

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT



Directorate-General for External Policies of
the Union

20
19

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1. Executive summary

The results presented in this report were achieved in a period of wide-ranging opportunities for the Directorate General for External Policies (DG EXPO), specific to the changing political landscape of an electoral year and reform of internal working methods.

Overall, 2019 was a period of wrapping up parliamentary business, evaluating the legacy of the eighth legislature, ensuring continuity, preparing and engaging for new challenges and priorities of the ninth legislature.

This evaluation process resulted in a new game-changing strategic objective that would shape all the DG's activities: making the European Parliament (EP) an efficient driver in European foreign policy.

This ambitious goal is built around institutional objectives and instruments provided by the Lisbon Treaty. Increased use of these mechanisms (e.g. hearings, structured dialogue, annual budgetary procedure, discharge) is now a priority.

The lead indicator the DG had as a reference for the last two years - to develop joint activities to improve the coherence and consistency of EU external activities - is now embedded in the DG's activities. We will maintain this course of action. Linking the work of committees, delegations and the Democracy Support and Elections Coordination Group (DEG), is essential for allowing the EP to make a strong impact in external actions.

Following the elections, the Committees and

Delegations in the remit of the DG were constituted and the hearings of the Commissioners-designate with portfolios for external policies were organised successfully.

The DG continued to support democracy-building activities of the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) not only in as election observers but also as mediators or facilitators, e.g. in Ukraine and the Western Balkans, has proven its added value in effectively addressing political deadlock situations and providing high visibility for the European Parliament. This successful instrument should be further developed and better communicated inside and outside the EU.

DG EXPO activities in the reference period have been intrinsically linked to the general fine-tuning process of the Parliament's administration, which is reshaping itself to become a more innovative, visible and agile organisation.

Within the structure of the "Strategic Execution Framework" - the management tool that guides the work in the European Parliament in this modernisation process - DG EXPO made the transition from the 2017-2019 projects to the future set of strategic assignments for 2019-2021.

The DG also addressed a new core objective: to establish communication priorities and explain to European Citizens how the activities that the DG supports respond to their concerns about the EU and its position in the world.

In order to use scarce resources efficiently, ensure greater coherence, have a stronger impact in policy making and communicate better, a reform of the working methods including some structural changes were envisaged for DG EXPO and approved by the Secretary General on 26 September 2019. The reform will be implemented in 2020.

These methodological and structural changes are a direct conclusion of the projects from the 2017-2019 DG EXPO Parliament Project Portfolio (PPP).

The reform was built to solidify the profile of the desk officers (who become focal points of reference for their respective geographical areas), to bring in new strategic and innovative working methods, and optimise overall the management of the DG's resources.

Concerning the budgetary resources in 2019 the activities were carried out in an efficient and cost-effective way. Budget awareness and accountability for the use of financial resources was enhanced by continuing to distribute quarterly follow-up information at consolidated and detailed level to different levels of the hierarchy in the DG. In 2019, DG EXPO also concluded a new framework contract for external expertise in the various fields of external policies, which will allow the committees to have access to high-quality research projects from a wide range of academic experts during the entire legislature.

This year DG EXPO was on a stable course in human resources management. The assistants' mobility was implemented successfully and it implied a consistent move of staff that was done without any disruptive effect on the workflow of the units concerned.

DG EXPO strives to be a learning organisation creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its functions to reflect new knowledge and expertise. During the electoral phase an extensive series of trainings was organised: the DG EXPO Electoral Recess Training Programme (29 April - 22 May). Many of these courses were organised in cooperation with DGs IPOL and EPRS.

DG EXPO takes its duty-of-care responsibilities very seriously in order to mitigate the risks when Members of the European Parliament and accompanying staff travel outside the EU. Specific training programmes were implemented for staff travelling on missions: HEAT (Hostile Environment Awareness Training) and HEAT Cap trainings, as well as trainings related to the work of the EP Crisis Cell ("SOS during official missions with MEPs"). The participation in the HEAT course was made compulsory for staff travelling to high and critical risk level destinations, while the Crisis Cell course was made obligatory for all staff travelling on official missions. In addition for the high-risk areas, extra-security measures are ensured in case it is deemed required (e.g. armoured cars, close protection teams).

By ensuring a cost-effective management of our resources, the DG strives to ensure that the most qualified and professional support is offered to the Members of the European Parliament for their activities in the field of the Union's external policies. The DG's role is therefore to contribute to the maximisation of the expertise, insight, creativity and efficiency of its services so that Members can carry out their duties with the greatest possible impact.

ENVIRONMENT OF THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL, OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

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

2.1. The Directorate-General (mission statement, operational context)

The mission of the Directorate-General for External Policies is to facilitate the work of all Members contributing to the Parliament's work in external policy and on external bilateral and multilateral relations. In particular, DG EXPO provides support and expertise to three committees - Foreign Affairs (AFET), Development (DEVE) and International Trade (INTA), two sub-committees (Human Rights (DROI) and Security and Defence (SEDE), 44 standing interparliamentary delegations, four multilateral Parliamentary Assemblies and the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG).

Our operational context was marked in 2019 at the political level by the conclusion of the previous parliamentary term, the European elections and the constitution of the newly elected Parliament at the start of the ninth legislature.

At the administrative level the year was defined by the closing of the second phase of the Strategic Execution Framework (SEF) and the launching of the new 2019-2021 Parliament Project Portfolio.

Besides these special characteristics related to the five-year cycle of Parliament's activities, it should be underlined that DG EXPO's operational context is constantly and directly dependent of the volatile world we leave in.

The global shifts, the threats to democracy and multilateralism worldwide, the alarms on human rights have an immediate and direct effect on the agendas of our political bodies.

In such a dynamic environment the success of our deliverables depends on smooth working methods, efficient communication, fitted operational goals and efficient management of the resources.

In this context the results of the SEF 2017-2019 are of central importance. The core achievement of the SEF 2017 - 2019 project was the proposal to adapt DG EXPO's structure and working methods to increase the coherence and coordination of its work and improve the service to the Members of the European Parliament.

The main structural elements of the reform are:

- the creation of a Strategy and Innovation Unit;
- the creation of a Communication and Outreach Unit;
- the slimming of the Policy Department by focusing its activities on its support to committees;

- the reinforcing of the role of the Desk Officers by transferring the geographical know how from the Policy Department to the Directorate for Regions;
- the redistribution of tasks within the units of the Directorate for Democracy Support.

This reform proposal was accompanied by a survey which was launched, as part of a PPP project on resources in June 2019. The staff had the opportunity to evaluate their work and give suggestion for improvements. This gave the top management a better overview of the DG and contributed with valuable details to the shaping of the reform of working methods in the DG.

The new SEF (2019-2021) was the result of a joint effort of the senior management and representatives of the four directorates who worked within a Task Force and came up with a set of coherent projects that would promote more flexibility and coherence, allow for quicker reactions to changing requirements and provide for more transparency and information towards the European citizens.

The projects of the Parliamentary Project Portfolio of the new SEF aim at strengthening the agenda setting, enhance scrutiny, give the Members the tools and empower them to strengthen the role of the Parliament and make it an efficient driver in external policies.

2.2. Key results and progress towards achieving objectives

The general objectives of the Directorate General were established for 2019 as follows:

Transitioning from one parliamentary term to another:

- Finalise the activities of the eighth legislature, with a particular focus on legislative files.
- Prepare the end of legislature report summarising democracy support activities during the eighth legislature and recommend follow-up and further activities for the next legislature.
- Coordinate, jointly prepare, and conduct hearings for the new European Commissioners responsible for external policies.
- Conduct successful constitutive meetings for the political bodies that DG EXPO assists and help them “get off on the right foot”.

Promoting innovative working methods:

- Refine working methods and functions linking committees, delegations and the Democracy Support and Elections Coordination Group (DEG), particularly by establishing how the work of interparliamentary delegations and the DEG will contribute to committees’ legislative and scrutiny work.
- Strengthen support for the DG’s horizontal responsibilities, such as the SEF, business continuity, document management, reporting, etc.

Moving from information to communication:

- Establish a centralised set of communication priorities for the year, after asking all units to flag significant upcoming events. This programme will serve as a basis for cooperation with DG COMM. In this context, strengthen support for communication and events, and explore the possibility of centralising certain related tasks.
- In order to enhance transparency and generate a better understanding – and appreciation – of our activities, highlight how the political bodies that the DG supports contribute to the daily lives of EU citizens.
- Contribute to the introductory activities and materials to be offered to incoming MEPs at the beginning of the new legislature, including redesigned “welcome packs” and “info kits”.

Managing Efficiently:

- Take advantage of the electoral period to train staff, screen and harmonise procedures in the DG, introduce possible structural changes, re-define priorities, and identify activities to be discontinued.
- Develop DG EXPO’s Strategic Executive Framework 2019-2021 (SEF), in line with the European Parliament’s SEF and the DG’s Parliamentary Project Portfolio (PPP). In this process, the DG’s directorates will also define their own SEFs.
- Continue to implement a dynamic approach towards risk assessment and management in order to improve capabilities and resilience to respond

effectively to identified risks related with data and information disclosure and any disruption of activities due to failure of key IT systems.

2.2.1 PROGRESS AND MAIN RESULTS

As defined in the mission statement, the DG EXPO’s mandate is to serve the various political bodies working on external policies.

In 2019 the EU citizens gave legitimacy to the EP actions by casting their votes in record numbers. The voter turnout in the European Elections, especially young voters, represents a clear strong call for an influential European Parliament.

It is in the context of this successful democratic exercise that we carved on the DG’s long term agenda the goal of making the EP an efficient driver in EU foreign policy.

2.2.1.1. From the 8th to the 9th legislature: smooth transition and consistent support for the political bodies.

Despite the pressure of the legislature in countdown mode, a successful wrap up of the legislative activity was achieved by the end of the 8th legislature.

A good example is the complex legislative report on the most important external financing instrument - the proposal for a regulation establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) - a joint report of the Development (DEVE) and Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) which was successfully completed as a first

reading position before the end of the parliamentary term.

The excellent cooperation between DEVE and AFET secretariats contributed to a real joint ownership of the report at political level. One of the most important requests of the text adopted concerns the role of the EP in the governance of the new instrument.

In the area of EU's Common Commercial Policy, 2019 was significant in trade because it marked plenary endorsement (with very large majority) of EU-Singapore free trade and investment protection agreements, serving as the first bilateral trade agreement with a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and as a stepping stone to further deals between the two regions. The Committee for International Trade (INTA) was instrumental for this achievement.

In view of the end of the 8th legislature and in the context of the MFF, SEDE contributed actively to the negotiations on the regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Defence Fund and prepared a recommendation for a Council decision establishing a European Peace Facility. It was also involved, as an opinion-giving committee, in the MFF related procedure on the Connecting Europe Facility which includes funding for Military Mobility.

The committee secretariats (e.g. Foreign Affairs Committee, Human Rights (DROI) and Security and Defence (SEDE) Subcommittees) prepared activity reports on the 2014-2019 legislature that summarised the activities of the Members and their contribution to the definition of the EU's foreign and security policy.

DEG took stock of the democracy support activities during the eighth legislature and made recommendations for follow-up and new activities for the incoming legislature. These recommendations included the drafting of administrative guidelines for relations between the EP delegation and the EEAS in the organisation of election observation missions, which were subsequently prepared.

All committee secretariats ensured smooth constitutive meetings of the Committees after the elections and the skilful induction of the new Chairs and Members.

The Committee secretariats organised very efficiently and conducted the hearings of the five Commissioners-designate in the field of external policies:

- High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (AFET)
- Neighbourhood and Enlargement (AFET)
- International Trade (INTA)
- International Partnerships and Crisis Management (DEVE).

As in 2014, the colleagues from the Policy Department tracked the commitments of the Commissioners throughout the hearings. This will be a useful tool of evaluation of the Commission and the individual Commissioners throughout the legislature.

The Parliament's delegations were also officially constituted. The staff serving the delegations had to address the particularities of the amended Rules of Procedure, which now apply the same gender-balance and nationality

approach to the bureau of a delegation, as it is the case for the committees. As the delegations have only two-vice chairs, the double conditionality requested close attention and extra efforts from the secretariats. Consequently, the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, as Committee responsible, has been asked to provide guidance on the interpretation and application of the above-mentioned Rules.

2.2.1.2. Innovative actions and working practices: ensuring cohesion and coherence for DG EXPO's activities.

The lead indicator “to develop joint activities to improve the coherence and consistency of EU external activities” - is now embedded in the DG's work practices.

DG EXPO made important further steps to enhance cooperation and coordination between the various political bodies it serves and mainstreamed a collaborative working mode inside the DG.

All resources of the DG are directed towards joint support for ensuring coherence and consistency of EU external activities. The DG has moved from established best practices at administrative level to creating space and supporting convergent actions at political level.

Mainstreaming this lead indicator into all DG's activities ensures the success of not only the current reform at the DG's level but it is also a valuable enabler for attaining the DG's new strategic goal: to make the EP an efficient driver in external policy.

Committees:

In close consultation and cooperation with its Committee Coordinators and the responsible services, in preparation for the 2019 hearings AFET carried out a review of how the hearings of previous Commissioners of its competence and, particularly, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, were organised in the Committee on Foreign Affairs in 2009 and in 2014.

AFET also identified key commitments on inter-institutional dialogue and cooperation made by Commissioners-designate in the past and delivery on such commitments, so that Parliament's prerogatives could be adequately valorised during the hearings of the Commissioners-designate of its competence.

The mandates of the Commissioners-designate were assessed in order to identify hearings to which AFET may have an interest in being associated in a spirit of good cooperation and synergy with other Committees. In light of the above, the Secretariat provided advice and a number of suggestions to its Coordinators as regards the written questions, which were fully endorsed.

Finally, with regard to the evaluation process after the hearing, AFET put in place a number of provisions, including the use of watermarks on draft texts for circulation during the evaluation meetings, in order to protect the confidential nature of the process.

DEVE enhanced its cooperation with the secretariats of both Internal Policies and External Policies Committees organising

numerous joint items in Committee, in particular with Budget (BUDG), Environment (ENVI), Agriculture (AGRI), Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) Committees. DEVE organised joint ad hoc delegations with ENVI to the UN General Assembly SDG Summit and Climate Action Summit in New York, with FEMM to the International Conference on Population and Development in Nairobi and with LIBE and DROI to the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva.

DEVE established a Task Force (at staff level) and a Monitoring Group on post-Cotonou negotiations including DEVE, AFET, INTA, the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (DACP), Delegation for relations with South Africa (DZA) and Delegation for relations with the Pan-African Parliament (DPAP) representatives. DEVE suggested a framework for future continuous cooperation for the EP monitoring of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. DEVE worked with AFET and BUDG on the scrutiny of Trust Funds.

During the election period, DEVE worked intensively on the Game-changer project "Shaping the future agenda" (Instant Legislation), preparing several concrete proposals and draft concept notes for possible policy priorities, legislative initiatives and implementation reports.

DEVE staff assisted the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Unit with the activities of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, both for Committee-meetings held in Brussels and its plenary sessions in Romania and Rwanda (providing a large team), and assisted the EuroLat unit for the Joint Parliamentary

Committee in Mexico and the session in Panama and EuroNest for the session in Georgia, providing expertise and experienced support in Committee work.

INTA continued scrutinising almost non-stop the ongoing trade negotiations and relations (Vietnam, US, Mercosur, Australia, Tunisia, New Zealand, China etc), unilateral GSP preferences (especially regarding Cambodia) and enforcement of existing agreements (notably in relation to Korea), and provided constructive contributions to the Brexit-related resolutions.

The cooperation with other parliamentary bodies and their secretariats was further enhanced: INTA regularly invited Members of other committees, delegation Chairs and secretariats to the relevant agenda items on Committee meetings' agenda as well as to numerous meetings of the INTA Monitoring Groups.

INTA successfully handled 'jointly' with IMCO the finalisation of 'cultural goods' legislation. INTA visited Vietnam in preparations for its vote on EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement and Investment Protection Agreement, engaging on the highest level of government for further commitments and progress to be made by Vietnam.

DROI actively contributed to key policy files, including defining the new shape of the human rights and democracy financial instrument replacing the EIDHR and participating in the inter-institutional negotiations on the matter; providing a consistent and detailed analysis and policy recommendations relating to the Annual report on human rights and democracy

in the World in 2018; engaging with the EEAS on the third EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy; and addressing the creation of a new sanctions regime.

In the same spirit, it also provided extensive expertise related to the human rights dimension of international agreements and the setting up of new human rights mechanisms so as to improve policy coherence between EU external policies and its human rights policy (e.g. EU-Vietnam trade and investment protection agreements).

With regard to scrutiny, the Unit consolidated existing practices such as organising regular follow-up sessions to urgency resolutions adopted in plenary (under Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedures), or through its regular hearings and exchanges of views and “question time” sessions. In a spirit of innovation, it also introduced new formats to engage with the EEAS and the Commission, such as the *Monitoring Group of Article 21 of TEU* (“Group 21”) or *in camera* briefing sessions with the EEAS both ahead of and after key human rights dialogues conducted by the EEAS.

2019 was also marked by an event which also contributed to further raising Parliament’s role and visibility on human rights: a High Level Conference celebrating the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, gathering prominent speakers, including the Queen of Belgium, and more than one thousand outside participant. The size and significance of the first event implied special preparations to be made and close cooperation and coordination with other three committees (Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Legal

Affairs and DEVE) and five Directorates-General on the logistics.

For SEDE the start of the new legislature and the constitution of the Subcommittee and the Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (including the election of the Chair and all Vice-Chairs) was very smooth. Following that the Secretariat took part in the preparation of the hearings of the Commissioners-designate, in very close cooperation with the AFET Secretariat. The applicable rules for hearings conferred SEDE a status as an invited committee in two cases.

With the start of the new legislature communications activities were considerably increased, in very close cooperation with the responsible press officers from DG COMM. In addition communication priorities were defined for the first semester of the new legislature and beyond, namely the tenth anniversary of CSDP and the review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Delegations

The good cooperation achieved with committees during the reference period continued and has clearly boosted the role of the delegations in supporting the EP’s legislative cycle and increasing the scrutiny role of the EP in the field of foreign policy.

The number of rapporteurs authorised to join an official delegation visit remains quite high.

Joint meetings and presentations of missions’ findings are now organised on regular basis.

During the reference period, the delegation secretariats continued consistently to apply the working methods and modalities (including the

reporting sheets) relating to scrutiny introduced in 2015, revised in 2016, 2017 and 2018, and examined in depth in 2019.

The constitutive meetings of Parliament's 44 standing delegations for the current term 2019-2024 were held on 26 September (37) and 9 October (7) in Brussels.

Policy Department (POLDEP EXPO)

POLDEP EXPO continued its embedded approach in its outreach activity by publishing its work on the [EP Think Tank internet site](#) and the [policy departments' common intranet site](#) and by contributing to monthly overviews of the policy departments' activities.

With a view to developing more links and nurturing exchanges with the academic and think-tank communities, diplomatic representations and relevant international organisations, POLDEP EXPO organised five policy hubs, one diplomacy forum and one experts roundtable (in cooperation with DG EPRS). In addition, it held seven informal exchanges of views with groups of civil servants from partner countries' public administrations, journalists and students.

In 2019, POLDEP EXPO continued inter-service cooperation on joint research projects. Out of 142 internal papers 12 were drafted in cooperation with DG IPOL and two with DG COMM. Colleagues from other DG EXPO services contributed to 45 internal projects. POLDEP EXPO also worked with the Crisis Cell for which it delivered ten political analyses on countries of high or critical risk level needed for mission security assessments (MSA).

Democracy building activities

The Parliamentary Support and Capacity Building Unit (PAC) organised regional conferences, seminars, study visits and fellowships with the aim of developing the capacity of the Parliaments of the Western Balkans and Turkey by aligning their structures and culture to EU standards and values.

This support programme engaged with 45 Members of Parliament and 102 staff members from pre-accession countries. Topics discussed in seminars and study visits included IT applications for parliamentary activities, human resources management for parliamentary staff, parliamentary research services and organisational strategies for parliaments.

A High Level Roundtable on the European Integration Process of the Western Balkans was held in the European Parliament (EP) bringing together delegations from the parliaments of the region. This Roundtable has become a crucial annual event in this field.

In addition, the Election Observation and Follow-up Unit (ELEC) organised election observation missions to presidential and/or parliamentary elections in Nigeria, Moldova, Ukraine, Tunisia, Kosovo, Sri Lanka and Mozambique. It also undertook its regular democracy support activities through study visits and the Democracy Fellowship Programme.

Furthermore, ELEC finalised the revised version of the 2012 Decision on the DEG and Implementing Provisions governing election observation delegations, approved by the Conference of Presidents on 7 February 2019.

Human rights activities contributed to overall democracy support efforts by empowering actors of democratic change: civil society, women (through parliamentary capacity building under the Simone Veil programme) and human rights defenders (through the Sakharov Fellowship programme).

The Sakharov week in December, a dedicated award ceremony for 2018 Sakharov Prize laureate Oleg Sentsov in November, public events and parliamentary meetings involving laureates, fellows and civil society actors enhanced the visibility of the EP human rights agenda.

The Human Rights Action Unit (HRAC) facilitated the inclusion of civil society representatives in an interparliamentary conference of Eastern partnership and pre-accession countries on 29 January. It organised a conference to pay tribute to the work of NGOs saving lives in the Mediterranean, Sakharov finalist 2018, on 18 March.

It supported the production of a film on sexual violence as a weapon of war in cooperation with the Dr Mukwege Foundation as a tool for an awareness-raising campaign around the topic to be developed over the coming years. It contributed to the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI) by organising an exhibition "*Les droits de l'homme, c'est pour quand?*" on 20 November. It invited Venezuelan laureate Lorent Saleh to inaugurate the Sakharov Walk of Freedom in Brussels on 10 December. Specific support, including via silent diplomacy, was provided for

the release of Sakharov Prize laureates Raif Badawi, Nasrin Sotoudeh and, successfully, Salih Osman and Oleg Sentsov who were freed in 2019.

The area of Parliamentary Mediation and Dialogue continues to advance and achieve high levels of visibility and success for the EP's democracy support activities. The Jean Monnet Dialogues (JMD) continued with the new Convocation of the Verkhovna Rada (launched in Bazoches on 29 November-1 December 2019). A new instrument has evolved by adapting the JMD, in the form of an Inter-Party Dialogue process established through three rounds (October-December 2019) in the Republic of Serbia.

The Young Political Leaders (YPL) programme progresses with a quadripartite gathering from Israel, Palestine, Armenia and Azerbaijan from 15 to 17 April 2019 as well as the regional YPL for the Western Balkans.

Mediation and dialogue activities have contributed to the European Commission Strategy for the Western Balkans (2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy (COM (2019)260)) as well as to European Parliament Resolutions (on 24 October on the Western Balkans and on 12 December 2018 AFET Annual Report on the implementation of the CFSP), including a dedicated Resolution adopted in March 2019 on "Building EU capacity on conflict prevention and mediation".

2.2.1.3. Moving from information to communication: making our activities more visible and valued

In December 2018, the [Global Democracy Support](#) page was launched. The format and content of the page were refined during the year in order to reflect the Parliament's added value in democracy building worldwide. In addition, in the course of 2019 a booklet on Global Democracy Support was produced together with a flyer on Election Observation activities.

A new webpage featuring the activities of the [EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly](#) was also set up in 2019, as an example of the parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue that the European Parliament is developing through one of its four inter-parliamentary assemblies.

A new project was designed and it is currently in the pipeline: a Transatlantic Dialogue page, which will put into spotlight the EP activities in connection to its transatlantic partners.

POLDEP EXPO cooperated on the use of social media with DG COMM in liaison with the press officers responsible for the INTA, DEVE, AFET, SEDE and DROI Twitter accounts.

During the electoral period, DG EXPO Committees Secretariats prepared in close cooperation with DG IPOL the welcome packs that are offered to Members at the beginning of the new parliamentary term.

As a novelty, a comprehensive communication operation was run by DG EXPO exclusively with the goal to offer an informative welcome pack to the Members of all delegations. As a

result, the activities and the achievements of the EP delegations were condensed in 3 general booklets. In addition, each of the 44 delegations' secretariats highlighted the specificities of its work in a separate brochure. All these materials were drafted in full-respect of the multilingualism principle endorsed by the Parliament. Therefore the general booklets, for example, were translated in 23 languages.

The exercise of establishing a communication set of priorities at central level was initiated in the second half of 2019 and will be consolidated in 2020.

It is worth mentioning that, during the electoral period, DG EXPO staff took part directly, as a response to the Secretary General's call, in the Back to School/University programme, through 31 missions in their home countries.

2.2.1.4 Management of resources: reliability, efficiency and flexibility

Within the human resources field, DG EXPO has conducted the AST mobility exercise and reached the objective set by the Secretary-General for the second year of the transition period of one third of the AST officials deemed to be subject to mobility when the new Regulation on Mobility entered into force.

On the basis of the administrative agreement on short-term exchanges of staff between Parliament and the European External Actions Service (EEAS), 15 assignments to the EEAS took place in 2019, out of which two AST colleagues. The pilot project for the short-term exchange of AST colleagues between the Parliament and the EEAS was launched for the first time in 2019. The DG EXPO project aims

at promoting better mutual understanding of working methods and at strengthening links between the two institutions.

The electoral recess training programme had as central theme: making the EP an effective policy driver. It took place from 22 April to 29 May and it included discussions, workshops, and special speakers to address topical issues in external policy. The programme benefitted of the participation of 1238 colleagues. Another set of trainings was organised together with IPOL and it was attended by 750 participants.

Fellowship programmes, exchanges and study visits were also organised with the EP Liaison Office in Washington on the functioning of the US Congress and US Administration and with the European Security and Defence College.

Transversally, the Finance Unit continued its active participation in the developments of the Parliament's business continuity and risk management exercise, as well as the ongoing project for reengineering of Parliament's financial management system (FMS), which was deployed at the end of 2019 and went to full operational use with the implementation of 2020 budget.

Concerning budget management, the Finance Unit has prepared, verified and authorised over 1600 transactions and 350 contracts over the review period. Carryovers and payment deadlines were closely followed up, in order to avoid, to the possible extent, any inaccuracies on budget management.

All the relevant procedures related to the financial provisions for Democracy Support activities were updated in 2019. The updates

were implemented in order to reflect the changes in the modified financial provisions, adopted at the end of 2018.

To further enhance the knowledge and awareness of financial rules and procedures, the Finance Unit prepared and delivered training for the organisation of public hearings and the reimbursement of paid experts, outlining all the recent changes in the relevant rules. Further training was offered on imprest accounts management and preparation of financial statements for the proposals submitted to the decision-making bodies. The business process for the preparation of financial statements has been revised and is now streamlined and digitized. A set of guidelines and instructions are also made available on the DG EXPO intranet.

Since 2012, all procurement procedures are centralised within the Finance Unit. The centralization permitted to continue the standardisation and increase professionalism in the procurement of expertise. In 2019, in close cooperation with the Policy Department, the Finance Unit concluded an open call for tender for a new framework contract in various fields of external policies expertise. The procedure was handled for the first time completely digitally.

In addition, the Finance Unit liaised with the Internal Audit Service and delivered close follow-up of the implementation of open actions resulting from the audits on the Annual Activity Reporting Process, Business Continuity Management and the implementation of the Code on Multilingualism that are in the implementation phase.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

3

3. Resources management

3.1. Human resources

The year was characterised by a large number of movements of staff due to several reasons: ordinary transfers of officials, secondment of officials and subsequent replacement through temporary agents, mobility, and reinforcement through contract agents where needed. A large number of selection procedures took place especially in Directorate A.

Furthermore, 4 positions of directors were vacant at the end of 2019 and assured in three cases out of four by colleagues acting as Directors.

Further to the decisions of the Bureau on 16 December 2019 three positions are filled in January/February 2020.

ESTABLISHMENT PLAN

	on 01/01/2019			
	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Permanent pc	113	105	4	222
Temporary pc	1	0	0	1
Total	114	105	4	223

	on 01/01/2018			
	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
	114	108	4	226
	2	0	0	2
Total	116	108	4	228

STAFF NUMBERS AT 31.12.2019

	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Officials	100	93	4	197
Temporary staff				
- in temporary posts	1	0	0	1
- in permanent posts	2	0	0	2
- offsetting staff working part time	0	2	0	2
Contract staff	4	1	3	8
Seconded national experts (SNE)	8	0	0	8
Agency staff	0	0	0	0
Total	115	96	7	218

3.2. Financial and budgetary management

INITIAL AND FINAL APPROPRIATIONS

In 2019, DG EXPO initial appropriations were at EUR 3 671 000.

In March 2019 the Committee on Budgets adopted a EUR 400 000 transfer from budgetary line 3042-02, to budgetary lines 3230-01 in the amount of EUR 250 000 and 3200-02 in the amount of EUR 150 000. The transfer redistributed the budgetary resources within DG EXPO budget lines to enable to pursue the designed activities and to respect the principle of budgetary specificity.

Credits were reduced by EUR 150 000 due to a transfer between DG EXPO and DG LINC. The transferred appropriations were intended to finance organisational costs related to meetings of Political Groups outside the three places of work, in particular the meetings to be held in the last trimester of 2019.

A total of EUR 1 497 669 were released in the mopping-up exercise. Therefore the final appropriations amount to EUR 2 023 331 (EUR 3 037 500 in 2018) representing 55 % of initial appropriations.

The surpluses echo the decision of the political authorities that standing inter-parliamentary delegation meetings and ad hoc delegations to third countries should not take place during the first nine months of 2019 in view of the unprecedented workload towards the end of the previous parliamentary term. Only ad hoc delegations in response to unforeseen political

events were authorised by the Conference of Presidents, by way of exception.

In addition, in order to support the activities of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO), DG EXPO's appropriations were increased during the budgetary procedure. However, the international trade capacity building events to be co-organised by the Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and the WTO Secretariat could not take place.

Moreover, the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) was only constituted at the end of October 2019. The late first meeting of the DEG of the 9th legislature delayed projects that otherwise could have been implemented in the third quarter of 2019. The execution on the line is also affected by the non-implementation of the international trade capacity building events.

DG EXPO practices a continuous and close follow up of the budget execution in order to be able to transfer any surpluses on time. However a sufficient budget margin needs to be maintained in order to enable rapid reaction to a constantly changing political environment.

FINAL APPROPRIATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTED

The level of execution is significantly lower than in the previous year, mainly due to the reduced number of activities. In total, 61 % of the final budget was committed in 2019, corresponding to EUR 1 237 185, compared to 79 % of the final budget committed in 2018.

The 2019 final appropriations were implemented as follows:



Most of the budget was directed to the democracy support activities (30 %) and to committees' missions and delegations (18 %).

The committees' missions, inter-parliamentary delegations and assemblies used 53 % of the annual allocated budget. The appropriations for external expertise were committed at a level of 75 %, while the appropriations for democracy support were at 63 %.

As is normally the case, the budget execution for activities which involve committees' missions and delegations (budget line 3042) are lower than for other budget items. This occurs mainly due to a significant degree of uncertainty related to the nature of the activities supported. In particular, committee and delegations missions can be cancelled or modified subject to fast changing political developments or new delegations could be authorised outside the semestrial programmes. Moreover, if security measures are required, the impact on the appropriations needed to cover the related costs of a mission can be significantly higher than usual.

For each mission there are several DGs involved and costs are shared between several DGs.

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTED AND PAYMENTS MADE

Payments made in the period from January to December 2019 correspond to 55 % of the commitments made. This is slightly lower than in previous years (62 % in 2018).

Several aspects influence the level of payment execution, such as:

- considerable number of provisional commitments that are made due to the uncertainty linked to the nature of the activities performed by the different services (outgoing delegations, reimbursements, representation expenses etc.) as well as the considerable number of managed imprest accounts;
- around one fifth of the appropriations are allocated to external expertise, where the time lag between commitments and payments is significant, since the execution of the contracts take several months and the payment is only done after formal acceptance of the services;
- some events took place at the last months of 2019, for which it was not possible to pay before the year-end;
- there are also cases where several documents need to be collected for the reimbursement of expenses, being the time lag considerable between the date of

the events and the final collection of the documents and thus delaying payments.

All these events have impact on the payment appropriations level, implying the obligation to carryover the amounts to be paid.

USE OF AUTOMATIC AND NON-AUTOMATIC CARRYOVERS FROM 2018 TO 2019

Out of the total commitments of EUR 903 978 which were carried over from 2018 to 2019, EUR 625 535 (69 %) have been paid. The carryover execution rate was lower than in 2018 (84 %).

Several facts influence the carryover utilisation rates by DG EXPO:

- forecasting the cost for inter-parliamentary delegations is extremely complex with a significant degree of uncertainty;
- the cost of a delegation depends on the situation of the destination country, particularly in high-risk areas. If security measures (armoured cars, close protection teams) are required, this can

have a significant impact on the appropriations needed;

- for election observation delegations an external auditor must examine and verify the expenditure, and the supporting documents submitted by the service provider, before payment. The final invoiced amount is frequently lower than the amount of the contract established which reflects, inevitably, in un-used carried over commitments;
- amounts not finally used can also relate to the fact that expertise may, occasionally, be rejected once received. This is sound financial management, as studies of insufficient quality should not be paid for, or only paid for partially;

Nevertheless, DG EXPO continuously tries to minimise the rate of unpaid carryovers through active follow-up. One of the measures implemented during 2019 is a structural change in its framework contract for acquisition of expertise by including all in prices, thus avoiding the requirement to carryover amounts for the reimbursement of potential travel costs in that area.

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



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

Internal Control is broadly defined in the Financial Regulation (Article 36.2) as a process, applied at all level of management, designed to provide reasonable assurance of achieving objectives. The European Parliament adopted minimum internal control standards with reference to international best practice in the field.

DG EXPO implements its external relations operational activities under three main axes: assistance and support to five committees and forty-four delegations and assistance to the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group's.

DG EXPO has set up an organisational structure and an internal control system tailored to the performance of its tasks, taking into account the risks associated with the management environment. The identification of major risks and the actions planned to mitigate the risks are subject to an annual review and communicated to the Parliament's risk manager in the DG central risk register.

Human, financial and IT resources for the DGs activities are managed in a separate directorate from the operational activities. Objectives for the DG are set annually under the Strategic Execution Framework and the Parliamentary Project Portfolio. Each directorate and unit also establishes annually objectives and ownership is well-defined.

The Authorising Officer by delegation continuously assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control systems with a view to ensuring that they are functioning as expected and that any detected weaknesses in the controls are corrected and reported.

Any new staff of the DG has to follow mandatory training focused on personal safety, as well as medical care, abroad and management of imprest accounts.

The budget structure, detailed financial circuits and authorizing officers by sub-delegation for the DG's implementation of these funds are communicated, published and updated on its web pages.

DG EXPO has in place a robust integrated planning framework. Programming of the ongoing work is based on several calendars, which are updated permanently in most cases for a 6-month period and decided by Parliament's political authorities.

4.1. Assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of internal control

The proper implementation of actions is ensured through several layers of checks and controls at the various stages of DG EXPO hierarchy. A key component of the internal

control strategy is the planning and prior approval of all expenditure through a detailed budgetary estimate of all actions.

DG EXPO applies a centralised system, for all budgetary and financial management, including procurement. The financial initiation, verification and authorisation is centralised in the Finance Unit. The operational initiation and “conforme aux faits” is performed by staff in the operational units. This system is efficient and allows a tight control, as well as harmonisation of procedures.

Segregation of duties guarantees that each transaction is implemented and monitored by, at least, four different actors. Therefore, the use of budget funds is transparent and under detailed scrutiny.

On 2015, the Internal Auditor conducted a consulting assignment on the internal management and control procedures in DG EXPO. The report concluded that DG EXPO's internal management and control procedures in the area of Democracy Support provide a reliable basis for ensuring that the related expenditure is regular and complies with the principles of sound financial management.

Annex 6e of the report offers a detailed assessment of the implementation of the 16 minimum internal control standards.

4.2. Assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the controls

The Financial Regulation (art 74.9) requires the Authorising Officer to ensure not only the effectiveness, but also efficiency of the internal

control and to make an assessment of the cost and benefits of control.

DG EXPO appropriations cover many activities of limited individual value that are highly diversified in scope and nature. Such activities may include ad hoc political initiatives which are carried under a strict regulatory framework governing the management of Parliament's administrative budget.

A high number of provisional commitments and a high number of payments executed by a significant number of temporary and permanent imprest accounts characterize the financial management environment. DG EXPO has set a structure with two permanent AOSDs and five financial actors that perform initiation and ex-ante verification tasks. Every single transaction (commitments, payments, regularisations of imprest accounts and liquidations) is initiated and tested ex-ante (four eyes principle) for the legality and regularity of the operations and sound financial management.

Procurement procedures are verified, even if most of them are below EUR 15 000. Following a risk and cost-effectiveness assessment order forms below EUR 2 500 under provisional commitments are not verified.

DG EXPO produced an estimation of costs with the full-time equivalents directly attributable to the control activity in the finance department. No external contracted costs were incurred. The overall cost of the aforementioned controls is estimated as follows for the external policies activities.

Total estimated costs of controls	Budget managed	Ratio (%)
132 150	2 927 309	4.51 %

Overall, in 2019, more than 1600 transactions (commitments, payments, liquidations, invoices, etc.) were verified and registered in Finord and 350 contracts have gone through ex-ante verification. In general, considering the implementation method, the volume and type of annual activities and related transactions and the appropriations' total budget, the controls in place are considered cost-effective.

4.3. Summary of internal and external audits

During 2019, the Internal Audit Service provided advice to the DG in the form of a limited, specific scope consulting assignment on aspects of DG EXPO's system of

'Reporting Sheets', including their overall effectiveness and potential for follow-up. The audit report provided six recommendations to the DG to enhance the current system. For the Internal Audit of Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism one action remains opened.

In addition, the Finance Unit liaised with the Internal Audit Service and delivered close follow-up to the audit of Implementation of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism inclusively by participating to the operational coordination group on interpretation services.

The Unit also provided its assistance and follow-up to the horizontal open actions resulting from the audits on the Annual Activity Reporting Process and Business Continuity Management that are both in the implementation phase.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

5

5. Statement of assurance

I, the undersigned, **Pietro DUCCI**

Director-General of **Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union**
hereby declare, in my capacity as authorising officer by delegation, that I have reasonable assurance that:

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

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

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

Done at **Brussels**

On **06/04/2020**



Signature

ANNEXES

6

6. Annexes

a. Budgetary implementation overview

Code	Appropriation type	EUR ou %	Formule
Appropriations of 2019			
A	Initial appropriations	3.671.000	
B	Final appropriations	2.023.331	
C	Commitments	1.237.185	
D	commitments in % of final appropriations	61%	D=C/B
E	Pay ments	684.686	
F	Pay ments in % of commitments	55%	F=E/C
G	Cancellations of 2019 final appropriations	786.146	G=B-C-K
H	Cancellations appropriations in % of final appropriations	39%	H=G/B
Appropriations carried forward from 2019 to 2020			
I	Automatic carry forw ards from 2019 to 2020	552.499	I=C-E
J	Automatic carry forw ards from 2019 to 2020 in % of commitments	45%	J=I/C
K	Non-automatic carry forw ards from 2019 to 2020	0	
L	Non-automatic carry forw ards from 2019 to 2020 in % of final appropriations	0%	L=K/B
Appropriations carried over from 2018 to 2019			
M	Automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019	903.978	
N	Pay ments against automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019	625.535	
O	Pay ments against automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019 in % of automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019	69%	O=N/M
P	Cancellations of automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019	278.443	P=M-N
Q	Cancellations of automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019 in % of automatic carry over from 2018 to 2019	31%	Q=P/M
R	Non-automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019	0	
S	Pay ments of non-automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019		
T	Pay ments of non-automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019 in % of non-automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019	-	T=S/R
U	Cancellations of non-automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019		U= R-S
V	Cancellations of non-automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019 in % of non-automatic carry overs from 2018 to 2019		V=U/R
Assigned revenue in 2019			
W	Appropriations from assigned revenue in 2019 (current)	0	
X	Assigned revenue carried over to 2019	0	
Y	Balance of commitments on assigned revenue carried over to 2019	0	
Z	Pay ments in 2019 against appropriations from assigned revenue (current and carried-over)	0	
AA	Pay ments in 2019 against appropriations in % of assigned revenue (current and carried-over)	-	AA=Z/(W+X+Y)

THIS TABLE WILL BE DRAWN UP BY DG FIN'S BUDGET UNIT ON THE BASIS OF THE PROVISIONAL ACCOUNTS APPROVED BY THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER AND WILL BE FORWARDED TO AUTHORISING OFFICERS FOR CONFIRMATION.

b. 2019 Budget implementation statement

CURRENT APPROPRIATIONS AS AT THE END OF DECEMBER - FINANCIAL YEAR 2019 (NATURE 0)

Poste	Intitule	Credits Initiaux	Virements Budg. Suppl.	Credits Actuels	Engagements contractes	% Util.	Paiements effectues	Soldes des Engag	Credits disponibles
3020	Frais de réception et de représentation	49.000,00	-	49.000,00	17.513,00	36%	10.863,00	6.650,00	31.487,00
3042	Réunions, congrès, conférences et délégations	1.937.500,00	-1.252.419,00	685.081,00	371.771,12	54%	168.922,63	202.848,49	313.309,88
3200	Acquisition d'expertise : études, experts et autres personnalités	554.500,00	-218.250,00	336.250,00	250.981,25	75%	66.131,25	184.850,00	85.268,75
3220	Dépenses de documentation : livres et souscriptions	10.000,00	-7.000,00	3.000,00	814	27%	814	-	2.186,00
3230	Soutien à la démocratie et renforcement des capacités parlementaires des parlements des pays tiers	1.120.000,00	-170.000,00	950.000,00	596.105,90	63%	437.955,48	158.150,42	353.894,10
TOTAL GENERAL		3.671.000,00	-1.647.669,00	2.023.331,00	1.237.185,27	61%	684.686,36	552.498,91	786.145,73

AUTOMATIC CARRYOVERS AS AT THE END OF DECEMBER - FINANCIAL YEAR 2019 (NATURE 2)

POSTE	INTITULE	CREDITS REPORTES	CREDITS ACTUELS	ENGAGEMENTS CONTRACTES	PAIEMENTS EFFECTUES	% UTIL.	CREDITS DISPONIBLES
2105	INFORMATIQUE ET TÉLÉCOMMUNICATIONS — ACTIVITÉS RÉCURRENTES DE GESTION DES APPLICATIONS TIC	30.000,00	30.000,00	30.000,00	29.893,83	100%	106,17
3020	FRAIS DE RECEPTION ET DE REPRESENTATION	8.614,96	8.614,96	8.614,96	5.491,23	64%	3.123,73
3042	REUNIONS, CONGRES ET CONFERENCES	310.917,46	310.917,46	310.917,46	180.842,53	58%	130.074,93
3200	ACQUISITION D'EXPERTISE: ETUDES, EXPERTS ET AUTRES PERSONNALITES	305.969,21	305.969,21	305.969,21	275.618,48	90%	30.350,73
3230	SOUTIEN A LA DEMOCRATIE ET RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITES PARLEMENTAIRES DES PARLEMENTS DES PAYS TIERS	248.476,66	248.476,66	248.476,66	133.689,06	54%	114.787,60
TOTAL GENERAL		903.978,29	903.978,29	903.978,29	625.535,13	69%	278.443,16

NON-AUTOMATIC CARRYOVERS AS AT THE END OF DECEMBER - FINANCIAL YEAR 2019 (NATURE 6) - NOT APPLICABLE

SPECIFIC EXPENDITURE APPROPRIATIONS/ASSIGNED REVENUE AS AT THE END OF DECEMBER - FINANCIAL YEAR 2019 (NATURE 7) - NOT APPLICABLE

SPECIFIC EXPENDITURE APPROPRIATIONS/ASSIGNED REVENUE CARRIED OVER AS AT THE END OF DECEMBER - FINANCIAL YEAR 2019 (NATURE 5) - NOT APPLICABLE

SPECIFIC EXPENDITURE COMMITMENTS/ASSIGNED REVENUE CARRIED OVER AS AT THE END OF DECEMBER - FINANCIAL YEAR 2019 (NATURE 3) - NOT APPLICABLE

SPECIFIC EXPENDITURE APPROPRIATIONS/EXTERNAL ASSIGNED REVENUE AS AT THE END OF DECEMBER - FINANCIAL YEAR 2019 (NATURE 9) - NOT APPLICABLE

c. List of exceptions - derogations from the rules

EXCEPTIONS TO PROCEDURE

DECISIONS TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION TO THE APPLICABLE PROCEDURES AND RULES

DOCUMENT REF.	RELEVANT AUTHORISING OFFICER	SUBJECT	AMOUNT	VERIFIER'S OPINION	VERIFIER'S OPINION	DECISION	DECISION
FINORD REF., CONTRACT, ETC.				FAVOURABLE WITH STATEMENT/ UNFAVOURABLE	JUSTIFICATION	RELEVANT AUTHORISING OFFICER	JUSTIFICATION

NOT APPLICABLE

WAIVERS/CANCELLATIONS OF RECEIVABLES

RECEIVABLE WAIVER/CANCELLATION PROCEDURES

DOCUMENT REF. (FINORD REF.)	RELEVANT AUTHORISING OFFICER	SUBJECT	AMOUNT	AUTHORISING OFFICER'S REASONS FOR WAIVER/CANCELLATION
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NOT APPLICABLE

d. Results of assessments

Bearing in mind the management environment, the nature of the actions financed and an internal control system with strong focus on ex-ante advice and verification (preparative and preventive work), as well as, the annual budget and staff resources available, ex-post

controls have not been considered cost effective. Full and strong cooperation is of course afforded to any actions in this respect by the Court of Auditors and/or the Internal Auditor.

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

Self-assessment summary table

STANDARD	ACHIEVED	ALMOST	PARTLY	STARTED	TO BE STARTED/N.A.
Section 1: mission statement and values					
1. Duties					
2. Ethical and organisational values					
Section 2: Human resources					
3. Allocation of staff and mobility					
4. Staff assessment and development					
Section 3: Planning and risk management					
5. Objectives and performance indicators					
6. Risk management process					
Section 4: Operations and control activities					
7. Operational set-up					
8. Processes and procedures					

STANDARD	ACHIEVED	ALMOST	PARTLY	STARTED	TO BE STARTED/N.A.
9. Supervision by management					
10. Business continuity					
11. Document management					
Section 5: Information and financial reporting					
12. Information and communication					
13. Accounting and financial information					
Section 6: Evaluation and auditing					
14. Evaluation of activities					
15. Evaluation of internal control systems					
16. Audit reports					

6.e COMMENTS ON THE OUTCOME OF THE ANNUAL SELF ASSESSMENT OF MICS PERFORMANCE

Standard 1. Duties - Achieved

DG EXPO's mission and mandate is clearly defined and available in its intranet. The objectives of the DG are set taking into consideration this mission cascaded down to Directorates. There is a link between the DG objectives and the objectives of its different services and of the staff.

Standard 2. Ethical and organisational values - Achieved

Core values - as expressed in the Guide to the Obligations of Officials and Other Servants of the European Parliament – “Code of Conduct” are clearly and periodically communicated to the staff, in the intranet as well as in the DG communication to staff (i.e. annual general assembly, newsletters, specific requests for information, etc.).

Standard 3. Allocation of staff and mobility - Achieved

Allocation of staff and mobility is done in accordance with the rules. All recruitment procedures are fully documented and jobs interviews are carried out professionally. Staff recruited have the expertise, experience, skills and competencies required to perform its tasks and meet its objectives. Recruitment is planned in the long run for the cases of mobility and retirement. Temporary shift of human resources between units is done, in order to alleviate workload peaks. These exchanges can cover a mission or a project of short duration, or spread over several months. Mentoring is in place to ensure that new staff members learn from their experienced

colleagues. Temporary measures, like recruitment of contractual agents, are used to fill short-term gaps. Staff mobility is encouraged. In order to ensure a maximum of transparency of the procedure posts in mobility are communicated to staff concerned.

Standard 4. Staff assessment and development - Achieved

An annual staff assessment procedure is carried out. Staff objectives are defined at the beginning of the year. A career counselling service is available in order to provide assistance on career development. Training objectives are determined annually within the annual training programme. Staff specific training needs are discussed, identified and included in their staff report. The annual training plan is discussed within the group of correspondents and adopted by the Management Team. Specific external or internal training is developed in order to cover specific training needs that are not covered by the training department (i.e. HEAT trainings on security, temporary imprest account training only for DG EXPO and management of external studies).

Standard 5. Objectives and performance indicators - Achieved

Objectives are defined and revised annually for the Directorate-General, as well as for each directorate and unit. Personal objectives for staff members are defined at the beginning of the year, and are in line with the DG's objectives and mission. The DG has set as a new game-changing strategic objective that shapes all the DG's activities: making the European Parliament an efficient driver in European foreign policy.

Standard 6. Risk management process - Achieved

Risk assessment in the DG is an ongoing process that involves all strands of the organization. DG EXPO's risk register is updated periodically. Risk Management is performed in line with the guidance provided by the Risk Manager of the European Parliament.

Standard 7. Operational set-up - Achieved

Delegations and sub-delegations are decided upon in line with the applicable rules. The nature and scope of delegations is transparent. Updates are immediately communicated to all persons concerned. All authorising officers by sub-delegation are informed of their responsibilities and duties and need to follow ex-ante appropriate training. DG EXPO applies a fully centralized budgetary and financial management. Imprest account managers follow compulsory training.

Standard 8. Processes and procedures - Achieved

All processes and procedures are conducted in line with the relevant regulations, provisions and rules in place. In this context, detailed procedures, guidelines and manuals for the different activities are available on DG EXPO's intranet.

Standard 9. Supervision by management - Achieved

Regular reporting on operations and budget execution is addressed to the management. Risk assessment is done and so far, the need for performing ex-post controls was not identified. Operational and financial ex-ante controls are performed for all transactions.

Standard 10. Business continuity - Almost Achieved

DG EXPO has defined a Business Continuity Plan, setting out, in detail, the core DG activities in case of disruption as well as composition of minimum level of staff presence to guarantee continuity of the services and communication channels. In case of major disruptions, the business continuity management plan is coordinated centrally to ensure that business processes can continue during crisis or major business interruption. Handover files, backup procedures and substituting arrangements are established to ensure business as usual during interruptions such as leave, holidays or staff mobility.

Standard 11. Document management - Almost Achieved

Systematic registration of incoming documents is recorded in GEDA. The new GIDOC filing plan implementation is ongoing. Ownership for document management is defined. The financial archives are organised and all electronic archiving is up to date. There are also specific procedures in place for handling EU classified information. DG EXPO participates to the working group on the introduction of ERMS.

Standard 12. Information and communication - Almost Achieved

Senior and middle management are briefed on all key policy or administrative issues monthly.

Information is shared with the rest of the staff through different means (meetings, intranet, notes and emails). For confidential documents a secure reading room is operational. Administrators have been provided with the SECEM installation,

allowing them to send and receive encrypted email and supporting authentication. An IT system to access EUCI 'Restricted' documents is under development.

Standard 13. Accounting and financial information - Achieved

The accounting data, annual accounts and financial reporting are prepared in accordance with the Financial Regulation, with the general accounting principles as well as in accordance with the Parliament's internal rules on budget implementation. Reporting includes activity reports, preparation of budget estimates, discharge procedures, mopping up exercises. Information related to budgetary and financial procedures is available and regularly updated on the DG intranet. DG EXPO initiates financial statements for the decision making process of the EP's political bodies.

Standard 14. Evaluation of activities - Achieved

Activities are evaluated by the management in accordance with the evaluation standards to ensure an efficient use of resources and to check if the objectives were achieved. Results of evaluations might lead to the discontinuity of an activity or project. Evaluations are available in due time for operational and strategic decision-making and reporting needs.

Standard 15. Evaluation of internal control systems - Almost Achieved

Major risks and the actions planned to mitigate the risks are subject to an annual review and communicated to the Parliament's risk manager. An Internal Control Coordinator provides assurance to the authorizing officer on the effectiveness

and efficiency of internal control and the alignment of these with the DG's risks. In order to verify that processes are exempt of weaknesses, DG EXPO takes into account several sources of information, which are mainly gathered through (a) the regular management meetings, (b) the reports issued by controlling bodies, (c) the result of the ex-ante verification carried on financial transactions and (d) the established periodic reporting mechanisms. Appropriate actions are taken if potential control weaknesses are identified. Procedures and guidelines are continually revised.

Standard 16. Audit reports - Achieved

The Finance Unit coordinates the requests by the Internal Audit Service and the Court of Auditors. The DG affords the audit services all assistance required. Where audit findings require measures to be taken, the Finance Unit in collaboration with the operational units ensures that, there is an appropriate follow-up. The Finance Unit also ensures that an action plan is established to follow-up and implement the controlling bodies audit recommendations.