AMENDMENTS
1 - 64

Draft report
Tomáš Zdechovský
(PE639.831v01-00)

2018 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Economic and Social Committee
(2019/2060(DEC))
Amendment 1
Tomáš Zdechovský, Monika Hohlmeier, Luke Ming Flanagan, Mikuláš Peksa, Isabel García Muñoz, Sabrina Pignedoli, Olivier Chastel

Proposal for a decision
Paragraph 1

Proposal for a decision  Amendment

1. Grants the Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Economic and Social Committee for the financial year 2018;

1. Postpones its decision on granting the Secretary-General of the European Economic and Social Committee discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Economic and Social Committee for the financial year 2018;

Or. en

Amendment 2
Tomáš Zdechovský, Monika Hohlmeier, Luke Ming Flanagan, Isabel García Muñoz, Mikuláš Peksa, Olivier Chastel, Sabrina Pignedoli

Motion for a resolution
Citation 1 a (new)

Motion for a resolution  Amendment

- having regard to the in camera presentation by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) to Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control of 3 February 2020 on the outcome of an investigation by OLAF relating to the Committee;

Or. en

Amendment 3
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Citation 1 a (new)

Motion for a resolution  Amendment
having regard the Report of the European Ombudsman on dignity at work in the EU institutions and agencies: SI/2/2018/AMF,

Amendment 4
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph -1 (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

-1 Notes that the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) from July until November 2018 received allegations about harassment against a senior member of the European Economic and Social Committee (the 'Committee'), the president of the Employer's Group (Group I) since April 2013, from five different sources and on 6 November 2018 decided to open an investigation; notes that OLAF on 17 January 2020 addressed its report and recommendations to the President of the Committee as foreseen in the cooperation agreement between the Committee and OLAF; expresses concern that OLAF made a finding of harassment against two staff members, improper behaviour (serious misconduct) against one staff member and a Member of the Committee, and misconduct against other staff members and also decided to refer the matter to the Belgian authorities;

Amendment 5
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph -1 a (new)
Motion for a resolution

-1a. Deplores the findings of OLAF as regards psychological harassment, grave misconduct and inappropriate behaviour by the president of the Group 1 towards his subordinates in 2018; notes that under Belgian law harassment constitutes a criminal act; notes, furthermore, that Article 4 of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Committee on dignity has been breached and that such behaviour is not compatible with the Union values of respect and protection of human dignity within the workplace as provided in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; calls on the Committee to consistently apply Article 8 of its Code of Conduct and the relevant rules of procedure for the Committee without any delay by starting the necessary procedures and promptly referring the matter to the advisory committee; calls on the Committee to report to the discharge authority in a timely manner on the follow-up of the recommendations by OLAF;

Or. en

Amendment 6
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph -1b (new)

-1b. Notes that another case of alleged harassment within the Committee was reported in 2018; reminds that the administrative inquiry has been concluded and a disciplinary sanction has been imposed on the person accused;

Or. en
Amendment 7
Luke Ming Flanagan

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 2 a (new)

Motion for a resolution
Amendment
2a. Regrets, as an overall remark, that chapter 10 ‘Administration’ of the Annual Report of the Court has a rather limited scope and conclusions, even if Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) Heading 5 “Administration” is considered low risk;

Or. en

Amendment 8
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 3

Motion for a resolution
Amendment
3. Notes that the Court selected a sample of 45 transactions from the Multiannual Financial Framework (MMF) Heading 5 ‘Administration’ of all Union institutions and bodies; notes that the sample was designed to be representative of the range of spending under Heading 5, which represents 6.3 % of the Union budget; notes that the Court’s work indicates administrative expenditure as low risk; considers, however, the amount of transactions selected in relation to the ‘other institutions’ as not sufficient and asks the Court to increase the number of transactions to be examined by 10 % at least;

Or. en
Amendment 9
Luke Ming Flanagan

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 3

3. Notes that the Court selected a sample of 45 transactions from the Multiannual Financial Framework (MMF) Heading 5 ‘Administration’ of all Union institutions and bodies; notes that the sample was designed to be representative of the range of spending under Heading 5, which represents 6.3% of the Union budget; notes that the Court’s work indicates administrative expenditure as low risk; considers, however, the amount of transactions selected in relation to the ‘other institutions’ as not sufficient and asks the Court to increase the number of transactions to be examined by 10% at least;

Amendment

3. Notes that the Court selected a sample of 45 transactions from the Multiannual Financial Framework (MMF) Heading 5 ‘Administration’ of all Union institutions and bodies; notes that the sample was designed to be representative of the range of spending under Heading 5, which represents 6.3% of the Union budget; notes that the Court’s work indicates administrative expenditure as low risk; considers, however, the amount of transactions selected in relation to the ‘other institutions’ as not sufficient and asks the Court to increase the number of transactions to be examined by 10% at least; requests that the audit work related to chapter 10 be more focused on issues of high relevance or even critical for the Committee;

Or. en

Amendment 10
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 4

4. Notes that in 2018 the Committee’s budget amounted to EUR 135 630 905, compared to EUR 133 807 338 in 2017, corresponding to an increase of 1.36%; notes an overall rate of implementation of 98.66% (compared to 96.5% in 2017 and 97.2% in 2016);

Amendment

(Does not affect the English version.)
Amendment 11
Luke Ming Flanagan

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 6

6. Observes that the final appropriations for travel and subsistence allowances for Members are slightly increasing, to EUR 20 247 625 in 2018 (compared to EUR 19 819 612 in 2017 and EUR 19 561 194 in 2016) despite the reduction in numbers of meetings; acknowledges that the related unused appropriations only amount to 1,05 %;

Amendment

6. Observes with concern that the final appropriations for travel and subsistence allowances for Members are slightly increasing, to EUR 20 247 625 in 2018 (compared to EUR 19 819 612 in 2017 and EUR 19 561 194 in 2016) despite the reduction in numbers of meetings; acknowledges that the related unused appropriations only amount to 1,05 %;

Amendment 12
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 7

7. Welcomes the Committee’s decision No 2018/C 466/02 of 10 December 2018, according to which the Committee’s members are reimbursed upon presentation of the supporting documents the actual costs of their travel tickets up to a maximum of the discounted business class (or similar) air fare; takes note that the current system, which is based on actual costs, is in line with both the Council decision and with the system in place at Parliament;

Amendment

7. Welcomes the Committee’s decision No 2018/C 466/02 of 10 December 2018, according to which the Committee’s members are reimbursed upon presentation of the supporting documents the actual costs of their travel tickets up to a maximum of the discounted business class (preferably economy class or similar) air fare; takes note that the current system, which is based on actual costs, is in line with both the Council decision and with the system in place at Parliament; notes with appreciation that the Committee encourages shared transport solutions such as public buses
and car-sharing as well as hiring coaches when this proves to be the most cost-efficient solution;

Or. en

Amendment 13
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 7

7. Welcomes the Committee’s decision No 2018/C 466/02 of 10 December 2018, according to which the Committee’s members are reimbursed upon presentation of the supporting documents the actual costs of their travel tickets up to a maximum of the discounted business class (or similar) air fare; takes note that the current system, which is based on actual costs, is in line with both the Council decision and with the system in place at Parliament;

Amendment
7. Welcomes the Committee’s decision No 2018/C 466/02 of 10 December 2018, according to which the expenses of the Committee’s members are reimbursed upon presentation of the supporting documents relating to the actual costs of their travel tickets up to a maximum of the discounted business class (or similar) air fare; takes note that the current system, which is based on actual costs, is in line with both the Council decision and with the system in place at Parliament;

Or. es

Amendment 14
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 7 a (new)

7a. Notes that in 2018 the Budget Group of the Committee focused in particular on assessing how to control spending and improve forecasting for the budget item covering members’ travel and subsistence allowances and that as a result, a call for tender on ‘Analysis and proposal for improvements of the current
projection system concerning cost reimbursement of EESC members, delegates and experts’ was launched in October 2018; calls on the Committee to inform Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control on any results achieved;

Amendment 15
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 8

8. Observes that the appropriations carried forward (EUR 8 204 796) from 2018 to 2019 amount to 6,05 %, which is mainly due to the budget line ‘buildings’ and ‘data processing’; calls on the Committee to keep the appropriations carried forward low to avoid any problems in the budget estimates;

Amendment

8. Observes that the appropriations carried forward (EUR 8 204 796) from 2018 to 2019 (as compared to EUR 9 232 069 from 2017 to 2018) amount to 6,05 % of the total appropriations, which is again mainly due to the budget lines ‘Members of the institution and delegates’, ‘buildings’ and ‘data processing’; deplores the fact that many appropriations automatically carried forward from 2017 to 2018 were particularly overestimated; reminds the Committee that it is essential to make a realistic budget adjustment in accordance with real needs; recalls that excessive overestimation or underestimation indicates poor budgetary planning and entail negative pressure on the sound and prudent financial management;

Amendment 16
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group
Marcel Kolaja

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 12

Motion for a resolution

12. Welcomes all the efforts in particular in 2018 which led to a vision to shape the Committee’s future IT environment to be compatible with modern administration and to envisage a digitally transformed, user focused and data-driven Committee for the next 10 years; notes that the implementation of the digital strategy of the Committee will need extra resources;

Amendment

12. Observes that in 2018 the Committee adopted a total of 215 opinions and reports (compared to 155 in 2017); welcomes the efforts made to increase its overall efficiency; specifically welcomes all the efforts, in particular in 2018, which led to a vision to shape the Committee’s future IT environment to be compatible with modern administration and to envisage a digitally transformed, user focused and data-driven Committee for the next 10 years; notes that currently only 3% of the Committee’s budget is devoted to IT products; notes that the implementation of the digital strategy of the Committee will need extra resources; strongly recommends any software developed for the institution to be made publicly available under free and open-source software licence;

Or. en

Amendment 17
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 12 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

12a. Acknowledges that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will change the labour market and displace a big proportion of jobs currently existing; encourages the Committee to follow this issue closely; supports the work done by the Committee on AI by issuing an opinion and organising a first stakeholder summit on AI in June 2018 with the Commission in order to stress the importance for the Union of ensuring that AI is safe, unbiased and in line with Union values;
Amendment 18
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 12 b (new)

12b. Welcomes the Committee's efforts to increase the data protection and cybersecurity of the Committee; further welcomes the cooperation with the Computer Emergency Response Team for the EU Institutions, bodies and agencies (CERT-EU) and the active participation in the IT Interinstitutional Committee (CII) Security subgroup;

Amendment

Amendment 19
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 13

13. Stresses that a service level agreement between the Commission and the Committee on human resources, including training, has been concluded in 2018 and has indeed increased transparency and the predictability of costs related to IT training as requested in Parliament’s 2017 discharge resolution; notes, however, that the advantage of increased transparency is partly offset by a substantial increase in prices charged by the Commission and asks the Committee to analyse the situation together with the Commission in the interest of improvements;

Amendment

13. Stresses that a service level agreement between the Commission and the Committee on human resources, including training, has been concluded in 2018 and has indeed increased transparency and the predictability of costs related to IT training as requested in Parliament’s 2017 discharge resolution; notes, however, with concern that the advantage of increased transparency is partly offset by a substantial increase in prices charged by the Commission and asks the Committee to analyse the situation together with the Commission in the interest of improvements;
Amendment 20
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 13

13. Stresses that a service level agreement between the Commission and the Committee on human resources, including training, has been concluded in 2018 and has indeed increased transparency and the predictability of costs related to IT training as requested in Parliament’s 2017 discharge resolution⁷; notes, however, that the advantage of increased transparency is partly offset by a substantial increase in prices charged by the Commission and asks the Committee to analyse the situation together with the Commission in the interest of improvements;

⁷ OJ L 249, 27.9.2019, p. 118

Amendment
(Does not affect the English version.)

Amendment 21
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 15

15. **Welcomes** the measures to implement the whistleblowing decision of 2016, such as the adoption of an internal decision on ethics counsellors;

15. **Notes** the measures to implement the whistleblowing decision of 2016, such as the adoption of an internal decision on ethics counsellors; acknowledges that three
acknowledges that three additional staff members were selected in 2018 to join the active team of trained councillors; notes the role of the ethics counsellors to advise and assist staff members in order to help them fulfil their obligations in the best way possible regarding the reporting of serious misconduct (whistleblowing” as stated in Parliament’s 2016 discharge resolution⁸; additional staff members were selected in 2018 to join the active team of trained councillors; notes the role of the ethics counsellors to advise and assist staff members in order to help them fulfil their obligations in the best way possible regarding the reporting of serious misconduct (whistleblowing” as stated in Parliament’s 2016 discharge resolution⁸; 


Amendment 22
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 15 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

15a. Notes with concern that the number of the requests of assistance to the ethics counsellors increased from 25 in 2017 to 42 in 2018 and stresses with particular concern that 33 of such requests were from women while the number of requests from men remained stable at nine;

Or. en

Amendment 23
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 16

Motion for a resolution

16. Recognises all the measures undertaken to strengthen the effectiveness of the anti-harassment policy, such as training on specific topics, networking of

Or. en
the confidential councillors and regular supervision by an external consultant; notes that a revision of the current decision on harassment is under consideration also to ensure better synergies with other relevant regulations, such as on whistleblowing; welcomes the course on ethics and integrity which is compulsory for all staff and which covers standards of behaviour in the workplace, including what harassment is and how to deal with it; confidential councillors and regular supervision by an external consultant; notes that a revision of the current decision on harassment is under consideration to ensure better synergies with other relevant regulations, such as on whistleblowing; notes the course on ethics and integrity which is compulsory for all staff and which covers standards of behaviour in the workplace, including what harassment is and how to deal with it; deeply regrets that all these measures have failed to avoid the related cases of harassment and to protect the victims; reminds the Committee that a proactive, real and urgent protection (including against threats, blackmail and bribery attempts) of victims and whistleblowers must be one of the key priorities of these measures; calls on the Committee to reinforce and improve the measures undertaken until now and above all effectively protect the victims; asks the Committee to report back to the Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control;

Amendment 24
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 16 a (new)

16a. Stresses its concern about the current work environment within the Committee, particularly in Group I, and asks the Committee to take the necessary measures to establish the respectful and trustworthy environment necessary for the personal wellbeing and professional development of the staff; also reminds that bad work environment causes inefficiency, stress and lack of productivity;
Amendment 25
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 17

17. Notes that one case of alleged harassment was reported in 2018 through the formal procedure (article 24 of the Staff Regulations and article 12§1 of the Committee’s decision on the prevention of harassment); takes note that three other alleged cases of harassment, to some extent connected to each other, were reported in 2018 through seven whistleblowing reports; takes note that two administrative inquiries were launched and the matters were referred to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in January 2019; asks the Committee to report back to the Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control;

Amendment

17. Notes that on 22 January 2020 Group I proceeded to the election of its current President as candidate to become the president of the Committee from October 2020 when the presidency of the Committee is to be held by Group I for two and a half years;

Amendment 26
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 17 a (new)

17a. Recalls the Report of the European Ombudsman on dignity at work in the EU institutions and agencies: SI/2/2018/AMF which stated with respect to high-ranking personnel that ‘Individuals are particularly vulnerable to harassment where there is a power imbalance between the parties involved. This can be mitigated through
more demanding rules for high-ranking personnel, who are not covered by the Staff Regulations, such as commissioners, judges, members of the Court of Auditors, members of the Economic and Social Committee and so on. These could include aggravated disciplinary measures, such as compulsory retirement or removal of pension rights. High-ranking personnel should be informed of all anti-harassment rules and policies at the beginning of their mandates in a comprehensive manner and at regular intervals.’;
18. **Welcomes that significant steps related to the ethical standards of the Committee members have been formalised;** notes that the new Code of Conduct for members, which is annexed to the Committee’s new Rules of Procedure that entered into force in March 2019, for the first time contains sanctions for members involved in situations where a member does not fulfil his or her obligations according to the Code of Conduct; notes that an advisory committee on the conduct of members has been established and that this committee will give any member who so requests guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the Code of Conduct and, by advising the President of the Committee on possible steps to be taken, assess alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct; regrets that such sanctions are not significantly severe and not are aligned with the recommendations of the Ombudsman; reminds that using Union funds to defend the institutional reputation and/or members condemned by the Court of Justice of the European Union or by courts of the Member States is a misuse of public funds and reminds that institutional legal services are used for the purpose of defending the institution only, not to defend the interests of individuals; asks the Committee to urgently strengthen the Code of Conduct for members in order particularly to add sanctions that may be more effective and dissuasive; notes that an advisory committee on the conduct of members has been established and that this committee will give any member who so requests guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the Code of Conduct and, by advising the President of the Committee on possible steps to be taken, and on alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct; strongly recommends that harassment training is available to all members, as it is the case in Parliament since the beginning of the current legislature;
Motion for a resolution

19a. Reminds that the Legal Service of the Committee was greatly weakened for four years from March 2010 when the head of the Legal Service was dismissed with immediate effect from his duties after having denounced serious irregularities and illicit pressures by the Secretary General at the time; also recalls that this position was vacant for three and a half years, that the European Civil Service Tribunal condemned the Committee for this case (judgment F-41/10 RENV Bermejo Garde v EESC), that the Committee had to pay more than EUR 100 000 and that only in 2014 a new head of the Legal Service was finally appointed and the service reinforced with five lawyers;

Amendment

Or. en

Amendment 30
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 19 b (new)

Motion for a resolution

19b. Is very concerned about the recent changes which may again weaken the Legal Service of the Committee, including that it since January 1 2020 is attached directly to the Secretary General as the only Legal Service among the Union institutions, that since September 2019 it has lost one of its five lawyers on a permanent basis, that some staff members, including the head of unit, have been included in mobility instead of being considered specialised staff as in the other institutions and that it has suffered a drastic reduction in the number of formal consultations;

Amendment

Or. en
Amendment 31
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 19c (new)

Motion for a resolution

19c. Taking into account that since their creation, the Union institutions have provided themselves with an internal legal service whose main functions are legal advice and representation and defence before the Court of Justice of the European Union, stresses the importance of having a strong and independent legal service, therefore asks the Committee to ensure that its Legal Service has a sufficient number of staff to perform its duties and is able to keep its independence; asks the Committee to eliminate all measures that could weaken it in the exercise of its corresponding activities and functions; also reminds the Committee of the importance of consulting the Legal Service on the Committee’s decisions in order to assure they comply with the law and to avoid making serious mistakes and subsequent legal, long and onerous proceedings;

Or. en

Amendment 32
Tomáš Zdechovský, Monika Hohlmeier, Luke Ming Flanagan, Mikuláš Peksa, Sabrina Pignedoli, Olivier Chastel

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 19a (new)

Motion for a resolution

19a. Deplores the findings of OLAF as regards psychological harassment, grave misconduct and inappropriate behaviour by a senior member towards his
subordinates which started in 2013 and recurred until 2018 when the first official complaints appeared; notes that under the Belgian law harassment constitutes a criminal offence; notes furthermore that Article 4 of the Code of Conduct for the Members of the Committee on dignity has been breached;

Amendment 33  
Tomáš Zdechovský, Monika Hohlmeier, Luke Ming Flanagan, Isabel García Muñoz, Mikuláš Peksa, Sabrina Pignedoli, Olivier Chastel

Motion for a resolution  
Paragraph 19 b (new)

Motion for a resolution  
Amendment

19b. Expects the Committee to duly inform the discharge authority before September 2020 on the measures taken in order to follow-up the recommendations of OLAF and to rectify the wrongdoings;

Amendment 34  
Tomáš Zdechovský, Monika Hohlmeier, Luke Ming Flanagan, Isabel García Muñoz, Mikuláš Peksa, Sabrina Pignedoli, Olivier Chastel

Motion for a resolution  
Paragraph 19 c (new)

Motion for a resolution  
Amendment

19c. Calls on the Committee to consistently apply Article 8 of its Code of Conduct without any delay, namely by starting the necessary procedure against persons concerned and by promptly referring such matters to the advisory committee;
Amendment 35
Tomáš Zdechovský, Monika Hohlmeier, Luke Ming Flanagan, Isabel García Muñoz, Mikuláš Peksa, Sabrina Pignedoli, Olivier Chastel

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 19 d (new)

Motion for a resolution Amendment

19d. Requests the Committee to put in place and implement an action plan to actively prevent and tackle harassment in the working environment, to raise awareness about harassment, and to foster a culture of zero tolerance with regard to harassment;

Or. en

Amendment 36
Tomáš Zdechovský, Monika Hohlmeier, Luke Ming Flanagan, Isabel García Muñoz, Mikuláš Peksa, Sabrina Pignedoli, Olivier Chastel

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 19 e (new)

Motion for a resolution Amendment

19e. Calls on the Committee to improve measures allowing staff to make formal harassment complaints and to organise regular trainings for confidential counsellors and to set up a pool of independent investigators which the Committee can call upon during formal harassment investigations;

Or. en

Amendment 37
Tomáš Zdechovský, Monika Hohlmeier, Luke Ming Flanagan, Isabel García Muñoz, Mikuláš Peksa, Sabrina Pignedoli, Olivier Chastel

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 19 f (new)

Motion for a resolution

19f. Notes with satisfaction the examples of good practice from the Court of Auditors’ anti-harassment policy which has strong disciplinary measures for culpable members, such as compulsory retirement or denial of pension rights, and calls on the Committee to implement these examples;

Or. en

Amendment 38
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 19 d (new)

Motion for a resolution

19d. Regrets public allegations caused by the recruitment procedure for the new Secretary General of the Committee; notes the arguments raised by the Secretary General in the answers to Parliament’s questions for the 2018 discharge; stresses the importance of ensuring full transparency in all phases without any exception throughout the whole procedure (publication, selection, appointment and establishment) as set out in the Committee’s Rules of Procedure and in the Staff Regulation in order to avoid any reputational risk, not only for the Committee but for all the Union institutions;

Or. en

Amendment 39
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group
Marcel Kolaja

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 20

**Motion for a resolution**

20. Welcomes the efforts to increase its visibility, both by strengthening its relations with the media and putting the focus on online communication; highlights in relation to social media communication the accompanying training policy and on-demand tailored coaching sessions for both the members and the staff of the Committee; notes the slight reduction in the number of press releases in 2018 (approximately 60 compared to 70 in 2017) as part of a strategy aiming to develop the format of ‘webstories’ in order to have a more focused communication on the most important topics of the Committee; asks the Committee to report back on its experiences in this respect; 

**Amendment**

20. Welcomes the efforts to increase its visibility, both by strengthening its relations with the media and putting the focus on online communication to further remove both language-related and disability-related barriers; highlights in relation to social media communication the accompanying training policy and on-demand tailored coaching sessions for both the members and the staff of the Committee; notes the slight reduction in the number of press releases in 2018 (approximately 60 compared to 70 in 2017) as part of a strategy aiming to develop the format of ‘web stories’ in order to have a more focused communication on the most important topics of the Committee; asks the Committee to report back on its experiences in this respect; further encourages the use of free open-source self-hosted social network platforms, having special regards to users data protection;

Or. en

Amendment 40
Isabel García Muñoz

**Motion for a resolution**

Paragraph 21

21. Notes that the Committee implemented a whole range of communication activities to mark its 60th anniversary in May 2018; welcomes that the Committee received 9 419 visitors in 2018 (compared to 7 820 in 2017) and that the traditional Open Day on 5 May attracted some additional 2 888 visitors (compared to 2 700 in 2017); notes that the Committee’s plenaries which are web-

**Amendment**

(Does not affect the English version.)
streamed had a potential reach of between 3 and 8 million people; notes that the overall online interaction, such as retweets, ‘likes’ and replies, has been increasing and reached between 680 and 1,840 mentions per plenary;

Olivier Chastel, Cristian Ghinea, Gilles Boyer, Ramona Strugariu, Martina Dlabajová

Amendment 41
Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 22 a (new)

22a. Invites the Committee to continue the rationalisation measures in the area of translation;

Isabel García Muñoz

Amendment 42
Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 23

23. Notes that the administrative cooperation agreement signed between the Committee, the Committee of the Regions (jointly the ‘Committees’) and Parliament in 2014 came to end on 31 December 2019; notes that until now the 2014 agreement has not been renegotiated or extended; is of the opinion that the 2014 agreement was very unbalanced for the Committees that transferred in total 60 translators to Parliament (36 from the Committee) and in exchange only got to use the services of the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS); notes with concern that as a consequence
the Committees had to hire contract staff and outsource the translation service; notes with concern that Parliament to compensate for the reduction in translation staff provides an additional amount (EUR 1 200 000 since 2015 to 2016) to the Committee and the Committee of the Regions to cover the outsourcing of the translation services which amount can be reallocated to other policy areas if they are not fully used for outsourced translation (the Committee used this reallocation possibility in the last three years); is of the opinion that these circumstances do not align with the criteria of overall prudent and sound financial management and should be reconsidered in case of extension of the present contract or negotiation of a new agreement; recognise that from a political point of view, the agreement must be updated to face today’s challenges, such as the new Multiannual Financial Framework or the new cohesion policy rules among others;

Amendment 43
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 23

23. Underlines the importance of the cooperation with Parliament and the adoption of a cooperation agreement in 2014; stresses that this agreement must be updated to face today’s challenges, such as the new Multiannual Financial Framework; recognises the good cooperation in order to promote citizen’s participation in the 2019 European elections;

Or. en
Amendment 44
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 24

24. Recognises the follow-up to the 2016 Committee’s staff survey on psychosocial risks at work by launching several initiatives, such as workshops for managers on absence management, conflict management and how to handle poor performance; welcomes as well a mentoring system for new colleagues and actions to increase staff well-being and staff commitment; notes that the staff absence rate seems to have reached its peak in 2017 (5,5 %), and decreased slightly to 5,35 % in 2018 (compared to 4 % in 2015); calls on the Committee to report back on all achievements reached to reduce the staff absence rate;

Amendment

24. Recognises the follow-up to the 2016 Committee’s staff survey on psychosocial risks at work by launching several initiatives, such as workshops for managers on absence management, conflict management and how to handle poor performance; welcomes as well a mentoring system for new colleagues and actions to increase staff well-being and staff commitment; notes that the staff absence rate seems to have reached its peak in 2017 (5,5 %), and decreased slightly to 5,35 % in 2018 (compared to 4 % in 2015); notes with concern, however, the increase in long-term sick leave among the heads of unit of the Committee; calls on the Committee to report back on all achievements reached to reduce the staff absence rate;

Or. en

Amendment 45
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 25 a (new)

25a. Welcomes the efforts made by the Committee to build a more diverse and inclusive work environment and culture by taking actions in favour of disabled people, such as making the intranet and website digitally accessible to persons with visual impairment, publishing a brochure

Amendment

25a. Welcomes the efforts made by the Committee to build a more diverse and inclusive work environment and culture by taking actions in favour of disabled people, such as making the intranet and website digitally accessible to persons with visual impairment, publishing a brochure
called ‘Access Able Brussels’ to provide all necessary information for newcomers with disabilities moving to Brussels, and hosting the Inter COPEC conference dedicated entirely to disability issues;

Amendment 46
Olivier Chastel, Cristian Ghinea, Gilles Boyer, Ramona Strugariu, Martina Dlabajová

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 25 a (new)

Motion for a resolution Amendment

25a. Recalls the necessity to develop a long term human resources policy framework which addresses the work-life balance of its staff, lifelong guidance and career development, gender balance, teleworking, non-discrimination, geographical balance and recruitment and integration of disabled people;

Amendment 47
Mikuláš Peksa on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 26

Motion for a resolution Amendment

26. Recognises that by means of an administrative cooperation agreement, the Committee and the Committee of the Regions have set out a large number of procedures for collaboration between their services and have also established and organised joint services in which both human and financial resources from the two Committees are pooled together

26. Recognises that by means of an administrative cooperation agreement, the Committee and the Committee of the Regions have set out a large number of procedures for collaboration between their services and have also established and organised joint services in which both human and financial resources from the two Committees are pooled
welcomes that the internal audit service of the two Committees collaborate closely concerning the joint services under the provisions of the cooperation agreement; encourages the Committee to extend its administrative cooperation agreement with the Committee of the Regions beyond 2019;

Amendment 48
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 27

27. Welcomes the yearly savings amounting to EUR 11.8 million as regards infrastructure and EUR 0.72 million as regards rent, maintenance, consumables and staff due to the fact that the two Committees are sharing resources in these areas; welcomes further that the annual budgetary savings as regards IT due to the cooperation between the two Committees amount to approximately EUR 5 million for both Committees; notes that another example of a clear synergy through the cooperation with Parliament, which creates savings in terms of staff costs amounting to EUR 3.3 million (2016 salary levels), is the Committee’s use of the European Parliamentary Research Service (36 Committee posts were transferred to the EPRS for this purpose);

Amendment 49
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution

(Does not affect the English version.)
Paragraph 28

Motion for a resolution

28. Calls on the Committee to analyse further the situation in order to identify additional areas for joint services with the Committee of the Regions; highlights that this kind of interinstitutional cooperation can significantly reduce the overall expenditure of the Committee; calls on the Committee to inform Parliament’s Committee on Budgetary Control on any results achieved;

Amendment

(Does not affect the English version.)

Amendment 50

Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution

Paragraph 28 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

28a. Notes that the cooperation agreement between the Committee and the Committee of the Regions, signed in 2016, established a firm legal framework for long-term, efficient and effective cooperation and also demonstrates that the two Committees are acting in partnership while respecting each other’s powers and prerogatives; notes that the agreement ended on 31 December 2019 and that it has been decided to extend it for one year while a new agreement is being negotiated; asks both Committees to make the necessary efforts to conclude it as soon as possible in order to allow further synergies and savings;

Amendment 51

Isabel García Muñoz
Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 28 b (new)

28b. Recalls that once again the Committee, together with Committee of the Regions, dedicated less than 3% of its total budget to IT and that IT projects and equipment have suffered from structurally underfinancing for several years; notes with concern that in order to address their backlog in IT projects and systems, the two Committees continue to use mopping-up exercises at the end of the year to finance IT projects; asks the two Committees to implement as soon as possible the new digital strategy and multiannual IT expenditure plan;

Amendment 52
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 29

29. Notes that the exchange of the B68 and TR74 buildings for the VMA building will result in a loss of office space and, thus, a need to find extra offices to accommodate around 200 staff members after the exchange; notes that a joint Committee working group has recently been established which will prepare a further analysis in order to find adequate solutions; welcomes that the administration is keeping all stakeholders informed via staff meetings and through the management of the concerned services and will take into consideration the concerns and suggestions put forward;

Amendment

Notes that the agreement between the Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the Commission on the exchange of the Commission’s VMA building for the Committees BEL68/TRE74 buildings was signed on 28 August 2019; notes that the exchange will become effective on 16 September 2022; notes with concern that the main priority identified by the Committees’ buildings policy is the geographical concentration of the buildings; notes with concern that this exchange results in a loss of office space of 10,440 m2 and, thus, a need to find extra offices to accommodate around 200 staff members after the exchange, which could not be entirely offset by
alternative measures in the short-term such as densifying the use of space in the other buildings and increased teleworking, but will necessitate the purchase of another adjacent building to compensate this reduction; notes also the need to renovate the VMA building in the short to medium term; fears the consequences that this agreement will have not only for the finances of the Committee but also for the wellbeing of the concerned staff; regrets that the legal service has not been consulted on a matter of such scope and importance for the Committee;

Or. en

Amendment 53
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 29

Motion for a resolution

29. Notes that the exchange of the B 68 and TR 74 buildings for the VMA building will result in a loss of office space and, thus, a need to find extra offices to accommodate around 200 staff members after the exchange; notes that a joint Committee working group has recently been established which will prepare a further analysis in order to find adequate solutions; welcomes that the administration is keeping all stakeholders informed via staff meetings and through the management of the concerned services and will take into consideration the concerns and suggestions put forward;

Amendment

29. Notes that the exchange of the B 68 and TR 74 buildings for the VMA building will result in a loss of office space and, thus, a need to find extra offices to accommodate around 200 staff members after the exchange; notes that a Committee working group has recently been established which will prepare a further analysis in order to find adequate solutions; welcomes that the administration is keeping all stakeholders informed via staff meetings and through the management of the concerned services and will take into consideration the concerns and suggestions put forward;

Or. es

Amendment 54
Isabel García Muñoz
Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 29 a (new)

Motion for a resolution

29a. Notes that a joint Committee-Committee of the Regions working group has recently been established which will prepare a further analysis in order to find adequate solutions; notes that another working group also has to reflect on new ways of working; stresses that in no case must the staff well-being, way of work and work space suffer negative consequences of the deficiencies coming from the exchange of buildings; recalls that the staff should be consulted on it and their opinion taken into account; calls on the Committees to inform Parliament's Committees on Budgetary Control and Budgets on any results achieved;

Amendment

55
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 29 b (new)

Motion for a resolution

29b. Expresses serious concerns because of the confirmation of presence of asbestos in critical places of the VMA building including parking; deeply deplores that an inventory realised by an specialised external contractor was carried out in September 2019 just one month after the signature of the agreement with the Commission; deplores that the agreement was signed without informing all stakeholders in due time about the possibly presence of asbestos in the VMA building; also deplores that members and staff have not been informed about the situation and asks the
Committee to remedy the situation in an adequate and effective way;

Or. en

Amendment 56
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 29 c (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

29c. Notes that the Committees received an asbestos-safe certificate for the VMA building in September 2019 and that this certificate specifies the building contains asbestos without risk for normal use of the building; taking into account especially that the next use of the building will not be normal use, but a situation of construction, is deeply concerned about the future developments on the issue;

Or. en

Amendment 57
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 29 d (new)

Motion for a resolution

Amendment

29d. Taking into account that the effects of prolonged and unsafe asbestos exposure on human health are well documented and are always a source of concern and alarm among the population in general, asks both Committees to carry out a policy of total and proactive transparency and information about the management of the situation before and after the effective occupation of the VMA building while at the same time avoiding unnecessary alarmism;
Amendment 58  
Isabel García Muñoz  

Motion for a resolution  
Paragraph 36

Motion for a resolution  

36. Notes the Committee’s willingness to improve its working methods by changing the system of requiring one signature to confirm the presence of Members in meetings to a system requiring two signatures, one at the beginning of the meeting and one at the end of the meeting; notes that the Committee will further study practices and experiences at Parliament and other Union institutions and bodies regarding the presence record and will benchmark the best practices; asks the Committee to report back on any achievements in its next annual activity report;

Amendment

36. Notes the Committee’s willingness to improve its working methods by further studying practices and experiences at Parliament and other Union institutions and bodies regarding the presence record and will benchmark the best practices; asks the Committee to report back on any achievements in its next annual activity report;

Amendment 59  
Isabel García Muñoz  

Motion for a resolution  
Paragraph 36

Motion for a resolution  

36. Notes the Committee’s willingness to improve its working methods by changing the system of requiring one signature to confirm the presence of Members in meetings to a system requiring two signatures, one at the beginning of the meeting and one at the end of the meeting; notes that the Committee will further study practices and experiences at Parliament and other Union institutions and bodies

Amendment

(Does not affect the English version.)
regarding the presence record and will benchmark the best practices; asks the Committee to report back on any achievements in its next annual activity report;

Amendment 60
Luke Ming Flanagan

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 40

40. Reiterates the need to streamline and speed up the discharge procedure; proposes in this regard to set a deadline for the submission of the annual activity reports of 31 March of the year following the accounting year; welcomes the readiness of the Committee to follow this best practise which should help to support the request to shorten the timeline for the discharge procedure;

Amendment
40. Reiterates the need to streamline and speed up the discharge procedure; proposes in this regard to set a deadline for the submission of the annual activity reports of 31 March of the year following the accounting year; regrets that this deadline was not respected for the 2018 Annual Activity report as requested in the 2017 discharge resolution; welcomes the readiness of the Committee to follow this best practise which should help to support the request to shorten the timeline for the discharge procedure;

Amendment 61
Isabel García Muñoz

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 40

40. Reiterates the need to streamline and speed up the discharge procedure; proposes in this regard to set a deadline for the submission of the annual activity reports of 31 March of the year following the accounting year; welcomes the

Amendment
40. Reiterates the need to streamline and improve the discharge procedure; proposes in this regard to set a deadline for the submission of the annual activity reports of 31 March of the year following the accounting year; welcomes the
readiness of the Committee to follow this best practise which *should help to support the request to shorten the timeline for the discharge procedure*;

readiness of the Committee to follow this best practise which *would provide the discharge institution with more time to go in depth and better conduct the discharge procedure*;

Amendment 62
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

**Motion for a resolution**
**Paragraph 41 a (new)**

*Motion for a resolution*  

41a. Welcomes the efforts of the Committee to promote the circular economy through its opinion and, in cooperation with the Commission, through the European circular economy stakeholders platform compiling initiatives and best practices;

Amendment

Or. en

Amendment 63
Mikuláš Peksa
on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

**Motion for a resolution**
**Paragraph 41 b (new)**

*Motion for a resolution*  

41b. Supports the efforts made by the Committee to decrease its environmental footprint; notes with satisfaction a slight decrease in the consumption of electricity (3 %) and paper (17 %) and of office waste (3 %); observes, however, the increase in the consumption of gas (5 %) and water (17%) due to the installation of a new gas heater and water leakages during construction work;

Amendment

Or. en
Amendment 64
Luke Ming Flanagan

Motion for a resolution
Paragraph 42 a (new)

42a. Notes the importance of political
dialogue between the Committee and Parliament to make sure that a valid
contribution from the Committee can be incorporated into the work of Parliament;
in that sense reiterates its request to pursue its best efforts in strengthening the
political cooperation between these two institutions.