

**INFORMATION ON THE BUDGETARY AND
THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN 2020**

AND

**REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN
PREPARATION FOR THE
EP DISCHARGE FOR 2020**

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Introduction

This document presents the answers by the Secretary-General to the questions tabled by Members of the Committee on Budgetary Control in the preparation to the decision on the European Parliament's discharge for budgetary and financial management of the year 2020.

In this context, the following introduction provides an overview of the main characteristics and events of the year 2020 and Parliament's use made of financial resources.

BUDGET OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN 2020

Parliament's final appropriations for 2020 totalled EUR 2 038 745 000, or 18.1% of heading 5 of the Multiannual Financial Framework¹. In 2020, 98.8% of the final budget was committed and only 0.8% (EUR 17 292 007) had to be cancelled.

In 2020 four chapters accounted for 67.8% of total commitments. Those chapters were Chapter 10 'Members of the institution', Chapter 12 'Officials and temporary staff', Chapter 20 'Buildings and associated costs' and Chapter 42 'Expenditure relating to parliamentary assistance'.

This could be achieved thanks to a combination of a very high degree of implementation of the budget as requested by the financial authorities and an end of the year transfer of EUR 138 250 Mio of unspent funds following a positive opinion by the Committee on Budgets, so as to help fund the purchase of the SCHOLL building and the construction of the new ADENAUER building in Luxembourg. When compared to a loan with regular repayments, the payment into the new ADENAUER project will result in estimated saved interest of EUR 6.5 million (accumulated interest based on assumed constant interest rate of 2.5% p.a. over a repayment period of 13 years, including 4 years grace period).

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND IMPORTANT EVENTS OF 2020

1. The year 2020 was marked by the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in fundamental changes to Parliament's way of working. From the onset of and throughout the pandemic crisis, Parliament had to take often unprecedented decisions aimed at minimising the risk for Members and staff, while ensuring that the Institution remains in a position to continue its core activities, while also showing practical solidarity with the host community.
2. Parliament has been able to ensure the above through its organisational resilience and ability to apply new working methods, in particular teleworking and remote participation. As from mid-March 2020, Parliament's administration went from an occasional teleworking scheme to teleworking being implemented between 70% and 100%, depending on the lockdown measure enforced and on the need of physical presence.

¹ Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2014-2020 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 884)

3. Strasbourg sessions were suspended for the most part of the year and digitalised processes included the organisation of remote meetings and remote voting systems in plenary and parliamentary committees.
4. In terms of remote participation, the deployment of a complex, multilingual solution which would normally require months if not years was implemented in only few weeks. From 19 March until 8 October 2021 the remote meeting system was used for over 4500 meetings with more than 426 000 participants in total, thus allowing Members to fully exercise their functions.
5. A remote voting system was conceived in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Electoral Act and the Members' Statute. The system has been in place since March 2020. It has been constantly upgraded and improved. Since March until October 2020, it has allowed for 143 voting sessions and nearly 10 000 voting operations.
6. The COVID-19 crisis led to substantial transfers within Parliament's budget. While budgetary resources became available in some areas such as travel expenses, additional budgetary needs occurred in other areas - notably for information communications technology (ICT).
7. Throughout the year 2020, work on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021 - 2027 continued and an agreement could be reached end of 2020. Parliament gave its consent on 16 December 2020. Together with the MFF, the new Interinstitutional Agreement between Parliament, Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on a number of related aspects were agreed.
8. With the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU (Brexit), the number of Members was reduced from 751 to 705 as from 1 February 2020. The Bureau decided to maintain Parliament's presence in the United Kingdom through the London Liaison Office, equipping it with a new mandate, while confirming the closure of the Edinburgh Office at the end of 2020.
9. Parliament's new financial management system was launched on 6 January 2020. Based on the S4 / HANA solution from SAP, it allows some 2 400 users to perform all day-to-day financial operations remotely, a novelty that has enabled the continuity of financial operations by teleworking.
10. Throughout 2020, the administration continued the implementation of Parliament's "Building Strategy Beyond 2019" as endorsed by the Bureau in April 2018.
11. An important part of Parliament's building strategy is the new ADENAUER building project which brings all Parliament services operating in Luxembourg under the same roof.
12. The first part of this project (East Wing) was completed in October 2020. Staff began occupying the new building on November 2020. Works to construct the final part - the West Wing - are underway.

13. As in previous years, the Committee on Budgets authorised in 2020 a mopping-up transfer for the pre-financing of the project. The part of this transfer dedicated to the new ADENAUER building amounted to approximately EUR 63.35 million.
14. In Brussels, the decision to purchase the SCHOLL building allowed to complete another important step of Parliament's building strategy. It will further consolidate Parliament real estate, underpin the interconnectivity of the central buildings and contribute to improved security. This purchase was also subject of the aforementioned mopping-up transfer, amounting to EUR 74.9 million.
15. The extension of the WAYENBERG nursery in Brussels was completed in September 2020 and the new facilities gradually put in use. The completion of this project increases the pre-schooling facilities at the disposal of Members, assistants and staff. WAYENBERG is the first passive building of Parliament.
16. The strategic approach related to the implementation of Europa Experiences in all Member States by the end of 2024, as decided by the Bureau in November 2019, was reinforced in November 2020 with the adoption by the Bureau of a timeline for the deployment of the facilities in all Member States.

REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN PREPARATION FOR THE EP DISCHARGE FOR 2020

GENERAL CONTEXT

1. In the context of the discharge, there is a difference between the recommendations adopted by the plenary in the discharge resolution, and what is eventually carried out by the Bureau. Can the Secretary-General give an overview of the points which were adopted in last year's discharge resolution and which the Bureau did not implement? Can the Secretary-General indicate how many of these issues he requested to be put on Bureau meeting agendas? Has the Secretary-General elaborated an action plan to address all the requests expressed in the 2019 discharge resolution and included the results in the annual activity reports?

The 2019 Discharge resolution as adopted by the Plenary on 29 April 2021 asks the Bureau to take action on the main following issues:

-) reconsidering the possibility for Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs), under certain conditions, to accompany Members on official Parliament's delegations and missions;
-) granting APAs the same subsistence allowance as statutory personnel for their missions to attend the part-sessions in Strasbourg;
-) requiring a review of the system for calculating the financial contribution for visitors' groups, keeping in mind also the fluctuating accommodation and transport costs and the inflation;
-) generalising the reimbursement based on bills for visitors' groups and withdrawing the possibility to appoint APAs as Head of groups;
-) appointing a higher number of women to senior posts of Parliament's administration;
-) increasing the number of people with disabilities working in Parliament's administration;
-) developing further green public procurement by setting ambitious targets for greening contracts in the medium term;
-) requesting that Parliament re-evaluates its EMAS targets in light of the emission reductions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;
-) exhausting all possible avenues to find a fair solution to the voluntary pension scheme while keeping Parliament's liability to a minimum.

As recalled in previous discharge replies, the Bureau is the responsible governing body for matters assigned to it under Parliament's Rules of Procedure. These include inter alia financial, organisational and administrative decisions, the conduct of the sitting, the establishment plan of Parliament's Secretariat, the draft budgetary estimates. The Bureau carries out its duties and takes its decisions in a collegial and autonomous manner.

The Bureau considered the majority of items described above, namely:

- J The Bureau decision of 2 October 2000 (last revised on 10 April 2014) on "*Committee missions outside the three places of work*" as well as the "*Implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the EU*" (Conference of Presidents decision of 29 October 2015) explicitly prohibit the participation of APAs to official Parliament delegations and committee missions. The Bureau and the Conference of Presidents on 28 May and 31 May 2018, respectively, reiterated this stance when adopting the semi-annual programmes for committee travel outside three places of work (within and outside the EU). It falls under the remit of these two governing bodies to decide whether to reconsider this decision.
- J The rules regarding the reimbursement of duty travel between Parliament's three places of work that apply to Parliament's Secretariat staff and APAs are different. The system of reimbursement for the Secretariat staff is laid down in the General Implementing Provisions adopted by the Bureau on 17 June 2009 and relevant internal rules adopted by the Secretary-General on 1 September 2018. This system is based on the reimbursement of travel expenses upon the presentation of supporting documents. The arrangements for reimbursement of mission expenses for APAs are laid down in the Implementing Measures Governing the Statute of APAs. The system is based on the reimbursement of travel and other expenses at a flat rate.
- J The rules for groups of visitors sponsored by Members were last revised by the Bureau in October 2016. Based on these rules, the Heads of groups are required to keep all the supporting financial documents for a period of three years. Ex-post controls are performed on a sample of groups and the Heads of groups have to present all invoices related to the expenditure they have declared. The revised rules have also introduced the possibility for Members to designate either a paying agent or a travel agency to hold the financial responsibility for the group, as an alternative to an APA or a member of the group. Since the introduction of the revised rules, the percentage of groups with an APA as Head of group has sharply decreased.
- J Concerning the question of the fluctuating accommodation and transport costs and the inflation, it should be recalled that in accordance with Article 13 of the revised Bureau Rules, the financial contribution is intended to cover part of the eligible expenditure incurred by the sponsored group. The rules offer Members more flexibility to adapt to the different needs of the groups by allowing the interchangeability of the use of funds resulting from the calculation method based on three factors (travel, accommodation, meals and minor local expenses). A decision to adjust one or more of these three factors would need to be taken by the Quaestors (see articles 17 and 18 of applicable rules).
- J On 13 January 2020 the Bureau approved, on a proposal from the Secretary-General, new and more ambitious targets for gender balance in senior and middle management posts in the Parliament's Secretariat to be achieved by 2024: 50% female Heads of Unit, 50% female Directors and 40% female Directors-General. To date (November 2021), 40% of Heads of Unit are women. Thanks to Parliament's continuous efforts to improve gender balance, the optimal situation of gender parity among Directors has been achieved. Throughout 2021, a significant step forward has been made at the level of Directors-General with the increase of the percentage of women occupying this position from 15.4% to 23%.

- J With a view to further strengthen and support Parliament's actions and initiatives, in July 2020, at the initiative of the Secretary-General, the Bureau endorsed ten commitments to be pursued during the current legislature on disability managements in the administration, including two specific commitments in the field of recruitment. Accordingly, as an example, all Parliament job vacancies published shall include a reference to "reasonable accommodation" that may be made to facilitate applications/interviews. In parallel, existing recruitment schemes for people with a disability shall be rolled out to all categories of staff.
- J Parliament's comprehensive approach to greening public procurement (GPP) is fully applied since 2017. The application of the GPP approach is successful, with the majority of Directorate-Generals having made considerable efforts to green their purchases. The systematic GPP approach is constantly analysed and performance monitored in the Working Group on GPP and the Public Procurement Forum to ensure its continuous improvement. The currently observed GPP performance is already close to the key performance indicator (KPI) target on GPP, adopted by the Bureau in 2019, of 90% green contracts in the priority categories by 2024. 85% of contracts in priority categories were greened in 2020.
- J Parliament's environmental performance with respect to its KPI targets, including the one for GPP, is monitored on a regular basis, including a mid-term assessment, as outlined in Parliament's EMAS Mid-Term Strategy 2024. The Bureau, the Steering Committee for Environmental Management and the Inter DG Steering Group on Environmental Management are kept informed by the EMAS Unit. At the mid-term review, Parliament will reassess the appropriateness of key performance indicator targets in light of the current performance and suggest the adjustment of specific targets, where necessary.
- J The COVID-19 pandemic has strongly impacted on the way Parliament conducts its business. These changes significantly affect Parliament's environmental performance, including its key indicators and targets. The EMAS Mid-Term Strategy 2024 therefore provides to monitor the achievement of the key performance indicator targets on a regular basis. Accordingly, at the mid-term review Parliament should reassess the appropriateness of the current key performance indicator targets. That review could lead to an adaptation of the EMAS targets and Mid-Term Strategy, including a possible adjusted CO² reduction plan.
- J On 10 December 2018, the Bureau introduced amendments to the additional voluntary pension scheme with a view to improving the sustainability of the fund, to addressing the increasing liquidity problem and to reducing the actuarial deficit and the negative consequences for the European taxpayer. The Bureau's decision was challenged before the Court of Justice by a number of members of the Pension Fund. In its judgements in cases T-720/19 to T-725/19, the Court concluded that already acquired rights were not impacted by the contested Bureau decision. The Court further confirmed the Bureau's competence to adopt decisions aiming at improving the sustainability of the fund. The Court also concluded that the Bureau decision of 10 December 2018 respected the principle of proportionality. The judgments were delivered on 15 September 2021 and Parliament is in the process of examining their implications with the view to submitting additional proposals to improve the sustainability of the Fund to the Bureau.

2. Has the transparency of the Bureau’s decision-making (particularly with regard to its website) been discussed as requested in the 2019 discharge resolution?

The website of the Bureau on Parliament’s intranet has been continuously improved. It provides a wide overview on the Bureau’s activities. Members and staff can find information on the composition of the Bureau and individual responsibilities of the Vice-Presidents and Quaestors.

The website further entails information on the calendar of meetings, agendas and minutes, composition of Bureau working groups, Notices. The website provides access to the Compendium of rules which contains all the rules adopted by the Bureau and the Conference of Presidents.

3. Does the Secretary General intend to make a proposal to the Bureau in order to improve the transparency of its decisions? Has it been envisaged to communicate on Bureau decisions in the same manner as Quaestors who issue notices of their activities?

The agendas of Bureau meetings are published beforehand and are made available on Parliament’s internet. All Bureau discussions and decisions, including the ones *in camera*, are minuted and, once approved by the Bureau, these minutes are also accessible on Parliament’s internet. The minutes include specific references to the documents used in the information and decision making process by the Bureau members, and can be obtained via the Register or on the basis of Rule 32(1) of the Rules of Procedure.

As a follow-up to the Bureau meetings, any Member concerned by a Bureau decision, either in a personal or in an office-holding capacity, is informed by letter from the President, the Secretary-General or the Bureau secretariat. In this context, it is worth recalling that the Quaestors are responsible for administrative and financial matters directly concerning Members and their working conditions. Members are indeed informed by the relevant decisions for which they are concerned via Quaestors’ Notices.

In addition to the above, Bureau decisions which concern Members are also generally communicated via Bureau Notices (<https://epintranet.in.ep.europa.eu/home/parliamentary-life/governing-bodies/bureau/notices-bureau.html>).

4. What criteria are used in the follow-up audits to assess the risk profile for actions open from the discharge?

The follow-up audits carried out by Internal Audit relate to agreed actions from its previous audit reports for which the agreed due-date for implementation has fallen due.

This approach is in line with Article 4(h) of the Charter of the Internal Auditor, according to which the latter is responsible “*for establishing and maintaining a follow-up process to monitor and ensure that management has effectively implemented all actions contained in the audit reports or that management has accepted the risk of not taking action*”.

Open actions from the discharge are not in the scope of Internal Audit follow-up audits. However, careful attention is given by Internal Audit to the discharge questionnaire and to the replies provided as they represent a useful source of information in the framework of Internal Audit activities.

5. The President's Cabinet: How many staff (including any seconded or lent posts) have been employed in President's cabinet in 2020? How many were previously EP officials, political group staff, APAs, secondments from other institutions (which), and other categories (which)?

In 2020, the Cabinet of the President had employed 42 staff as outlined in the table below.

Category	AD	AST	I	TOTAL
Official	11	9		20
Temporary agent	12	7		19
Contract agent			3	3
TOTAL	23	16	3	42

Staff in the President's Cabinet are mainly officials seconded in the interests of the service and temporary agents. With two exceptions, staff members all worked previously for Parliament (see breakdown in the table below).

Previous job	# of staff
EP Secretariat (Officials/TA)	21
Seconded official (EC)	1
Ex-APA	5
Political group (Official/TA)	5
Contract agent (EP)	5
Ex-Assistant VP	1
Ex-President's Office*	1
Sec. Bureau-Quaestors	1
Trainee	1
No previous job	1
TOTAL	42
*Protocol Officer	

6. Missions by the President:
- Which missions outside the EP's three locations (Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg) have been undertaken by the President in 2020?
 - How many times did the EP President or his Cabinet use the plane to travel to destinations within a radius of 250km from Brussels? What were the destinations?
 - In the cases where a private flight has been chartered, for what costs was it chartered and what justification has been given for not taking the regular flight operators?
 - For missions outside the EU: what was the purpose of the mission and who has accompanied the President in which function?

a. Missions outside the EP's three working places in 2020:

- Pesaro, Reggio Emilia and Modena, Italy from 6 to 7 January;
- Davos, Switzerland, from 20 to 22 January;
- Jerusalem on 23 January;
- Assisi, Italy on 24 January;

5. Houjarray, Bazoches-sur-Guyonne and Versailles on 30 January;
 6. Tirana, Albania from 3 to 4 February;
 7. Verona, Italy from 13 to 14 February;
 8. Torino, Napoli and Rome, Italy from 20 February to 2 March;
 9. Greece on Tuesday 3 March 2020;
 10. Madrid, Spain, from 15 to 16 July;
 11. Pisa, Parma, Firenze, Italy from 4 to 8 September.
- b. In 2020, the President used the plane once to travel to a destination, during a transit, within a radius of 250km from Brussels, i.e.: Rome - Schiphol Airport- Brussels (less than 250 km) on 9 June 2020.
- c. On 22 January 2020, the President and his Head of Cabinet joined President von der Leyen on a private charter from Zürich to Tel Aviv. Within the timeframe and in order to respect his commitments, the President took the private flight because it was the only means of transport available to travel to Israel (Yad Vashem) from Switzerland where the President was present on the occasion of the World Economic Forum. The amount paid by the European Parliament for the private flight was EUR 2147.29.

On 30 January 2020, the President and his delegation travelled on a private flight with the Presidents of the European Commission and the Council in the framework of the official mission to Houjarray, Bazoches-sur-Guyonne and Versailles (France, for which no payment took place).

No private flight was organised for the President in 2020.

- d. Missions outside the EU:
1. Mission to Davos, Switzerland, from 20 to 22 January to attend the World Economic Forum. Members of the delegation: Head of Cabinet, Spokesperson and one Advisor. The delegation was accompanied by 1 Interpreter and 2 Close Protection Officers.
 2. Mission to Jerusalem on 23 January on the occasion of the Holocaust Commemoration. Member of the delegation: Head of Cabinet. The delegation was accompanied by 2 Close Protection Officers.
 3. Mission to Tirana (Albania) from 3 to 4 February (meetings with the President of Albania and various members of the Government and Parliament, including the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament and leaders of the political groups). Members of the delegation: Deputy Head of Cabinet; Head of the President's Private Office; Member of Cabinet in charge of the Western Balkans; Member of Cabinet (Press Officer); Member of Cabinet (Protocol Officer). The delegation was accompanied by 1 Interpreter and 2 Close Protection Officers

7. Will the EP commit to continue the possibility for remote voting for Members, in absence of a decision by the President, who are on maternity leave, in line with the demand by the discharge authority in paragraph 108 of the 2018 EP discharge and paragraph 36 of the 2019 EP discharge? Is the Parliament envisaging any discussion at the Bureau level to implement the request included in paragraph 36 of the 2019 discharge resolution? If not, what does the Bureau consider necessary preconditions for members on maternity leave to be able to continue to make use of the remote voting procedure?

In light of the restrictions imposed by the Member States, including on travelling, at its meeting of 20 March 2020 the Bureau decided to review its rules on voting to allow Members to vote remotely. This was necessary to enable Parliament to adopt the urgent measures proposed by the European Commission as part of the EU-coordinated response to COVID-19.

On 17 December 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on parliamentary work, Parliament amended its Rules of Procedure, adopting four new Rules (Rules 237a, 237b, 237c and 237d) in order to ensure the functioning of the Institution in extraordinary circumstances. Rule 237c(6) states that “*the Bureau shall adopt measures concerning the operation and security of the electronic means used under this Rule, in accordance with the requirements and standards set out in paragraph 2.*”

On 8 February 2021 Parliament’s Bureau adopted rules governing voting under the remote participation regime, in order to allow the President to implement Rule 237c of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure as amended on 17 December 2020. Upon decision by the President in extraordinary circumstances under the conditions of Rule 237a of the Rules of Procedure, the Bureau decision enables plenary, committee and delegation votes to take place remotely, with adequate safeguards to ensure that Members’ votes are individual, personal and free, in line with the provisions of the Electoral Act and the Members’ Statute.

Voting remotely in the absence of a decision by the President establishing extraordinary circumstances is currently not provided for under Parliament’s Rules of Procedure. Any further circumstance where Members might exercise remotely their right to vote, such as while benefiting from maternity or paternity leave, would therefore require, as appropriate, an amendment to the Rules of Procedure and a subsequent decision by the Bureau.

In this context, it should be noted that the future of parliamentary democracy after the pandemic is currently object of a broad discussion in the framework of a reflection process launched by the President at the end of March 2021. In this regard, five Focus groups have discussed different issues, including as regards remote voting. The proposals of the Focus Group are being assessed by the responsible governing bodies.

8. Will the EP provide the possibility for Members on maternity leave to be substituted temporarily and if not, what preconditions does it consider necessary?

Under Article 6 of the Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage (Election Act), Members of the European Parliament shall vote on an individual and personal basis. This is also reflected in Rule 186 of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure, which states that the right to vote is a personal right.

Moreover, under Article 13 of the Election Act, a seat shall fall vacant only when the mandate of a Member ends as a result of resignation, death or withdrawal of the mandate. Consequently, based on these provisions, a substitution during maternity or parental leave is currently not possible, as it would first require amending the applicable legal framework.

TRANSPARENCY

- 9.** Based on the reply to the 2019 discharge resolution, the declarations of financial interests reflect the disclosure obligations. However, some cases remain insufficiently detailed to fulfil these obligations. Which steps is Parliament taking to address and prevent these?

The format of the declarations of financial interests reflects in its entirety the disclosure obligations that are currently applicable to Members pursuant to points (a) to (h) of Article 4 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament with respect to financial interests and conflicts of interests (hereinafter “Code of Conduct”), adopted in accordance with Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure and annexed thereto.

In this regard, it should be noted that this format allows Members to declare, on a voluntary basis, in section (I) of their declaration, any additional information deemed by them to be relevant, including further details about activities already declared by Members pursuant to points (a) to (h) of Article 4(2) of the Code of Conduct.

Pursuant to Article 9 of the Implementing Measures for the Code of Conduct (Bureau Decision of 15 April 2013), where there is reason to assume that a declaration contains manifestly erroneous, superficial, illegible or incomprehensible information, the competent Parliament service performs, on behalf of the President, a general plausibility check for clarification purposes, giving the Member concerned the possibility to react within a reasonable time-limit.

Further to that, training courses are offered to Members and their staff, via the *learn.MEP* catalogue and individual offers made to all political groups, on the Code of Conduct and the correct fulfilment of the disclosure obligations enshrined therein.

- 10.** In its resolution to the 2019 European Parliament discharge, Parliament calls for an independent assessment on whether post-mandate activities of Members create conflicts of interests. Will the Secretary-General conduct this assessment? If not, why does the Secretary-General not deem such an assessment necessary?

Article 6 of the Code of Conduct stipulates that “*Former Members of the European Parliament who engage in professional lobbying or representational activities directly linked to the European Union decision-making process should inform the European Parliament thereof and may not, throughout the period in which they engage in those activities, benefit from the facilities granted to former Members under the rules laid down by the Bureau to that effect*”.

Prior to the 2019 European elections and to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union in January 2020, information sessions were organised for Members on the arrangements for the end of their mandate. In these sessions, Parliament drew Members’ attention to the application of Article 6 of the Code of Conduct. The presentation given at the information sessions was sent to all Members before the elections, and was also referred to in the letter sent by the Secretary-General to all outgoing Members at the end of the term.

In addition to the above, all Members whose mandates end during the legislative term are made aware of the provisions under Article 6 of the Code of Conduct.

11. Parliament responsible services are working to make plenary voting records available on a dedicated space where users will have access to clear and reader-friendly documents. Will this tool also display the text of the respective amendment for which the voting record is shown?

Parliament's responsible services are working to make plenary voting records available on a dedicated space, giving access to reader-friendly documents. As part of the project, the new layout will include directly matching the text of a specific split vote with the corresponding voting record.

As for other amendments, it is not yet technically possible to separate the text of a single amendment signed by a Member. The question will be reassessed as soon as the digitalisation of the legislative chain will be completed.

12. How many interest representatives had access badges to the European Parliament in 2020? How many organisations do they represent?

In 2020, 12 164 interest representatives had access badges to Parliament representing 3 524 organisations.

13. What rules have changed with the revised IIA on Transparency Register as far the EP is concerned? Is the EP planning to draft and publish an annual report on the interest representatives and other organisation that were given access to Parliament's premises?

Negotiations between Parliament, the Council and the Commission on an interinstitutional agreement on a mandatory transparency register (IIA) culminated in a political agreement reached on 15 December 2020. Following its adoption by each of the signatory institutions, the agreement entered into force on 1 July 2021.

No rules have changed in 2020, as the new agreement was not yet in force. In 2020, Parliament applied the existing rules which in line with the new agreement are publicly accessible on the Transparency Register.

Individuals working for interest representatives registered in the Transparency Register can be issued with a personal long-term access badge (TR brown badge) granting them access to Parliament buildings on an annual basis. The name of individuals holding TR badges broken down by categories of organisations is publicly available on the Transparency Register website. The Joint Transparency Secretariat prepares an annual report on the running of the Transparency Register, also published on the Register website.

Parliament's services draft an annual report on accesses to Parliament for security purposes. One section of that report covers the interest representatives and other organisations that were given access to Parliament's premises. As that report contains personal data, it is not published and is kept internally in accordance with the Data Protection Regulation.

14. Committee chairs are required to publish meetings with interest representatives online. Could you provide an overview of the published meetings for each chair by committee for 2020?

The breakdown requested is outlined in the table below. The data is based on self-declarations by Members made until 31 August 2021.

It should be further noted that where committee chairs declared meetings without specifically indicating that they held the meeting in their capacity as committee chair (for example because the chair was simultaneously rapporteur for a specific file and declared the meeting as rapporteur), those meetings are not included in the figures below.

Committee	# declared meetings
AFCO	0
AFET	0
AGRI	63
BUDG	4
CONT	1
CULT	24
DEVE	16
ECON	39
EMPL	1
ENVI	1
FEMM	1
IMCO	8
INTA	83
ITRE	24
JURI	26
LIBE	6
PECH	0
PETI	0
REGI	1
TRAN	51
BECA	5
ANIT	1
AIDA	6
INGE	7

15. Why is the information in which capacity an MEP has held a lobby meeting, e.g. as Rapporteur, Shadow, Committee Chair, no longer published?

When a Member declares a meeting, he or she must always indicate the “capacity” in which he or she holds the meeting, i.e.: rapporteur, shadow rapporteur, committee chair, or “just” Member.

A technical problem, which has occurred at the last release, has blocked the display of the capacity field on the Members’ profile pages.

However, the database still contains that information for all meetings declared, and the problem is expected to be resolved by an update in November 2021. From then, the capacity will be once again displayed for all meetings (including those declared while the problem affected the display).

16. What trainings were available for members and APAs about transparency rules in the EP? Have such programmes been adapted to the challenges posed by the shift to teleworking caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?

The Transparency Unit of the Directorate-General for the Presidency (DG PRES) offers *ad-personam* trainings to all Members (and their offices) via the MEP.learn catalogue.

For Members, the Transparency Unit of DG PRES) offers a tailor-made training course on the Transparency Register. It takes 30 minutes and is offered on demand. APAs may also participate in the session. The course is also available from remote.

In 2020, eight information sessions for staff on the Transparency Register and related rules were offered. Six of these sessions took place online.

The Transparency Unit also participated as guest trainer in two training sessions for staff on ethics and one on dealing with lobbyists in 2020, two of which took place online.

17. Could you provide a new overview of the unofficial groups in Parliament, so-called ‘friendship groups’, that interact with governments of third countries? The last overview available is from the previous mandate.

In the exercise of their free mandate and while respecting the values of the European Union, Members may form or participate in unofficial groupings of Members, including ‘friendship groups’, for the purpose of holding informal exchanges of views on specific issues across different political groups, drawing on members of different parliamentary committees and of promoting contact between Members and civil society. Such unofficial groupings must be fully transparent in their actions and must not engage in any activities that might result in confusion with the official activities of Parliament or of its bodies. In particular, they may not organise events in third countries that coincide with a mission of an official parliamentary body, including an official election observation delegation.

Pursuant to Rule 35 of Parliament’s Rules of Procedure, “*unofficial groupings ...[are]... required to declare, by the end of the following month, any support, whether in cash or in kind, which Members have not declared individually in accordance with their obligations under Annex 1 [of the Code of Conduct].*” As specified in Notice (10/2019) of the Quaestors, the obligation laid down in Rule 35 applies individually to each Member participating in an unofficial grouping and benefiting from such support.

As there is no obligation to declare the existence of ‘friendship groups’ or their composition, it is not possible for Parliament’s services to verify their existence, membership or whether they have received external support which should have been declared. Consequently, there is no official list of friendship groups. The overview from the previous mandate referred to in the above question was drawn up on a one-off basis by the Conference of Delegation Chairs, using unofficial information sources, for a debate in the Conference of Presidents.

18. What cases did the European Ombudsman handle in 2020 concerning the Parliament? What measures were taken to respond to the Ombudsman’s recommendations?

In 2020, the Ombudsman issued eight decisions concerning Parliament. All eight cases were either closed as the Ombudsman had not detected any maladministration or no further investigations were justified or the complainant had brought action before a national court.

19. What cases did OLAF investigate involving Parliament and on what issues? What is the status of those investigations?

In 2020, OLAF investigated 29 cases involving Parliament on issues related, on the one hand, to Members’ financial and social entitlements and, on the other hand, to the financing of political structures. As regards 5 out of these 29 cases Parliament received an OLAF final report with financial recommendations in 2020.

20. According to article 6 of the Code of Conduct, former Members “*who engage in professional lobbying or representational activities directly linked to the EU decision-making process should inform the European Parliament thereof and may not, throughout the period in which they engage in those activities, benefit from the facilities granted to former Members*”.

- a. How many of the Members who have not been re-elected in 2019 have notified the European Parliament of their new employment after leaving office in 2020?
- b. Have these notifications been checked? If yes, how and by whom?
- c. In how many cases were the notified activities found to be linked to the EU decision-making process? Were any conditions imposed on the new professional activities (if yes, which conditions?), or activities forbidden?

a. 459 Members from the 8th parliamentary term were not re-elected in 2019. In 2020, Parliament received only one notification of post-mandate employment submitted to it pursuant to Article 6 of the Code of Conduct.

b. Article 6 of the Code of Conduct stipulates that “*Former Members of the European Parliament who engage in professional lobbying or representational activities directly linked to the European Union decision-making process should inform the European Parliament thereof and may not, throughout the period in which they engage in those activities, benefit from the facilities granted to former Members under the rules laid down by the Bureau to that effect*”. The only notification of post-mandate employment submitted to Parliament in June 2020, pursuant to Article 6 of the Code of Conduct, was registered by the competent service.

c. Among the former Members who were not re-elected in 2019, only one notified Parliament in June 2020 of his/her new employment after leaving office pursuant to Article 6 of the Code of Conduct. The former Member concerned was reminded that, under Article 6 of the Code of Conduct, it is not permitted to benefit from the facilities granted to former Members during the period of engaging in representational activities.

21. How many cases of potential breaches of the Code of Conduct and Rules of Procedure did the Parliament's advisory committee on the conduct of members investigate last year? Of these, how many received sanctions? Were there cases where close members of family were hired, contrary to the code of conduct?

In 2020, the Advisory Committee on the Conduct of Members investigated two cases of breaches of the Code of Conduct. The President referred both cases to the Advisory Committee, respectively in December 2019 and November 2020. In the first case, the President decided to impose a sanction in July 2020. The examination of the second case was concluded in 2021 and also led to a sanction.

The Code of Conduct does not include a prohibition for Members to hire family members. Article 43 of the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members provides that the sums paid in the framework of the parliamentary assistance may not be used to fund contracts providing for the employment or the use of the services of Members' spouses or stable partners or their parents, children, brothers or sisters or, in general, giving rise to any possibility of a conflict of interest as defined in their Article 62(1a).

There were no recoveries undertaken in the area of local parliamentary assistance for family members or close relationships hired in 2020 and Parliament's services are not aware of cases thereof having been hired in 2020 contrary to the rules on conflict of interest.

22. Can you provide an overview of the cases of breaches of the code of conduct for international electoral observation investigated by the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group in 2020? In how many of these cases were sanctions applied?

Based on information from the Directorate-General for External Policies (DG EXPO), there has been eight cases of a breach of the code of conduct for international election observation. Five of these cases were linked to Crimea (July 2020) and three to Venezuela (December 2020).

In all eight cases, the Members deemed to be in breach were informed by the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group that they are unable to participate in an official European Parliament Election Observation delegation until the end of 2021.

- 23.** Please provide us with up-to-date information regarding possible misuse of allowances paid to Members, local and accredited assistants as well as EP officials respectively. Please also provide the answers for the year 2019 for comparison:
- a. How many investigations were carried out in 2020?
 - b. How many Members' offices were concerned?
 - c. Which allowances were involved?
 - d. What amounts were at risk?
 - e. In how many cases and what amounts were found to be paid out irregularly, and were therefore demanded to be returned?
 - f. What were the results of these internal investigations?
 - g. How many cases were referred to OLAF, how many were referred to national authorities?
 - h. Can you divide the cases where MEPs were involved into occurrences per political group?

As required by the principle of sound financial management provided for in the Financial Regulation, the services in charge of managing Members' allowances carry out regular daily internal control activities aimed at safeguarding the legality and regularity of transactions and compliance with the Statute for Members and its Implementing Measures.

The figures below do not include investigations started in 2020 but not concluded by the end of the same year.

Moreover, possible misuse of allowances may lead to disciplinary investigations conducted on the basis of the Staff Regulations which aim at establishing breaches of statutory obligations by staff members of the European Parliament, including accredited assistants.

- a. There were 18 cases, in which investigations, outside the daily control activities, were carried out in 2020.
- b. 12 Members' offices concerned.
- c. 13 cases concerned the area of parliamentary assistance allowances, other cases the area of travel expenses and the area of medical and travel expenses.
- d. Approximately EUR 1 318 000 were concerned.
- e. 15 cases for an amount of approximately EUR 943 000
- f. Please refer to the previous paragraph. Furthermore, the Appointing Authority imposed penalties for the misuse of allowances, such as written warning, reprimand, downgrading or dismissal. All disciplinary measures were taken in accordance with Article 9 of Annex IX to the Staff Regulations.
- g. 1 case was referred to OLAF.
- h. As a general principle, Members' allowances and entitlements are granted on an individual basis in strict compliance with the Statute for Members and its Implementing Measures, irrespective of the political Group's affiliation or Member State of origin. In 2020, Members concerned belonged to the following political Groups:
 -) 3 Members from the EFDD Group;
 -) 2 Members from the Renew Group;
 -) 2 Members from the ECR Group;
 -) 2 Members from the EPP Group;
 -) 2 Non-attached Members;
 -) 1 Member from the ENL Group

As requested, the table below compares the situation in 2019 with 2020:

	2019	2020
a/ How many investigations were carried out	11 cases	18 cases
b/ How many Members' offices were concerned	6 MEPs	12 MEPs
c/ Which allowances were involved	Parliamentary assistance	Parliamentary assistance: 13 Travel expenses: 3 Medical expenses: 1
d/ What amounts were at risk	EUR 560 000	EUR 1 318 000
e/ In how many cases and what amounts were found to be paid out irregularly, and were therefore demanded to be returned	EUR 560 000	EUR 943 000
g/ How many cases were referred to OLAF, how many were referred to national authorities	0	1

24. Can the administration explain the EP's voluntary arrangements with the city of Brussels concerning homeless persons and shelters?

Following contacts between Parliament and the three host cities, the Bureau decided in April 2020 on several solidarity measures towards the three places of work.

These included among others the following concerning homeless persons and shelters:

-) the delivery of charity meals in Strasbourg, Luxembourg and Brussels; and
-) the setting up of a shelter for vulnerable women in one of Parliament's office buildings (KOHL) in cooperation with the Brussels Region and a non-governmental organization called New Samusocial.

25. Were the CoR and EESC consulted on the reply provided by Parliament to paragraph 38 of the 2019 discharge resolution, concerning the cooperation agreement between the Committees and Parliament?

The Cooperation Agreement (CA) between the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Parliament was signed on 5 October 2014 by the relevant Presidents. It aims at fostering mutual relations and creating an effective framework for cooperation in a number of areas such as translation, security, access to buildings, and IT services. Since the entry into force of the agreement, cooperation between Parliament, the CoR and the EESC has progressed significantly.

While respecting the autonomy and functioning of the two bodies and of Parliament, cooperation concerning administrative matters of the agreement has been implemented in the following fields: staff transfer, translation workload balancing, security, interpretation, meeting rooms, catering, IT matters and communication/information. In the reply referred to in the question, Parliament reported on the progress made.

26. What measures did the Parliament take in order to make a transparent exit strategy out of COVID-restrictions?

The measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19, including restrictions imposed by Member States, have represented a major challenge for parliamentary democracy. This concerns in particular efforts to safeguard legislative and budgetary powers as well as political scrutiny. This is especially true for the European Parliament. A unique multinational and multilingual Assembly made up of 705 members, elected in 27 Member States.

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Parliament had to take various, often unprecedented, decisions aimed at minimising the risk for Members and staff, while ensuring that the Institution remains in a position to continue its core activities. This has allowed Parliament to play its full role in adopting any measures required at EU level to respond to, and mitigate the impact of pandemic crisis.

The decisions were taken by the President and Parliament's governing bodies, especially the Bureau. As regards Parliament's administrative operational functions and staff, measures were put in place by the Secretary-General.

The decisions and measures taken were communicated to Members and staff, as appropriate, in a comprehensive and transparent manner through inter alia Bureau and Quaestors Notices, or communications from the Medical Service.

The measures taken during the crisis are structured along three axes and objectives:

-) protecting Members and staff, including sanitary measures, teleworking, testing and on-site vaccination;
-) ensuring business continuity, including remote participation and voting; and
-) implementing practical solidarity in the host Member States.

In terms of remote participation, the deployment of a complex, multilingual solution which would normally require months if not years was implemented in only few weeks. From 19 March 2020 until 29 October 2021 the remote multilingual meeting system was used for over 4 900 meetings with more than 467 000 participants in total, thus allowing for Members to fully exercise their functions.

A remote voting system was conceived in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Electoral Act and the Members' Statute. The system has been in place from March 2020 until the October II part-session. It has been constantly upgraded and improved. Since March 2020 until October 2021, it has allowed for 149 voting sessions and over 10 000 voting operations.

Next to enabling remote participation and voting, Parliament had to cope with the challenges of a multilingual and open Institution. Plans were implemented to increase interpretation during the pandemic to up 70% of the pre-COVID capacity. Specific online programmes for visitors were put in place.

Throughout the pandemic crisis, the measures have been adapted and, where appropriate, relaxed or lifted depending on the overall development of the pandemic. This has allowed a return to normalcy, whenever possible.

27. How did the EP and the other European institutions work together to coordinate their approaches to work during the pandemic?

Since February 2020, when COVID-19 was identified as a risk to parliamentary and administrative activities, EU institutions, bodies, and agencies coordinated their efforts and exchanged information at different levels. This includes:

-) top and senior management meetings;
-) exchanges at the level of the Medical Services via the Interinstitutional Medical Board to coordinate sanitary and risk-mitigation measures;
-) meetings of Human Resources entities with the creation of a COVID-19 Inter-institutional exchange of information and coordination working group (CPQS).

The various cooperation mechanisms have been instrumental to achieve coordinated actions, such as receiving the necessary authorisations from the Belgian authorities for the opening of testing centres and accredited COVID-19 vaccination centres in the Institutions, or in the framework of joint procurement procedures for the purchase of personal protection equipment.

The Interinstitutional Medical Board (IMB) is composed of medical advisors of all European Institutions and agencies combining medical expertise in different fields ranging from occupational health, emergency and preventive medicine to epidemiology and infectiology. It has several working groups including the Risk Preparedness and Management group (RPM) which is responsible for monitoring biological threats, such as epidemics. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the IMB has provided medical advice on preventive measures and guidance on inter alia in-house epidemiological surveillance, testing strategies, contact tracing, quarantining and isolation rules, psycho-social support and access to COVID-19 vaccination.

28. Which specific measures were in place at the start of 2020 in Parliament to deal with a possible pandemic? If any, which of these measures were implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic and how would you evaluate their implementation and what was their budgetary impact? Please provide us data of investment costs and measures to telework, remote voting, hygiene standards and vaccination.

At the beginning of 2020 (before the outbreak of the pandemic), the following was inter alia in place:

-) hygiene protocols and medical guidelines (based on flu and Ebola scenarios);
-) stock of personal protective equipment (PPE), i.e. masks, FFP2, FFP3, gowns, gloves, glasses, boots, screens;
-) stock of hand alcohol rub;
-) budgetary provisions for (standard flu) vaccinations;
-) stock of medical equipment.

The above listed materials and measures could be used and implemented immediately by Parliament during the pandemic. They were supported by logistic and facility management services which were significantly mobilised to ensure safe working conditions for Members and staff by inter alia:

-) procuring and distributing protective masks;
-) implementing reinforced sanitizing and cleaning protocols;
-) organising COVID-19 testing facilities;
-) adapting working spaces to physical distancing and sanitary measures;
-) rearranging catering facilities to ensure physical distancing and proper ventilation.

As regards teleworking, it should be noted that Parliament had anticipated the increasing need of mobile working in the context of its efforts to develop a digital workplace. As a result, once large teleworking schemes started to apply during the pandemic crisis, Parliament quickly scaled up its communication platforms and ICT infrastructure and integrated additional tools. These included: remote conferencing, remote voting, enabling remote interventions during part-sessions from Parliament's Liaison Offices, together with the massive deployment of 10.000 Hybrid laptops.

In terms of remote participation, the deployment of a complex, multilingual solution which would normally require months if not years was implemented in only few weeks. From 19 March until 8 October 2021 the remote meeting system was used for over 4500 meetings with more than 426 000 participants in total, thus allowing Members to fully exercise their functions.

A remote voting system was conceived in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Electoral Act and the Members' Statute. The system has been in place since March 2020. It has been constantly upgraded and improved. Since March until October 2020, it has allowed for 143 voting sessions and nearly 10 000 voting operations.

The Institution has overall proven a high degree of resilience and capacity to adapt and transform during the pandemic crisis. Collective efforts by Members and staff have allowed keeping Parliament operational and so enabling it to play its full role to respond to the pandemic crisis in the interest of the citizens.

Parliament was able to draw upon existing contingency plans to further build on digitalisation, allowing for the smooth introduction of large teleworking regimes, remote voting and online debating and participation tools. Technology has also opened new channels of communication with the citizens. This has brought the Institution closer to them in a time of great uncertainty.

The budgetary impact of the measures taken during the COVID crisis is outlined in Annex 4 of Parliament's Report on budgetary and financial management 2020 (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cont/discharge-procedure/discharge-2020?tabCode=european-parliament>). An overview is also available in the answer to the question below (Question 29).

29. As those costs were unforeseen, they were financed through budgetary transfers from budgetary lines, which were used less due to the pandemic. Could you give an overview of the savings on the other hand?

An overview is available in the table below.

OVERVIEW OF COVID-19 IMPACT ON 2020 APPROPRIATIONS

Chapter	Heading	COVID-19 impact on transfers* - decrease of appropriations - (EUR)	COVID-19 impact on transfers* - increase of appropriations (EUR)	COVID-19 net surplus - transferred to Chapter 20 for ADENAUER project and purchase WIERTZ building in 'mopping-up' transfer** - (EUR)	COVID-19 impact on cancellations* (EUR)
10	Members of the institution	-34.125.336	0	0	156.595
12	Officials and temporary staff	-15.000.000	0	0	0
14	Other staff and external services	-16.381.000	0	0	610.341
16	Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	-5.128.412	2.990.000	0	767.129
Title 1 - Persons working with the institution		-70.634.748	2.990.000		1.534.065
20	Buildings and associated costs	-8.048.400	588.000	120.462.302	1.004.179
21	Data processing, equipment and movable property	-1.330.000	28.165.134	0	556.910
23	Current administrative expenditure	-543.000	0	0	403.435
Title 2 - Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure		-9.921.400	28.753.134	120.462.302	1.964.524
30	Meetings and conferences	-25.051.065	0	0	884.913
32	Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and dissemination	-33.106.925	1.548.250	0	4.080.560
Title 3 - Expenditure resulting from general		-58.157.990	1.548.250	0	4.965.474
40	Expenditure relating to certain institutions and bodies	0	0	0	0
42	Expenditure relating to parliamentary assistance	-15.039.548	0	0	514.800
44	Meetings and other activities of current and former members	0	0	0	0
Title 4 - Expenditure resulting from special functions carried out by the institution		-15.039.548	0	0	514.800
Title 5 - The authority for European political parties and European political foundations and the Committee of independent eminent persons		0	0	0	0
Title 10 - Other expenditure		0	0	0	0
Total		-153.753.686	33.291.384	120.462.302	8.978.863

* Figures are based on estimations of Authorising Officers by Delegation

** Total 'mopping-up' transfer including availabilities not related to COVID-19 pandemic amounted to EUR 138 251 124.

All information line by line on budgetary savings related to the COVID-19 pandemic has been detailed in Annex 3 of Parliament's Report on budgetary and financial management 2020 which is accessible at the following link:

- <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cont/discharge-procedure/discharge-2020?tabCode=european-parliament>.

30. Can you provide an estimate of the costs saved by having remote voting and speaking arrangements for plenary sessions during COVID-19? In order to savings and efficiency, is it considered to continuing with remote voting?

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an average number of 678 Members travelled per plenary sessions (period 2017-2019, after correction of the Brexit effect). After the outbreak of the pandemic, there were 9 plenary sessions in 2020 for which an average of 418 Members travelled. The corresponding average difference of 260 Members who did not travel to plenary sessions in 2020 has generated savings of approximately EUR 5.2 Mio in travel and subsistence allowances.

As already explained in the answer to question 8, voting remotely in the absence of a decision by the President establishing extraordinary circumstances is currently not provided for under Parliament's Rules of Procedure. Any further circumstance where Members might exercise remotely their right to vote, such as while benefiting from maternity or paternity leave, would therefore require, as appropriate, an amendment to the Rules of Procedure and a subsequent decision by the Bureau.

31. Could you provide data on percentage of voting participation throughout 2020?

Members' participation in the voting sessions throughout 2020 was very high, with a maximum number of 702 Members voting – 99.5 % in the first voting session on 24 November 2020.

Overall, participation ranged from 96.7 % (681 Members) to 99.5 % (702 Members). The average participation rate was 98.3 %, corresponding to 692 Members voting.

32. Can you provide an overview of the number of MEPs and assistants that attended plenary sessions on location in Strasbourg in 2020? And the amount of staff employed to facilitate the sessions?

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only two plenary sessions (January and February) were held in Strasbourg. All other sessions were held either remotely or in a hybrid mode in Brussels. The number of Members and assistants who attended the two sessions are as follows:

-) January 2020: 719 Members and 998 APAs;
-) February 2020: 670 Members and 923 APAs.

Furthermore, 27 contract agents were employed to facilitate plenary work in Strasbourg.

33. What are the figures concerning the application of the "Covid part-time" scheme to APAs?

In 2020, 22 COVID-19 75% part-time schemes were granted to APAs.

34. During the pandemic, Members were reimbursed for their Covid-tests in the Member States pre-travel. There were significant differences in the prices. Were there any cases where Members were not refunded the total amount?

Members were informed via several Quaestors' Notices of the possibility to be reimbursed for COVID-19 tests for ordinary travel under certain conditions. A ceiling of EUR 75 for reimbursement was established, allowing in duly substantiated cases a higher test cost to be reimbursed in line with applicable medical tariffs in the various Members States.

The administration has applied such flexibility on a case-by-case basis subject to the provision of appropriate proof by Members that the average cost of tests in their country was higher than the established ceiling

35. Could you provide an overview of the costs of the Covid-19 testing facilities in the Parliament's premises? What criteria were used to select the service provider for the testing facilities? How many bidders took part in the procurement procedure?

In 2020, a Covid-19 testing centre was set up in Brussels in Parliament's premises. This was achieved through an exceptional negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice justified on the basis of point 11.1(c) of Annex I to the Financial Regulation, according to which this type of procedure can be used "*in so far as is strictly necessary, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by unforeseeable events, it is impossible to comply with the time limits [set for the other procedures] and where the justification of such extreme urgency is not attributable to the contracting authority*".

Accordingly, Parliament entered into negotiations with Ecolog, a provider that organised and operated the testing centre in the airport in Zaventem and the testing centres of the nation-wide screening operation in Luxembourg. The firm is responsible for the entire process, including IT & logistics, running of the centre, transport of samples, and cooperation with other accredited laboratories guaranteeing access to testing without negatively impacting national public testing capacity.

The contract signed with Ecolog was limited to one year, thus only covering the period necessary to carry out a new standard open tender procedure, and amounted to EUR 832 135.40.

36. Was the test centre staff part of the medical service? Was there any call for volunteers? How many people volunteered?

The test centre in Brussels is an end-to-end system with all the necessary staffing included. The test centre's staff was thus not part of Parliament Medical Service. As a result, no Parliament staff members worked for the centre, nor was there any call for volunteers.

37. Is the contract of the EP COVID test centre for a fixed term? And if so, what is the term? How many tests were conducted between the establishment of the test centre and December 31, 2020? Did the Parliament benefit from a different tariff than the Belgian system? How much did the tests cost? Does the EP have access to the recorded data?

As referred to in the reply to question 35, the contract for Parliament COVID-19 testing centre was awarded through an exceptional negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice, justified by the extreme urgency triggered by the pandemic. In such situations, a negotiated procedure may be used only "as strictly necessary". This implies that any contract emerging from the negotiated procedure can cover only the period necessary to carry out a new standard procedure covering the same procurement. The term for the contract of the test centre was one year, thus only covering the period necessary to carry out a standard open tender procedure.

The number of tests performed during 2020 is as follows:

-) October: 4 236 PCR tests at an average cost of EUR 79.33;
-) November: 1 687 PCR tests at an average cost of EUR 107.20;
-) December: 4 257 PCR tests at an average cost of EUR 72.68;

The average cost of a PCR test is determined on the basis of the following pricing structure:

-) EUR 4 360 lump sum/200 tests to cover the centre and logistics (including staff, registration module, transport and costs of results portal);
-) upgrade of EUR 995 per 50 tests;
-) EUR 52.93 per PCR analysis.

There is no standard tariff for testing services in the Belgian system. The price that Parliament obtained was in conformity with market value while offering to staff improved and accessible services.

Parliament has access to all the recorded data.

38. Until when is the door handle cleaning protocol foreseen?

The regular sanitizing of contact points will be maintained on the three sites until any advice to the contrary is received from the Medical Service and Parliament's Prevention and Protection at Work Service (SPPT).

39. Did the EP hire employees specifically in the context of the coronavirus pandemic? If so, how many were hired? What type of tasks do they perform in the EP? Under what type of contract are they employed and for how long?

In the context of Covid-19 pandemic, the Medical Services in Brussels and Luxembourg received 6 additional posts (3 AD and 3 AST officials) to support them in addressing the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic (*see also reply to question 94*). On top of that, the Medical Service in Brussels hired 6 interim nurses to help with the vaccination campaign and offer a general support to Parliament nursing team for the duration of 6 months. Their tasks included vaccination, medical visits, contact tracing and administrative support to the medical team.

The Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO) did not specifically hire employees in the context of COVID-19, but used temporary reinforcement schemes to answer the need for more staff assigned to the thermo-scanning procedure at Parliament entrances, i.e. 23 interim staff on short-term renewable contracts from end of June 2020 till end of July 2021. In the framework of the pooling of resources, mail ushers were tasked to alleviate workload peaks after the implementation of the thermo-scanning measure at the entrances in Brussels and in Luxembourg. Sanitizing crews were also reinforced, with 52 persons recruited by Parliament external contractor.

In Brussels, stewards were recruited to perform the temperature checks as from 6 September 2021. In this context, the Directorate-General for Security and Safety (DG SAFE) relies on an average of 11 full time equivalent each month.

40. How was the supplier of fabric masks chosen? What was the cost?

In 2020, the total costs for protective masks amounted to EUR 29 174. Three suppliers were selected by DG PERS in order to provide masks for the Medical Services and the Childcare Facilities Service. Two suppliers had pre-existing contracts regarding the supply of pharmacy, parapharmacy and medical equipment products.

The procedure for the provision of reusable protective masks was launched as a follow up to the President's decisions of April and May 2020, taken at a very early moment of the pandemic in a context of emerging urgency where no clear and harmonised framework relating to such devices was available at national or European levels.

Following the publication of the procurement procedure for the supply of reusable facial masks on Parliament's website on 15 April 2020, Parliament dispatched the invitations to tender to nine preselected tenderers on 22 April 2020. At the beginning of May 2020, the final three suppliers in a cascade framework contract (to allow participation of smaller businesses) were chosen in a published and fully competitive EU-wide procedure, whereby 27 candidates expressed interest and submitted tenders.

The unit price was significantly lower than the usual market price at the time (i.e. between EUR 1.93 and 2.37, including customisation and individual non-plastic packaging, versus EUR 6 to EUR 8) while including important social criteria to support the employment in textile companies located in the European Union in a moment of deep crisis. The overall final expenditure under the framework contract was EUR 111 341 without VAT.

41. Has Parliament considered setting up a system for collecting used masks for recycling?

Covered bins have been installed in several places of work especially dedicated to collect masks, gloves, etc. However, there are no harmonised EU level rules on the recycling of masks and in the majority of Member States, the advice is to treat them as general waste.

42. Parliament distributed masks for protection against the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus to MEPs and staff in 2020. Does this include third-party employees that are employed through subcontractors? Was there a public tendering process for the mask procurement?

Third party employees received their masks through their responsible employer.

43. Medical/FFP2/FFP3 masks have been proven to provide a higher protection from the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus than masks made from fabric, such as the ones provided by the EP services to staff in 2020. Is the EP planning to distribute (free) medical/FFP2/FFP3 masks to Members and staff in the future?

Medical and/or FFP2 masks are not provided to Members and staff. Personal protective equipment is made available for specific posts where this is required (e.g.: medical teams).

44. French authorities offered vaccinations to Members and assistants in Strasbourg. Did the Parliament contribute financially to these operations? If so, how much?

Parliament did not contribute financially to the vaccinations provided by the French authorities to Members and staff in Strasbourg.

45. What percentage of staff were permitted to be on the EP premises at any one time during the pandemic?

There was no specific percentage established regarding the number of staff members permitted to work on Parliament premises during the pandemic. Instead, those staff members whose physical presence was considered to be indispensable were always able to work from Parliament's premises. All other staff members were asked to telework to varying degrees depending on the evolution of the epidemiological situation.

More specifically, all staff members whose presence in the office was not essential were working 100% from home from 16 March 2020 and throughout the year, except for the period from 15 June to 27 October, when staff members teleworked 70%, 80% or 90% of their monthly working time depending on the needs of their service, or exceptionally less if their Directorate-General considered their physical presence essential (see also the reply to question 28).

46. How many people were denied entry to EP buildings because their body temperature measured at the entrance exceeded the allowed threshold?

For the period from 15 June (start of the thermo-scanning) until 31 December 2020, 60 persons were refused access in light of a body temperature exceeding the ceilings set in the relevant President's Decision.

For the period 1 January to 30 June 2021, no persons were denied access due to high temperature.

47. Is the EP aware of the number of MEPs, APAs and/or staff that were infected with the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2? How many of these infections could be traced back to work or activities in the European Parliament? How did the in-house tracing by the medical service work exactly (how were people contacted, what were they advised to do, etc.)?

The Medical Services received information of positive test from Parliament test centre or reported by staff members themselves. The available data are therefore clear underestimations.

Most cases were individual cases and transmission at the workplace was prevented by the combination of all measures in place in Parliament, including the in-house contact tracing and quarantine procedures. Several clusters (involving 2 to 4 persons) were documented thanks to in-house surveillance.

Given the lack of testing possibilities during the first wave of the pandemic, most of the documented cases and clusters were concentrated during the second wave (October-November 2020), when 36 presumed in-house transmissions were recorded in Brussels and 18 in Luxembourg. All clusters were successfully ended at an early stage through in-house surveillance, contact tracing and quarantine.

After the second pandemic wave, it became increasingly rare to encounter clusters and the in-house transmission dropped to undetectable levels. In the first six months of 2021, 2 presumed in-house transmissions were recorded among Members and staff in Brussels and 3 in Luxembourg.

Parliament “track-and-trace” teams initiated a “Case management and contact tracing procedure” for every known case, which worked in the following way:

-) Information of a positive Covid-19 test received from the laboratory or reported by a staff member;
-) All cases were requested to give information on their close and occasional contacts (by e-mail and phone);
-) The teams reached out to all contacts with advice on quarantining, self-monitoring and testing, but also with information and an offer of medico-psycho-social support. If needed, a link was made with the national surveillance system.

48. Why were measures taken in the pandemic that concern staff distinguish between statutory staff and APAs, especially in terms of access and telework?

The Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Union and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants set out different rules for APAs and for other staff members. The Secretary-General is the competent authority to take measures relating to the teleworking of staff members of the Administration, whilst Members are competent to take measures relating to the teleworking of APAs.

In view of the increased health risks caused by COVID-19, the Secretary-General authorised, on 8 March 2020, teleworking for vulnerable staff. With effect from 16 March 2020, 100% teleworking was introduced for all staff whose presence was not essential.

By Quaestors’ Notices 20/2020 of 11 March 2020 and 24/2020 of 25 March 2020, Members were recommended to apply the same measures with regard to APAs.

In light of the worsening situation of the COVI-19 pandemic, the decision to restrict the presence of Members` staff on Parliament premises to one staff member per Member was taken by the President on 13 October 2020.

49. During the pandemic, the MEPs and APAs were provided with hybrid laptops in order to perform their work remotely. Did the Parliament ensure sufficient tools for remote work for the trainees during the pandemic? Can you provide the amounts invested for comparison?

Throughout the pandemic, all trainees were provided with a token to remotely access Parliament’s IT infrastructure using their personal devices via the so-called Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI). Sufficient tools for remote work were provided to the trainees without further investments.

In some cases, trainees did not have a personal device in order to use the VDI connection. As a consequence, in 2020:

-) 90 Members' trainees received a Parliament's laptop, upon request of their Members and following an individual derogation obtained by the competent Quaestor;
-) 51 Schuman trainees received hybrid devices and 3 Schuman trainees received Parliament's laptops.

In all the above-mentioned cases, the devices were made available from Parliament stock and were reassigned to other users after the departure of the trainees.

50. Were there any call for tenders for the installation of thermic cameras at the entrances of EP premises? What were the specifications? What was the delay to respond to it?

BRUSSELS

DG INLO used existing maintenance contracts to cover urgent orders and did not run any tenders for the installation of thermic cameras. The procurement of these contracts was done well in advance of the pandemic.

When the teleworking scheme started to be gradually lifted, more entrances started to be used. As a consequence, DG SAFE took over the task from DG INLO. The cameras have therefore been integrated into existing security equipment (metal detectors), while walk through detectors are still in use, where necessary. The procurement of thermal devices are implemented using existing framework contracts of DG SAFE.

STRASBOURG AND LUXEMBOURG

The thermic cameras in Luxembourg and Strasbourg were bought after a regular call for tender, inviting six companies from across Europe. The submission deadline was five days. The specifications were based on the needs without specifying a particular brand, but only the required functionalities.

51. Does the EP register violations of COVID-19 safety protocols and rules on its own grounds? If yes, how many violations is the EP aware of? Are there any cases where sanctions were imposed on offenders? If yes, which ones? Can you provide a breakdown by MEPs, APAs and staff?

Parliament security agents are responsible for ensuring that the following safety protocols and rules are complied with:

-) obligation to wear a community mask that covers mouth and nose both before entering Parliament's buildings and all times while in Parliament's buildings;
-) temperature check on any person entering Parliament's buildings in the three work places and denial of access to all users with a body temperature of 37.7 degree Celsius or more.

According to the information provided by the responsible services, the security agents did not experience any major incidents as regards the compliance with the obligations set above.

52. How many air filters (e.g. HEPA filters) were ordered and installed in EP buildings in order to prevent airborne viral infections, such as COVID-19? Was there a public tendering process, how many tenders were received, to whom was the contract awarded and why?

Parliament did not purchase or supply any air filters for the purpose of preventing airborne viral infections. Subsequently, no such tenders were run. Instead, the ventilation system running on 100% fresh air is considered to be medically more efficient and safe to prevent virus transmissions.

TELEWORKING

53. What was the first date that EP staff were advised to begin teleworking due to the pandemic?

See reply to question 28.

Starting on 9 March 2020, the Secretary-General authorised vulnerable staff to telework. With effect on 16 March 2020, the Secretary-General instructed Parliament's administration to introduce 100% teleworking for all staff whose physical presence in Parliament was not absolutely essential.

54. Which posts were excluded from teleworking arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic and will be in the future?

During the pandemic, teleworking arrangements were introduced for all staff members whose physical presence in Parliament was not considered absolutely indispensable.

By decision of 16 July 2021, the Secretary-General consolidated the rules on teleworking in the European Parliament. These rules provide that staff members who perform tasks that can be carried out remotely are eligible to telework. It is the responsibility of Directorates-General, independent administrative entities, to establish a list of posts for whom the post holder is not able to telework (e.g. childcare personnel, security agents, etc.) and to publish the list on their respective website.

55. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and shift to teleworking, has the Parliament done any assessment of the impact of new working conditions on the work-life balance of its staff, APAs and interns?

In June and November 2020, Parliament conducted two institution-wide surveys among its staff on the future use of teleworking. The aim of these surveys was to assess staff experiences with teleworking and to analyse the evolution of the opinion of the staff on the matter over time.

The results of both surveys showed a high level of staff satisfaction with teleworking and that staff embraces an enlarged use of teleworking in the post-pandemic period.

Against this background, following the decision by the Secretary-General of 16 July 2021 referred to in the previous reply, new teleworking rules for Parliament staff entered into force on 1 September 2021. The new rules replace and substantially extend the scope of existing teleworking schemes. Accordingly, three modes of teleworking are available on a voluntary basis to eligible staff:

-) 'standard': teleworking one day per week (20%), on average per month;
-) 'moderate': teleworking two days per week (40%), on average per month;
-) 'maxi': teleworking three days per week (60%), on average per month.

No staff member is required to telework. Requests for 'moderate' or 'maxi' teleworking are subject to authorisation by the line manager, for a renewable 6-month or 12-month period.

While safeguarding the interests of the service and the proper organisation of Parliament's work, the rules allow for the implementation of flexible and modern management of its staff in order to strengthen their motivation by encouraging a better work-life balance, thereby contributing to the quality of work produced.

56. What measures did the EP introduce to help keep the working / private balance of its employees considering that a big majority of tasks and meetings went on-line?

Parliament introduced a range of measures to support staff work-life balance during the business continuity teleworking, especially for those with more challenging personal circumstances. The measures included:

-) flexibility (in terms of working time and output) for employees with demanding family situations;
-) the possibility to work part-time outside the place of employment for staff members needing to take care of direct relatives;
-) allowing carers of children with a disability to work 50% with no corresponding loss of income during the period when the facilities for children with a disability were closed;
-) a temporary derogation from Staff Regulations to allow vulnerable staff to telework 100% from their country of origin.

In addition, a diverse set of awareness-raising initiatives and psychosocial support resources were offered to staff to address issues in this domain, including free online mindfulness classes for all staff from October 2020 and psychological support groups on a range of topics (e.g. teleworking, parenting during pandemic, digital overload).

57. What sort of equipment for teleworking has the EP provided to different categories of Staff? Could you provide a breakdown by DG and staff category?

In 2020, Parliament has distributed a total of 1 356 (already written-off) office chairs to the secretariat staff. Each Directorate-General, following an internal survey, sent a nominative list to the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO), which was able to satisfy all requests. There was no distinction made and thus no breakdown provided concerning various staff categories.

REQUESTS SECRETARIAT	
SG + central services	46
Legal service	54
DG PRES	115
DG IPOL	145
DG EXPO	16
DG EPRS	109
DG COMM	113
DG PERS	111
DG INLO	38
DG TRAD	239
DG LINC	66
DG FINS	56
DG ITEC	173
DG SAFE	75
Total	1356

In addition to the above, 200 (already written-off) office chairs were distributed to the staff of political Groups of which the amount was determined proportionally to the Group size:

REQUESTS POLITICAL GROUPS	
PPE	52
S&D	41
RENEW	29
ID	22
G-EFA	20
ECR	19
THE LEFT	14
NI	3
Total	200

Concerning ICT equipment, all staff categories were treated the same way. Indeed, the same equipment is provided to all staff regardless of entities and category.

58. Could you provide a detailed analysis of the costs incurred by the procurement of teleworking related IT equipment for all staff categories (breakdown per DGs and categories)? How many APAs and staff have requested access to EP IT devices for teleworking? Has the EP been able to provide teleworking IT devices to all its staff and APAs? Do interns have access to EP IT devices for teleworking? Has the EP administration considered revising the rule of providing each MEP office with only 3 (one for the MEP + 2 for APAs) IT devices for the purposes of teleworking, in order to provide such equipment for all APAs and interns?

Equipment	Total	Average Price	Total Price
Headset	3012	EUR 15	EUR 45.180,00
Keyboard	1328	EUR 30	EUR 39.840,00
Screen	2860	EUR 100	EUR 286.000,00
Mouse	2825	EUR 20	EUR 56.500,00
Hybrid	7580	EUR 1590	EUR 12.052.200,00
Travel dock	7655	EUR 35	EUR 267.925,00
Grand Total	25260		EUR 12.747.645,00

In accordance with the Bureau Decision of March 2020 and the decision taken at the Bureau meeting of 11 May 2020, Members were provided progressively with 2 additional mobile device for their staff, thus ensuring the adequate teleworking equipment. In addition to the IT dotation for Members, in line with the Bureau Decision on Rules on the provision of IT and telecommunication equipment to Members (1 iPad and 1 hybrid PC), a total of 1332 hybrid PCs and 82 iPads have been provided for Members' staff.

Additional equipment for teleworking was delivered upon derogation of the competent Quaestor, covering in particular supplementary screens (75 pieces), mouse, docking stations and cables.

Concerning the equipment provided to trainees, see also reply to the question 49.

59. What measures has the EP taken to ensure proper working conditions for its staff and APAs under the circumstances of remote-working conditions, besides providing hybrid IT devices (specific furniture such as desks, ergonomic chairs, screens)? What has been the dedicated budget for such measures and what has been the cost of such measures so far?

In order to ensure proper working conditions for its staff during the mandatory teleworking period prompted by the COVID pandemic, Parliament has provided all kinds of accessories ranging from screens to inter alia mice, keyboards and headsets. Parliament has also provided uncountable videoconferencing services accounts to support an exponential increase in virtual meetings.

The infrastructure capacity including data centre and network access was strongly reinforced in order to accommodate the increase from 250 to 6000 users per day and the exponential number of videoconferences, at a total cost of EUR 4.5 Mio.

At the beginning of the pandemic, each Directorate-General received a number of ergonomic chairs, which were distributed among staff with a priority given to those with special health-related needs. Parliament distributed 1 356 office chairs to Secretariat staff and an additional 200 to staff of political Groups. This was a budgetary neutral operation as the chairs were not purchased but retrieved from several existing stocks in the three work places and distributed following their decommissioning.

60. Lockdown measures for several months have generated savings in energy and building operating costs: can these be quantified and how does the EP intend to use them? For this question, a detailed answer on all the workplaces is necessary (Luxembourg, Strasbourg, and Brussels).

BRUSSELS

Parliament buildings in Brussels remained open and operational during the pandemic period. Energy cost savings due to low staff presence on site (e.g. in water consumption) have been mainly offset by increased expenses to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on Parliament premises (i.e. 100% fresh air).

Maintenance and cleaning contracts were maintained and even reinforced for some specific measures, such as sanitising activities. No significant savings were therefore observed.

Some of the preventive maintenance activities were postponed. The time gained was used inter alia to close the back-logs from previous periods.

STRASBOURG

The electricity consumption in 2020 was about 20% lower compared to 2019. However, as a result of the sanitary measures in place, ventilation in all buildings was done with 100% fresh air which significantly increases energy consumption especially in winter.

Maintenance works planned during the first lockdown in France (between mid-March and beginning of May 2020) were rescheduled to the summer period. The savings relating to cleaning contracts were used to reinforce sanitising activities.

LUXEMBOURG

In Luxembourg, savings amounting to approximately EUR 100.000 stem from cleaning activities, while EUR 17.555 from technical maintenance.

It is not possible to evaluate the impact of the low building occupation on energy consumption. During the lockdown period, Tower A, Tower B and a part of the old ADENAUER buildings were no longer used, as staff had moved to the new ADENAUER. The energy consumption of those buildings is therefore not comparable.

61. Does the Administration have a record of how many MEPs have authorised the 40 € compensation for APAs' energy bills during teleworking? Has this compensation applied to the EP staff, too (and why not if this was the case)?

In light of the ongoing health risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretary-General adopted the Decision of the 17 March 2020 on fixed reimbursement of Internet connection costs in order to ensure proper teleworking conditions for the Parliament Secretariat's staff. This decision provides for Parliament to transfer a fixed reimbursement of EUR 40 per month to all staff members of the General Secretariat with the view to contribute to well-functioning Internet running costs. This exceptional measure was extended until the end of 2021. No such decision has been taken in relation to energy bills.

Members may have decided, if they so wished, to pay an equivalent amount to their APAs from their General Expenditure Allowance (GEA). The administration does not hold a record of how many MEPs may have done so.

62. During the Covid-19 crisis, the administration of the European Parliament informed the APAs that it was impossible for them to telework from a place other than their place of employment, that they had to inform the administration of such a situation and that a reduction of their salary could be applied. How many notifications did the administration receive of APAs teleworking outside the place of employment? How many APAs have had their salaries reduced as a result?

Article 20 of the Staff Regulations, which applies by analogy to APAs by virtue of Article 127 CEOS, lays down the general obligation of all staff to reside either in their place of employment or at no greater distance there from as is compatible with the performance of their duties. Consequently, teleworking can only be done from the place of employment.

However, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and as an exception from the above rule, especially to allow staff members to take care of their relatives within whatever Member State, the Secretary-General by decision of 31 March 2020 provided all staff with the possibility to part-time work away from the place of employment.

In 2020, 22 APAs decided to benefit from this exceptional measure. They requested and were granted the authorisation to work 75% part-time away from the place of employment with the corresponding reduction of their salary.

On 17 April 2020, the Bureau decided that the Appointing Authority might, on a case-by-case basis, recognise medical grounds, border closures, quarantine, travel restrictions, containment as well as half-time work before retirement as valid reasons justifying a temporary absence from the work place. A total of 78 APAs informed the administration about their absence from the work place. In 69 cases, the absence from the work place was considered as justified and the APAs were allowed to work away from the place of employment. In 9 cases, where the absence from the work place was not considered justified, the APAs concerned either returned back to the place of employment or were authorised to work 75% part-time away from the place of employment.

COMMUNICATION

63. Can the administration show the staff growth for DG COMM by unit from 2014-2020? If it is increased, what are the reasons?

Over the period from 1 January 2014 until the end of 2020, the number of officials and temporary agents at DG COMM decreased (from 614 to 581). This was due to the 6% reduction in the number of establishment posts and the progressive redeployment of AST posts as compensation for additional contract agents recruited to reinforce the communication capacity of Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs), as further detailed below.

Over the same period, there was an increase in the number of contract staff (from 91 to 183), which was related to the following objectives: a) reinforced communication capacity of the EPLOs on the Parliament's media relations and digital communication activities in the Member States (+51); b) a structural reinforcement in the central services (+41) to acquire up-to-date and specialised expertise and for auxiliary and supporting tasks.

In the same period referred to above (2014-2020), the organisational structure of DG COMM has been adjusted on various occasions according to operational needs and following a series of reforms mandated by the Bureau. The following is a brief overview of the main changes which occurred:

-) the creation in 2015 of the Youth Unit in charge of the coordination of the European Youth Event, with a corresponding redeployment of staff from other units;
-) a major reorganisation in 2017 with the creation of a Campaigns Directorate, the suppression of the Europarl TV-Unit, the creation of a Spokespersons Unit, a Concept and Design Unit and the Strategy and Innovation Unit;
-) also in 2017, an updated internal organisation of the EPLOs following the Bureau Decision of a new mission statement and redefinition of strategic priorities;
-) in 2018, the creation of a service in charge of the Europa Experiences;
-) in 2019, centralisation within certain Directorates of finance functions at Directorate level against unit level.

In light of the many organisational changes and the corresponding redeployment of posts, there is no basis for a comparison by unit during the period concerned.

64. Can the administration provide an overview of the number of staff employed for Europa Experiences and Liaison offices in 2020 by position and grade?

The number of staff employed in each Parliament Liaison Office (EPLO) and regional antennas varies according to the number of Members from the concerned countries. The total number of staff employed as of 31 December 2020 in the EPLOs and Europa Experiences is 272, mostly attached to the Directorate for Liaison Offices at DG COMM.

Brexit necessarily changed the situation in the UK. The Bureau decided to maintain Parliament's presence in the UK through the London EPLO, equipping it with a new mandate, while confirming the closure of the Edinburgh Regional Office at the end of 2020.

The table below provides an overview per Liaison Office with a breakdown per staff category as of 31 December 2020.

Liaison Office	AD	AST	CA	Total
AT - Vienna	3	3	2	8
BE - Brussels	2	3	2	7
BG - Sofia	3	3	2	8
CY - Nicosia	3	2	1	6
CZ - Prague	3	4	2	9
DE - Berlin	6	9	3	18
DE - Munich	1	2	1	4
DK - Copenhagen	3	2	3	8
EE - Tallinn	3	2	1	6
ES - Barcelona	1	2	1	4
ES - Madrid	4	4	3	11
FI - Helsinki	3	4	2	9
FR - Marseille	1	2		3
FR - Paris	4	7	3	14
GB - Edinburgh	1	1		2
GB - London	4	4	1	9
GR - Athens	4	3	2	9
HR - Zagreb	3	1	2	6
HU - Budapest	3	3	3	9
IE - Dublin	2	3	3	8
IT - Milan	1	3	1	5
IT - Rome	6	5	2	13
LT - Vilnius	2	1	2	5
LU - Luxembourg	1		2	3
LV - Riga	2	3	1	6
MT - Valetta	2	2	2	6
NL - The Hague	2	3	2	7
PL - Warsaw	5	4	3	12
PL - Wroclaw	1	2		3
PT - Lisbon	4	4	2	10
RO - Bucharest	4	2	2	8
SE - Stockholm	4	3	3	10
SI - Ljubljana	2	2	3	7
SK - Bratislava	2	2	2	6
US - Washington	11	2		13
Total	106	102	64	272

65. Can the administration elaborate on the cost split between the Parliament and the Commission for Europa Experience?

In line with the mandate assigned by the Bureau in 2019, Parliament has taken the lead in the prospection and deployment of the Europa Experiences multimedia spaces (EU-XP). Parliament bears the initial investment costs and ensures that the exhibition contents, including those related to the Commission, are adequately updated in close cooperation with its Commission counterpart. Once the EU-XP is open to the public, both Institutions share the running costs of the facility on an ad hoc basis. These include the charges, the security, the costs of the external floor staff and IT maintenance for both the interactive stations and the Role Play Game.

The cost split for Europa Experience facilities in operation between the Parliament and the Commission has been established on a project-specific basis. In line with the objective of completing the rollout by 2024, the two Institutions are in discussion to establish a comprehensive framework for sharing running costs of EU-XPs in all Member States.

EU-XP	Expenditure	Commission	Parliament
Berlin	Rent and charges	0%	100%
Ljubljana	Rent and charges	60%	40%
Copenhagen (owned)	Charges	58.16%	41.84%
Helsinki	Rent and charges	50%	50%
Tallinn	Rent	0%	100%
	Charges	58.98%	41.02%

*charges includes cleaning, maintenance, energy consumption, etc.

66. DG COMM EPLOs: Recently, a decision has been taken to not equip any longer each European Parliament Liaison Office in the Member States with a Head of Unit as manager but with a "Head of Liaison Office" which allows for lower AD grades as of AD 7 to apply for these positions.

- Who has taken for which reason this decision to downgrade the management of EPLOs?
- Meanwhile 6 out of 27 EPLOs are managed by a "Head of Liaison Office". Do they enjoy the same rights like Head of Units, in particular in terms of staff management? Do they receive a management allowance similar to Heads of Units?
- What happened with the previous Head of Unit posts: were they redeployed elsewhere (where: in DG COMM or elsewhere in the EP) or were they saved and deleted from the EP organigram?

Following the adoption by the Bureau in November 2017 of a new mission statement for the European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs) and the redefinition of the strategic dimensions of the EPLOs, it was necessary to review the internal organisation of the EPLOs and optimise the use of human resources. This new internal organisation within the EPLOs also addressed the hierarchical structure aiming at facilitating the mobility of Heads of EPLOs and their return to the headquarters and encouraging a regular change of management to keep the dynamic of usually small teams within EPLOs.

The new job description, "Head of Liaison Office" was therefore created. It is an administrator type of post with managerial responsibility. The Heads of Liaison Offices are the sole managers of their teams on site and the assessors of their teams in the framework of the annual staff assessment exercise.

They are fully part of the managerial structure of DG COMM and participate in management meetings and any related activity on exactly the same basis as other management staff.

In general, in order to guarantee a certain seniority of the applicants, these posts are published in grades AD7 to AD12. Heads of Unit might also express their interest in these vacancies. An appointment as Head of Liaison Office does not entail any statutory change: administrators remain administrators, while confirmed Heads of Unit keep their Head of Unit type of post. However, only confirmed Heads of Unit are entitled to the management allowance.

67. In the DG COMM Directorate for Liaison Offices there are three support units based in Brussels with the names of "Financial support", "Strategic support" and "Logistical support" unit. What are the different tasks these units are exercising for the Liaison Offices? Could they not be merged? Are their Heads superior to the "Heads of Liaison Office"?

The Directorate for Liaison Offices at DG COMM coordinates the work of 220 staff members, spread over 34 locations. Staff needs support and coordination in various fields of activity in order to deliver the objectives as defined in the mission statement of the EPLOs adopted by the Bureau in 2017, namely: implementing Parliament's institutional communication efforts in a decentralised way; managing contacts with national, regional and local media; engaging with citizens and stakeholders through offline and online activities; and offering a communication platform to Members in the Member States.

Over the years of the operation of the EPLOs, three different fields of activity were identified as requiring central support and coordination, as well as particular but very diverse expertise, specifically Financial affairs, Communication Strategy and Human Resources and Logistics. The ultimate goal of the Units is to provide support to EPLOs to guarantee that they can focus on their core business. The Units perform the tasks further detailed below:

-) **The Financial Support Unit for EPLOs** is at the heart of the financial functioning of the EPLOs. The Head of Unit is the authorising officer for all EPLOs and in charge of planning and monitoring the annual budget and national budget allocations. The unit also manages among others procurement procedures. It is also in charge of the budgetary and financial reporting and risk management of all the Offices. The central organisation of financial management is necessary to mitigate risk in financial procedures and to reduce the number of sensitive functions in the EPLOs, as well as relieving the Offices of a significant potential administrative workload.
-) **The Strategic Support Unit for Liaison Offices** is at the heart of the strategy and activities of the EPLOs. Its team supports the planning of all activities, coordinates outreach and other programmes (together.eu, EPAS, outreach to civil society, etc.) and the implementation of decentralised campaigns and events. The unit is also in charge of the coordination of inter-institutional cooperation (general cooperation, Europa Experience, Europe Direct Centres, etc.). It also coordinates EPLOs' editorial activities (including websites and social media). The unit further supports the evaluation and reporting of EPLO activities, and the implementation of the data protection regulation in the daily activities of the EPLOs.

- J) The **Logistical Support Unit for Liaison Offices** works in close collaboration with the Directorate for Resources at DG COMM, coordinating all aspects of human resource management across EPLOs. It also acts as a liaison point with the various external services needed for the smooth functioning of EPLOs. Since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, close cooperation has also been established with the relevant services to ensure that EPLOs staff can benefit from the same level of support as staff in the three places of work.

68. From the three units for external Liaison Offices (Washington, London, Jakarta) those for the USA and UK are included in the DG COMM Directorate for Liaison Offices, the one for ASEAN is based in DG EXPO's Directorate for Regions.
- In which DG would units for further external offices like New York (UN) and Addis Abeba (African Union) be placed?
 - Why are the current three units for external offices not all in DG EXPO in order to profit from synergy effects with the specialised committees and delegations for external policies?

The decision to make available parliamentary support in external delegations of the European Union was taken by the Bureau on 11 February 2019, with an initial focus on the ASEAN (Jakarta) and African Union (Addis Ababa) regional assemblies, and the UN (New York). On 14 January 2019, the Bureau had endorsed that parliamentary support staff would be organisationally linked to DG EXPO allowing Members to benefit from their expertise. Therefore, as is the case for the parliamentary support to ASEAN, the staff providing support to African Union and to the UN would, in principle, also be based in DG EXPO.

The scope of activities of the Parliament's Liaison Offices established in Washington and maintained in London post-Brexit is much broader and requires further engagement with government, citizens, civil society, the parliamentary environment and media in the country. With regard to their mission, structure, goals and staffing levels, keeping the London and Washington Liaison Offices organisationally linked to DG COMM in order to profit from synergy effects in terms of strategic, logistical and financial support and coordination provided by DG COMM to all Liaison Offices, seems therefore the most appropriate way forward.

69. *"On 11 February 2019, the Bureau decided to make available parliamentary support in external delegations of the European Union with an initial focus on the EU Mission to ASEAN, the EU delegation to the African Union and the EU delegation to the UN in New York. That decision did not entail any increase in Parliament's staffing plan and during 2020, because of COVID 2019, no staff was deployed to any of the delegations as mentioned above."*² Does the Parliament expect any increase in Parliament's staffing plan in the near future for this purpose?

At present, Parliament does not plan an increase in its staffing plan to strengthen the parliamentary support in external delegations of the European Union. At least in the initial phase, the staffing process applied with regard to the Jakarta and Washington EPLOs should be followed and parliamentary support should be made available by an internal redeployment of resources.

² Replies to and actions taken on the European Parliament resolution of 29 April 2021 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European union for the financial year 2019, page 16.

70. At the pandemic's start, many visitor groups had to be cancelled at the last minute, which resulted in some cases in significant financial responsibilities by some of the APAs responsible for the groups. How did the Parliament solve these exceptional situations?

Quaestors Notices 13/2020 and 53/2020 informed Members about the possibility for Heads of groups of sponsored visits which were cancelled due to the pandemic to claim reimbursement of the eligible cancellation cost of their visits. Accordingly, the Heads of groups were invited to contact the Visits and Seminars Unit at DG COMM to get advice on all necessary steps to take to request reimbursement of the eligible cancellation costs of the travel expenses incurred. After submission of the supporting documents of the expenses and of proof of due diligence, a reimbursement was granted.

71. Are the savings from the funding of the sponsored visitor group quotas that were not used in 2020 quantifiable? How much is it? How did Parliament use these funds?

The savings amounting to EUR 15 400 000 (budget line 3244) were used to reinforce communication actions concerning different Parliament priorities. These include the Conference on the Future of Europe, reinforcing Parliament's media presence and its engagement with citizens through a grants programme, and contributing to the purchase of immovable property.

72. Has the Parliament carried out a risk assessment of transferring the financial responsibility of sponsored visits to APAs instead of professionals? In addition, what is the principle behind the rule that allows assistants to bear financial liability for sponsored visits? Are the responsible services going to recommend removing APAs as an option for the financial responsibility in the context of the revision of the rules for the Internal Auditor's action plan?

The role of the Head of a visitor group is laid out in the Rules governing the reception of groups of visitors, as approved by the Bureau. The appointment of an APA is only one from several possibilities as Members have an array of options for the designation of the Head of group, and consequently to whom the financial contribution will be paid for the group. Accordingly, Members can designate:

- a. A paying agent, under contract with the Members, who takes financial responsibility for the sponsored group, using a standard contract provided by Parliament's services. The financial contribution is paid to the bank account of the paying agent. A participant or staff member of the Member's office should be designated as Head of group, taking the organisational responsibility for the visit.
- b. A travel agent, bearing the organisational and financial responsibility for the group of visitors. The Head of group - present during the visit - is a person with legal authority or delegation to represent the travel agency. The financial contribution is transferred to the account of the travel agency.
- c. An individual, either a participant or a staff member, who takes the organisational and financial responsibility for the group. The Head of group may choose to receive the financial contribution on his/her personal bank account or ask for the financial contribution to be transferred to a bank account held by the group. This includes the possibility to execute payments to the bank accounts of "moral entities" such as schools, institutions or associations.

The objective of the options outlined above is to empower professionals with the financial responsibility of a sponsored visit rather than APAs. Moreover, in the event an APA is designated as Head of group and receives the financial contribution on his/her personal bank account, Parliament provides certification, available in all official EU languages, as to the source and purpose of the funds being transferred.

In April 2018, the Bureau Working Group on Information and Communication endorsed an assessment of the revised rules. The evaluation acknowledged that the main objectives of the latest modifications to the rules on visitor groups had been met, i.e.:

-) cash payments were almost eradicated; and
-) Members exploit the possibility offered by the revised rules to give the financial responsibility of sponsored visits to professionals (i.e. paying agents or travel agencies) instead of accredited parliamentary assistant (APAs).

Next to the continuous monitoring of the operational situation by the responsible Parliament services, an audit of the applicable rules was launched by Parliament Internal Auditor in September 2018 and completed in 2021. It does not include a recommendation aimed at removing the possibility for APAs to be designated as Heads of groups.

73. Which steps were taken in 2020 to make the Parliament's press conference rooms in Strasbourg and Brussels more suitable to hybrid press conferences, enabling the remote participation of journalists?

During the lockdown, Parliament press room was always open to journalists who needed to film or interview Members and there would regularly be a combination of physical and online presence at press conferences/briefings. One obvious impact of the pandemic was the lack of physical presence of journalists (and Members) at press conferences. Solutions needed to be found overnight to maintain the facility for the President and other Members to communicate on all the legislation being approved.

Parliament audiovisual service rapidly developed a secure in-house solution enabling to broadcast and stream images. Members were also able to participate remotely and benefit from some interpretation. An evaluation among users showed that Interactio offered the best overall potential for those having to offer high quality formats in multiple languages, and was also the preferred solution of journalists.

The press conference room in Brussels was also transformed into a more dynamic stand-up format throughout 2020. Accordingly, Members could hold press conferences adapted to the circumstances, including with large TV screens displaying remote participants.

The option to join remotely meant a wider potential audience, which many journalists appreciated, including from outside Brussels. This hybrid format for press conferences will be therefore continued in future.

74. What is the strategy of DG COMM to inform the widest possible audience about the Conference of the Future of Europe? Does it involve traditional channels such television and newspapers?

Since the start of the Conference on the Future of Europe (hereinafter “the Conference”), Parliament’s communication services have been mobilised to ensure an optimal communication around the various key milestones of the Conference, as well as a sustained promotion of the participatory process towards citizens. This includes a communication campaign run on traditional and online channels, media relations, an online campaign specifically targeted towards youth, national activities and outreach through multipliers.

Over the summer, an extensive paid media campaign about the Conference’s platform was launched by Parliament, focussing on traditional media (print and digital). A first social media paid campaign took place between 19 April and 3 May 2021 and brought 500 580 clicks and 13 105 403 impressions. A second wave started on 21 June and lasted until 4 July 2021, bringing 656 750 clicks and over 22 million impressions. It was further pursued with a third wave starting on 2 August and lasting until 29 August 2021 which brought more than half a million clicks to the platform and over 120 million impressions.

Many seminars and briefings are being organised both centrally and in the Members States to inform journalists across Europe about the Conference, and integrate them in regular contacts. Journalists were also invited to attend the launch of the Conference on 9 May 2021 as well as the first plenary session in June. From January to September 2021, 2561 journalists were briefed on the Conference by press officers from the Member States.

Throughout the summer, a promotion action was held on social media towards the youth audience. With a total reach of 5.4 million, it generated 1.6 million video views and 668 000 clicks through to the youth ideas platform. 520 ideas were added to the platform by its visitors.

All communication activities are supported by Parliament Liaison Offices in the context of media relations, local events and promotional activities, including those undertaken in cooperation with the Commission Representations, national authorities and the Europe Direct Centres. From January to mid-September 2021, the EPLOs have organised 514 events around the Conference, involving several Members.

Parliament has built up extensive networks of interested citizens and organisations that can act as multipliers. These networks, including inter alia national and pan-European European civil society organisations, supporters and volunteers, are continuously informed about the Conference. These networks are being encouraged to organise debates and consultations. In addition, 5 pan-European and 12 national projects by civil society organisations were awarded grants linked to the Conference, for a total potential outreach upwards of 5 million European citizens.

INTERPRETATION

75. On several occasions during 2020, the interpretation of some official languages in committee was not possible due to a shortage of available interpreters. Can DG LINC give a number of such incidents and elaborate on the steps taken to overcome this situation?

The pandemic has seriously hampered the Institution's interpretation capacities because of several factors. These include, inter alia, the restrictions imposed by the Member States which made it nearly impossible for freelance interpreters to regularly travel to Parliament's places of work as well as the sanitary measures put in place under the guidance of Parliament's Medical Service, which have among others reduced the number of interpreters present in a booth from three to one person only.

In 2020, DG LINC organised 3081 meetings with interpretation in total. Due to the fluctuating epidemiological situation and changes in travel regulations, there were a few cases where languages initially confirmed by DG LINC to requestors subsequently proved impossible to be provided. This was notified either ahead of the meeting (87 cases) or at the start of the meeting (59 cases).

With the view to enable Members to fully exercise their mandate while protecting interpreters, following a proposal by the Secretary-General several actions were approved by the Bureau to gradually increase interpretation capacities during the pandemic to 70% of the pre-COVID capacity from November 2020 to April 2021 (see table below). These actions range from reinforcing the overall technical infrastructure (e.g. installing mobile interpretation booths) to remote interpretation, a field where Parliament is a reference and standards-setter at global level.

October 2020 starting point	November 2020 all targets achieved	December 2020 all targets achieved	January 2021 all targets achieved	February 2021 Targets	March 2021 Targets	April 2021 Targets
20 % of pre-COVID interpretation hours	25 % of pre-Covid interpretation hours	30 % of pre-Covid interpretation hours	40 % of pre-Covid interpretation hours	50 % of pre-Covid interpretation hours	60 % of pre-Covid interpretation hours	70 % of pre-Covid interpretation hours
			50% committee weeks	60% committee weeks	65% committee weeks	70% committee weeks
			60% group weeks	70% group weeks	75% group weeks	80% group weeks
			35% plenary weeks	40% plenary weeks	45% plenary weeks	50% plenary weeks
6-12 languages	6-14 languages	6-18 languages	6-21 languages	2 meetings in parallel with 22 languages	3 meetings in parallel with 22 languages (target achieved one month later)	4 meetings in parallel with 22 languages
12 meeting rooms in Brussels, 13 meeting rooms in Strasbourg with Interactio	14 meeting rooms in Brussels, 15 meeting rooms in Strasbourg with Interactio	15 meeting rooms in Brussels, 17 meeting rooms in Strasbourg with Interactio	16 meeting rooms in Brussels, 17 meeting rooms in Strasbourg equipped for Multilingual Remote Participation	17 meeting rooms in Brussels, 17 meeting rooms in Strasbourg equipped for Multilingual Remote Participation	19 meeting rooms in Brussels, 17 meeting rooms in Strasbourg equipped for Multilingual Remote Participation	21 meeting rooms in Brussels, 17 meeting rooms in Strasbourg equipped for Multilingual Remote Participation
7 meetings in parallel	8 meetings in parallel	9 meetings in parallel	9 meetings in parallel	10 meetings in parallel	11 meetings in parallel	12 meetings in parallel
2x2 hour slots, 8 h weekly	3 h slots 10 hours weekly	12 hours weekly ³	maximum 13 hours weekly	maximum 14 hours weekly	maximum 15 hours weekly	maximum 15 hours weekly
39 mobile booths installed	57 mobile booths installed in Yehudi Menuhin et al. (19 additional languages)	75 mobile booths installed in Yehudi Menuhin et al. (25 additional languages)	93 mobile booths installed in Yehudi Menuhin et al. (31 additional languages)	Provide 39 additional languages in parallel at the same time through mobile booths and coupling	Provide 47 additional languages in parallel at the same time through mobile booths and coupling	Provide 55 additional languages in parallel at the same time through mobile booths and coupling
no remote interpreting capability	Establish technical feasibility	Establish operational procedures & perform testing	Remote interpretation in first live meetings	250 remote interpretation hours/week from Strasbourg, hubs, home (target achieved one month later)	500 remote interpretation hours/week from Strasbourg, hubs, home (target achieved one month later)	1000 remote interpretation hours/week from Strasbourg, hubs, home
Remote interpreting from Brussels to Strasbourg and vice versa*	Establish technical feasibility					

³ Subject to performance of Interactio 2.0.

76. What are the deadlines for the committees to request interpretation, the deadline for DG LINC to assign interpreters, and what is the procedure to request freelance interpreters to complement interpretation services?

The committee secretariats request meetings, with interpretation being one of the possible services, subject to the deadlines set in Article 8 of the Code of Conduct on Multilingualism and the Rules concerning meetings of political groups.

Accordingly, the Directorates-General for Internal Policies and External Policies and the Secretaries-General of the political Groups have to submit their requests to DG LINC no later than three months in advance, ensuring that meetings are spread evenly across all the time-slots of the working week. Requests for additional meetings shall be submitted no later than one week prior to the date scheduled for the meeting in question, or two weeks if the request concerns a slot of peak activity. Requests for coverage of an additional official language shall be submitted no later than two weeks prior to the date scheduled for the meeting in question.

Committee requests are managed in a decentralised way by the Meeting Scheduling Service which allocates meeting rooms and passes on requests for interpretation to DG LINC.

Consequently, DG LINC uses the Meeting Request System to confirm the status of interpretation to the requestors and allocates available interpreters to the meetings while determining the needs for additional recruitment of freelance interpreters.

77. Can the administration detail the measures undertaken to accommodate the situation of freelance interpreters?

Parliament relies on a considerable pool of specialised freelance interpreters (Conference Interpreting Agents - ACIs) to service multilingual meetings in 24 languages, with skillsets which are difficult to procure. During the pandemic, travel restrictions greatly reduced the availability of non-local ACIs. The following measures were therefore taken:

1. As a risk mitigation measure, 581 ACIs were offered Contracts for Skills Maintenance Scheme (COSMAS) in 2020 totalling EUR 3.7 Mio. This measure has allowed ACIs regularly serving Parliament to access training and thereby avoid loss of skills that are valuable to the service upon their return to Parliament.
2. In line with the applicable regulatory framework, DG LINC honoured the contracts of the ACIs which could not work due to the sudden cancellation of meetings between 15 March and 4 June 2020. This corresponded to 6 697 ACI contract days, amounting to EUR 4.9 Mio.
3. As agreed at interinstitutional level, DG LINC granted also some direct financial support by paying an advance for up to 4 future contract days to 94 ACIs, corresponding to EUR 122.000.
4. The measure taken to gradually restore multilingual meetings and to increase interpretation capacity resulted in more than 15 000 ACI contract days from May to December 2020.

STAFF

78. Can you provide the age structure of the staff of the EP? What percentage of staff will come in the retirement age in the next 5 to 15 years?

Because of the difference in the nature of the employment relationship between the institution and the different categories of staff (i.e. officials, temporary agents, contract agents), the reply focuses on officials only, which can spend the entirety of their career and retire from the institution. Unlike officials, temporary staff and contract agents are recruited for a fixed period limited to a maximum of six years.

The age structure of officials in activity in the Parliament's Secretariat on 31/12/2020 is presented in the table below:

Age	Number of officials
<35	105
35 - 44	1451
45 - 54	1833
55 - 64	1314
65	36
Total	4739

The percentage of staff reaching retirement age in the next five years (2021-25) is estimated at 9.7%, i.e. 1.9% on a yearly average. Over the following ten years (2026-35), another 36% of the current staff should reach the retirement age, on a yearly average of 3.6%.

NB: To calculate the percentage of staff reaching retirement age, the age of 65 year-old has been taken as reference. The total staff considered is the total number of officials in activity in the General Secretariat on 31/12/2020.

79. How is the General Secretariat preparing for the future vacancies? Does the General Secretariat foresee preparing a timetable in cooperation with EPSO to publish concours in time to fill those vacancies?

Cooperation with EPSO does not bring a suitable solution to most HR challenges due to duration of competitions, financial cost, time investment and not exploitable reserve lists. However, this cooperation may be considered as an appropriate way for recruitment when the need is permanent, not urgent and for more generalist staff. This is also the area in which Parliament contributes to EPSO annual '*bon de commande*' and envisages to carry on with the mentioned cooperation. In this context, the Parliament intensively works on the reform of EPSO procedures and competitions in close cooperation with all EU institutions to forge an improved competition model and service that better meet Parliament's needs (e.g. in relation to speed of delivery, geographical balance and flexibility).

The challenge is however not only the 'quantity' of competitions but the 'quality' of the applications, also in terms of geographical balance. In this context, it became essential for Parliament to build its own outreach capacity, with the goal of attracting to competitions quality candidates that Parliament needs, in terms of profile, age and nationality and especially from underrepresented countries.

To tackle the heavy workload generated by the organisation of Parliament-specific competitions and selection procedures and expected with respect to the exponential increase in the quantity of procedures and applicants and further development of the outreach activities, the Secretary-General approved the redeployment of eight additional posts to the services concerned.

80. How many civil servants have left the service in 2020? How many of those retired, how many left for other reasons?

In 2020, 193 officials ended their service. The table below gives the breakdown by reason for termination of service:

Reason for termination of service	Number of terminations of service
Retirement	156
Invalidity	14
Resignation	12
Death	4
Leave in the interest of the service	7
TOTAL	193

81. In how many cases was permission for another job requested, were there any cases of conflicts of interest in taking up a new position?

In 2020, the Career Development and Ethics Unit received 31 requests for an activity after leaving the service (Article 16 of the Staff Regulations). In two cases a potential conflict of interest was identified, but both former staff members withdrew their request before its submission for opinion to the Joint Committee.

82. Were any conditions imposed on the new professional activities (if yes, which conditions?), or activities forbidden?

Since there were no activities involving a potential conflict of interest, no conditions or restrictions were imposed in 2020.

83. How does Parliament ensure that former civil servants adhere to the conditions imposed on their new professional activity?

In most cases, restrictions are imposed in relation to envisaged lobbying activities after leaving the service. The most common restriction imposed on former civil servants is a prohibition of representing the new employer at Parliament premises for a certain period of time. In this respect, the Accreditation Unit is informed, together with the Transparency Unit, in order to prevent the former staff member from having access to Parliament as a lobbyist. In the event of non-respect of the conditions imposed, disciplinary proceedings according to Annex IX of the Staff Regulations can be initiated even against former staff members.

84. According to the Code of Conduct for Officials and Other Servants of the European Parliament, officials and other servants must obtain permission when they propose to engage in an outside activity (gainful or otherwise). How many officials and other servants have applied for such a permission in 2020, how many of those received it, and how many requests were rejected? Please tell us the number of requested, received and rejected permissions broken down by AD grade (5-16).

In 2020, 180 staff members (officials, temporary agents, contract agents and APAs) applied for the permission of the Appointing Authority to engage in an outside activity. In 9 cases restrictions were imposed (mostly in relation to the remuneration perceived) and in 2 cases permission was not granted (commercial activities). 40 of these applications were submitted by AD staff members, out of which 1 was refused, with the following breakdown by grade:

Grade PE	No. requests	Agreements	Refusals
AD5	3	2	1
AD6	6	6	0
AD8	4	4	0
AD9	8	8	0
AD10	8	8	0
AD11	7	7	0
AD12	3	3	0
AD13	1	1	0
Grand Total	40	39	1

85. How many persons were granted leave from their position at the Parliament in 2020 in order to support a national/local election campaign? How many of those were APAs, local assistants, group staff, and EP staff members?

In 2020, in total 44 staff members notified the Appointing Authority of their intention to stand as a candidate in election. On the basis of their notification, 14 staff members were granted leave on personal grounds: 9 APAs, 2 temporary agents from political groups, 2 contract agents from political Groups and 1 official. As for the remaining 30 staff members (21 APAs, 4 temporary agents from political groups, 2 contract agents and 3 officials of the Parliament), no obligation to take leave on personal grounds was imposed by the Appointing Authority.

Parliament does not manage local assistants' contracts. Their management, including granting leave, is handled by the Member via his/her paying agent. Parliament received in 2020 a total of 44 notifications regarding local assistants being on paid or unpaid leave due to election participation.

86. Are you collecting data on how diverse the Parliament's staff is?

The only data recurrently collected is data on the gender of Parliament's staff. At present, no data is collected regarding the identification with or belonging of Parliament's staff to different diversity groups, based on diversities such as disability, race and ethnicity or sexual orientation, which would be classified as "sensitive personal data" according to the Data Protection Regulation.

The new diversity roadmap 2022-2024, which was adopted by the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity on 26 October 2021 and should be discussed and eventually adopted by the Bureau by the end of 2021, foresees that a voluntary and anonymous survey might be carried out regarding the diversity of staff, their perceptions of the inclusiveness of the Parliament as a workplace, and the effectiveness of Parliament's diversity actions. Another voluntary and anonymous staff survey might be carried out to specifically assess racial diversity and discrimination in Parliament.

87. Is there any obstacle for the Bureau to change Article 3 of its rule on the appointment of senior management in order to allow staff representatives to participate in the appointment procedures?

The decision laying down the steps in the procedure for appointing senior officials was adopted by the Bureau. Any change would require a revision of this decision, for which the Bureau is responsible.

However, a discretionary power of the Bureau in this area is limited by the legal framework set by the Staff Regulation and in particular Annex III thereof governing competitions, which lays down several principles that have to be applied and respected within the competition procedures. In this context, Article 3, fourth paragraph, of Annex III sets out the following principle:

“Members of the Selection Board shall be chosen from officials whose function group and grade is at least equal to that of the post to be filled.”

This principle is applied by analogy to all selection procedures other than competitions, including selection procedures for temporary staff, the certification procedure and the procedure for appointing senior officials. This means that, for example, should the Bureau allow staff representatives to participate in the procedures for appointing senior officials, any procedure to appoint a Director-General would require a staff representative with a minimum grade of AD15.

88. The older civil servants were often employed under old Staff Statues before 2004 with higher grades. New civil servants will be employed under the current Staff Statute. Can you reflect budget consequences? Is there an expectation for savings?

The 2014 Staff Regulations brought a number of reforms, including, among others:

-) an increase of the pensionable age from 63 to 66;
-) a reduced annual pension accrual rate of 1.8% for staff recruited after 1 January 2014 (compared to 2% before 2004);
-) a pay and pensions freeze in 2013 and 2014;
-) a 5% reduction in the number of permanent posts (6% in the case of the EP); and
-) a new career structure with the creation of the AST/SC function group.

The new career structure with three function groups instead of two, as well as the reduced promotion opportunities in higher grades, has generated budgetary savings and reduced long-term pensions' expenditure.

Since the adoption of the 2014 Staff Regulations, grade advancement is capped at AST 9 and AD 12. Promotion above these grades depends on the nomination to a senior assistant type of post, or to a Head of Unit or equivalent type of post, a limited number of vacant positions being available every year.

An analysis performed for the ten-year period 2016-2026 shows that the number of staff in grade AD 12 is expected to increase over time, while staff in grade AST 9 will slightly diminish. Since the large majority of these staff members will have their careers capped, the budgetary savings are expected to continue rising.

89. How many contract agents are employed in total and in parliamentary committee Secretariats in Brussels as a place of work in 2020? What is the proportion of permanent/contract staff working in parliamentary committee Secretariats? How is the parliament responding to the request made in the last discharge resolution to make sure that the core positions and tasks should be performed by permanent staff?

On 31/12/2020, 1 050 contract staff (of all function groups) were based in Brussels, of which 39 were employed in committee Secretariats in DG IPOL and DG EXPO. The breakdown by category of staff employed in committee Secretariats is as follows:

Category of staff	
Officials	362
Temporary agents	23
Contract agents	39
Seconded national experts	20
TOTAL	444

Permanent staff represent 81.5% of all committee staff whilst contract staff represent only 8.8%.

To cope with an increased amount of tasks and specialised committees, which resulted in a significant increase in legislative and coordination work, following a proposal by the Secretary-General, the Budget Estimates for 2022 provide for the creation of 66 permanent posts (46 AD and 20 AST) in committee secretariats.

Additional support measures to (re-)allocate resources were also put in place. These include among others the reallocation of tasks, the creation of pools of staff willing to take over new files, and the recruitment of some additional contract agents and trainees.

90. In its creation of permanent posts for committees to the establishment plan, is the Secretary-General also taking non-legislative workload into account, such as the discharge procedure?

Parliament has had to cope with an increased amount of tasks and specialised committees in the last years, which has resulted in a significant increase in legislative and non-legislative terms, in particular as regards the scrutiny of how EU laws and budget are being implemented. In the light of the serious concerns raised by several Committee Chairs, the staffing situation of committee secretariats was discussed at the level of the Conference of Committee Chairs in October 2020. A number of measures were requested, including sufficient statutory posts for parliamentary committees and support services based on the Institution’s parliamentary core business, reinforcement of the budget line for contractual agents, default compensation of part-time work, and smooth recruitment procedures.

In line with the requests put forward by the political authorities at different levels, the Secretary-General in his draft for the estimates of Parliament for the financial year proposed to create 66 permanent posts to the establishment plan (46 AD and 20 AST) for committee secretariats. The proposal was approved by the Bureau and the Committee on Budget, and subsequently adopted by the Plenary.

91. Which Directorate-Generals have put in place an internal policy to ensure the right to disconnect? Which have not? Why not? In addition to the new approach to medical absence management and psychosocial support, which other measures has Parliament implemented to secure the staff's right to disconnect and work-life balance?

At the level of the General Secretariat, Parliament supported staff members through reinforcing the existing and putting in place new resources (e.g. two helplines, psychological consultations and group sessions, social assistance, confidential counselling, and Network of Mental Health First Aiders). Appropriate advice or support was guaranteed, including referral to more competent services such as Medical Services or Human Resources Units. In addition, a diverse set of awareness-raising initiatives and psychosocial support resources were offered to staff, including: free online mindfulness classes for all staff from October 2020.

Please also refer to the reply to the next question (question 92) for additional information on the measures put in place to support the mental health of staff during the pandemic.

At the level of the Directorates-General (DGs), specific policies framing the right to disconnect were also put in place. These include DG COMM and DG PRES. Other Directorates-Generals approached the matter with different levels of formality throughout 2020.

DG INLO, for example, promoted sound management practices towards its middle management by offering training dealing with remote team management in the form of webinars that took place on a weekly basis in April and May 2020. Courses on well-being in a remote work environment were also offered. DG IPOL took measures to raise awareness among line managers of the right to disconnect and exchanged best practices for the organisation of telework. Within DG FINS, senior and middle managers discussed the side effects of intensive teleworking and called for vigilance for the induced negative behaviours, such as remaining available beyond reasonable time, or regularly sending e-mails requests outside working hours. Other actions complemented the support provided, including the creation on the DG FINS Intranet of a dedicated area for well-being, encouraging managers to undertake training on team management in a teleworking environment and the setting-up of a network for prevention of psychosocial risks. Similarly to DG FINS, the Legal Service has addressed the issue at the level of senior and middle management during coordination meetings on teleworking.

DG EPRS conducted a broad and inclusive "Hybrid Working Consultation" among all its staff in spring 2021, and is currently exploring the possibility of a tailored framework for all aspects of hybrid work, including, but not limited to, work-life balance, the right to disconnect and psychosocial aspects.

DG ITEC is adapting its management culture into a leadership that respond to the need of the staff and focused on trust and results. The staff in DG ITEC continuing to telework with an intake of moderate and maxi regimes rather high compared to Parliament's average. This approach contributes to a better work-private life balance.

DG LINC has been on the frontline in keeping up the business continuity of the Parliament. This was only possible with very close collaboration and continuous assessment of the ever evolving situation. DG LINC managers have dedicated particular attention to challenges like possible ways and importance of adapting people management to extensive teleworking, new ways of cooperating and sharing information in the COVID environment, all regularly discussed at LINC Management Meetings.

There has been no specific policy on the right to disconnect put in place within DG SAFE as the vast majority of staff was not in a position to telework and/or is expected to be contactable 24/7 due to the specific security-related nature of their tasks.

92. Describe the Parliament's measures and related expenses regarding the mental health of its workers during the time of the pandemic.

In order to support the mental health of staff during the pandemic, the responsible Parliament services at the Directorate-General for Personnel (DG PERS) put in place a multi-layered psychological support offer that is available to all colleagues and tailored to individual needs, including:

-) Professional help (consultations with psychologists, doctors, or social workers from the Medical Services in Brussels and Luxembourg, and weekly psychological support group meetings);
-) “Talk to me” helpline (a helpline offering a listening ear and support to anyone feeling anxious, stressed or lonely or having any other psychological or emotional issues);
-) “Listening ear” for managers (one-on-one support and guidance sessions for managers, to discuss the challenges they were facing in the context of pandemic and extended teleworking); and
-) Network of Mental Health First Aiders (each Directorate-General has a number of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) who can offer support to those needing help during the pandemic crisis).

The following expenses were incurred in relation to the above-listed measures of psychosocial support:

-) Expenses linked to the external psychologists (16h/week in Luxembourg; 32h/week in Brussels);
-) Costs linked to MHFA training (i.e. for the training course materials and licence; no extra trainer-related cost as all Parliament trainers are internal); and
-) Costs linked to the training of healthcare providers.

A set of awareness-raising initiatives and events were offered to staff, including among others free online mindfulness classes as from October 2020.

93. In 2020, the EP implemented a multi-layered psychosocial support for Members and staff (consultations with professionally, helpline, etc.). Does the EP know how many employees know of said services (e.g. by surveys) and how many have requested help through them? Has the EP hired additional staff to promote mental health of MEPs, APAs, and staff?

During 2020, psychosocial support resources were extensively used by staff, as detailed below:

-) Psychological consultations: 930 sessions;
-) Psychological group sessions: 188 participants in 33 group sessions;
-) “Talk to me” helpline: 29 cases; and
-) “Listening ear”: 15 sessions.

Even though the Medical Services’ human resources were reinforced during the pandemic, no additional staff members were hired in 2020 with the specific intention to promote mental health within the institution. Parliament decided to recruit a full-time psychologist as of 2021.

This was partially linked to the COVID-19 crisis, namely to cope with increased needs and long-term consequences.

94. *How many people work within the medical service? How many Doctors? Nurses? Others? Has there been any recruitment? Long / short term? Full / part time? Has there been any increase in financial or personnel support?
 *For these above questions, a detailed answer on all the workplaces is necessary (Luxembourg, Strasburg, and Brussels).

As referred to in reply to question 39, in 2020, the Medical Services were reinforced with 6 additional posts (3 AD and 3 AST officials).

The Medical Service in Brussels was staffed as follows:

Job	Description	2019	Increase 2020	Total 2020
Doctors	AD officials and temporary agents	6	2	8
Nurses	AST officials and contract agents	10	1	11
Social workers	AST officials	3	0	3
Medical secretaries and assistants	AST and SC officials, contract agents	8	0	8
Total		27	3	30

Four staff members worked various part-time arrangements during the year (e.g. 50%, 60% and 75% and in one case between 50% and 80%). One vacant AST post was filled in 2021.

The Medical Service in Luxembourg was staffed as follows:

Job	Description	2019	Increase 2020	Total 2020
Doctors	AD Officials and Temporary agents	3	1	4
Nurses	AST officials	4	0	4
Social workers	AST officials	3	0	3
Senior assistant team coordinator	AST official	1	0	1
Medical secretaries and assistants	AST and SC officials, contract agents	3	1	4
Total		14	2	16

One person worked 50% during 2021 in preparation for retirement and another person worked 80%.

The Medical Services were also supported by two external psychologists (external service providers).

There is no specific and permanent medical service in Strasbourg. During plenary sessions, a team coordinated by the Medical Service in Brussels travels to Strasbourg. This team is supported by one external service provider.

95. How many deferrals on medical grounds have been decided by the medical service in 2020? How many deferrals on medical grounds have been made since 2018?

Staff Regulations, Article 28 - Number of people declared “medically unfit to perform duties” at a recruitment exam:

-) 2018: 1 for Brussels, 0 for Luxembourg
-) 2019: 0 for Brussels, 0 for Luxembourg
-) 2020: 2 for Brussels, 0 for Luxembourg

Staff Regulations, Annex VIII Art 1 - Number of people declared “fit” but with a “reserve clause” concerning the insurance on death and invalidity:

-) 2018: 20 for Brussels, 2 for Luxembourg
-) 2019: 21 for Brussels, 2 for Luxembourg
-) 2020: 8 for Brussels, 3 for Luxembourg

96. Can you give us more details on how the deferral on medical grounds (decided during the recruitment medical visit) works and how it is decided?

Before a staff member takes up his duties (or within the first months following the recruitment, in the case of APAs), he or she shall be medically examined by one of the institution's medical officers in order to assess whether he or she is physically fit to perform the duties.

At the end of a medical examination, the medical officer formulates a medical conclusion regarding both the “medical fitness for the function” (Staff Regulations, Art. 28) and the “reserve clause for the death and invalidity insurance” (Staff Regulations, Annexe VIII, Art. 1). Where the medical examination made before a staff member takes up his duties shows that he is suffering from sickness or invalidity, the Appointing Authority or AECE may, in so far as risks arising from such sickness or invalidity are concerned, decide to admit that official to guaranteed benefits in respect of invalidity or death only after a period of five years from the date of his entering the service of the Parliament. The staff member may appeal against such decision before the “Invalidity Committee”.

97. What happens when an EP employee got sick again during his/her deferral on medical grounds (decided during the recruitment medical visit)? How many people have been in this difficult situation since 2018?

The reserve clause laid down in Annex VIII, Article 1 of the Staff Regulations, which triggers a deferral in admitting the staff member to benefits in respect of invalidity or death is only relevant in case of invalidity or death of a person concerned and is only valid for the illness/condition ascertained at the moment of recruitment. The reserve clause remains valid for a period of 5 years after which it becomes void (i.e. a staff member concerned is admitted to benefits in respect of invalidity or death).

The application of the reserve clause in case of invalidity or death is subject to an active decision by the Appointing Authority, which may or not decide to apply this clause. If the Appointing Authority decides to apply the reserve clause and within the period of 5 years recognizes that the staff member concerned is in the permanent incapacity to perform her or his duties, such person shall be automatically retired according to Article 53 of the Staff Regulations without the benefit of invalidity allowances. If the permanent incapacity to perform duties is recognized, or if the staff member dies, after this period of 5 years has elapsed, he or she is automatically admitted to benefits in respect of invalidity or death.

Based on the data of Parliament Medical Services, none of the persons whose service terminated in 2018, 2019 or 2020 by reason of death or invalidity, had an active reserve clause.

98. How many long-term sick leave cases were declared by the staff in 2020?

In 2020, 848 staff members in the General Secretariat were certified as absent for medical reasons for more than 20 days. Compared to 2019, this represents a 9.81% decrease.

99. What has been the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the situation of burnouts reported in the EP? What was the number of burnout cases identified in 2020? What measures has the EP taken in order to address these cases, especially under the circumstances of reduced physical contact?

No specific data exist on the incidence of burnout in Parliament because medical leave certificates do not allow with certainty to identify burnouts.

In order to avoid burnouts during the pandemic, the responsible Parliament services have reinforced the existing and put in place new actions. These include:

-) Online consultations with psychologists, doctors, or social workers;
-) Weekly psychological support group meetings;
-) “Talk to me” helpline;
-) “Listening ear” sessions for managers;
-) Network of Mental Health First Aiders;
-) Social assistance;
-) Volunteering platform;
-) Confidential counselling and mediation;
-) ‘Mind Matters’ staff support programme; and
-) Awareness raising activities on well-being at work.

See also the reply to Question 92 above for further details.

100. In its answers and follow-up to paragraph 132 of the European Parliament's resolution of 29 April 2021 on the 2019 discharge of the European Parliament, the European Parliament services indicate that a proposal to amend Parliament's internal rules regarding the leave for welcoming a new-born child in the family is currently being prepared. The proposed amendment would provide for a special leave of an equivalent duration as that of maternity or adoption leave to be granted in cases where no parent fulfils the conditions to benefit from such types of leave.

- a. What will be the procedure for the adoption of this amendment?
- b. Can you provide us a clear timeline outlining when the new rules will be adopted and when they will be effective?
- c. In the answer, it is also said that the proposed special leave could be shared between the two parents if both are staff members. In this regard, will the changes also allow women who benefit from maternity leave to share their leave with a partner if that partner is also a staff member?

The proposed amendment will be submitted to the Staff Committee, the Committee on Equal Opportunities and Diversity, the Advisory Committee on Prevention and Protection at Work and the Data Protection Officer for consultation before being considered for adoption. Once adopted the amendment would become effective immediately.

According to Article 58 of the Staff Regulations, pregnant women are entitled to 20 weeks leave on production of a medical certificate. Sharing of such leave between parents, as is foreseen in the case of the 20 weeks special leave granted for adoption of a child, would require a modification of the Staff Regulations.

101. Can the administration elaborate on the measures undertaken by the EU Parliament to accommodate the losses experienced by external service providers, such as catering, cleaning and private security due to the (partial) closing of Parliament?

Cleaning/maintenance staff

BRUSSELS

No losses or negative impacts due to the Covid-19 pandemic have been raised by the contractors as the Brussels building remained open.

STRASBOURG

At beginning of the first lockdown period, negotiations were held with the cleaning contractor to decrease the services and the amount of the flat rate following social measures put in place by the French government. However after mid-April 2020, the cleaning/disinfection procedures have been reinforced, balancing out the loss for the cleaning contractor over the year.

LUXEMBOURG

The need for reinforced cleaning due to the pandemic has compensated the decrease of activity. There is therefore no reduction of overall cleaning services. During the closure of the offices in March/April 2020, cleaning staff on forced leave received full salary.

LIAISON OFFICES

Neither the cleaning, security service providers handled by the European Commission, nor the maintenance contracts handled by Parliament were suspended during the lockdown period.

Catering staff

Parliament's Bureau adopted a set of measures in April, October 2020 and July 2021 to ensure the business continuity of catering facilities on Parliament's premises and to safeguard employment for catering staff, thus mitigating the impact of the crisis.

The measures include maintaining the facilities open in all buildings through the provision of a business-continuity fee. The total estimated budget for this operation is approximately EUR 2.4 Mio. This scheme is gradually being phased out and will end at the end of 2021.

Parliament also finances the daily production of "solidarity meals". The total estimated cost of this measure is approximately EUR 3 Mio. It will last until December 2021.

The above-listed measures not only made it possible for Members and staff to use catering services throughout the pandemic period, they also contributed to safeguarding 37 full time jobs among the staff employed by the catering providers.

Security

There was no loss of staff from external security providers. The same volume of hours was delivered by Parliament's external contractors for security and safety throughout the pandemic.

102. Why does Parliament/DG INLO not conduct an independent satisfaction survey about the working conditions of cleaning and catering staff, despite repeated calls in discharges?

Cleaning staff

Article 1.7 of the cleaning contract specifies that contractors must comply with social and labour law obligations as provided for by EU law, national law and collective agreements or by international obligations in social and labour law. Where the responsible Parliament services detect or receive any alert on possible breaches, and on the condition that the persons concerned have raised in vain the issue with their responsible managers, the union representatives and the external service for prevention and well-being of the company, the relevant authorities are contacted.

An inspection of the national service '*Contrôle des lois sociales/Direction de Bruxelles*' (2020) and an analysis by the psychosocial department of the external service for prevention and protection at work in Brussels (2020) did not find any legal breaches related to social laws and working conditions. In addition, the Prevention and Protection at Work Service (SPPT) closely cooperates with other administrative services to ensure that the working conditions of cleaning staff meet the highest health and safety standards during their performance of services.

Proposals of internal surveys were already discussed with the current contractors and a survey will be launched by the end of the 2021. The survey is aimed at reflecting the actual state of the company's employee satisfaction levels, engagement, commitment, loyalty, motivation, etc. and to identify weaknesses, problems or opportunities for improvements within the company. The questions relate to the general workers motivation, the workplace culture, the management and the co-workers. The contractor has to guarantee that the employees can complete the questionnaire anonymously and without feeling supervised and that answers are received and stored on a secure platform and/or server.

Catering staff

Catering contracts are concession contracts. This type of contract management allows the contractor to define the measures to be used in order to achieve the result requested by the Parliament. Consequently, the obligations that Parliament services can impose are fairly limited. Nevertheless, the following regular controls and monitoring activities are in place:

-) Strict controls and reporting from the Belgian Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (AFSCA);
-) Regular quality controls by Parliament Catering's Unit contract managers;
-) Regular audits and reporting by an external audit company (on quality, hygiene, etc.);
-) Monthly coordination meetings with all the catering providers on topics related to quality, security, staffing.

The only area where the responsible services are allowed to conduct surveys concerns client satisfaction. In this context, the responsible Parliament service has regularly conducted client satisfaction surveys in all the catering venues, focusing mostly on ensuring high food quality, a variety in the meal offers, good hygiene and the implementation of other necessary measures due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

103. How many (external) employees (including catering/cleaning staff/contracts; freelance interpreters; staff of the European House of History, Europa Experience and EPLOs) were dismissed in 2020 in the context of the pandemic?

Cleaning staff

Parliament did not decrease the number of cleaning hours during the COVID-19 crisis. On the contrary, as the risk of spreading of the virus is related to the sanitary situation, there was a need to maintain the same cleaning activities as before the pandemic, complementing these with sanitizing procedures of numerous contact points (door handles, front desks ...). As a result, the number of sanitising crews was reinforced.

Parliament was not informed about any dismissals among its contractors. Some staff in Luxembourg was put in furlough during spring 2020 while receiving a full salary. In Strasbourg, following the social measures put in place by the French government, only limited partial unemployment was used by the contractors.

Catering staff

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major negative impact on the catering sector worldwide, with a significant part of the workforce being made redundant. While Parliament's role is limited to ensuring the proper execution of the contractual obligations outlined in the concession contracts for catering, exceptional actions were taken to implement practical solidarity measures in the host countries and keep catering outlets open.

To ensure the business continuity of the catering facilities on Parliament's premises, the Bureau approved the provision of a business-continuity fee to service providers. This measure has contributed to safeguard employment for catering staff and thus mitigate the impact of the economic and social crisis while keeping outlets open for Members and staff.

In the framework of practical solidarity measures in the host Member States, Parliament finances the production of daily "solidarity meals" in the three places of work. This measure not only constitutes an other alternative solution to safeguard employment for the catering staff, but also contributes to Parliament's efforts to honour its social responsibility by assisting people in need.

Concerning Parliament's contracts, companies announced to the Parliament's services the dismissal of 62 workers (57 from Compass/ among them 17 through a pre-retirement package, and 5 from Sodexo). Thanks to the extraordinary measures listed above, 37 full-time jobs out of 227 (total number of employees) were saved among the staff employed by catering providers operating in the three sites of Parliament.

Following a proposal from the Secretary-General, at its meeting of 5 July 2021, the Bureau approved the prolongation of both measures until the end of the year in a proportionally reduced manner in line with the gradual phasing out of teleworking obligations for Parliament staff.

Freelance interpreters

In 2020, 33 300 contract days were given to specialised freelance interpreters (Conference Interpreting Agents - ACIs) compared to 43 000 in the Electoral Year 2019 (-25%) and to 51.000 in 2018 (-35%). The responsible Parliament service cancelled (with the required prior notice of 60 days) about 12 350 ACI contract days from May to December 2020 due to meeting cancellations and generally reduced meeting activity.

In line with the applicable regulatory framework, Parliament honoured the contracts of the ACIs which could not work due to the sudden cancellation of meetings between weeks 15 March and 4 June in 2020. This corresponds to 6 697 ACI contract days which are worth EUR 4.9 Mio. In parallel, Parliament offered Contracts for Skills Maintenance Scheme (COSMAS) in 2020 to 581 ACIs totalling EUR 3.7 Mio. This has allowed ACIs on whom Parliament depends during routine business to access training and thereby avoid loss of skills.

About 15 000 ACI contract days were given at short or very short term in the same time frame, thanks to the measures taken by Parliament to gradually restore multilingual meetings and increase interpretation capacity. In addition, mitigation and support measures were put in place as outlined in the reply to question 77.

Staff House of European History and Europa Experiences

In the framework of the contract for the "Provision of floor staff services used by the House of European History, no permanent contracts were terminated in 2020 by Parliament. Only 4 fixed-term contracts could not be directly renewed. Of these 4 fixed-term contracts, 1 external staff member found another job and 3 external staff members joined the team again when the House of European History reopened on 9 July.

In the EPLOs, each Europa Experience has its own contract for the services of floor staff. No employment contracts managed by Parliament or Commission contractors were terminated in 2020 in the context of the pandemic.

104. Why did Parliament not take steps to avoid the dismissal of catering staff of the COMPASS Group in January 2021 in advance? Was Parliament informed by its service providers on the timing and size of these dismissals in advance? How is Parliament planning to avoid unexpected dismissal of catering staff in future? In addition to ensuring compliance with applicable environmental, social, and labour law obligations of the contracts for external staff, has Parliament carried out a feasibility study on the internalisation of catering and cleaning services as requested? Is Parliament envisaging to reconsider Parliament's externalisation policy?

In accordance with Article 166(2) of the Financial Regulation, Parliament defines minimum requirements for its procurement procedures which shall "include compliance with applicable environmental, social, and labour law obligations established by Union law, national law, collective agreements or the applicable international social and environmental conventions listed in Annex X to Directive 2014/24/EU." Parliament's contracts for external staff also benefit from social protection under national labour law and collective conventions governing contracts signed in its places of work (Belgium, Luxembourg and France).

The catering call for tenders clearly pointed out and evaluated the environmental, social and ethical responsibility of the catering providers. Furthermore, the technical specifications of the call for tenders clearly highlight the obligation to comply with national and EU legislation, including labour law.

With reference to catering contracts, it should be recalled as already mentioned in the reply to Question 101 that these are concession contracts, thus direct control mechanisms and intrusion on the internal functioning of the economic operators are rather limited.

However, there has always been regular coordination between Parliament services and the service providers. Parliament suggests and advises on catering operator's management, especially for the situation of catering staff, but can't influence their internal decision making.

In the framework of the COVID-19 impact on the catering sector, companies adapted their services and staffing situation to face the crisis. Plans for restructuring and dismissals by the different service providers were presented to Parliament during all of 2020.

As a response to the announced dismissals, Parliament put in place since 3 November 2020 two measures (direct aid and solidarity meals) that ensured saving of 37 full-time jobs. These measures have also improved the atmosphere and contributed to the outcome of the negotiations between the management and the trade unions of Compass, during which the two parties agreed on pre-retirement packages and Compass not laying off staff which are on long-term sick-leave.

Parliament's help, as decided by the Bureau, has considerably reduced the financial, economic and social impact on its caterers and their employees. Internalisation has not been discussed in the Bureau as an option for the current contracts.

105. How many COMPASS Group staff members kept their position in the catering service following the company decision to dismiss 80 Staff members? How many of them have been replaced by new staff with shorter or less protected contracts?

According to the information provided by Compass Group, there are 53 staff members of the initial team that are still working in Parliament catering venues. All their staff members working within the catering organisation in Parliament are employed under an official contract of indefinite duration. Temporary workers (interim) are only called upon during activities that require increased staffing levels (228 hours in total for a period of 9 months in 2021).

ACCREDITED PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANTS (APAS) AND LOCAL ASSISTANTS

106. Can you tell us how many APAs were hired and at which salary grade at the end of 2020? For each grade, can you indicate the ratio of women to men?

At the end of 2020, 1 986 APAs were working for the European Parliament. The table below shows their salary grades and the ratio of women to men for each grade.

Grade	Women		Men		TOTAL
	Number	%	Number	%	
AP01	22	56%	17	44%	39
AP02	23	58%	17	43%	40
AP03	29	66%	15	34%	44
AP04	36	64%	20	36%	56
AP05	43	48%	46	52%	89
AP06	49	55%	40	45%	89
AP07	110	55%	89	45%	199
AP08	112	52%	105	48%	217
AP09	115	57%	87	43%	202
AP10	105	52%	98	48%	203
AP11	99	57%	75	43%	174
AP12	66	44%	83	56%	149
AP13	75	44%	94	56%	169
AP14	46	49%	48	51%	94
AP15	36	51%	34	49%	70
AP16	21	43%	28	57%	49
AP17	9	28%	23	72%	32
AP18	15	50%	15	50%	30
AP19	24	59%	17	41%	41
TOTAL	1035	52%	951	48%	1986

107. How many APAs resigned before the end of their contract in 2020? How many MEPs dismissed at least one of their APAs before the end of their contract in 2020? How many of these dismissals were appealed by the APAs?

In 2020, the APA Front Office Unit dealt with 236 resignations (end of the contract at the request of the APA) from which 107 were resignations to start a new contract to assist another Member, grouping or another post in Parliament as contract agent or temporary agent.

In 2020, 14 APA contracts were terminated at the request of a Member on the basis of loss of trust. In two cases, the APAs lodged a complaint pursuant to Article 90(2) of the Staff Regulations, against the decision to terminate their contract.

108. How long did ex-MEPs and ex-APAs still have access to EP premises and work email? Is the EP intending to increase the period as in some cases it is almost impossible for APAs to complete their task and all the administrative steps required?

According to the applicable Rules governing the treatment of electronic files of Members at the end of their mandate, Members retain access to the electronic mailbox and the shared drive for 3 months following the end of their mandate.

The account of Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs) becomes inactive at the termination of their contract. However, in specific circumstances (e.g. for anticipated termination of the contract due to the election of the Member at national level), a prolongation of 2 weeks can be granted for the APA to complete tasks and relevant administrative steps.

Former Members receive a badge granting them access to Parliament buildings during normal business hours, initially valid for a period of 10 years but renewable indefinitely. Former APAs keep their access rights unchanged until the end of the month of the end of their contract in order to give them the time necessary to complete all professional and administrative tasks.

109. How many MEPs and APAs departed in 2020 and how many new APA contracts were signed? What were the main reasons that delayed the signing of contracts?

In 2020, 83 Members left Parliament, among them 73 elected in the UK due to Brexit. A total of 293 APAs left Parliament in 2020 and 406 new APA contracts entered into force. Linked to the replacement of UK Members after Brexit, 5 derogations were granted directly by the President to some new Members to recruit an APA.

While the recruitment of APAs was suspended between 25 March 2020 and 4 June 2020 in light of the COVID pandemic, there were no delays in the signature of the contracts. New recruitments took place within 10 working days since the receipt of the recruitment request or at the date requested by the Member concerned.

110. What was the average length of time to recruit APAs in 2020? Is the EP intending to work on reducing the number of days?

The administration has undertaken to recruit APAs in 10 working days from the moment that the recruitment request is complete and the necessary documents are at the disposal of the file manager in charge. It is to be noted that this internal deadline for processing a recruitment is by far the shortest among the recruitment procedures for different categories of staff.

It is worth mentioning that in order to allow Members to quickly recruit the staff they choose to assist them, APAs may be recruited before an engagement medical visit is organised and before obtaining an extract of their criminal record. They have three months to undergo the medical visit and to provide an extract of their criminal record.

Taking as a reference the time between the validation of the request by the Member and the entry into force of the contract, the average length of the recruitment procedure of APAs would be 25 days. It is to be highlighted that this figure does not reflect the time required by the administration to complete APA recruitments.

In fact, the cases where Members submit the recruitment request more than 10 days before the desired starting date of APA's contract substantially extends the average length of the procedure. For example, if a Member validated the request for recruitment of an APA more than 30 days before the desired starting date and the recruitment was carried out punctually on the date requested, the length of this particular procedure would be 30 days with no regard to the real time needed by the administration to process the recruitment.

In order to measure and objectively assess the performance of its services, Parliament defined a series of the Key Performance Indicators. In this context, the Key Performance Indicator for assessment of the efficiency of APA recruitments related to 2020 shows that 92,85% of the recruitments of new APAs (re-recruitment not included) were completed within 10 working days or within the deadline set by the Member.

111. Did the administration provide the APA Committee with a fulltime assistant to help them carry out their duties as staff representatives? How evenly is the budget dedicated to the personnel shared between the Staff Committee and the APA Committee?

The administrative support of the APA Committee is closely linked to the cooperation between the APA Committee and the Staff Committee. In fact, Article 126(2), 2nd subparagraph of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS) sets out that *'the arrangements relating to the autonomous representation of accredited parliamentary assistants shall be laid down by the implementing measures referred to in Article 125(1) taking into account that a formal link shall be established between the statutory representation of staff and the autonomous representation of assistants'*. Article 35(2) of the Implementing Measures for Title VII of the CEOS, as adopted by the Bureau on 14 April 2014, provides that the APA Committee shall make *'a contribution towards the establishment of formal relations with Parliament's Staff Committee, so as to ensure that there is a direct formal link between the two committees'*.

In this context, the APA Committee was granted an office (with a work station and phone line) near the premises of the Staff Committee. According to the above legal framework, the APA Committee shall establish a formal link and liaise with the Staff Committee in order to benefit from different facilities including meeting rooms and administrative support.

Regarding the budget dedicated to the Staff Committee, as set out in the general budget (Section I - Parliament), budgetary item 1630 ('Social welfare') serves inter alia for the financing of a grant for the Staff Committee. As per the accompanying budgetary remarks for the line, *'contributions or defrayal of expenses by the Staff Committee for participants in welfare activities will be aimed at financing activities that have a social, cultural or linguistic dimension, but there will be no subsidies for individual staff members or households.'*

However, there is no similar budget attributed to the APA committee. Discussions are currently taking place between the Staff Committee and the APA Committee with a view to reserving a share of the budget allocated to the Staff Committee in order to finance small expenses related to the operations of the APA Committee.

112. Which actions is the Secretary-General undertaking to ensure former British APAs are able to transfer their rights to pension funds in the UK?

The rules regarding the transfer of pension rights are governed by the Staff Regulations (not by the Parliament's internal rules) and applied by the European Commission's Pay Master's Office (PMO).

The Commission is aware of the fact that some British APAs were not been able to transfer their rights to certain pension funds in the UK and is working to find a solution.

113. Has the Parliament started the procedure to launch a new discussion at the level of the Bureau and the Conference of Presidents in order to reconsider the possibility for APAs to accompany Members on official Parliament delegations and missions, as already requested in several occasions? If not why? If yes, what has been done to initiate this discussion, which have been requested by previous discharge resolutions since several years?

The Bureau decision of 2 October 2000 (lastly revised on 15 December 2014) on "*Committee missions outside the three places of work*" as well as the "*Implementing provisions governing the work of delegations and missions outside the EU*" (Decision of the Conference of Presidents of 29 October 2015) explicitly prohibit the participation of APAs to official Parliament delegations and committee missions. The Bureau and the Conference of Presidents on 28 May and 31 May 2018, respectively, reiterated this stance when adopting the semi-annual programmes for committee travel outside the three places of work.

It should be further noted that delegations face different logistical challenges when meeting high-level stakeholders in the destination country. If APAs, subject to certain conditions to be set, would accompany Members in official Parliament delegations and missions several administrative impacts would have to be considered, such as:

-) budget increase for APAs missions and overall for delegation and mission costs, and
-) increase of organisational and logistical complexity (venues, transport, accommodation etc.) and of workload when delegations grow substantially in size.

114. Current regulation does not provide for APAs to take part in internal competitions. Which are the rules that should be changed in order to respond to the discharge resolution request for them to take internal competitions?

According to Article 29 of the Staff Regulations internal competitions shall be open only to officials and temporary staff as defined in Article 2 of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS) and, in exceptional cases, to contract staff as defined in Articles 3a and 3b of the CEOS.

115. Has the Secretary-General presented to the Bureau the Parliament's specific and repeated request for the APAs to receive the same subsistence allowance as the statutory personnel for their missions to attend the part-sessions in Strasbourg, in order to change the applicable framework?

In accordance with Article 132 of the Conditions of employment of other servants (CEOS), the arrangements for the reimbursement of mission expenses for APAs are laid down in the Implementing Measures Governing the Statute of APAs.

The allowance rates for APAs, as they were decided by the Bureau on 2 October 2017, entered into force on 1 January 2018. Any change to this legal framework would require a revision of the applicable Rules, which lies under the responsibility of the Bureau.

HARASSMENT AND WHISTLEBLOWING

116. How many new, ongoing and closed harassment cases were reported at the Parliament in 2020? And how many cases of harassment, sexual harassment or other abuses were identified in 2020? Of these, how many were reported by APAs? In how many cases were sanctions imposed? How many of the cases concerned relations between staff members and how many concerned relations between MEPs and staff members?

In 2020, 17 new harassment cases were opened and four cases were pending from previous years. 14 cases were closed during 2020, among which one that was pending from previous years. Two complaints were withdrawn by the complainants following an amicable resolution of the issue. Psychological harassment was found in relation to three complaints, each submitted by an APA.

These three complaints all concerned the same Member and a sanction was imposed by the President. One sanction was imposed on a staff member in 2020 in a sexual harassment case pending from previous years. Five of the 17 new harassment cases concerned relations between staff members and 12 concerned relations between Members and staff members

117. What measures has the Parliament administration taken to adapt its safe channels for reporting cases of harassment to the shift to online teleworking imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic? What measures has the Parliament taken to ensure that its employees are aware and can make full use of its anti-harassment services?

The main channels for reporting cases of harassment are email and telephone, which remained accessible during the mandatory teleworking period. Therefore, no specific measures were needed in this respect in 2020 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The measures previously implemented which stemmed from the "*Updated Roadmap for the adaptation of preventive and early support measures to deal with conflict and harassment between Members of the Parliament and Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs), trainees and other staff*", adopted by the Bureau on 12 March 2018, continued to be fully applicable.

The brochures "*Zero harassment in the workplace*" prepared for Members and "*Practical tips and advice for Accredited Parliamentary Assistants on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace*" for APAs were available both in paper version and on Parliament's Intranet.

In the welcome sessions for APAs, the Infodesk mentions the fact that the social workers are available under strict confidentiality to discuss any personal or professional challenges that they may have, and a link to the confidential counsellors' webpage is sent in the follow-up message.

New Members of Parliament were required to sign a declaration confirming their commitment to complying with the Code of appropriate behaviour for Members of the European Parliament (adopted in 2018 and incorporated in Parliament's Rules of Procedure in January 2019). Members who have not signed the declaration cannot be elected as office-holders of Parliament or of one of its bodies, be appointed as a rapporteur or participate in an official delegation or inter-institutional negotiations. All declarations, whether signed or not, were published on Members' profile pages on Parliament's website.

118. What groups and how many MEPs took part in anti-harassment training? How have these trainings been adapted to the new remote-working conditions? Has it been considered to make this training mandatory, as requested by the discharge authority? What actions have followed from the discharge authority's request?

Harassment prevention training for Members has been provided since 2018 and participation is on a voluntary basis. However, according to the Code of Appropriate Behaviour: "*Members should take part in specialised training organised for them on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace and on good office management.*"

A total of 204 current Members have participated in harassment prevention training, including re-elected Members who took part during the 8th parliamentary term (2014-2019) and new Members who have participated during the 9th parliamentary term (2019-2024). This represents a 62% increase compared to 2019. Since October 2020, the courses have been converted into virtual classrooms complemented by an e-learning collection.

On 31 January 2019, during the vote of the amendments to Parliament's Rules of Procedure, the introduction of mandatory anti-harassment training courses did not obtain the required majority of votes by Members. As a consequence, the Bureau is not in a position to make the training mandatory.

Training sessions on harassment prevention are part of the induction courses for APAs and also a long-standing part of the training catalogue for Parliament staff.

119. The Bureau has adopted a provision whereby where it is established that an APA has been a victim of harassment by a Member, the APA's salary has to be paid by the MEP from the parliamentary assistance allowance until the end of the APA's contract and the Member shall not be entitled to the provision of any further services by that assistant. Why is the same policy not adopted for APAs who acted as whistle-blowers in relation to their MEP?

In accordance with Article 22c of the Staff Regulations and Article 4 of Parliament's Internal Rules Implementing Article 22c of the Staff Regulations, the administration shall take all necessary measures to protect a whistle-blower. Such steps can include a transfer of the APA to another entity. On the other hand, it should be recalled that all measures to protect a whistle-blower have to take into consideration the concrete case and cannot be automatic.

120. Which steps have been taken by the Parliament to establish an advisory committee dealing with the protection of whistle-blowers as requested in previous discharge resolutions?

Article 22c of the Staff Regulations and Parliament's Internal Rules implementing that Article provide a high level of protection to whistle-blowers. There have been a relatively low number of actual and potential cases in the past years. There have never been any issues with the appropriate protection of those actual and potential whistle-blowers. Based on that experience, the current rules provide for an adequate level of protection for whistle-blowers.

121. How many whistleblowing cases were reported in 2020? If there were cases in this year, which actions did the Parliament take to handle the cases? Over which channel? How many were referred to OLAF? What were the areas that the disclosures concerned? What is the breakdown of staff classifications of the whistle-blowers? How many were APAs and were any of them dismissed by their MEPs?

There have been no cases of whistle-blowers in Parliament in 2020. The administration has received a number of anonymous allegations of misconduct which have all been followed up either internally or by OLAF.

122. Which secure reporting channels exist for whistle-blowers in the EP? What measures has the EP taken to ensure that safe channels for whistleblowing were maintained and adapted to the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic? How are you raising awareness among APAs and (group) staff about the availability of secure reporting channels, if they exist?

The Secretary-General has appointed a contact point in his Cabinet for whistle-blowers. That contact person ensures a confidential treatment of all information received and a protection of the identity of any whistle-blower. The contact point also offers confidential advice and assistance to whistle-blowers in accordance with Article 3 of Parliament's Internal Rules Implementing Article 22c of the Staff Regulations. As the contact point is initially reached via e-mail or phone, his/her accessibility has not been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parliament's Intranet contains information on how to act in cases of irregularities and fraud. Trainings offered to staff, such as on budgetary principles or on ethics provide information on how to act in cases of potential fraud. Further awareness-raising measures can be implemented by the responsible services, as appropriate.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS

123. In which way has the Covid-pandemic changed/modified the building strategy of the European Parliament?

The “Building Strategy Beyond 2019”, which has been relatively recently approved by the Bureau (in April 2018) following a proposal from the Secretary-General, brings flexibility as a key principle for allocating offices to both Members and staff. This approach is also suitable for the post-COVID period.

Accordingly, the use of office space could be further developed towards a smart way of using single offices, collaborative spaces and social facility areas. Being the owner of the quasi-totality of its buildings in the three places of work, makes Parliament the master of the area it occupies and allows the Institution to use the space available in a flexible and adjustable manner while adapting to all possible situations in the future.

The overall reflection will also be fed through assessments of teleworking patterns in the course of 2022. This will allow to launch new projects while taking fully into account effective office needs by Members and staff.

124. As a result of the pandemic, teleworking became the norm in 2020 and existing teleworking schemes will at least partially be extended also in the future. Will the EP adapt its office spaces to this new reality, e.g. by reducing or restructuring offices and work spaces to save resources?

A reflection on the use of office space after the pandemic is currently taking place, including at the level of the reflection process launched by the President on the future of parliamentary democracy after the COVID crisis. An example of the considerations being made in this regard is the assessment of the available space carried out in the new ADENAUER building.

Accordingly, following a proposal from the Secretary-General, the Bureau at its meeting of 22 July 2020 decided to re-evaluate the space needs of the West Wing. Certain parts originally foreseen such as the link between the new ADENAUER building and the old building as well as an additional restaurant (the so called "White Box") were abandoned, leading to savings amounting at EUR 18 million.

As mentioned in the previous questions, the overall reflection will also be fed through assessments of teleworking patterns in the course of 2022. This will allow to launch new projects while taking fully into account effective office needs by Members and staff.

125. What is the current minimum standard of office space area / individual office employee? How are those standards respected in different EP buildings?

An important feature of the “Buildings Strategy Beyond 2019” concerns the use of office space based on a participative and client-oriented consultation of the users. Accordingly, as far as the Administration is concerned, the Strategy moves away from a category-based calculation of office space for each Directorate-General towards providing an average amount of space per staff member (approx. 10 m²).

This new approach allows each Directorate-General to influence its own working conditions by for instance introducing more social areas to foster more collaborative ways of working.

126. What was the result of the audit on accessibility of Parliament building for people with disability over the period 2015-2019? What are the steps the Parliament is planning to take based on this audit?

In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, Parliament has committed to create a physical environment accessible to all users including persons with a disability.

Against this background Parliament has performed an accessibility audit (2015-2019) of its built environment. The results of the audit showed a good level of accessibility of buildings in both Strasbourg and Brussels in line with applicable legislation. The accessibility results for the EPLOs showed differences in their level of accessibility, mainly due to the characteristics of the buildings, and compliance with applicable legislation.

The fully independent use of Parliament buildings by persons with disabilities will however require more adaptations. The following measures were therefore taken:

-) a specialised handbook on accessibility for real estate prospection has been developed;
-) global planning of 7 years for Brussels (2021-2027; NB: this planning initially covered a period of 9 years, but following the work already carried out by the responsible Parliament services, it was possible to reduce the planning to 7 years);
-) global planning of 9 years for Strasbourg (2017-2025);
-) since 2021 a specific budget is reserved for accessibility actions in Parliament buildings both in Brussels and Strasbourg;
-) as regards Parliament's Liaison Offices a work program for the accessibility has been launched.

In Luxembourg, the new ADENAUER building was designed in compliance with the legal framework and with the Accessibility Vademecum of Parliament. The project team in charge proactively hired the services of an accessibility expert at the very beginning of the project, well before the 2015-2019 accessibility audit. The new building was therefore audited based on the project plans, including its catering facilities, which were the object of a deeper analysis. Due to the evolution and the complexity of the project, including the added security improvements at the entrances, an audit be conducted when the building is 100% operational.

127. Which criteria were used to select the proposals for the renewal of the Spaak building? Could you share the evaluation of the international jury and the initial cost evaluations of the winning projects presented to the Bureau? Can you share the Summary Pre-Project?

The criteria indicated on the competition brief are the following:

“B.22 The jury’s main criteria for assessing the entries, which relate in an integrated way to the overall sustainability of the projects, are listed below. The following criteria are listed in no particular order of importance. The criteria may be defined more precisely by the Jury during the evaluation process.

Urban design and architecture

- *Urban integration including heritage aspects*
- *Architectural design quality*
- *Compliance with functional requirements*
- *Usability and attractiveness for users and visitors*
- *Structural design*

Environmental design

- *Environmental exemplarity*
- *Relevance, appropriateness and coherence of the proposed schemes*

General requirements

- *Economic efficiency and feasibility*
- *Potential for creating identity*
- *General impression of the overall concepts*

At this stage, before having a decision by the Bureau, both the content of the proposals and the jury evaluation are confidential and cannot be disclosed.

128. *"In 2020 Parliament launched an international architectural competition for the renewal of the SPAAK building. It received 132 pre-candidatures, of which 15 candidates were invited to present by January 2021 their projects. In February 2021, the Architectural competition was concluded. The proposals selected by the international jury will be presented to the Bureau."*⁴ When will the Bureau decide upon the winner of the competition? When will the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Budgetary Control be informed about the outcome of the competition?

Following the Bureau decision of 2 July 2018, Parliament launched an international architectural competition for selected options of the SPAAK renewal. The international jury which also includes four members of the Bureau, selected proposals in early 2021 (both renovation and reconstruction options) to be presented to the Bureau and to the Committee on Budgets.

The budgetary procedures according to the Financial Regulation including the referral to the Committee on Budgets will be fully observed.

129. In light of increased teleworking, why does the EP still aim to acquire additional office spaces, such as the TREVES II building?

In all three places of work, Parliament owns almost all its buildings, allowing the Institution to have saved more than one billion euros of rental costs over the last years.

However, in Brussels, some buildings either currently occupied by Parliament, or of a major strategic interest in particular due to their location and the related security aspects, are not Parliament's property. Parliament's Building Strategy Beyond 2019 underlines the importance of owning and interconnecting parliamentary and central buildings and mentions TREVES II as a building that is in Parliament's interest to acquire.

The majority of Parliament's central buildings owned by the Parliament on the Brussels site (SPINELLI, SPAAK, BRANDT, ANTALL, STATION EUROPE / LIAISON OFFICE IN BELGIUM, SCHOLL, ZWEIG and REMARD) are linked through footbridges, which allow for the integration of these buildings into a central buildings complex.

⁴ Replies to and actions taken on the European parliament resolution of 29 April 2021 on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European union for the financial year 2019, page 19

This interconnection is however incomplete, as the TRÈVES I building, hosting today Members and staff of a Political Group, remains disconnected from the BRANDT building. The link can only be made through the TRÈVES II building which is currently subject of an ongoing acquisition procedure, as further outlined in the reply to the next question

130. Would it be possible to have a detailed plan, including a time line, on the acquisition of the TREVES 2 Building, including situation on purchase, renovation, link to Brandt building etc., which seems to be the only solution to the isolation of the TREVES 1 Building?

At its meeting of 5 October 2020, the Bureau approved the launch of a local property market prospection in Brussels. The Committee on Budgets held an exchange of views on this subject in its meeting of 15 October 2020 in the context of Early Information.

The negotiated procedure launched on 14 July 2021 resulted in the reception of three offers received within the deadline of 7 September 2021. On the basis of the technical specifications and the offers received, the negotiations were organised and concluded on 28 September 2021. The final offers were received on 5 October 2021.

On 6 October 2021, the Bureau Working Group on Buildings, Transport and a Green Parliament held an exchange of views on and recommended the acquisition of the proposed office building in Brussels. At its meeting of 18 October 2021, the Bureau took note of the results of the procurement procedure relating to the acquisition of an office building in Brussels and approved the acquisition of the building located at Rue de Trèves 9-11, as well as the signing of a purchase contract. Subsequently, the building file was submitted for the approval of the Committee on Budgets, in accordance with art. 266(3) of the Financial Regulation.

The building is in a good state. It fulfils all prescribed regulatory and compliance requirements for office use, allowing also reception of the public, as it is the case at this moment. It was fully renovated in 1998-99. The offices are fully usable and the building has also several meeting facilities. Some works to be carried out concern inter alia the improvement of the energy performance, a very limited number of water infiltration problems and upgrading the air conditioning.

131. Is the Parliament planning to provide for more services for the TREVES 1 building? If yes, when and which services?

From a catering point of view the TREVES I building seems fully serviced. On the 1st floor, there are several vending machines (coffee, beverages, and snacks). Each floor (2 to 9) is equipped with a water fountain.

Parliament responsible services will of course closely monitor staff presence in the building, including as regards teleworking patterns, in order to adjust the services offered to the needs.

132. The estimated project management costs of the Adenauer II Project were 57.7 mil EUR, whereas the actual expenditure on 31/12/2020 was 128.2 mil EUR⁵. Can you please explain the significant difference?

The construction contract structure chosen for the project (separate lots instead of a general contractor) led to the need of having additional technical and project management assistance. Aside from these additional project management costs, there was the need for additional design services to cope with technical and functional evolutions as well as change of some providers.

The breakdown of the actual cost is detailed in the table below:

Honoraires	
HW-GP (Heinle Wischer GeneralPlanung)	33.368.525
Lot A : Coordinateur-pilote (ancien)	19.017.132
Lot B : Bureau d'études architecture	13.969.193
Lot C : Bureau d'études génie civil	4.807.432
Lot D : Bureau d'études génie technique	16.637.276
Lot E : Contrôleur des coûts	1.243.117
Lot F : Coordinateur sécurité-santé	467.060
Lot G : Bureau de contrôle technique	994.703
Lot H : Economiste	4.774.537
Lot P : DPW - Coordinateur Pilote	9.207.682
Lot R : Bureau d'études génie civil et technique	10.492.047
DELTA PARTNERS	737.748
GLOBAL FACILITE S	5.607.044
SOCOTEC: Surveillance nuisances	1.347.950
Organismes agréés: SECOLUX - FUGRO - VINCOTTE (ex-AIB)	1.708.118
PWC (PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS)	200.357
Autres honoraires et frais divers	3.608.216
Total honoraires (3)	128.188.137

133. Which consequences has the Covid-pandemic had on the rollout of the Europa Experience in the Member States by 2024?

Despite the very challenging context triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, preparatory work advanced well in 2020. As a result, new contracts for stand-alone Europa Experience sites in both Rome and Paris were signed at the beginning of 2021. In addition, a building to serve as the House of Europe with an integrated Europa Experience in Dublin was purchased.

In parallel, seven market prospectations were launched in 2020. These concern Athens, Bratislava, Bucharest, Lisbon, Madrid, Sofia and Vienna.

A call for tenders has been organised in the course of 2020 for the creation of a Europa Experience space in the new ADENAUER building in Luxembourg.

In light of the above, it is fair to argue that there have been no dramatic delays in the implementation of Europa Experience projects in light of the pandemic crisis.

⁵ Report on Budgetary and Financial Management 2020 - Section I, Annex 8.

The pandemic and lasting sanitary restrictions in the first half of 2021 delayed the local market prospection procedures. As a result, the joint Work Programme was aligned in June 2021 to revised milestones for most projects. Parliament responsible services aim at completing during 2022 the exhibitions in Paris, Rome, Warsaw and Prague, as well as possibly Stockholm in 2022.

134. The Parliament acquired the plot of the Jean Monnet House in Bazoches, France, which is used as a museum and residence for the Parliament. What was the cost of the purchase of the plot?

The purchase price of the plot of land adjacent to the Jean Monnet site amounts to EUR 697 000. It consists of:

-) the purchase price for the property, namely EUR 650 000; and
-) related notarial fees and taxes amounting to EUR 47 000.

Following the approval of the project by the Committee on Budgets on 22 June 2020, the purchase contract was signed on 10 September 2020. The residential building on the plot has since been transformed into office space for Parliament's staff based in Bazoches.

135. What activities organised by the EP took place at the Jean Monnet House in 2020 (and 2019 for comparison)?

Overall activities organised at Jean Monnet House generated 13 034 visits in 2019. In 2020, events generated 3 839 visits, whereby activities were suspended from March to December.

In 2019, over twenty activities took place at the Jean Monnet House on Parliament's initiative:

-) Ten conferences for the general public (between 50-110 participants) on various topics (Jean Monnet and history of the European unity, European Twinning of towns, Defence and Citizenship, Cultural diversity in Europe, European Memory Initiatives);
-) Four training sessions for high profiles (teachers and professors, students, European School of Administration);
-) Five Special Events for Parliament's Guests (e.g. Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada under the auspices of the Jean Monnet Dialogue for Peace and Democracy led by Pat Cox);
-) Fourth meeting of the European Parliament Network of Houses and Foundations of Great Europeans;
-) The Away-Days of the Bureau (3-4 Oct. 2019).

By comparison, and despite the COVID-19 crisis, fourteen events were organised on the site in 2020 (NB: the premises were closed to the public between 16/03/2020 to 5/06/2020 in line with the first lockdown period in France) and the museum could only reopen for individual visitors (10 persons maximum) until November 2020 (second lockdown period):

-) Three Presidents' Meeting (Ursula von der Leyen, Charles Michel and David Sassoli) on 30/01/2020;
-) Seven training sessions for high school students from Ile-de-France;
-) Three training sessions for teachers;
-) Two conferences for the general public (one on history and one on the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU);
-) One outdoor event for the Heritage Days (mid-September 2020).

Parliament Jean Monnet Academy organised around forty activities in 2019:

-) Sixteen seminars and one interinstitutional seminar of Jean Monnet Academy faculty;
-) Eight management and leadership seminars;
-) Fifteen team events.

In 2020, the Jean Monnet Academy organised only five events between January and early March in light of the pandemic restrictions:

-) Two seminars of Jean Monnet Academy faculty;
-) Two management and leadership seminars;
-) One team event.

136. Following the closure of the ING bank branch in Brussels, we would like to know if DG INLO has entered into negotiations to find replacements for the available venues? A call for tender was organised in 2020, aiming to occupy two banking areas, and no offers were received. Furthermore, Members were recently informed that the last remaining KBC bank branch would close its agency located in Parliament before the end of this year. How does the Parliament intend to react?

Since 1980, a branch of KBC Bank has been present on the premises of Parliament in Brussels directly interfacing with clients as well as offering a range of services tailored to customers' needs. However, already before the COVID-19 outbreak, the worldwide trend for banks is being to increasingly shift to virtual spaces and away from physical banking facilities. This trend has lately severely intensified and touches now all EU Institutions.

Parliament run two tender procedures to find a bank to operate a branch in the main buildings in Brussels. No tenders were received in reply to the first procedure and only one tender in reply to the second.

Meanwhile, KBC informed Parliament of the closing of their branch as of 7 December 2021, as described in the Notice sent by the Quaestors on 15 September 2021 (Notice 38/2021).

In light of the above, a new procurement procedure will be launched, so that Members and staff would be able to have certain banking services available in the central buildings in Brussels. The responsible Parliament services will pursue their efforts to secure minimum banking services while taking into account the changes recently experienced by the banking sector. Besides a traditional branch, all the latest ways used by banks to serve customers will be integrated. These include inter alia installing cash machines to withdraw money and perform other bank services with a bank card, setting up temporary or mobile banking units or launching "Banking Hubs", joint branches that target individual customers.

137. In view of the difficulties to fulfil the banking concessions in the Parliament, have the services running the procedures contemplated the possibility of installing 'smart cash machines' (where a large number of services are provided for self-use)?

As explained in the reply to the previous question, the responsible Parliament services will pursue their efforts to secure minimum banking services taking on board the changes recently experienced by the banking sector and thus integrating in the technical specifications, beside a traditional branch, all the latest ways used by banks to serve customers. These include inter alia installing cash machines to withdraw money and perform other bank services with a bank card, setting up temporary or mobile banking units or launching "Banking Hubs", joint branches that target individual customers.

138. What steps is the Parliament taking to prevent the acquisition and employment of goods and services that are not in line with standards of responsible business conduct and Parliament's own views on environmental and human rights due diligence?

Parliament responsible services are working to extend Parliament's already successful Environmental Management System to cover other sustainability elements. To this end, a Working Group on Socially Responsible Public Procurement has been set up with the aim to develop and implement guidelines on social public procurement. The Working Group discusses selected issues of social procurement, such as the social situation of staff of Parliament's contractors, promotion of equal opportunities and gender balance in Parliament's contracts, respect for human rights and other basic rules in the supply chain of goods purchased by Parliament.

At the end of a test-phase to be carried out in 2022, all in-house services should report on the implementation of the guidelines. The feedback should be evaluated and taken into account in view of a possible review of Parliament's current administrative framework for social procurement.

139. What is the exact procedure for the APAs and EP staff going to Strasbourg to occupy an empty seat in one of the EP official cars going there? What is the reason these 'bookings' are not offered on the EP intranet?

For the journey between Brussels and Strasbourg first priority is given to Members. Upon prior request and under normal conditions, APAs can join their Members in the cars and minivans of the service car fleet. Three service cars are available for staff per Directorate-General for duty travel between Brussels and Strasbourg during part-session weeks (altogether 39 cars).

A further enlargement of the transport offer between the places of work during part sessions is currently not possible, as this would potentially jeopardize the functioning of the core business of the service, namely the transport of Members. The number of vehicles as well as the sanitary and working time restrictions for drivers imposed by labour law provisions do not allow a further extension of the service beyond the current offer.

140. Please provide a detailed list of what was the precise use of the fleet of vehicles of the EP (percentage of trips between airport/EP premises in Brussels/Strasbourg, between train station/EP premises, and so on).

In 2020, Parliament service fleet available for the transport of Members at the places of work was used as follows:

BRUSSELS

-) first priority 36,30%:
 - trips between EP premises and airports 28,84%;
 - trips between EP premises and train stations 7,46%;
-) second priority (within 20km of EP premises) 61,12%;
-) third priority (beyond 20km of EP premises) 2,58%.

STRASBOURG

-) first priority 18,27%:
 - trips between EP premises and airports 11,58%;
 - trips between EP premises and train stations 6,69%;
-) second priority (within 20km of EP premises) 66,13%;
-) third priority (beyond 20km of EP premises) 15,60%.

In 2020, Parliament service fleet available for the transport of goods at the places of work was used as follows:

-) Transport of mail between buildings: 4 times/day (except during lockdown/COVID period);
-) Transport of mail between three workplaces: twice a week outside sessions, 4 days/week during sessions;
-) Transport of trunks and other material to/from Strasbourg for the sessions: 12 times/year;
-) Transport to/from external missions (political Groups' meetings, official Away days, EPLOs): on specific request, average of 3 times/month;
-) Transport of other goods on demand (i.e. furniture delivery between 3 place of work, between institutions, etc): average of 3 times /week.

141. How much did it cost to develop the Interactio tool?

In 2020, the costs totalled EUR 1 702 010, broken down as follows:

-) testing multiple platforms prior to deciding to proceed with the Interactio platform (EUR 148 977);
-) adapting the meeting room infrastructure to allow for the interconnection of the multilingual remote participation platform (Interactio) into Parliament's audio visual installations (EUR 340 200 including both Brussels and Strasbourg).
-) access to the use of the platform in 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 (EUR 1 212 833)

142. Does Parliament plan to allow for remote participation in plenaries?

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote participation in plenary has been based on the President's decision on extraordinary measures enabling Parliament to carry out its duties and exercise its prerogatives under the Treaties. Remote participation in the absence of a decision by the President establishing extraordinary circumstances pursuant to Rule 237a is not foreseen in Parliament's Rules of Procedure. Therefore, any further circumstance where Members might participate remotely in plenary sessions would require an amendment to the Rules of Procedure.

In this context, it should be recalled that the future of parliamentary democracy after the pandemic, including as regards aspects concerning remote participation, is currently object of a broad discussion in the framework of a reflection process launched by the President at the end of March 2021. In this regard, five Focus Groups have discussed different issues, including as regards remote participation, hybrid meetings and remote voting. The proposals of the Focus Group are being assessed by the responsible governing bodies.

143. Is Parliament planning to improve the functionality of Interactio, e.g. so that MEPs can see each other on the platform? Is Parliament planning to enable the use of the Interactio tool on EP computers?

New features are being added to the Interactio platform on a regular basis to increase its stability and improve its functionality. In 2020, these features included the introduction of echo cancellation and the improved connectivity of end-user devices and headphones.

In 2021, further features included amongst others the ability for remote participants to see which other participants are connected and who has raised their hand, the ability to share files, an individual chat function, remote chair console, remote interpreter console and integration of remote languages to the physical infrastructure of the room.

Waiting room functionality, break-out rooms as well as the green room for testing of the connection during the meeting are planned at the end of 2021. Because of the technical limitations in the platform, the use of multiple video-slots in 2021 has been restricted to meetings with a very specific need (e.g. with a remote panel). However these restrictions are being addressed with the objective of being able to offer it to a limited number of meetings as of the first quarter of 2022.

The Interactio platform has been enabled on Parliament computers, both fixed office computers and hybrid devices, with the installation of the Edge Chromium web browser on these devices.

144. Does Parliament plan to allow for the online tabling of plenary amendments, just as it is possible for committee amendments? If not, why?

The online submission of the texts of plenary amendments is already possible, where the legislative text is available in XML at source in all languages (XML is a document format which is both human-readable and machine-readable). The administration has put in place the eLegislate project, which aims to gradually increase the number of documents available in the XML format and digitalise the entire legislative chain.

145. The 2019 discharge resolution mandates the Bureau to decide in particular what categories of data and applications can go to cloud services or not and on the choice of service providers, before final contracts are concluded. When will the administration submit to the Bureau relevant information in order for it to discuss and decide on those matters?

Parliament Information Security Policy identifies the different categories of information and establishes the related conditions for their handling and storage. When it comes to the usage of the Cloud, Parliament follows the Cloud strategic orientations approved by the Bureau in June 2020. These orientations are translated into technical, contractual, organisational and procedural measures. As a result, before contracting any cloud-based solutions, the responsible services ensure inter alia that the choice to use cloud-based solutions is compliant with the categorisation of information as defined in the information security policy. The decision to place certain data categories in the Cloud or not is taken on a case-by-case basis by the business owner, in accordance with the principles of information security and protection of personal data.

Concerning the choice of service providers, Parliament services use Inter-institutional contracts established under the Cloud II framework and the Side II framework contract.

146. The 2019 discharge resolution mandates the administration to submit to the Bureau an Open Data Policy proposal, which would define a clear scope of what should be open data, and how to produce open data in a systematic and horizontal way across all services. When will the administration submit such proposal?

Parliament already provides public access to a large number of documents on its own website, including through the legislative train schedule and the public register of documents. The open data project in Parliament strives to make it even more easily accessible and searchable.

The ongoing work on open data in Parliament is based on the guiding principles endorsed by the Bureau Working Group on ICT Innovation Strategy. It addresses four types of openness: technical, legal, practical and social. Improving the technical and legal openness is a pre-condition for the conception of a meaningful open data policy. Currently Parliament's open data portal is under development and it will provide publicly available data in machine-readable, non-proprietary formats.

Improving the legal openness means that data to be published is made available for re-use directly, without the need of an individual application, free of charge and under an open license which defines conditions for re-use. Work on finding an appropriate solution for licensing is under way.

147. Which share of administrative procedures is still based on authorisation per handwritten signature on paper and how and when does the administration intend to fully digitalise all administrative procedures?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Parliament administration underwent a significant shift from paper based to digital processes. In this context, the Public Procurement Forum has prepared guidelines for emergency use of digital signature during the pandemic, i.e. acceptance of contracts being signed with Advanced E-Signatures, which led to the instant digitalization of a significant part of Parliament's administration around contract work in April 2020.

The post-pandemic situation requires a consolidation and extension of the digitalization gains realized during the pandemic. To this end, the administration is putting in place a strategic project with the objective to facilitate the digital transformation of any paper-based processes within Parliament into digital-by-default processes, where no ink-on-paper is required for assuring the legal validity of the involved documents.

148. Can DG ITEC explain the buying criteria for the hybrid devices? Will DG ITEC offer other hybrid devices given the frequent number of issues and connectivity problems?

Parliament acquisitions strictly follow the public procurement rules as defined in the Financial Regulation. In this context, DG ITEC assures a continuous monitoring and proactive upgrades of the ICT equipment and tools in order to improve their performance and consequently the end-user experience.

Concerning the hybrid devices, investigations showed that heating problems were at the origin of some performance issues experienced by the end-users. In addition, the teleworking conditions have resulted in intensive usage of the video conference functionality and the tools providing those functionalities require additional computing resources. The latest upgrades performed and technical solutions implemented to remedy the situation have demonstrated an increased stability of the devices.

It must also be noted that the performance of hybrid devices perceived by end-users when teleworking depends on various factors, some of which are out of control of Parliament IT services. This includes for instance the local network.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

149. Which items benefited from the 2020 mopping-up transfer? Which savings occurred in 2020 due to the mopping-up transfer?

The 2020 mopping-up resulted in EUR 138 251 124 of unused appropriations being reallocated to two major building projects as follows:

-) EUR 63.351.124 to the ADENAUER Building project;
-) EUR 74.900.000 to the acquisition of the SCHOLL building

This reallocation will result in savings in the following years in terms of saved interests for the ADENAUER building (+/- EUR 6.5 Mio in total for the duration of the project) and usufruct for the SCHOLL building (+/- EUR 3.7 Mio per year).

150. Public tenders for contracts for the purchase of goods and services by the European Parliament: Were there single bidder tenders in 2020? How many? What were the reasons for having received only one offer? Were there tenders where the same company won two or more tenders for a very different product or service? Please provide us with an overview of how many tenders were won by each company. How many of the single-bidder tenders had a value of over 15.000 Euro?

There have been 1 415 single bidder tenders in 2020 (for 1 545 procurement procedures, out of which 1 344 had a value equal or below EUR 15 000). 1 326 of the single bidder tenders concern contracts with value equal or below EUR 15 000 and 89 contracts above EUR 15 000. There were cases in which the same company has won two or more tenders (cf. overview in Annex to reply to Question 150).

The Financial Regulation (FR) provides for the possibility for authorising officers to limit certain types of procedures to a single offer:

-) Point 6.3 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation (FR), if the value of the contract to be awarded does not exceed EUR 15 000.
-) Point 11.1(a) to (m) of Annex I FR, if the authorising officer uses the negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice for specific cases referred to in that point.
-) Point 12.1 of Annex I FR, if the authorising officer uses the competitive procedure with negotiation or the competitive dialogue for specific cases referred to in Point 12.1(a) to (f) of Annex I FR.

Pursuant to Article 74(10) FR, for each financial year, an ex-post report on contracts concluded by negotiated procedures in accordance with points (a) to (f) is sent to the CONT and BUDG committees.

For all other types of procedures for which a contract has been awarded with only a single offer in 2020, various factors could explain the lack of quantity in offers. These include the relatively complex EU procurement rules and highly ambitious standards creating administrative burden for tenderers. In the same vein, a lack of attractiveness could be originating from the limited award amounts of some of Parliament's public procurement procedures.

The responsible Parliament services have taken appropriate measures (guidelines, awareness raising in trainings, exchange of best practices, etc.) to encourage the reception of more offers in public procurement procedures launched by Parliament. The services are also looking into options aimed at further simplifying procedures to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic burdens. In this context, the development of digital procurement tools is a major evolution which will enable to further reduce procedural administrative burden and to reach a higher number of economic operators.

It should be noted that digital tools such as *eTendering* and *eSubmission* are already available for some procurement procedures. Technical developments are ongoing to expand their use to a larger number of procedures in the future.

151. What is the estimated saving after the cancellation of the missions to Strasbourg and to Luxembourg from March 2020? What is the amount of this saving and how does the Parliament intend to use it?

The total savings connected to the cancellation of missions to the three Parliament places of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic for the year 2020 amounted to EUR 26 260 608 million. The surpluses were transferred to other sections of Parliament budget and mainly used to finance IT, catering, recruitment of contract staff and building projects as well as the Medical Services.

A breakdown of the savings by budget line is provided in the table below.

Budget (sub- item)	Title	Impact of Covid-19
3000-01	Expenses for staff missions and duty travel between the three places of work: duty travel between the three working places	EUR 14.974.360
3000-03	Expenses for staff missions and duty travel between the three places of work: learning and development	EUR 2.295.700
3000-04	Expenses for staff missions and duty travel between the three places of work: trainees	EUR 590.000
4220-04	Expenditure relating to parliamentary assistance: expenses for mission and duty travel between 3 places of work and external training of accredited assistants – Statute for Members	EUR 8.400.548
TOTAL		EUR 26.260.608

152. Can you provide an overview of the spending made to facilitate the plenary sessions in Strasbourg in 2020 and 2021? For example, what were the costs of additional transport put in place to arrange these sessions?

The usual means of transport were used for the part-sessions in 2020 and 2021. No additional transport was put in place.

In 2020, only two plenary sessions took place in Strasbourg, right before the outbreak of the pandemic in March. These two sessions were organised with a standard trunk collection.

When the plenary sessions in Strasbourg resumed in June 2021, taking into account reduced staff presence, trunks were authorised only for Members and political Groups as well as some exemptions concerning essential services for plenary works. This has led to a consistent reduction of trucks (down to 4).

153. How many MEPs flew to Strasbourg in 2020? How many staff members flew to Strasbourg in 2020? Where did they depart?

A total of 497 Members used a plane to fly to Strasbourg during 2020 (part-sessions of January and February). For the list of airports used by Members, please refer to the Annex to this reply.

In total, 248 staff members (including APAs and Members' trainees) flew to Strasbourg in 2020 (part-sessions of January and February) for 296 missions where the travel involved at least one leg (outward and/or return journey) by plane. The place of departure for APAs and Members' trainees was Brussels.

The places of departure for agents (mostly EPLOs' agents) were the following: Brussels, Madrid, Stockholm, Vienna, Rome, Dublin, Berlin, Helsinki, Luxembourg, Athens, Wrocław, Tallin, the Hague, Riga, Bratislava, Vilnius, Warsaw, Budapest, Prague, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Nicosia, Valetta, Zagreb, Marseille, Sofia, Edinburgh, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Milan, and Barcelona.

154. Members can ask for a reimbursement of their travel costs for ordinary trips to Parliament's three locations of work by car. There is a reimbursement ceiling of 1000km per outward or inward journey for travel by car. How many times was reimbursement requested for travel by car where the route length exceeded 500km one way? What does the EP do to discourage individual long travels by car and promote more sustainable ways of travel?

A total of 2 668 single trips that exceeded 500 km, within ordinary journeys, were reimbursed. In order to put a ceiling on long travels by car, Parliament decided that reimbursement in respect of travel by car shall be made up a maximum of 1000 km for each leg of a return journey (Quaestors' Notice 53/2012).

The current regulatory framework for reimbursement of travel expenses does not favour any specific means of transport. Any change to the applicable rules to favour one means of transport over another requires a decision at the level of the competent governing bodies.

155. Why is the EP not collecting the miles from the airline tickets paid by the EU budget? Where is the justification for individuals to use extra free tickets, upgrades, etc. for their private travels that are based on the tickets bought by the EP?

It is not possible for an organisation or company to collect the miles from the airline tickets paid by them. The airlines who have a program for travellers to collect bonus miles, attribute them directly to the traveller, no matter who paid for the ticket. Furthermore, airlines categorically refuse to centralise miles in a company/institutional account.

Parliament's travellers can use the miles received for future work-related travel. There is however currently no regulatory framework in force which obliges travellers to do this.

Furthermore, as frequent flyer accounts are private and nominative, Parliament is unable to have an overview of such miles. Due to data protection rules, employers cannot oblige staff members to declare their miles accumulated during business travel.

156. The CWT Travel agency had to outsource the arrangement of a mission to Cuba due to the agency being subject to the US legal framework. Are there other ways in which the travel agency is limited in its operations due to its basis in the United States, rather than the European Union?

Parliament's service provider is CWT Global BV, a Dutch legal entity. The contract stipulates the obligation to book travel "to any destination within or outside the EU". After the first Parliament's booking request to Cuba, CWT Global BV informed Parliament's services about their complex booking procedure stemming from their ties with its American mother company.

In order to ensure continuity of service for Members and staff, the responsible Parliament services launched a procurement procedure for the selection of a travel agency that can process reservations for which CWT Global BV might have some constraints. Accordingly, a contract was concluded with FCM Travel Solutions on 29 January 2021 for a period of two years with the possibility of two annual extensions. This ensures that all Parliament's travel bookings can be processed, which to date has been always guaranteed.

157. How many MEPs returned the part of their General Expenditure Allowance that they had received in or before 2020 but were unable to spend? How much was returned in total? How many MEPs left their posts in 2020 and how many of these MEPs repaid the unspent GEA to the EP? How does the EP raise awareness of outgoing MEPs' obligations in this domain, and plan to make the process of repaying unspent GEA easier? What did the Parliament, in 2020, recommend Members do with the unspent part of their GEA? How many MEPs refrained from having the GEA transferred on a monthly basis? What was the total percentage of the budget reserved for the GEA that was not used in 2020?

A total of 30 Members returned part of their General Expenditure Allowance (GEA) that they had received in or before 2020 declaring this to Parliament responsible services. The total GEA amount returned on a voluntary basis in 2020 was EUR 386 081.53. This amount concerns the GEA paid to Members in 2020 but possibly also from previous years as Members often do not specify to which year(s) the returned amount refers to.

A total of 83 Members finished their mandate in 2020 (72 due to Brexit). 2 of those Members have returned GEA funds in 2020.

Members can suspend the payment of the allowance or request a reduced monthly allowance, if they estimate their expenses being less than the provided amounts. If Members have not used the full amount of the allowance, they can return unused amounts by making a transfer to Parliament's bank account. All the necessary information on reimbursements, suspension or reduction of payments of GEA is available in the Members' section of Parliament's intranet (see: <https://epintranet.in.ep.europa.eu/home/browse-as/human-resources/salary-allowances-mep/general-expenditure-allowance.html>).

Before the end of a legislative term or on an individual basis, i.e. when a Member leaves office, Parliament responsible services organise general and individual info-sessions for Members on their Social and Financial Entitlements (see Quaestors Notice 42/2018). During these sessions, the possibility of returning any unspent GEA amount is indicated and the practical modalities to do so explained.

Only one Member has never provided a specific bank account to which to transfer his/her GEA, and therefore did not fulfil the conditions as laid down by the Bureau for the payment of the GEA, which was never been paid to him/her. All other Members receive the GEA on a monthly basis as a lump sum. Three Members opted to receive only a part of their GEA.

In view of the above, in 2020 GEA was paid to all, except one Member, on a monthly basis as a lump sum. As indicated above, the returned amount of GEA in 2020 corresponds to 0.53% of the total GEA paid to Members.

158. How many Members have admitted an independent auditor/accountant to check the accounts and published that auditor's/accountant's opinion on the EP's website in 2020?

Members can on a voluntary basis, publish on Parliament's website the expenses incurred in connection with the General Expenditure Allowance (GEA). Five voluntary declarations on the use of the GEA were submitted during the calendar year 2020. Of those, three contained a report from an auditor or accountant. It should be noted that the voluntary declarations submitted in 2020 referred to the previous financial year, i.e. 2019, which was an election year. Since mid-2021, the administration has been gradually receiving voluntary declarations relating to the 2020 financial year. That process is still ongoing.

159. Does the EP plan to simplify the publication of an independent auditor's/accountant's opinion in order to increase compliance with the recommendation, e.g. by providing a guideline with clear labels for each category of costs, provision of a bookkeeping tool for MEPs, to provide a template for the auditor to fill in, etc.?

The Bureau decision of 2 July 2018 on the "List of expenses which may be defrayed from the General Expenditure Allowance" contains a detailed list of the most common expenses divided in six expense-categories that can be defrayed with the GEA. The auditors and accountants can therefore use the proposed structure.

160. Reform of the GEA: How many additional FTEs, would it require to 1) set up a system that would allow Parliament to reimburse expenses made by the GEA instead of paying a lump sum (similar to how travel reimbursements are currently handled) and 2) to carry out sample checks of the GEA spending of 5% of all MEPs (=36 MEPs) annually? Please provide us with the analysis behind the estimates.

1) The setting-up of a system that would allow Parliament to reimburse expenses made via the GEA instead of paying a lump sum would involve the following:

-) Setting-up an authorising structure to process the reimbursements that complies with the principles of segregation of duties and sound financial management in line with the Financial Regulation. This involves, inter alia, the operational and financial verification of the eligibility of the expenses underlying the reimbursement (including specific ex-ante controls), the selected checks of regularity, reality and value-for-money of the object of expenses, the final validation by the Authorising officer, and the execution of the banking operations by the Accounting officer. This chain of responsibilities would apply not only to payments, but also to the recoveries which will potentially arise from the verifications;
-) Mobilising the type of profiles capable of understanding the transactions underlying the reimbursements, which are incurred under 27 national fiscal regimes and in 23 languages;

- J Staffing a reimbursement team to timely process the requests from the Members. To some extent, the workload for the reimbursements of expenses incurred by Non-attached member (political and information activities) could be taken as a benchmark for projections onto the GEA. It assumes that the expenses underlying the GEA will follow a pattern comparable to the expenses of Non-attached Members (from 20 to 40 monthly invoices per Member) with type of risks requiring 5 full-time equivalent (FTE) posts to reimburse an average of EUR 2.5 Mio yearly. Based on calculation by the Directorate-General for Finance (DG FINS), by pro-rata projection, switching the payment of the GEA (EUR 38 Mio) into a reimbursement regime would therefore require at least 75 FTE.
- 2) The checks of the yearly expenses concerning the GEA of 36 Members (5% of all Members) shall follow audit-type controls to provide sufficient assurance on the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions with regard to the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members (IMMS) and the applicable national regulations. These controls cover the sampled amount of EUR 1 977 000 (EUR 4 576 x 12 months x 36 Members) and would involve:
- J Collecting all the documentation substantiating the expenses, assuming they are available with the Members;
 - J Establishing categories of expenses on a risk-based approach;
 - J Ensuring that the expenses (and the corresponding contracts) are legal, regular and eligible (by nature, in space and in time);
 - J Verifying that the transactions were free from conflicts of interests and, where national regulations require so, involved only duly authorised persons;
 - J Ensuring that the expenses have been actually disbursed with a direct link to the GEA and the Member;
 - J Checking proofs of actual delivery of the underlying services or goods to the direct benefit of the Member;
 - J Reviewing the value-for-money of purchased services and goods;
 - J Verifying, where applicable, that the public procurement rules have been complied with;
 - J Establishing whether the amount of GEA has been fully used (or returned).

The existence and availability of proper accounting records with each Member is of course a fundamental pre-requisite to the feasibility of the controls.

With regard to the procedural steps outlined above, an estimated 4 to 6 FTE will be necessary to control the GEA of 36 Members a year (5% of all Members). This estimation may vary significantly depending on uncertainty factors such as availability of the justifying documents (including bank statements), reliability of the proofs, complexity of some cases and proportion of recurrent contracts (next to 23 language coverage and 27 national fiscal regimes).

161. Can the Bureau explain the objectives of the dedicated working group for the further handling of the GEA?

After the decision of the Bureau of 2 July 2018, the Ad-hoc Working Group on the revision of the list of expenses which may be defrayed from the General Expenditure Allowance (GEA) had achieved its purpose. There is therefore currently no working group of the Bureau on the GEA.

162. What was the total amount of per diems paid out to Members in 2020 (in 2019, 2018 for comparison)? How many Members have paid back parts of their per diems in 2020 (in 2019, for comparison)?

Total number of daily allowances paid to Members:

2020	61.105
2019	97.572
2018	101.434

During 2020, a total of 5 Members opted for a voluntary reimbursement of the daily subsistence allowance (total amount: EUR 48 540.80). This compares to 3 Members for a total amount reimbursed of EUR 9 038.38 in 2019 and to 3 Members for total amount reimbursed of EUR 37 900 in 2018.

163. What are the most recent figures on the actuarial deficit and the return on investment of the voluntary pension fund? What was the deficit compared to 2019?

As of 31 December 2020, the actuarial deficit of the Fund amounted to EUR 371.3 Mio. This compares to EUR 328.6 Mio as of 31 December 2019.

According to the Fund's annual accounts for the financial year 2020, the change in value of investment between 2019 and 2020 amounted to EUR 3.06 Mio. which according to the report by the Chair of the Board equals a return of 4% on investments.

164. What does Parliament consider to be the implications of the Court's judgment in cases T-720/19 to T-725/19 on the pension fund with regard to the Bureau's statement in 2009 that it considers a legal responsibility to guarantee the pension rights of its beneficiaries? How does the Parliament interpret Articles 27(1) and (2) of the Statute for Members of the Parliament regarding the voluntary pension fund, also in light of the judgment? And what other implications does Parliament derive from the judgment for addressing the fund's possible insolvency?

In its judgements in cases T-720/19 to T-725/19, the Court concluded that already acquired rights were not impacted by the contested Bureau decision of 10 December 2018, and hence the judgment in question has no general impact on acquired pension rights under the additional voluntary pension scheme.

The Court further confirmed the Bureau's competence to adopt decisions aiming at improving the sustainability of the fund. Therefore, rights in the course of being acquired may be subject to modifications as a result of a balancing of the interests involved. In that sense, the Court considers that economic necessities and the public interest of guaranteeing the viability of the supplementary pension fund in the case in question, can justify the modification of the modalities of acquisition of the right to supplementary pension.

The Court also concluded that the Bureau decision of 10 December 2018 respected the principle of proportionality.

The judgment was delivered on 15 September 2021 and Parliament is in the process of examining its possible implications for Articles 27(1) and 27(2) of the Statute for Members regarding the voluntary pension fund with the view to submit to the Bureau additional proposals to improve the sustainability of the Fund.

According to the annual accounts of the ASBL for the year 2020, the fund's financial assets amounted to EUR 94 Mio, and annual pension payments totalled EUR 19.6 Mio.

165. On the basis of the judgment, does the Bureau decision of 10 December 2018 apply to all members of the fund, or only a subset, such as those members that have not retired yet? If only a subset, what consequences does this have for possible actions the Bureau may take?

The Bureau decision of 10 December 2018 applies only to pensions established after 1 January 2019. As such, it does not affect beneficiaries who retired before that date. As regards future actions and decisions, the Bureau retains its competence for financial, organisational and administrative decisions on matters concerning Members within the applicable legislative framework.

166. Can you share the detailed evaluation of the judgment by Parliament's legal service?

On 15 September 2021, the General Court of the European Union delivered the following two judgments: *Ashworth a.o./Parliament*, joined cases T-720/19 to T-725/19 and *Arnautakis a.o./Parliament*, joined cases T-240/20 to T-245/20.

The first judgment concerned the introduction by the Bureau on 10 December 2018 of a special levy of 5% of the amount of the additional pension and the second judgment concerned the increase by the Bureau on 10 December 2018 of the pension age from 63 to 65 for the Members benefiting from the additional pension.

The two modifications to the pension scheme have been applicable since 1 January 2019 to any additional pension which has become payable since that date.

The applicants invoked the illegality of the modifications decided by the Bureau on the basis of five different pleas. The General Court dismissed all five pleas.

In the first place, concerning all the pleas except for part of the third one which will be discussed in more detail below, the General Court confirmed that the Bureau has the competence to adopt modifications to the conditions relating to the pension scheme initially established in Annex VII of the PEAM Rules, because the modification of the additional voluntary pension scheme is a measure relating to financial decisions on matters concerning Members according to Article 25(3) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure. The General Court also considered that the levy of 5% does not constitute a tax, which would have to be adopted by unanimity by the Council of the European Union, but instead has the nature of a social contribution to the Fund. The Court further confirmed that the reasoning behind a general act such as the Bureau decision concerned can be brief and further noted that the applicants were completely aware of the context of the adoption of the Bureau decision.

Regarding the alleged violation of the protection of the legitimate expectations, the Court underlined the fact that the applicants do not refer to any precise information given to them that the rules concerning the pension scheme would be upheld in the same manner and that the Bureau had already amended the PEAM Rules in 2009 by invoking the deterioration of the economic and financial situation relating to the pension fund.

Concerning the alleged violation of the principle of proportionality, the Court noted that the objectives pursued by the Institution were legitimate and corresponded to Parliament's concerns relating to the problems of liquidity of the pension fund and that the two modifications adopted, taken together, were not manifestly inappropriate to fulfil the objectives. Regarding the alleged violation of the principle of equal treatment, the Court could not find any discrimination against the applicants.

Next, the Court rejected the argumentation relating to the alleged violation of the principle of legal certainty, concluding that the Bureau decision had no retroactive effect. It considered that the viability of the Fund could constitute an overriding public interest, which would be in contradiction with the adoption of transitional measures.

In the second place, concerning the alleged violation of the acquired rights and the future entitlements of the applicants, the Court dismissed, firstly, the argument of the applicants according to which Article 27(2) of the Statute for Members has had as a consequence the freezing of the material rules relating to the additional pension scheme in the sense that any modification of the modalities of the scheme would be forbidden in the future.

Secondly, given that Article 27(2) of the Statute for Members does therefore not constitute a legal obstacle in that respect, the Court considered that, concerning the future entitlements of the applicants who have not yet acquired rights under the additional voluntary pension scheme (which are protected in accordance with the general principles of EU law), these can be modified under certain conditions after a balancing of the interests concerned. It further noted that requirements of an economic nature such as the public interest to guarantee the viability of the Fund can justify the modification of the modalities of the acquisition of the right to the additional pension, if this modification respects the principle of proportionality.

The Court relied on a literal as well as contextual interpretation of Article 27(2) of the Statute and analysed the structure of this provision in order to confirm that the Bureau has the competence to define and amend the material rules concerning the pension scheme and that the future entitlements do not benefit from any specific protection.

According to Parliament Legal Service, it follows from the two judgments that the Court confirms that acquired rights as such, of Members who have already fulfilled all the necessary conditions for the acquisition of the right to the additional voluntary pension, are fully protected under the general principles of EU law. However, for those Members who have not yet fulfilled all the conditions for the acquisition of pension rights and who therefore only hold future entitlements under the pension scheme, those conditions as well as the modalities of the pension can still be amended on condition that the principle of proportionality is duly respected. This means that the objectives pursued have to be legitimate and that the measures adopted by the legislator are not manifestly inappropriate to achieve these objectives.

167. In light of the judgment, which actions will the Secretary General propose to the Bureau to avert negative financial consequences for Union taxpayers? Will the Bureau liquidate the Fund, rebalance its financing model, further increase the retirement age and/or reduce the pension rights of beneficiaries to achieve this? Will the Secretary General share these proposals with members of the Budgetary Control committee in advance?

As already mentioned in the reply to Question 164, in its judgements in cases T-720/19 to T-725/19, the Court concluded that already acquired rights were not impacted by the contested Bureau decision of 10 December 2018, and hence the judgment in question has no general impact on acquired pension rights under the additional voluntary pension scheme.

The Court further confirmed the Bureau's competence to adopt decisions aiming at improving the sustainability of the fund. The Court also concluded that the Bureau decision of 10 December 2018 respected the principle of proportionality.

The judgment was delivered on 15 September 2021 and Parliament is in the process of examining its implications for future actions and proposals to be submitted to the Bureau with the view to improve the sustainability of the Fund while reducing Parliament's liability as much as possible. As regards any future decisions, the Bureau retains its competence for financial, organisational and administrative decisions on matters concerning Members within the applicable legislative framework.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

168. Given the increased absence of members and staff from the EP offices and the shift to telework, has the EP administration taken any measures to prevent thefts from the EP buildings offices? How many theft situations, from members or staff offices, were brought to the Parliament's attention in 2020 (in 2019, 2018 for comparison)? Can DG SAFE provide an overview of the total damage due to thefts inside Parliament buildings in 2020? What is the current state of the investigations in these cases? Have there been arrests or charges filed against individuals following the detection of the thefts? Have any of the perpetrators been identified?

The total number of thefts reported in Parliament by Members, APA's, staff and all other parties is respectively:

Year	2018	2019	2020
Number of thefts	82	107	199

The annual average number of thefts perpetrated in Parliament since 2017 is 123. The average annual value of the items stolen corresponds to EUR 60 000. The most frequently stolen items are high-tech equipment, especially small items such as tablets, laptops, smartphones and photo equipment.

An analysis of the breakdown by date shows that thefts are reported most frequently on return after periods of closure and during or just after part-sessions. Theft therefore occur both when Parliament is experiencing peaks of activity and when the buildings are almost empty. The high number of theft cases reported in the context of the COVID pandemic confirms this tendency.

In 2020, there have been a number of specific phenomena:

-) a significant increase in the number of thefts reported in Parliament compared to 2019, which can be explained by the fact that the buildings remained mostly empty for a long period, so that people could move in the buildings largely unobserved. From September 2020 onwards the number of cases recorded fell sharply;
-) a notable increase in the sums involved (the total damage due to thefts inside Parliament buildings in 2020 is estimated at around EUR 127.000) which can be explained by the value of the individual items of high-tech equipment and devices stolen (this period coincided with the large-scale distribution of such devices);
-) an increase in the percentage of Members, APAs and political Groups' staff among the victims (69% in the period studied in 2020, compared to 47% in previous years), which may be explained by the fact that the areas of the buildings occupied by these categories remained almost completely empty during the lockdown.

As regards investigations, Parliament services act within the framework of the applicable Rules governing security and safety in the European Parliament. Investigations were launched for each reported case. In cases involving valuable equipment, investigators collaborated with the national police to file complaints enabling stolen equipment to be registered with the police in the Schengen Information System database. As of the end of October 2021, individuals have been identified, arrested and charged by the national authorities (4 in 2020 and 1 in 2021). Different cases are still under investigation.

As regards preventive measures, please see the reply below to Question 169.

169. Which additional safety measures have been put in place since the thefts and to significantly reduce the risk of further thefts? Is the EP administration considering to increase the number of surveillance cameras in the corridors and hallways?

On a proposal from the Secretary-General, at its extraordinary meeting of 22 July 2020, the Bureau adopted immediate theft-prevention measures applicable without delay and at reasonable cost.

These measures included:

-) an awareness-raising campaigns on theft-prevention;
-) physical and technical protection of valuable IT equipment;
-) provision of separate master keys for each area and floor, with strict limits on their distribution; and
-) performance of maintenance operations in Members' offices subject to prior notification.

At the same meeting, the Bureau held an exchange of views on long-term measures, namely:

-) the introduction of electronic door locks,
-) increased CCTV coverage and
-) access' rights tailored to groups and areas in Parliament's buildings.

As these measures have a considerable budgetary and resources-related impact, the Bureau invited the relevant services to conduct feasibility assessments covering budgetary, technical, planning and structural aspects of the measures concerned.

At its meeting of 14 January 2021, the Secretary-General presented to the Bureau a note informing about the implementation of the immediate measures.

Relevant actions included the following:

-) An awareness-raising campaign in the form of posters and webinars was implemented and continued on a regular basis by DG SAFE.
-) With a view to protecting valuable IT equipment, Parliament services distributed more than 8700 coded cable locks for hybrid computers.
-) A new key management system was introduced together with new access keys for each area, floor and building, with strict limits on their distribution. The responsible services of the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO) replaced all door locks in the offices of Members during the 2020 summer period and those of the offices of accredited parliamentary assistants by the end of September 2020.
-) Since 27 July 2020 Parliament's services introduced a streamlined procedure in cooperation with the external contractors for maintenance interventions on request. The intervention is notified by email to the Member concerned by the Buildings Helpdesk. The notification specifies the timeframe and the action to be performed. It also provides the name of the company.

At the same meeting of 14 January 2021, the Secretary-General presented to the Bureau the assessments made to support decision-making on long-term measures. After a wide ranging exchange of views, the Bureau judged the increased CCTV coverage a rather intrusive measure, questioned the benefits and proportionality of establishing different zones and access rights within Parliament's main buildings. The Bureau supported in principle the idea of electronic locks and asked that the various options be tested in the framework of the IDEA Lab.

170. Is the information on Parliament's computers encrypted so that in case these devices get stolen, the information stored on them is safe?

Parliament's Cybersecurity framework policy⁶ foresees the protection for various types of IT equipment, based on their risk profile. The protection profile covers specific requirements for portable devices, such as drive encryption as a safeguard measure to reduce the risk linked to loss of such equipment.

The configuration deployed on Parliament hybrid and laptop devices includes functionalities to encrypt their hard disk requiring a first authentication with username and personal PIN code to access it.

The configuration for other Parliament smart devices (i.e. iPhones, iPads) includes a default encryption of the equipment, and an additional encrypted secure container on the device, that allows, upon request by the user, to perform a remote wipe of the information stored on the device (in case of lost or stolen device). Furthermore, the storage is mainly on centralised servers, limiting data stored locally, and therefore reducing further the risk of accessing valuable information in lost/stolen devices.

⁶ https://itecnet.in.ep.europa.eu/files/live/sites/itecnet/files/security/ep_cybersecurity_framework_policies_v1.0.pdf

GREEN PARLIAMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

171. On 16 December 2019, following a proposal from the Secretary-General, the Bureau adopted new ambitious key performance indicator targets for Parliament's environmental indicators, including a 40% carbon emission reduction target for 2024. Can you present how much has been achieved since then?

The global performance figures presented below show both the pre-pandemic performance in 2019, and the 2020 performance which was heavily impacted by the reduced activity in light of the restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The EMAS Unit is currently preparing an overview on the contribution of all Parliament's entities to the different key performance indicator targets. This includes a gap analysis covering all relevant sectors and sub-sectors within Parliament in relation to the respective targets. Based on this analysis, all necessary steps will be taken to achieve the key performance indicator targets in time, taking into account the budgetary planning for 2023.

Environmental aspect	Indicator	Target for 2024	Performance in 2019	Performance in 2020
CO₂ emissions	Carbon footprint in tons of CO ₂ eq. per FTE	40% reduction between 2006 and 2024	- 37.7% (compared to 2006)	- 65,4% (compared to 2006)
CO₂ emissions from transport of persons	Carbon emissions resulting from transport of people in tons of CO ₂ eq. per FTE	30% reduction between 2006 and 2024	- 23.2% (compared to 2006)	-77,6% (compared to 2006)
Gas, heating oil, and district heating consumption	Annual consumption of gas, fuel oil and district heating ⁷ in kWh per FTE	25% reduction between 2012 and 2024	- 22.5% (compared to 2012)	-23,1% (compared to 2012)
Renewable energy	Share of energy used by EP which is generated on-site from renewable resources	25% attained by 2024	15.3%	17,7%
Electricity consumption	Annual electricity consumption in kWh per FTE	20% reduction between 2012 and 2024	- 16.4% (compared to 2012)	-19,1% (compared to 2012)
Paper consumption	Average paper consumption in kg per FTE over a 5-year period	Reduction by 50% in 2019-2024, compared to the base period of 2010-2014	- 43.5% (compared to the average for the 2010-2014 period)	-60,8% (compared to the average for the 2010-2014 period)

⁷ Calculated as a rolling average of the last three years to even out the effects of climatic variation.

Environmental aspect	Indicator	Target for 2024	Performance in 2019	Performance in 2020
Water consumption	Annual water consumption in m ³ per FTE	15% reduction between 2012 and 2024	- 16.9 % (compared to 2012)	-37,1% (compared to 2012)
Waste recycling	Percentage of waste recycled	Recycle on average 70% of the total amount of waste over the 2016-2024 period	67.2% (over the 2016-2019 period)	70,6% (over the 2016-2019 period)
Non-recycled waste production	Annual production of non-recycled waste in kg per FTE	20% reduction between 2012 and 2024	- 25,2% , without special construction waste + 46,8% overall (compared to 2012)	- 64,6% overall (compared to 2012)
Food waste	Amount of food waste (unsold and leftovers food) in kg per meal served	30% reduction between 2016 and 2024	- 22.0% (compared to 2016)	-36,7% (compared to 2016)
Green public procurement	Percentage of contracts (among the priority product categories ⁸) classified as “Green” or “Green by Nature”	90% by 2024	89.1%	85,25%

172. Can you give us the percentage of renewable energy supplied to the EP in 2020? What was the share of each renewable energy source in the total? Please provide data from previous years for comparison.

Since 2008, all electricity purchased by the European Parliament is 100% ‘green’ electricity, i.e. electricity from renewable sources with appropriate certificates of origin. Electricity used in external data centres was also 100% ‘green’.

Brussels: 100% of the electricity consumption is guaranteed from a renewable energy source.

Strasbourg: 100% of the electricity consumption is guaranteed from a renewable energy source.

⁸ Priority product categories defined in the EP Implementation Guide on Green Public Procurement. Currently, these categories are: Buildings; Cleaning; Food and Catering; Furniture; Gardening and Green Areas; IT and Imaging Equipment; Lighting; Office Supplies; Paper; Sanitary and Water Equipment; Textiles; Vehicles and Transport; Waste management.

Luxembourg: Parliament buys electricity from 100 % renewable sources based on an inter-institutional contract since 2016.

See also reply to Question 182.

173. What were the quantities of electricity, gas, oil (and possibly other sources of energy) bought in 2020 compared to 2019 and 2018?

BRUSSELS

Energy	2020	2019	2018
Electricity (kWh)	61.729.866	67.809.322	71.544.340
Gas (kWh)	44.436.876	44.494.027	52.870.521
Oil (kWh)	0	0	0

STRASBOURG

Energy	2020	2019	2018
Electricity (kWh)	25.970.530	32.385.546	32.385.546
Gas (kWh)	5.987.082	6.242.872	1.991.606
Oil (kWh)	148.500	148.500	148.500

The different gas consumption in 2019 and 2020 compared to 2018's is due to the replacement of the heat pumps and the use of the gas boilers for heat production in the Weiss building.

LUXEMBOURG

Energy	2020	2019	2018
Electricity (kWh)	13.116.894	14.606.094	15.531.157
Gas (kWh)	16.797.897	10.538.262	11.631.158
Oil (kWh)	570	513	485

This increase in gas consumption is due to the simultaneous occupation of a new building and various existing buildings, which has resulted in an increase in surface area.

174. What was the composition of the EP's vehicle fleet in 2020 (and for comparison in 2019, 2018) in terms of type of car (internal combustion engine, electric engine, and hybrid)?

Composition of the people transport service fleet in 2020

-) 15 full battery electric cars;
-) 10 fuel cell electric cars;
-) 80 plug-in hybrid;
-) 40 diesel vans.

Composition of the people transport service fleet in 2019

-) 15 full battery electric cars;
-) 61 plug-in hybrid;
-) 46 diesel vans

Composition of the people transport service fleet in 2018

-) 61 plug-in hybrid;
-) 79 diesel vans and cars.

Composition of the transport of goods service fleet in 2020

-) 9 diesel trucks ;
-) 14 diesel vans;
-) 10 battery electric cars.

Composition of the transport of goods service fleet in 2019

-) 9 diesel trucks;
-) 14 diesel vans;
-) 10 battery electric cars.

Composition of the transport of goods service fleet in 2018

-) 7 diesel trucks;
-) 12 diesel vans;
-) 10 battery electric cars.

175. How many litres of fuel were consumed by how many cars for how many kilometres as part of the EP's car service in 2020 (and 2019, 2018 for comparison)?

In 2020, the service cars fleet consumed 77 188.83 litres of fossil fuel for the execution of transport tasks falling in the remit of the People Transport Unit at the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO).

In 2019, the overall consumption for fossil fuel of service vehicles was at 214.354,07 litres.

Due to a change of provider in the beginning of 2019, the figures on fuel consumption of 2018 are no longer accessible to Parliament services.

The service responsible does not hold information on the total amount of kilometres in a specific year. This information is only relevant when the fleet needs to be replaced.

176. Does the EP keep track or an estimate of work-related travels by MEPs, APAs and group staff, including the mode of transportation for their work in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, as well as missions-related trips? If the CO2 travel offset is not assessed, how can the EP make a realistic estimate on its carbon neutrality?

Parliament has the broadest scope to calculate its carbon footprint among EU institutions. This includes all direct, semi-direct, and indirect emissions for which data can be obtained or estimated. Data on travel by Members and APAs linked to their work in Brussels, Luxembourg, and Strasbourg, as well as mission-related trips are reported to the EMAS Unit by the relevant services on an annual basis. This reporting includes the mode of transportation used for each trip.

This data is included in Parliament's annual carbon footprint calculation. The resulting emissions are added to the reporting with respect to achievement of environmental performance targets as well as offsetting of irreducible emissions in line with the Bureau decision on carbon offsetting from October 2015.

When it comes to data on mission travel of political Group staff, this is provided to the EMAS Unit on a voluntary basis, as the reporting has to be done by the political Groups themselves. To the extent this data is provided, it is then also included in the carbon footprint calculation, reporting and offsetting scope.

177. Does Parliament offset the carbon for flights taken by Members, APAs, group staff and EP staff?

Parliament offsets all of its irreducible carbon emissions based on the decision of the Bureau of October 2015. This includes emissions from flights by Members, APAs, and (to the extent relevant data for the calculation is provided) political Group staff.

Parliament's environmental policy, as implemented in the EMAS Action Plan, is based on the principle of preventing emissions and, where emissions are unavoidable, of limiting them in the first place. However, if emissions cannot be limited any further for a given year, other options have to be explored. In this context, CO₂ offsetting, i.e. the purchase of carbon offsets to compensate for the purchaser's own emissions, is part of Parliament's strategy to tackle climate change, as a final step in a complete carbon management plan.

178. What is the estimate of the contribution that lighting of all EP premises, including office spaces makes to the EP annual emissions and energy costs? What is being done to save energy on lighting?

Total electricity consumption at the Parliament accounts for 2% of the total carbon footprint in 2020. This low percentage is obtained because every year since 2008 all electricity purchased by the European Parliament was 'green' electricity, i.e. electricity from renewable sources with appropriate certificates of origin.

Electricity used in external data centres was also 100% 'green'. As lighting is only part of this total electricity use, the contribution of lighting to the emissions and energy costs is minor.

Further reducing energy use from lighting is a priority for Parliament and specific EMAS-related actions are planned to this end. These include the installation of energy efficient lighting, motion sensor lighting and extending light savings schedules.

179. Can the EP provide us with a breakdown of light sources used on its premises, including offices (e.g. halogen bulbs, energy-saving bulbs, LED)?

BRUSSELS

The replacement of existing lighting with LED lights is evaluated whenever possible and feasible. Currently, there are seven ongoing LED light projects targeting meeting rooms, offices, hallways and car parks.

Currently, the SCHOLL building as well as the SPINELLI (Members' and APAs' offices) are on LED. The MONTROYER 70 will be on 100% LED lighting by the end of 2021.

STRASBOURG

Since 2014, lighting is being continuously modernised with energy-saving lighting with the projects and maintenance works taking place on an ongoing basis.

For example, the lighting in all the offices in the DE MADARIAGA and CHURCHILL buildings has been replaced with energy-saving LED lighting, also the parking areas in the WEISS and the CHURCHILL buildings have been equipped with LED lighting.

LUXEMBOURG

In the new ADENAUER building, the major lighting source is LED and in the coming years, all energetically less efficient sources will be replaced by LED light.

180. Why do lights in the EP have to be switched off manually instead of automatically switching off after a period of inactivity or at a specific time during the day or night, particularly in offices? How do you explain that the lights in offices are often switched on in the morning, although they have been switched off by staff when they left the night before? What is being done to introduce a better energy-saving efficiency and avoid lights being switched on when the EP's offices are empty?

BRUSSELS

The current situation in Brussels is the following:

-) SPAAK: lights in the common areas are programmed based on an occupation schedule. Lights in the offices are manual (no presence detectors). There are presence detectors in zone C but only for the air conditioning. Conference rooms are only switched on when occupied (based on the reservation schedule).
-) SPINELLI, BRANDT, ANTALL: Members` and assistants` offices have to be manually switched on by the user. They switch off automatically via an absence detector. Conference rooms are only switched on when occupied (based on the reservation schedule). Lights in the common areas are programmed based on an occupation schedule.
-) PARLAMENTARIUM: general lights are only on during opening times.
-) MARTENS, SCHOLL, ZWEIG, ARENDT, MONTOYER 70: lights in the offices have to be manually switched on by the user and switch off automatically via an absence detector. The MONTOYER/SCIENCE building will be equipped with the same system by the end of 2021.

The lights in the other buildings are all on manual mode.

Parliament contractors (including cleaning and maintenance technicians) are present in the offices outside normal working hours so as not to disturb occupants with their activities. Therefore, if not programmed otherwise, this is the reason for having lights on in the morning.

STRASBOURG

All offices are equipped with motion detectors and several buildings with natural light detectors. Large parts of the lighting in the indoor areas are switched off outside the session weeks.

LUXEMBOURG

In all the buildings in Luxembourg, there is a time programmed switch off. Moreover, in the new ADENAUER building, there is an automatic switch off based on absence of movement.

181. Is there a night-time plan for the lighting of the EP premises that takes energy-saving aspects into account? If so, where are lights switched off at night?

In Brussels, where possible, motion detectors are installed in the offices and then lights are managed based on the following principle: manual switching on and automatic switching off on detection of absence. In addition, all common areas are managed on the basis of an occupancy schedule. Since 2019, where appropriate, movement detectors have also been installed in the corridors: during office hours, the lighting is on; outside office hours, part of the lighting switches on when presence is detected. The emergency lighting always remains on.

In Strasbourg, lighting of the circulation and public areas is controlled by the Building Management System and is shut down in the evening (only the regulatory safety lighting remains during night time). In Luxembourg, at night, the lights are off in all the building except for emergency evacuation and specific rooms (such as rooms occupied by the security staff).

Please see for further details the reply to Question 180.

182. How does the EP heat its buildings? What share of the energy used for heating is produced by the EP itself?

BRUSSELS

The cogeneration units and heat pumps/geothermic installations generates energy for heating. All new buildings are already equipped with geothermic installations, such as MARTENS, CAMPOAMOR, HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY and WAYENBERG. Cogeneration is present in the MARTENS building. The share of produced energy on site in the total consumption by all is still limited.

At present, on Parliament`s site in Brussels, four buildings (a quarter of the total number of buildings) are equipped with photovoltaic panels. These installations represent a cumulative surface area of 547 m² on roofs, with an overall peak power of 88,5 kWp.

Energy audits are ongoing for most buildings and investments are evaluated based on priorities, effectiveness and efficiency. Taking into account the circulation space for technical maintenance, available space on the current building stock is also limited and other environment-friendly energy sources are used in several Parliament buildings, such as geothermal energy.

STRASBOURG

All buildings in Strasbourg have heat pumps installed since their construction in order to provide cooling and heating. These heat pumps are using the underground water as a source of renewable energy both in winter and summer.

The WEISS building has new reversible heat pumps (2020) with improved energy efficiency and studies are ongoing to further reduce the use of gas boilers by new high temperature heat pumps (2021). The replacements of heat pumps with high efficiency ones or the insulation of façades were also carried out in the DE MADARIAGA building.

LUXEMBOURG

The new ADENAUER building was conceived with the most modern environmental techniques, such as rainwater recuperation, geothermal and solar energy, full use of daylight and natural materials for the fitting out.

183. Is heating and air-conditioning regulated automatically on EP premises, and in office spaces in particular? Are there places in which this is not the case, i.e. where manual regulation is required? Does the EP save energy on heating and air-conditioning by reducing its availability to working hours and specific periods of the year? If not, why not?

BRUSSELS

All buildings have an automatic regulation system and are connected to a building management system (BMS). Using BMS, facility management is able to control, command and supervise heating, cooling and ventilation systems. Air conditioning of individual offices is controlled automatically in every building except for REMARD and TRÈVES I. In these two buildings, a manual control allows occupants to manipulate the heating/cooling devices.

One of the main goals of Parliament's environmental policy is to save energy as much as possible. For this reason, all air conditioning equipment (such as boilers, pumps, chillers, heat pumps, ventilators) are controlled according to an availability calendar and outside weather conditions. Office temperatures are automatically adapted and reduced based on working hours/presence.

STRASBOURG

Heating and air-conditioning is constantly monitored by several Building Management Systems. Those systems are programmed to take into account occupation periods, working hours and seasonal variations. Moreover, a 24/7 permanence on site allows to adjust the functioning parameters in case of punctual and specific needs. The regulation covers all Parliament premises except parking spaces.

LUXEMBOURG

The heating is automatically regulated in all buildings. The old ADENAUER and SCHUMAN building are not air-conditioned.

The new ADENAUER building is air-conditioned. When offices are not occupied, the air-conditioning works in reduced mode.

184. Is the aim of the renewal of the SPAAK building to turn it into a 'zero-energy building' (= total amount of energy used by building on annual basis is equal to the amount of renewable energy created on the site) or passive house, like the Wayenberg building? Is there a plan to turn all of Parliament's buildings into zero-energy/passive houses over time?

The highest environmental standards will be implemented to address the currently poor environmental performance of the SPAAK building. In this regard, at its meeting of 17 June 2019 the Bureau adopted a note from the Secretary-General including a Charter detailing environmental standards for the future renewal of the building, which concern not only an approach towards zero energy but all other aspects of sustainability.

In Brussels, a roadmap has been established for obtaining an Energy Performance Certificate for all buildings and the extension of the WAYENBERG building has, in turn, become the Parliament's first ever project constructed as a «passive house⁹», increasing the usage of renewable energy and energy storage, geothermal heating and cooling, optimized ventilation and rainwater recuperation. In this regard, it should be noted that the accommodation structure under construction on the Jean Monnet site in Bazoches is already certified as a passive house.

In Strasbourg an environmental audit was carried out between 2012 and 2015 for all the buildings to identify potential solutions to improve energy consumption. The recommended measures concerning the improvement of production facilities (regulation, heat pumps, etc.) have been carried out. Structural measures to improve the insulation of the "envelope" of buildings will have to be undertaken in the future. The new ADENAUER building in Luxembourg was conceived with the most modern environmental techniques, such as rainwater recuperation, geothermal and solar energy, full use of daylight and natural materials for the fitting out.

185. How does the EP measure and separate its waste? Is the current waste separation deemed effective? Does the EP recover money through selling its separated waste, e.g. by reselling foil? If yes, how much money was recovered thanks to this? If not, why not?

BRUSSELS

Parliament collects different waste in dedicated bins. So far, there are 17 sorting channels. For some types of waste, Parliament recovers money (e.g.: paper). The figures will be available, once the recovery exercise is completed.

STRASBOURG

The following waste types are sorted and treated in a dedicated recycling process:

-) paper;
-) cardboards;
-) wood;
-) metal;
-) PET plastic¹⁰;
-) glass;
-) food (organic) waste;
-) batteries;

⁹ Passive house is a highly energy efficient building standard that also promotes indoor comfort and acoustic insulation: it was one of the pioneering concepts for building low-energy houses and is today a leading building standard. The design is focused on making best use of the "passive" influences in a building – like sunshine, shading and ventilation – rather than active heating and cooling systems such as air conditioning and central heating. Passive House buildings also offer superior indoor comfort due to consistent temperatures and good air quality. They finally have the added benefit of reducing both external and internal noise due to the high levels of insulation.

¹⁰ PET (also abbreviated PETE) is short for polyethylene terephthalate, the chemical name for polyester. PET is a clear, strong, and lightweight plastic that is widely used for packaging foods and beverages.

-) oil;
-) CIW¹¹;
-) construction wastes (construction wastes are to be sorted and recycled by works contractors, not by Parliament directly).

No money was recovered in 2020 as the unit prices include collection, transport and recycling. The waste contract tendering process is ongoing and Parliament expects to recover money in the future.

LUXEMBOURG

Parliament separates waste into a dozen of different categories. Parliament does not directly recover money through reselling waste. However, it benefits of preferential tariffs from the contractors responsible for the waste treatment.

186. What is the EP's annual food waste from its canteens? What is being done to reduce the amount of food waste? What happens to the EP's food waste?

In order to avoid food waste and to provide further support to people in need, in cooperation with the service providers, in 2017 Parliament as the first EU Institution started a food donation scheme. As part of this scheme, all the weekly food surpluses are gathered and delivered every Friday to 'Front-line' organisations, e.g. the Red Cross Belgium. Since 2017, the amount of food donated is 9.567,935 kg which in food portions is approximately 10.000.

These organisations obtain the donated food from Parliament catering companies in compliance with food hygiene, safety and food information according to consumer legislation. The donated food is delivered on a weekly basis to people in need.

In addition, in Parliament self-service restaurants, catering providers offer to customers the opportunity to have several meals in smaller portions at a lower price to reduce leftovers.

187. What is the total area of the roofs of Parliament's three seats? What is the roof area dedicated to energy production (solar panels or solar roof)? What is the maximum capacity of solar panels on the roofs and the quantity of annual electricity production? Are these figures available to be read on the web?

BRUSSELS

Presently, on Parliament site of Brussels, four buildings (a quarter of the total number of buildings - SPINELLI, MONTOYER 63, MONTOYER 75, MONTOYER Science) are equipped with photovoltaic panels. These installations represent a cumulative surface area of 547 m² on roofs, with an overall peak power of 88,5 kW_P.

¹¹ CIW stands for Common Industrial Waste. It is neither inert nor hazardous. It is waste produced by companies that can be treated in the same plants as household waste: cardboard, glass, kitchen waste, packaging, textile waste, etc.

Name of building	Installed surface [m ²]	Peak Power [kWp]
Spinelli	209	34,5
Montoyer 63	65	12
Montoyer 75	88	14,6
Montoyer Science	185	27,36

A fifth installation, on the roof of the MONTROYER 70 building, is planned by 2023 at the latest. These panels are being commissioned to complete the efforts to reduce the energy consumption of this building, required by the regulatory energy audits as part of the Brussels environmental permit renewal and with the aim to decrease Parliament buildings' energy consumption by 10% by the end of 2023.

Name of building	Installed surface [m ²]	Peak Power [kWp]
Montoyer 70	100	16,5

STRASBOURG

There are currently no panels on the Strasbourg site. The energetic audit of the buildings carried out in 2014 concluded that the energy efficiency return on investment for other measures were more profitable than photovoltaic panels. As a result, Parliament has implemented environmental improvements, like replacements of heat pumps with high efficiency ones in WEISS buildings, studies on the renewal of the insulation of concrete façades of the PFLIMLIN before reverting to photovoltaic panels in 2022-2023.

LUXEMBOURG

The new ADENAUER building is equipped with solar panels.

For the solar panels, which are meant for sanitary hot water:

-) Power = 66,7 kW
-) Surface = 76,5 m²
-) Estimate annual production = 35 800 kWh/year

For the photovoltaics, which are meant for electricity:

-) Power = 378 kWc
-) Surface = 2 300 m²
-) Estimation annual production = +/- 350 000 kWh/year

188. What is the status of the pilot project for additional bicycle parking areas?

Additional bicycle parking areas are in the final fitting phase in Brussels (SCHOLL building) and Luxembourg (ADENAUER II building) in order to respond to the significant increase of bicycle use in these places of work, but also to provide modern and user-friendly infrastructure for cyclists (lockers, showers, repair-station).

These new indoor bike areas will offer over 100 places each and provide for dedicated space also for large bicycles (cargo and electric).

189. With the visible increase of bicycle use in Brussels, does the EP plan to increase parking spaces in the ASP building in particular? Especially for cargo bikes that do not have a suitable space in the bicycle parking in the ASP?

Given a constant saturation of the existing bike parking in the SPINELLI building and a lack of space especially for cargo and family bikes in this area, it is planned to offer additional parking space on level -2 of the SPINELLI building in 2022. This area will be accessible via the entrance ramp of the car park and provide sufficient space for over 100 bicycles of all different types.

As of 8 November 2021, a bike area is accessible in the SCHOLL building. It further improves Parliament bike parking offer in Brussels, as well as a fast and direct access to Parliament's main buildings.

This area is entirely equipped and offers:

-) 100 parking places for standard and e-bikes (incl. 20 electric charging points);
-) 12 parking places for cargo bikes (with electric charging points);
-) self-service repair station;
-) sanitary installation with showers, including facilities for persons with reduced mobility;
-) secured lockers.

190. Can you give a timeline by when Parliament intends to fully integrate sustainability reporting into its reporting cycle?

Parliament responsible services have started to develop a sustainability reporting system for the Institution as an extension of its successful environmental management system. This exercise requires contributions and participation of almost all entities of Parliament and is coordinated by the EMAS Unit.

Preparatory work to develop sustainability reporting began in 2020 and continued in 2021, including choosing the appropriate reporting methodology, consulting external experts on the subject, and interviewing relevant services as part of a stocktaking exercise. Information obtained in these preparatory steps is to be used in drawing up Parliament's first (pilot) sustainability report.

The (pilot) sustainability report is currently being finalised. Based on the outcome of this pilot project, further steps in Parliament's sustainability reporting will be taken, as appropriate.

191. Which elements will Parliament address in its sustainability reports? Can you share this format, elaborating for example on the particular environmental and social elements of procurement that will be included in Parliament's sustainability report?

The methodology chosen for Parliament's sustainability reporting is the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). It is the most widely recognised and used reporting system for corporate sustainability reporting globally. In the materiality analysis, which is a prerequisite for preparing a sustainability report under the GRI methodology, the following topics were found to be materially significant for Parliament's sustainability reporting:

-) budget and compliance;
-) climate change impact,
-) risk and opportunities;

-) public procurement;
-) ethics and anti-corruption;
-) diversity and inclusion;
-) responsible use of energy and consumption;
-) social responsibility/circular economy actions (as high materiality topics);
-) employment/ benefits/ labour-management relations;
-) training;
-) retirement plan;
-) data protection/privacy; and
-) infrastructure (as medium materiality topics).

The environmental elements of procurement are already covered in existing Parliament reporting as part of the environmental management system, such as in Parliament Environmental Statement and the Environmental Management Review.

The social elements of Parliament's procurement, for which internal guidelines are currently being developed, will be included in the social section of Parliament sustainability report. To the extent data is available, it will address the following social elements of procurement:

-) supply chain due diligence;
-) gender equality and promotion of equal opportunities; and
-) social and working conditions of (sub)contractors' employees.

ANNEXES

Contractor	Number of contracts obtained
20 MINUTOS EDITORA	2
24SATA D.O.O.	2
ABAQUE PLAST SAS	5
AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE	3
AHREND	2
AIR LIQUIDE SANTE FRANCE	2
AKADEMIAI KIADO TR	3
ALRIS COMMUNICATION	2
ANDREA CESARE RESTI	2
ANDRIA, S.R.O.	2
ANP	2
ANSA AGENZIA	2
APDD AGENDA 21	2
ARGENT FM	2
ASBL PRODUCTIONS ASSOCIEES (SMARTBE) (VERENIGDE PRODUCTIE	3
ASCOLIA	2
AUDI	2
B O INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS	2
BECHTLE BRUSSELS	3
BJ STUDIO ANETA STEFANCZYK	2
BK KOMUNIKACIJE BARBKA PECAR	2
BLACKBOX VIDEOPRODUKTION AB	4
BLOMEYER Y SANZ	2
BMW BRUSSELS	3
BROADCASTING CENTER EUROPE	2
BRUEGEL	2
BUREAU VERITAS EXPLOITATION	2
CDNTV PRODUCOES AUDIOVISUAIS UNIPessoal	2
CENTRE EUROPEAN POLICY STUDIES	6
CESU DRUVA SIA	2
CHAPIER	2
CIVITTA EESTI	3
CLINGENDAEL	3
COM'IN MARSEILLE MADE IN MARSEILLE	2
CP BOURG	2
CSTB	3
CYPRUS BROADCASTING CORPORATIO	2
D.R.D. BVBA	2
DALLOZ	2
DB VIDEOPRODUCTIONS	3
DE KIESMANNEN	2
DE LANDELIJKE UITGEVERIJEN S.A.	2
DE TAALSTUDIO	3
DIGENTO GBR	2
DOUBLET IBERICA	2
DPA INFOCOM GMBH	2
DUVALL	2
DZS D.D.	2

E2E BV	2
EBSCO INFORMATION SERVICES	4
ECONOCOM PRODUCTS SOLUTIONS	3
EDITORIALE LINKIESTA.IT SRL	2
EDITORIALE LINKIESTA.IT SRL	4
EFTERSKOLEFORENINGEN	2
EKSPRESS MEEDIA	2
EMSHIELD	2
EPATA STUDIO SIA	2
EPIDEMIC SOUND	2
EUROOPPAINEN SUOMI RY	2
EUROOPPANUORET RY	2
EUROOPPANUORET RY	2
EUROPAHUIS RYCKEVELDE	2
EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (EIPA)	2
EUROPEAN MEDIA CONNECTIONS	2
EUROPEAN MOVEMENT IRELAND	2
FACTSTORY SAS	3
FA-RO MARKETING	2
FASI . BIZ EU MEDIA	2
FERNANDO BERESALUZE TORREGROSA	2
FERREIRA LOPES	3
FRIEDRICH VERLAG	2
FUNDACJA CENTRUM STOSUNKOW MIEDZYNARODOWYCH	2
FURRABUS S.R.O.	2
GIG SERVICE GMBH	2
GILL	2
GIUFFRE FRANCIS LEFEBVRE	2
GLENN MEHTA	3
GLOCAST	3
GOAL MARKETING	2
GOETHE + SCHWEITZER	5
GOTEBORGSREGIONENS	2
GRAPHIUS L. CAPITAN	2
GRASSINIBUS SOC. COOP. AR.L.	2
GROUPE MONITEUR DEPT MARCHES	4
HABITAT ET SANTE-ENVIRONNEMENT	2
HC PRODUCTIES	3
HIKARI GROUP	2
HUIS VOOR VEERKRACHT	2
ICT	2
IL FOGLIO QUOTIDIANO SOCIETA COOPERATIVA	2
IMMOBILIEN GBR PARISER PLATZ	2
INFORADIO MUSORSZOLGALTATO KORLATOLT FELELOSSEGU TARSA	2
INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS	2
INVOLVER EDUCATION LTD	2
IOLAR INFORMATIKA V BESEDI	3
ISABEL SIBYLLE REISSMANN	3
JAKOB GROTH	2
JOAO RODRIGUES CONDUTO	2

JOE LYNAM	2
JONATHAN TALLON T/A GOOD IDEAS	3
JOURDAN LUXEMBOURG	3
JPS CONTROLE SAS	2
KASKAS MEDIA OY	2
KATHIMERINES EKDOSEIS SINGLE MEMBER S.A.	2
KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN	2
KIM BRINK	2
KLAUNER ETS	2
KLUWER LAW INTERNATIONAL	2
KURZEMES VARDS SIA	2
LAB9 PRO NV	2
LANSONS COMMUNICATIONS	5
LAURENT BRELIERE	3
LE PETIT FUTE LES NOUVELLES EDITIONS DE L'UNIVERSITE	3
LENA-LOUISA VOGEL	3
LEOPOLD HOTEL/ROTHI BVBA	2
LIBRAIRIE UM FIELDGEN	4
LINGEA	2
LYRECO BELGIUM	6
MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY	2
MANUEL DEBUS MEDIA DEPARTMENT	2
MANUTAN-OVERTOOM	2
MARCELLO MEREU	2
MARKENFILM CROSSING(ANC BM8)	2
MARTIN'S HOTELS	2
MAYOR TOM PRODUCCIONES S.L.	2
MCS KICK AND RUSH	2
MEDIEMERAH	5
MERCEDES-EUROPA	2
METTE FROBENIUS	2
MINSKY BVBA	2
MLMS	4
MORTOCI FILM	4
MOVING SCOPE	2
MTU ARVAMUSFESTIVAL	2
MULLER ET WEGENER	2
NE SVERIGE	2
NETOKRACIJA D.O.O.	2
NLA MEDIA ACCESS	2
OASIS	2
OCLC	2
ONET SERVICES	4
PANOPTIKUM, MARKO CAFNIK S.P.	2
PARIS LONDON PRODUCTIONS	3
PIXIS	2
PLAY + S.R.L.	2
PLINT AB	2
PONS GMBH	2
POST TELECOM	2

POSTIMEES GRUPP	3
PUMPKINMOUNT LTD T/ASNAPCHARLEMONT	3
PYRAMIDE SAS	2
RAPID COPY OFFICE RCO	4
RCI FINANCIAL SERVICES	2
REDCORP	6
REGIONU MEDIJI SIA SIA REGIONU MEDIJI	2
REINERT	2
REPORTERS SANS FRONTIERES RSF	2
ROEMEN FRERES CARROSSERIE	2
ROTHA TEORANTA T/A AS THE WHEEL	2
SANOMA MEDIA FINLAND	2
SCHINDLER LIFTEN	2
SCHLEIPER	5
SCUOLA SUPER DI STUDI UNIVERSI	2
SOCOTEC FRANCE	2
SOLER CONSEIL	3
STICHTING HAAGSCH COLLEGE	2
STICHTING MOVIES THAT MATTER	2
SVEN SAEKERT	3
SVERIGES INGENJORER	3
TEGRAL	2
TUV NORD BALTIC SIA	2
UAB PROPELLER	2
UMWELTBUNDESAMT	2
UNION TECHNIQUE DU BATIMENT UTB	6
UNIVERSITA CATT DEL SACRO CUOR	2
VAD VI VET MEDIA AB	2
VALENTUM KOMMUNIKATION	2
VINCI FACILITIES	2
VISIT BRUSSELS	2
VITAL MED	2
VLTAVA LABE MEDIA A.S.	2
VODALYS SAS	2
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM	4
VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL	2

Annex to reply to Question 153 - The list of airports used by the Members

AIRPORT
AT - GRAZ - GRZ
AT - SALZBURG - SZG
AT - WIEN - VIE
BE - BRUXELLES - BRU
BE - CHARLEROI - CRL
BG - SOFIA - SOF
BG - VARNA - VAR
CH - BASEL - BSL
CH - GENEVE - GVA
CH - ZURICH - ZRH
CY - LARNAKA - LCA
CZ - PRAHA - PRG
DE - BADEN BADEN
DE - BERLIN - TXL
DE - DRESDEN - DRS
DE - FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN - FRA
DE - HAHN - HHN
DE - HAMBURG - HAM
DE - KARLSRUHE - FKB
DE - MUNCHEN - MUC
DE - NUERNBERG - NUE
DE - STUTTGART - STR
DK - BILLUND - BLL
DK - KOBENHAVN - CPH
EE - TALLINN - TLL
ES - ALICANTE - ALC
ES - BARCELONA - BCN
ES - BILBAO - BIO
ES - GRANADA - GRX
ES - LA PALMA - SPC
ES - LAS PALMAS - LPA
ES - LOGRONO - RJL

Annex to reply to Question 153 - The list of airports used by the Members

ES - MADRID - MAD
ES - MALAGA - AGP
ES - OVIEDO - OVD
ES - PALMA DE MALLORCA - PMI
ES - PAMPLONA - PNA
ES - SANTA CRUZ DE TENERIFE - TFN
ES - SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA - SCQ
ES - SEVILLA - SVQ
ES - VALENCIA - VLC
ES - VIGO - VGO
FI - HELSINKI - HEL
FI - JYVASKYLA - JYV
FI - KUOPIO - KUO
FR - AJACCIO - AJA
FR - BIARRITZ - BIQ
FR - BORDEAUX - BOD
FR - CLERMONT FERRAND - CFE
FR - LYON - LYS
FR - MARSEILLE - MRS
FR - MONTPELLIER - MPL
FR - NICE - NCE
FR - PARIS
FR - PARIS - CDG
FR - PAU - PUF
FR - POINTE-A-PITRE - PTP
FR - SAINT-DENIS (REUNION) - RUN
FR - SAINT-MARTIN - SXM
FR - STRASBOURG - SXB
FR - TOULOUSE - TLS
GB - ABERDEEN - ABZ
GB - BELFAST - BFS
GB - BIRMINGHAM - BHX
GB - CARDIFF - CWL
GB - EDINBURGH - EDI

Annex to reply to Question 153 - The list of airports used by the Members

GB - EXETER - EXT
GB - LONDON - LHR
GB - MANCHESTER - MAN
GB - NEWCASTLE ON TYNE - NCL
GR - ATHENES - ATH
GR - THESSALONIKI - SKG
HR - SPLIT - SPU
HR - ZAGREB - ZAG
HU - BUDAPEST - BUD
IE - CORK - ORK
IE - DUBLIN - DUB
IN - BANGALORE
IT - BARI - BRI
IT - BOLOGNA - BLQ
IT - BRINDISI - BDS
IT - CAGLIARI - CAG
IT - CATANIA - CTA
IT - FIRENZE - FLR
IT - GENOVA - GOA
IT - LAMEZIA TERME - SUF
IT - LAMPEDUSA - LMP
IT - MILANO - LIN
IT - MILANO - MXP
IT - NAPOLI - NAP
IT - PALERMO - PMO
IT - ROMA - FCO
IT - TORINO - TRN
IT - VENEZIA - VCE
IT - VERONA - VRN
KR - SEOUL
LT - VILNIUS - VNO
LU - LUXEMBOURG - LUX
LV - RIGA - RIX
MT - LA VALLETTE - MLA

Annex to reply to Question 153 - The list of airports used by the Members

NL - AMSTERDAM - AMS
PL - BYDGOSZCZ - BZG
PL - GDANSK - GDN
PL - KATOWICE - KTW
PL - KRAKOW - KRK
PL - LUBLIN - LUZ
PL - POZNAN - POZ
PL - RZESZOW - RZE
PL - WARSZAWA - WAW
PL - WROCLAW - WRO
PT - FUNCHAL - FNC
PT - LISBOA - LIS
PT - PORTO - OPO
RO - BUCURESTI - BUH
RO - CLUJ-NAPOCA - CLJ
RO - IASI - IAS
RO - SIBIU - SBZ
RO - TIMISOARA - TSR
SE - GOTEBOG - GOT
SE - STOCKHOLM - STO
SE - UMEA - UME
SI - LJUBLJANA - LJU
SK - KOSICE - KSC