in question. Most of the other issues, especially those without further cost and/or resource implications (e.g. improvements in reporting, coordination, visibility, information flow, cross section cooperation, etc.), were quickly addressed.

The system of regular inspections proved its usefulness as a genuine management tool, both for the Delegations and Headquarters, capable not only of identifying strengths, eventual weaknesses and problems, but also in providing concrete recommendations for action.

73 The three following internal control standards 'Staff allocation and mobility', 'Business continuity' and 'Document management' remain the weakest components of the EEAS internal control system; have there been any efforts to improve these three?

In 2018, the EEAS implemented different measures to ensure better allocation of human resources and alignment with political priorities and evolving realities, while seeking the best solutions for its staff.

The EEAS continued strengthening the Delegations and rebalancing of the resources between Headquarters and Delegations. In a context of budget constraints and enhanced focus on prioritisation, the implementation of the Annual Review Mechanism seeking a strategic approach to allocation of posts in Delegations was pursued. Based on the recommendations from the Mechanism and the budget for 2018, there were adjustments to the allocation of posts.

The annual Mobility and Rotation exercises offered a wide range of career development possibilities to EEAS staff members, while also enabling the EEAS to attract suitable candidates from Member States' diplomatic services. In the framework of the Mobility exercise, AD staff are in principle required to change their post after four years in the same position, while AST staff can participate in the Mobility exercise on a voluntary basis.

The 2018 Mobility exercise allowed staff to change posts in Headquarters as well as for the reintegration of staff who returned from Delegations: in total, 52 AD posts and 35 AST posts were available. The EEAS also undertook a management Mobility exercise in 2018, with the participation of returning Heads and Deputy Heads of Delegation and managers in Headquarters who had been on their post for four or more years.

With regard to business continuity, the EEAS updated and enhanced its response plans in case of business discontinuity at Headquarters, issuing new operational guidelines for management involved in corporate crisis response. With regard to Delegations, a renewed emphasis on compliance was materialised with circulars calling all Delegations to complete or update their plans. Particular attention was also given to deploy effective phone based alert systems –operational across the Headquarters and Delegations– as the fastest and most efficient alert delivery methods when the unexpected happens.

With regard to control systems a comprehensive Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission (COsO)-compliant online training programme was developed, following the approach on controls chosen by the Commission. The training is

composed of an online educational support which covers using realistic examples, a wide range of risks the EEAS is exposed to. Among the risks, fraud is examined in considerable detail with five case histories chosen in relation to an "external action specific" risk analysis carried out by the EEAS management. Within the control training programme, EEAS staff explore themes related to management by objectives and results, but also methods to raise the quality of professional conduct and output. To complement this awareness raising training, two "beyond the basics" training modules offer an expert view on the annual management plan and risk management, against the most recent and pertinent recommendations of the European Court of Auditors.

The EEAS through its Information and Document Management Sector remains committed to improving compliance with document management procedures. The efforts undertaken in recent years have highlighted that the problem is complex and multi-faceted, linked to diverse issues such as the hybrid original nature of EEAS, the rapid mobility/rotation of staff and the pressure for quick delivery of results in a rapidly evolving environment. EEAS Senior Management has endorsed an ambitious Information Management Strategy, approved in February 2019, which addresses many of the concerns. Nevertheless document management remains the basic foundation that must be improved as a stepping stone for all these initiatives.

Improvements:

- A complete training programme for document management officers in Delegations has been put in place with cooperation from the Commission's Secretariat-General, DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, DIGIT and the EEAS. The programme merges all the training necessary to carry out this fundamental role. Since October 2018, 88 Delegation Document Management Officers have followed this training with a high degree of satisfaction
- Management of financial files and their document management has also been improved. Close cooperation with the Finance and Contracts Division has resulted in detailed guidelines describing the use of document management tools during financial procedures. Compliance with these guidelines has been boosted through compulsory trainings offered jointly by Finance and Contracts and Information and Document Management Divisions.
- The training offer related to document management has been totally revamped with 6 types of courses completely reviewed. Special emphasis has been put into offering a solid training for newcomers that has so far been absent.

Despite these improvements work remains to be carried out in order to boost document management within the EEAS. To this effect, a working group has been tasked with developing a document management compliance campaign, to be reinforced with a communication campaign and a change management approach. The group will present a range of options for this campaign and will prioritise a number of actions, accompanied and reinforced by a targeted communication campaign addressed at changing staff behaviour. The results are expected in first quarter 2020.

74 Compliance with internal control principles for control over technology reaches only 76.7%. What are the main barriers to compliance?

The main barrier to compliance is the use of local agents for IT support roles in Delegations. A policy to replace Local Agents in an IT support role with statutory staff will be proposed in the 2021 budget.

75 How often does the EEAS use videoconferences to allow avoiding the unnecessary flights of its staff?

In recent years (2016-2018) the use of the videoconferencing facilities (VCR) within the EEAS increased by 3% each year. The number of VCR events in 2018 was 10.083, around 300 more than in 2017.

It is important to highlight that, during the same period of time, the overall number of missions increased only marginally (5%) between 2017 and 2018 (1,591 missions) compared to an increase of 15% for the period 2016-2017 (4,206 missions). This in spite of the expansion of the activities of the EEAS in Headquarters and in the network of Delegations and the required increase of the political representation activities of the EEAS.

This is also the result of a change in approach within the EEAS to actively engage in supporting the best use of these facilities, whenever possible: The participation in workshops and seminars (by Headquarters or Delegation based staff) by VCR, should always be evaluated to avoid unnecessary missions. In this respect, the EEAS has intensified its offer of online training and training via VCR. In 2018, 1,190 staff participated to training activities remotely. The EEAS is also systematically uses VCR for staff interviews in the context of the annual mobility and rotation exercises. Furthermore, EEAS staff participate via VCR in the meetings of the EP's delegations in Strasbourg,

Since 2018, all information distributed to the Delegations and EEAS entities related to mission budget allocations and mission management has been accompanied by clear instructions regarding the possibility of using VCR in order to reduce the number of missions. These instructions are also incorporated in a new set of Guidelines for Missions that the EEAS is discussing with the Commission, in order to increase their impact at Delegation level.

It is not possible to simply conclude that the 10.083 VCR events of 2018 have avoided the same number of physical travels (missions) nevertheless it is clear that the focus on equipping, developing and using VCR facilities led to serious savings and significant reduction in the overall carbon print of the EEAS.

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

The EEAS has not yet introduced an Environmental Management System, mainly due to lack of resources. The EEAS is however eager to improve the environmental impact of its functioning in Headquarters and in Delegations. The goal would be to fully align with EMAS requirements for activities and buildings in Headquarters, and to progressively develop environmental coordination and management system for Delegations. In the meantime, green initiatives are encouraged.