



**European Committee  
of the Regions**

# Annual Activity Report for 2021

**European Committee of the Regions**

Jun 2022



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## INTRODUCTION

The Annual Activity Report is a key component of the strategic and programming cycle. It is the basis on which the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) takes its responsibility for the management of resources and the achievement of objectives, as a mirror of the Strategic Management Plan.

This Annual Report of the Authorising Officer by Delegation (the Secretary-General) is established on the basis of the Financial Regulation (art. 74.9 of the Financial Regulation), the CoR's Rules of Procedure (rule 69.2), the internal rules on the implementation of the budget and the Charter of tasks and responsibilities of the Committee's Authorising Officer by Delegation.

As required by the above provisions, the Annual Activity Report covers the activities of the institution (the objectives and main achievements of the year under review), as well as the budget execution within the parameters of the control environment. The report also contains a declaration, signed by the Authorising Officer by Delegation, on the application of the principle of sound financial management to the use of the resources and on the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions in 2021.

Part 1 of the report is a brief summary of the political achievements of the institution in 2021.

Part 2 presents the main achievements and activities compared against the objectives set in the Strategic Management Plan 2021-2022.

Part 3 reports on the internal management and control systems. It outlines the characteristics of the CoR risk environment and gives a detailed description of internal control systems, such as verification, internal control standards and financial exceptions reporting. In addition, the chapter reports on actions taken on the comments and recommendations from the various supervisory bodies: recommendations made in connection with the budgetary discharge, the reports of the Court of Auditors as well as the internal audits.

Part 4 contains comments made by the Authorising Officer by Delegation on the management system he has put in place.

Finally, Part 5 is the declaration by the Authorising Officer by Delegation.

# 1. POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The European Committee of the Regions (the CoR) is a Political Assembly of 658 elected representatives of Local and Regional Authorities (329 Members and 329 Alternates). Its mission is twofold:

- The Committee contributes to the EU policy shaping and decision making process from the view point of the Local and Regional Authorities..
- At the same time the Committee's members contribute to make the Union more effective and closer to the citizens by implementing EU law and communicating on the Union's policies on the ground.

Local and regional authorities are responsible for one third of public spending and two thirds of public investment hold in many Member States competencies in key areas such as education, economic development and cohesion, environment, social protection, health and services of general interest. Cooperation between local, regional, national and European levels is the best response to common challenges. A European Union that takes into account local and regional needs and concerns increases the legitimacy of its legislation, improves ownership and achieves greater added-value and effectiveness on the ground for the benefit of citizens.

To this end, the CoR works closely with the other EU institutions and with associations of local and regional authorities, as well as in the Member States with the various tiers of government. The CoR's activities, as well as the annual work programme of its commissions, are defined on the basis of the overall political strategy of the CoR, set out in the resolution on the political priorities.

**2021 was the second year of the CoR's seventh term of office 2020-2025**, under the leadership of President Apostolos Tzitzikostas and First Vice-President Vasco Alves Cordeiro.

Shortly after the start of the new political mandate, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Since the outbreak, regional and local authorities have fought tirelessly to safeguard their communities, increase resilience and support their people and businesses in this time of need. The CoR never stopped working despite the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the first year of the mandate, which was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 the CoR met six times in Plenary Session (3 remote and 3 hybrid). The planned external Bureau meeting marking the Portuguese Presidency of the Council was replaced by a remote Bureau meeting in spring, while in September an external Bureau meeting took place in Lipica (Slovenia) to mark the Slovenian Presidency of the Council.

There are more than a million politicians elected at regional and local level in the EU – more than 3,000 eligible candidates for every position as Member of the CoR. Reaching out to all of them is a strategic key objective for the CoR. Our Members' political activity and their expertise, both in Brussels and in their constituencies, is the unique selling point and most important asset of the CoR. According to several Eurobarometer surveys local and regional politicians are the most trusted by citizens – across the Union. CoR members are powerful multipliers in their communities and in their national associations of local and regional authorities. The Union cannot afford to neglect this asset at its disposal when it comes to regaining the trust of European citizens.

The CoR political priorities for the mandate 2020-2025 were the guiding principles in 2021 and these were accompanied by 3 communication campaigns:



1.

**Bringing Europe closer to its people: strengthening EU democracy and working together on the future of our Union;**



2.

**Understand and respond to the profound societal transformations that the digital, environmental and demographic challenges entail for building resilient regional and local communities;**



3.

**Ensure that the European Union is permanently at the service of its people and the places they live based on social, economic and territorial cohesion as fundamental value.**

In order to implement these priorities, strong working relationships have been built with the Members of the European Parliament and the relevant EP committees and with European Commissioners and the thematic services of the Commission (DGs). CoR members continue to be involved along the whole political and legislative cycle of the EU pol-

icies. This is achieved through an early input into the policy-agenda setting of the European Commission, through an increased follow-up of its opinions towards the co-legislators (European Parliament; Council), or in partnership with the European Commission's services on the roll-out and evaluation of policies and legislation. At the same time,

there is a continuous need to communicate these activities and their impact ever more effectively. The cooperation agreements with the European Commission and the European Parliament need to be updated and upgraded if possible, and the cooperation with the European Council and the Council of Ministers need to be strengthened.

**9 flagship initiatives** have been identified in 2020 and followed up in 2021 to make the CoR more strategic and impactful in accordance with the political priorities:

- Recovery and resilience facility (RRF)
- Health related COVID –19 response
- The Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (SEDEC)
- CoR 4 Climate Pact
- The future of cross-border cooperation
- The New Pact for Migration and Integration
- Conference on the Future of Europe
- Long-term vision for Rural Areas
- Strategic CoR's Budget – ensuring a fair share of the resources for the CoR

The CoR continued its political goal to strengthen the assembly's involvement along the whole EU political and legislative cycle, building on the existing cooperation agreements with the European Parliament and the European Commission.

- More involvement throughout all stages of the EU legislative process (European Commission, European Parliament and Council of the EU);
- Raise the CoR's institutional profile by building even more effective and trustful partnerships with other EU Institutions;
- Put regional and local authorities at the heart of designing and implementing European policies;
- Further develop the EU's decentralised communication with and within regions and cities.

## 2021 political achievements

On 9 May for [Europe Day](#), on the occasion of the launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe in Strasbourg, the European Committee of the Regions organised a debate which gave the floor to local and regional elected representatives and European citizens. The CoR in preparation for its political participation in the Conference on the Future of Europe in the institutional strand included a stepping up the cooperation with the associations of local and regional authorities (LRA) at EU and national level, conceiving a network of EU councillors for the conference and creating a network of former CoR members. Following the launch of the Conference, members and alternates and EU Councillors organised hundreds of European information and dialogue events in their regions and local authorities, including local and cross-border events held in cooperation with the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

At our October plenary, the CoR presented the second [Regional and Local Barometersecond](#), a fact-based and analytical document presenting a comprehensive state of play of EU regions and cities of 2021. This took place

during the fully digital #EURegionsWeek involving over 17,600 participants.

Throughout 2021 the CoR's Plenary Sessions included standing debates on the Conference on the Future of Europe, the Green Deal and Covid-19. The Plenary Sessions were attended by high-level speakers from the European Commission, European Parliament and international organisations. In 2021, in the context of the Presidencies of the Council, the Plenary Session was addressed by Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa (May), Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša (October) and French President Emmanuel Macron (December).

The High-Level Group on European Democracy, chaired by Herman Van Rompuy, was set up in 2020. CoR members held several exchanges with president Van Rompuy and the members of the High-Level Group during the CoR plenary and commission meetings throughout 2021, and a [high-level conference](#) on the state of European Democracy and Democracy in the EU took place on 3 December with representatives of various components of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Its recommendations will serve as input to the CoR and its delegates in the Conference in 2022.

The CoR cross-commission working group *Green Deal Going Local* launched in 2020 ensures consistency across the policy areas that fall under the remit of the Green Deal. In 2021, 10 calls to action were published with the key objective of supporting and engaging members in implementing the green transition locally.

[Cohesion Alliance 2.0](#): 2021 activities of the Alliance included activities and events on cross-border cooperation, the new rules governing cohesion policy 2021-2027 and "cohesion as a value" as well as the High-Level Forum on Recovery and Resilience, which was co-organised with the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Some specific local dialogues highlighted the Just Transition Fund and several CoR studies, e.g. on the involvement of local and regional authorities in National recovery and resilience plans and on cohesion as a European value, were published in 2021.

## A new era of cooperation

In spring 2021, the CoR, in cooperation with the International Cities of Refuge Network and the City of Gdańsk, launched the nomination process related to the first edition of the award, which promotes the legacy of Mayor Adamowicz and supports the fight against intolerance, radicalisation, hate speech, oppression and xenophobia. The [Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award](#) is attributed for courage and excellence in the promotion of freedom, solidarity and equality.

The Working Group Ukraine met for the first time in a new format at the end of 2021 and launched a peer-to-peer initiative on transparency. The project was put on hold because of the Russian military aggression in Ukraine.

The [Zero-Pollution Stakeholder Platform](#) was launched on 16 December as a joint initiative of the European Commission and the CoR. The platform will mainstream the zero pollution agenda and the implementation of the EU's Zero-Pollution Action Plan. It will bring together stakeholders

and experts from different policy areas, such as health, agriculture, research and innovation, transport, digitalisation and the environment and is currently working on a work programme for 2022-2024.

The cooperation with the EP has been continuously increased despite the COVID-19 restrictions. The CoR and the EP pursue effective bilateral cooperation on a set of selected priority files which are reviewed and updated every year. Regular meetings between the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the two institutions and structured cooperation between the rapporteurs of both institutions as well as between CoR commissions and EP Committees increased throughout 2021.

The CoR continued its close cooperation with the Council trio Presidencies and the acting Council Presidency. This involved the design of their future programmes as well as the opportunity to present CoR positions at Presidency events, Council Working Parties and Informal Council meetings. The CoR issued 4 opinions based on referrals received by the Presidency of the Council. Each Council Presidency presented its priorities at a CoR plenary session and in various CoR statutory bodies meetings.

The CoR has also developed cooperation initiatives with the Council secretariat on thematic priority files. The CoR opinions, as well as other relevant CoR documents (studies, consultation reports, impact assessments etc.), are presented in respective working parties of the Council. The CoR has also achieved to set up and information exchange on the respective internal planning documents.

A more detailed account of achievements is provided in the Annual Impact Report 2021<sup>1</sup>.

## 2021 administrative achievements supporting political priorities

The mission of the Secretariat-General of the CoR is to assist the Committee and its Members in reaching their political objectives as well as to provide its day-to-day administration.

The year 2021 was the second year of the CoR's seventh mandate, with three political priorities set. The "Going for IMPact!" plan, which the Secretary-General launched at the start of his mandate was continued in 2021 and referred in the Annual Impact Report 2021. Its objective set by the Members and the CoR President is to modernize the administration. The plan includes a comprehensive set of measures to make the administration's support to the CoR's political mission more strategic, to use the CoR's resources in a more efficient way and to boost the impact and outreach of the institution.

The aim of that programme is to refocus management on boosting the CoR's impact and performance through the following clusters:



**Focused Policy support;**



**Increased Outreach;**



**Smart & modern administration;**



**lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic**

Common features of the work related to the clusters from all parts of the administration are:

- The concentration of resources and administrative support to areas where the institution can achieve the most impactful added-value for the Union
- Strong focus on digitization
- Inclusive and cross-service cooperation increasing project oriented work focused on impact
- Review of processes in order to achieve efficiency gains in times of scarce resources
- Focus on outreach activities increasing inter-institutional impact and good communication with

<sup>1</sup> [Summary and full report](#)

regional and local politicians and citizens

- The effective implementation of the new EESC-CoR cooperation agreement, putting always first the interest of CoR members and their political activity.

In the context of the "Going for IMPact!" programme, a thorough and inclusive analysis was made on the CoR's priorities in 2020, coupled with an exercise of administrative simplification of processes and procedures (cutting red-tape). Based on this work, 9 cross-service, non-hierarchical Task Forces were created for priority areas in July 2020 and the first Task Force Project day for all staff took place in 12 January 2021. Following the Bureau decision of 7 December 2020 a new organisational chart is in place since of 1 March 2021.

**9 Task Forces continued to work in 2021** (5 political and 4 administrative):

1. Strategic planning
2. Simplification of administrative environment
3. The Green Deal Going Local
4. Conference on the Future of Europe
5. COVID19 Action Plan
6. Financial Management
7. Electronic Workflows & XML
8. Digital Strategy
9. Better Regulation and the Fit4Future Platform

All the Task Forces' achievements have had a great impact on the modernization of the administration and on the CoR's Members and core activities in 2021. At the end of 2021 the Task force 5 on the COVID-19 exchange platform was put dormant and the Task Force 6 on financial management completed its work and therefore it could be closed.

## COVID-19 pandemic: business continuity and beyond

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which coincided with the start of the new mandate and continued in 2021, had an influence on the way of working. As the pandemic improved, the institution also adapted to the situation. At the start of the year meetings took place in remote format, and once the pandemic permitted, meetings took place in hybrid format where possible.

Nonetheless, building on a robust IT environment and thanks to the flexibility, creativity and commitment of staff in all CoR departments, the institution continued to ensure business continuity in a satisfactory manner in almost all areas of activity also in 2021.

Telework was already before the pandemic a widely used working tool, but the necessary IT equipment, experience and teleworking culture were not yet present throughout the CoR. Telework has developed remarkably during the years of the epidemic and has resulted in a seamless work. IT services deployed significant efforts to acquire, configure and deliver the relevant material to allow the whole institution to operate hybrid or remotely.

Notwithstanding the very demanding circumstances, the collective efforts of all involved enabled the Secretari-

at-General to ensure continued support to the political activities of the Committee. Whilst putting health and safety of Members and staff first, the organisation adapted to the continuously evolving situation. Statutory and non-statutory meetings as well as other core activities were pursued in times of pandemic, thus enabling the Committee to play its role in the European decision-making process without interruption and to support the other EU institutions and the local and regional authorities in the handling of the crisis situation at hand.

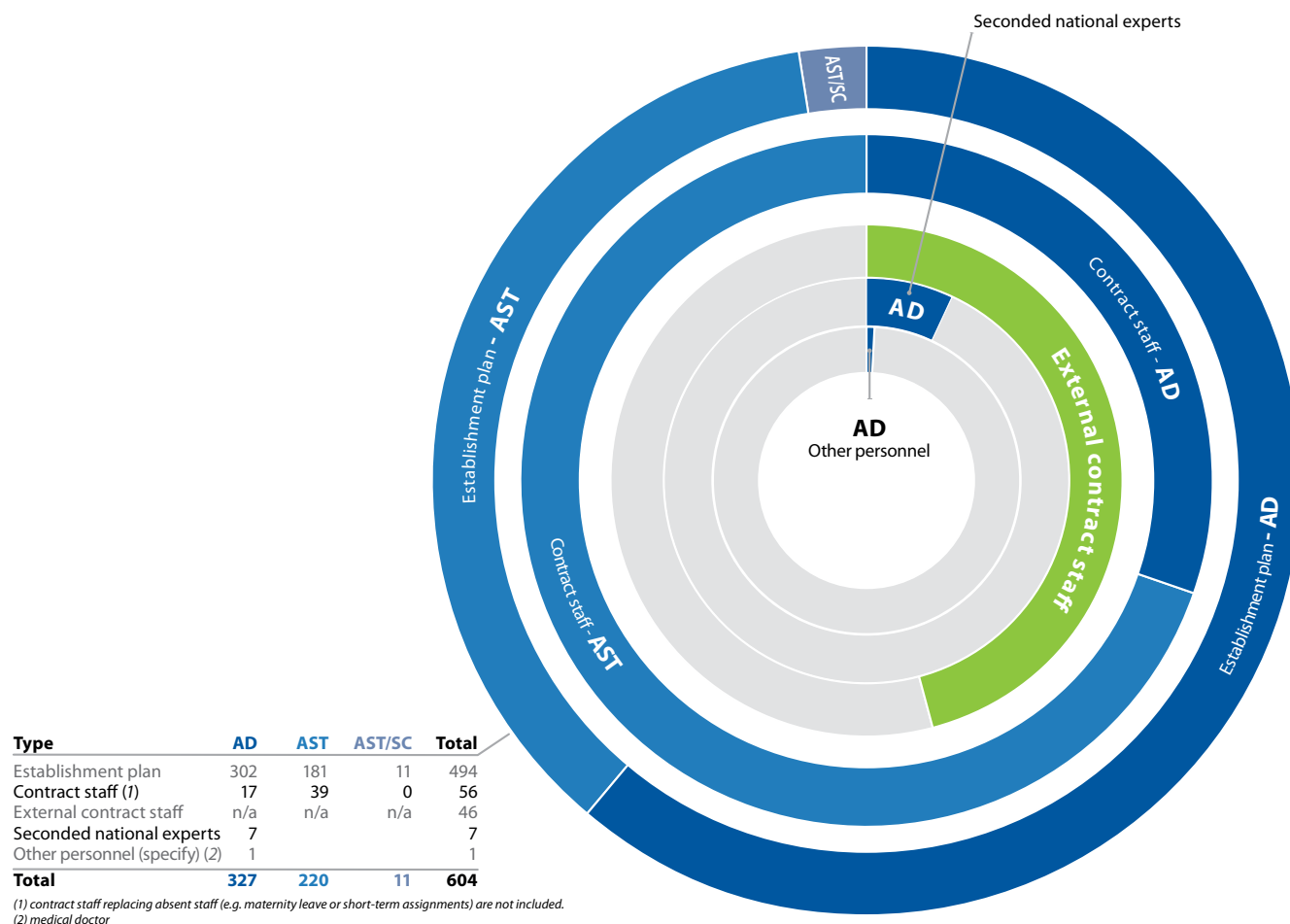
In the following parts of this report, the main achievements and activities are compared against the objectives set in the Strategic Management Plan 2021-2022, as well as the budget execution within the parameters of the control environment. The report also contains a declaration, signed by the Authorising Officer by Delegation, on the application of the principle of sound financial management to the use of the resources and on the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions in 2021.



## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN PER SERVICE

This chapter presents the implementation of the Strategic Management Plan per service.

The table below shows the staff of the Committee of the Regions as of 31 December 2021.



## Glossary of frequently used terms and icons



Political priority for 2021-2022:  
Bringing Europe closer to its people: strengthening EU democracy and working together on the future of our Union



Political priority for 2021-2022:  
Understand and respond to the profound societal transformations that the digital, environmental and demographic challenges entail for building resilient regional and local communities



Political priority for 2021-2022:  
Ensure that the European Union is permanently at the service of its people and the places they live based on social, economic and territorial cohesion as fundamental values.



Administrative priority for 2021-2022:  
Focused Policy support.



Administrative priority for 2021-2022:  
Increased Outreach.



Administrative priority for 2021-2022:  
Smart & modern administration.



Administrative priority for 2021-2022:  
lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic.

<b>ARLEM</b>	Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly	<b>ENVE</b> :	Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy
<b>CALRE:</b>	Conference of the Regional Legislative Assemblies of the EU	<b>E-PRIOR:</b>	IT tool to send invoices and credit notes
<b>CCC:</b>	Conference of Committee Chairs	<b>EPRS:</b>	European Parliamentary Research Service
<b>CFAA</b>	Committee for Financial and Administrative Affairs	<b>e-ram/e-AM:</b>	tool for electronic amendments
<b>CIVEX:</b>	Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional Affairs and External Relations	<b>ESPAS:</b>	European Strategy and Policy Analysis System
<b>COFE:</b>	Conference on the Future of Europe	<b>EUDCC:</b>	EU Digital COVID Certificate
<b>CoP:</b>	Conference of the Presidents	<b>EVA:</b>	SYSPER's module for evaluation and promotion
<b>CoR:</b>	Committee of the Regions	<b>EWRC:</b>	European Week of Regions and Cities
<b>CORLEAP:</b>	Conference for local and regional authorities for the Eastern Partnership	<b>FTE:</b>	Full-time equivalent (unit to measure man-days effort)
<b>COTER:</b>	Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy	<b>HLG:</b>	High-Level Group on Democracy
<b>DB:</b>	Draft Budget	<b>IMP:</b>	Unit Imprimerie/Diffusion
<b>ECON:</b>	Commission for Economic Policy	<b>JCCS:</b>	Joint consultative committees (with Serbia, Western Balkans, Montenegro)
<b>EFA:</b>	European Free Alliance (Political Group)	<b>LRA:</b>	Local and Regional Authorities
<b>EGTC Platform:</b>	The Platform of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation	<b>MEP:</b>	Member of the European Parliament
		<b>NAT:</b>	Commission for Natural Resources

<b>PEPPOL:</b>	is a standard European network that allows sending certified electronic invoices	<b>RoP:</b>	Rules of Procedure
<b>PGs:</b>	Political groups	<b>RRF:</b>	Recovery and Resilience Facility
<b>PMG:</b>	Political monitoring group set up with the EESC to monitor the cooperation at political level between the two consultative bodies.	<b>SEDEC:</b>	Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture
		<b>SLA:</b>	Service Level Agreement
		<b>YEP:</b>	Young Elected Politicians

## Secretariats of the Political Groups

### 2.1 European People's Party (EPP) Group

#### 1. Build on the stronghold of the EPP group as political motor.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

#### Target for 2021-2022:

#### Latest known result:

Number of meetings which took place in Brussels and extraordinary meetings (in Brussels or outside of the CoR HQ).

The EPP Group intends to organise all its regular meetings alongside plenary sessions and commissions' meetings. The format of the meetings will be adapted according to the situation with the coronavirus pandemic.

**Achieved:** In 2021, the EPP Group organised 4 regular remote, 1 extraordinary remote and 2 hybrid regular Group meetings. Moreover, it organised several meetings alongside CoR Commissions meetings (preparatory ones).

In this context it will also examine the possibility of re-introducing extraordinary meetings, taking place outside of Brussels.

Lastly, the Group held a workshop during the European Week of Regions and Cities on the topic of Digitalisation (Resilient cities and regions – the role of digitalisation) which is at the forefront of EU current affairs and a policy priority of the current EU executive.

There were no external extraordinary meetings, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Percentage of members which participated in meetings.

Maintain good attendance percentage.

**Achieved:** 65% of members attended each meeting.

Opinions drafted by EPP members.

Continue securing opinions of strategic importance within the current EU affairs. The Group will closely follow the evolution of the new EC Work Programme through its coordinators in each of the CoR Commissions and where necessary it will propose own-initiative opinions where new issues must be placed on the EU agenda.

**Achieved:** The Group secured a majority of rapporteurships on topics considered of strategic importance according to its priorities. Moreover, some of the EPP led opinions were approved unanimously.

Voting position regarding amendments in commission and plenary session meetings.

Maintain current successful outcome. The Group will seek to defend its common lines on every occasion by generating debate and providing voting guidelines on each opinion, resolution or other legal text requiring decision.

**Achieved:** Results of the voting, in statutory meetings on opinions and Resolutions, were welcomed by the members who appreciated the excellent work and advice of the political advisors of the secretariat.

Contribution of the Group in promoting the work of the CoR to EU institutions, bodies, agencies, as well as other associations.

Maintain current successful outcome. Specifically, for 2021, particular focus will be given to promote the work of the CoR and be involved in topics such as the CoR's delegation and input to the Conference on the Future of Europe (COFE) and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the European Green Deal.

**Achieved:** Several members (including the ones who had rapporteurships) represented the CoR in meetings with MEPs, EU officials, EU Commissioners as well as in conferences and Council Working Parties.

## 2. Promote and improve visibility of EPP-CoR Members' work.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



### Result/impact indicators:

### Target for 2021-2022:

### Latest known result:

Number of press releases, publications and audio-visual materials published on our website taken up by media or participants.

Continue increasing the number of web entries, news, press releases and publications on the website by 30 % in 2021 and 30% by 2022.

**Achieved:** The EPP Group has increased the number of web entries, news, press releases and publications on the website. These added to 174.

Number of social media posts that led to the increased number of followers, likes, shares and retweets.

Increase the activity on social media and digital support for our members by at least 30 % in 2021 and another 30% by 2022.

**Achieved:** The EPP Group has increased the activity on social media and digital support for our members. The group had 979 tweets on Twitter which is the strongest social media channel of the Group.

Number of interview request for the EPP-CoR members.

Achieve 20% more interviews with EPP-CoR members in 2021 and 20% more in 2022.

**Achieved:** The EPP Group members had interviews in press articles as well as online interviews, due to COVID situation, with newspapers as well as institutional channels. These included op-eds published in Politico, EU Observer, Brussels Times, and The Parliament Magazine.

EPP Local Dialogues with citizens.

Reach out to citizens by organising more EPP Local Dialogues by at least 20% in 2021 and 2022.

**Maintained:** Due to COVID, we managed to organise hybrid EPP Local Dialogues and events with citizens.

### 3. EPP contribution to the monitoring of the CoR administrative and budgetary activities.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result/impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Level of ownership of decisions taken.	Maintain the increased level of ownership of decision taken.	<b>Achieved:</b> EPP Group Members provided an essential contribution to the adoption and implementation of the Action Plan for the Project "Tapping into the regional and local authorities' potential to strengthen the EU". With the guidance of the CFAA chair, key decisions on the project's direction have been taken, such as the decision to include it in the 2023 draft budget and important political lobbying has been undertaken to gain crucial support for the project e.g., the letter from Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša – as the first PM of any Member State on this project – to Ursula von der Leyen, alongside numerous other activities.
High level of participation and active contributions of EPP members in the CFAA, RoP ad-hoc and all other working bodies set-up to reach main CoR's budgetary and administrative objectives.	Maintain high level of participation of Members' and increased their active involvement in the CFAA, RoP.	<b>Achieved:</b> Full participation of EPP Group members in all meetings and the Chair's focus on improving overall work of the CFAA.
Adoption of the CoR positions on future organisation of IT services.	Increase the efficiency of IT Service and Telecommunications by organising them in a way which will allow the CoR to transform its secretariat into a modern and smart administration to support Members in their political work in Brussels and elsewhere in their constituencies.	<b>Achieved:</b> Progress made as part of the CoR Digital Strategy implementation, particularly in cyber-security. This includes the gradual roll-out of multi-factor authentication (MFA) to further boost the security of the CoR's IT systems.
Number of revisions of CoR regulations which are of particular importance for Members and Political Groups.	Maintain the level of revised regulations to remove red tape and simplify the CoR legal frame to what is really needed thus improving work of the Political Groups.	<b>Achieved:</b> The adoption of a regulation on the payment of an allowance to members of the CoR performing tasks or fulfilling duties in respect of local events held in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe. A flat-rate allowance of €700 is to be paid to the coordinator of an outreach local dialogue or event in the context of the CoFE (Conference on the Future of Europe), which constitutes an important motivation to hold such events, which are part of the core mission of the CoR, with the CoR's role as a political enabler in outreach activities being acknowledged by EU institutions.

Number of projects to be implemented to simplify the current CoR legal framework which is very complex and prevents improving the CoR functioning (more than 600 regulations and decisions in place).

Adoption of the CoR Simplification Strategy and its quick implementation with increased participation in projects to support the "Going for IMPact" Initiative launched by the Secretary General.

**Achieved:** On 17/11/2020, CFAA adopted the "Strategy on the simplification of CoR rules and procedures for the period 2020-2025", which was confirmed by the CoR Bureau on 7/12/ 2020. To contribute to the modernisation of the CoR administration and to focus resources on the body's analytical and advisory function, the Strategy aims to increase the political impact of the CoR and its members and to deliver related services to members in the most effective, efficient, and transparent way.

This project on simplification has continued throughout 2021 under the political supervision of the CFAA Chair and active involvement of the EPP-CFAA members.

### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The restrictions related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a considerable impact on all activities of the Group throughout 2021.

In accordance with the decisions by the Belgian government and the CoR, the Group did not organise any external extraordinary Group meetings in 2021.

The further waves of the pandemic meant a constant readjustment to a new working environment for members and the Group secretariat.

The Group organised all its scheduled meetings in a remote or hybrid format.

It adapted quickly to the technical requirements and ensured high level speakers during all meetings.

Regarding press and communication, all the online activities increased (press releases, social media posts, number of followers, online events and trainings).

Concerning consultative works, the Group's secretariat adapted its working methods and continued to assist members completing their tasks. Given the lack of in-person meetings, more information emails and extended briefings were used prior to statutory meetings taking place.

The calendar of meetings of the EPP Members on the Member's Portal was constantly checked and adapted to the evolving situation resulting in changes of dates and format of meetings.

### Human resources of the EPP Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	10	4		14
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>



## 2.2 Party of European Socialists (PES) Group

### 1. Strengthen PES Group contribution on the CoR political activities and CoR's impact on the EU decision making process.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result/impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Participation of PES members in plenary sessions, commissions, Bureau, CFAA, ARLEM, CORLEAP, working Group on Green deal, subsidiarity steering committee, JCCs, working groups with third countries, etc.)	Maximise the participation and contribution of PES Group members in the various meetings mentioned in the indicators to reflect the CoR and PES priorities on the strategic agenda of the EU. 2 and 3.	<b>Achieved:</b> In 2021, despite the prolongation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the PES Group managed to organise Group meetings alongside each plenary session and commission meetings via videoconference or in hybrid mode. The PES Group organised its first full physical meeting with nearly 80% of its members in Seville. This conference on the European Green Deal was the occasion to invite around 40 young, elected representatives for a full day of exchange. In 2021, 16 opinions have been drafted by PES members and adopted on key political priorities of the Group including the EU pillar of social rights, migration, minimum wages, eradication of homelessness, union of equality, ... Finally, the PES Group secretariat has also produced voting lists for opinions adopted in plenary sessions and commission meetings.
Organisation of PES Group meetings, including ordinary and plenary meetings to prepare the votes and extraordinary meetings aiming at building a PES position on issues relevant to the regional and local authorities.	The PES Group will follow closely the rolling programme of the European Commission to appoint PES rapporteurs for major opinions.	
Preparation of voting guidelines for the adoption of opinions and resolutions and for the tabling of amendments.	The PES Group will follow closely the rolling programme of the European Commission to appoint PES rapporteurs for major opinions.	
Organising meeting with other institutions and external stakeholders.	The PES Group will keep working on its relationship with the European Commission and with the European Parliament through its cooperation with the S&D parliamentary Group.	
Local dialogues or events organised by PES member.	The PES Group will support its members organising events – digital, hybrid or ordinary according to the evolution of the pandemic - with our institutional partners. The concept of the “Progressive Local Labs” will be continued and expanded. The PES Group will also enhance its engagement with young local and regional politicians.	

## 2. Increase PES Group's monitoring of CoR administrative and budgetary affairs.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

Level of participation and contributions of PES members in the various bodies set up for the main outputs.

Number of modifications brought to the existing CoR rules in the framework of the ad hoc commission on revision of rules of procedure.

Negotiation on the new cooperation agreement with the EESC.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

Thanks to the alternateship, we target 100% level of participation of PES members in the various bodies including the new joint body with EESC due to replace the Political Monitoring Groups.

Concerning the Cooperation Agreement with the EESC, evaluation of the 13 fields for action and milestones for their implementation identified in the current cooperation agreement with the EESC.

Signature of the agreement by October 2021 and finding a consensual solution for a building strategy and the future occupation of CoR/EESC buildings, particularly in the case of the VMA building refurbishment.

#### Latest known result:

**Partially achieved:** In 2021, the PES Group has participated in the various bodies set up to monitor administrative and budgetary affairs, like CFAA, the Audit Committee, the IT Group on digital future. As far as the cooperation agreement is concerned, the political level was not much associated in the implementation of the cooperation agreement signed between the two institutions. The focus has been placed on the Project **"Tapping into the regional and local authorities' potential to strengthen the EU"**.

## 3. Develop PES Communication strategy.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

More qualitative traffic to the website and higher engagement of users on the website:

- 1-Number of hits on the new website.
- 2-Average time spent in each visit.
- 3-Increased perception of relevance of the website content.
- 4-Improvement of the website user experience.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

The design and user-friendliness of the PES website will be improved via the support of an external provider thanks to budget line 264.

Content in relation to the PES Group's projects on local and regional best practices and articles on the CoR activities will be uploaded on the website resulting in at least a 10% increase of visits in 2021.

#### Latest known result:

**Partially achieved:** In 2021, the PES Group has published a total of 47 articles on diverse topics. This work was strengthened as much as possible by adding on a case-by-case multilingual versions of the articles in the language of the key actor involved and more when possible. Regarding the impact indicators:

- In 2021, 23,314 users visited the website, representing an increase of 7% compared to 2020, which is below our target of 10%.
- An average session duration of 1:54 minute with 88.4% of new users. 65,255 page views, with peaks during the year reflecting the key campaigns (e.g., Housing Week, LGBTIQ Freedom Zone Cities and Regions, Extraordinary Group meeting and School event in Seville).
- This proves a good success of the content and engagement strategy providing fresh, interesting and relevant content.



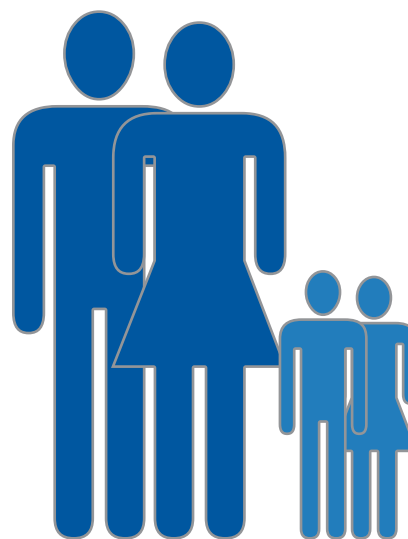
Number of recipients of the newsletter in our database.	Review and reformulation of the newsletter concept in order to adapt it to the new platform following the end of the website hosting with the provider ESN. Increase the newsletter's subscribers by at least 10%.	<b>Achieved:</b> The total number of contacts are over 3,516 and substantially increased by about 1,500 compared to 2020, making us proudly go beyond the goal set last year of 10% increase.
Number of social media followers 1_Facebook 2_Twitter 3_Instagram, Youtube and LinkedIn.	Put in place new strategies to grow engagement, maintain its followership and increase it by at least 5%. Continue to maintain its position as first political group of the Committee on all social media. Continue to engage with its members to help them improve their social media presence and engagement and increase the number of views on various social media platforms.	<b>Achieved:</b> In 2021, the PES Group continued to be the most followed group within the Committee of the Regions. Our followers increased on Twitter (8.4%), Instagram (36.7%), YouTube (27%), and LinkedIn (117.7%), mostly achieving (Facebook, Twitter) and going even beyond in some cases (Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube) our goals set last year. The PES Group now has more than 5,500 followers on Twitter, more than 1,400 on Instagram, and crossed the threshold of 100 followers on LinkedIn.
Number of visitor groups	Welcome again at least 20 groups of visitors for the next years if the situation allows it and continue to host online visits to debate about the role of the CoR and cities and regions in Europe (at least 10).	<b>Partially achieved:</b> The PES group had 13 virtual group of visitors in 2021.

### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

As political Group in an Assembly of local and regional elected representatives, the COVID-19 pandemic had a massive impact on our work having to cancel meetings and replace them by videoconferencing. This mode of functioning is far from being ideal in a political environment that includes negotiations, search of compromises, reactivity, etc. In the late 2021, we managed to organise one of the few face-to-face meetings with 150 participants on site and it was more than appreciated by CoR members who could interact in person with other participants.

### Human resources of the PES Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan*	10	4		14
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>



## 2.3 Renew Europe Group

### 1. Provide information to the European level about the state of the Union in the municipalities/regions of Renew Europe members.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

#### Target for 2021-2022:

#### Latest known result:

Percentage of members interviewed for policy profile.	100% of members interviewed by July 2021.	<b>Not achieved</b> (30% - online meetings has meant a break in the interviews).
Speakers at CoR plenary and commission meetings who inform about the situation in their municipality/region.	At least one such intervention for every plenary and commission meeting.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Invitations from European Liberal Forum, Renew Europe EP, ALDE Party, EDP.	At least one such intervention for each organisation mentioned in every quarter.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Upload Mandate Priorities into website and promote in the newsletter.	Upload by March 2021. Begin promotion in the wider Renew Europe family in spring 2021.	<b>Achieved.</b>

### 2. Provide information about the EU to the constituents and stakeholders of Renew Europe members.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

#### Target for 2021-2022:

#### Latest known result:

Articles published in the party communication outlets (newsletters, social media, website).	One article for each national/regional party represented in our group.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Articles/interventions published in the local mainstream media of our members.	One article for each Renew Europe rapporteur.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Posts published in the social media channels of our members.	All Renew Europe Bureau members, Coordinators, and Rapporteurs to post about their CoR work on their social media channel(s) at least once.	<b>Achieved.</b>

### 3. Raise the profile of the CoR towards specifically targeted stakeholders.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result/impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Events organised.	Organise the following events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least two Liberal Mayors Summits.</li> <li>• One Young Elected Liberal Leaders' (YELL) Summit.</li> <li>• Regional Ministers Summit.</li> <li>• Event at the ALDE Party Congress.</li> </ul>	<b>Partially achieved:</b> Due to COVID-19, one Liberal Mayors Summit was held online in July 2021. In November 2021, the first Regional Ministers Summit online was organised. ALDE Congress was only online without side events. It was agreed with the youth partners to postpone the YELL summit to 2022.
Content (articles, speeches, videos, etc) published.	Publication of content about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CoR plenaries.</li> <li>• CoR commissions.</li> <li>• CoR events.</li> <li>• Events of Renew Europe political family.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved.</b>
Meetings with key contacts organised.	Bilaterals with at least two of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One EU Commissioner of the Renew Europe family.</li> <li>• One Chair of EP Committee of Renew Europe.</li> <li>• One member of the European Council of Renew Europe.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved:</b> EU Commissioner achieved. EP Chair achieved.

#### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2021 the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a considerable impact on all activities of the Group. As a result of continued teleworking and limited travel possibilities, the Renew Europe Group did not organise any external extraordinary meetings and most of the statutory meetings were held in remote or hybrid format, limiting the possibilities for active participation. It also meant a slight setback for the execution of members' interviews. The existing circumstances affected our working methods and required quick adaptation to the constantly changing situation. Nonetheless,

our Group members continued to participate in all the meetings and be well prepared.

The new working environment also allowed us to improve our digital skills and move towards a more digitalised working space. The secretariat has launched an internal SharePoint Site for document sharing with the President of the Group and began to use new methods for sharing information, such as the launch of the podcast 'Letter from Brussels', released after every CoR plenary.

### Human resources of the Renew Europe Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	5	3		8
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>



## 2.4 European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Group

### 1. Build on the stronghold of the ECR Group as political motor.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

Assistance with research and administrative arrangements ahead of interventions of ECR Members.

Amendments tabled to key opinions at every plenary and most commission meetings.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

Maintain the high level of support, especially in connection with debates with representatives of national governments, EU Commissioners and MEPs.

Amendments to be tabled at each plenary session and most commission meetings, especially in key areas for the citizens, the institution, and the Group, such as cohesion, environmental and migration policies.

Table amendments which ensure that opinions are in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

#### Latest known result:

**Achieved:** Research assistance provided ahead of all commission and plenary meetings and most CoR-related events and bilateral meetings.

**Achieved:** Amendments tabled to all key opinions at every plenary session and at most commission meetings.

Ensure that ECR opinions are properly followed-up and have impact on key EU institutions and national authorities.

Provide full support to all initiatives aiming at creating the macro-regional strategy for the Carpathian region.

Ensure that main messages of the three new ECR-led opinions are taken up by EU institutions:

- The New Circular Economy Action Plan (rapporteur Tjisse Stelpstra).
- The European Year of Rail (rapporteur Jarosław Stawiarski).
- Cross-border Public Services (rapporteur Pavel Branda).

**Achieved:** Examples of supporting the follow-up actions:

1. Opinion on macro-regional strategy for Carpathians:
  - Assistance with the organisation of the macro-regional group on Carpathians, which was regularly attended by ministers and representatives of regional and local governments.
  - Participation of the rapporteur in the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee meeting; and in numerous conferences such as “European Values” or “Sustainable Tourism - Business for Europe’s mountains”.
2. The New Circular Economy Action Plan:
  - Rapporteur presented his opinion at the opening session of #EUCircularTalk and the European Week of Waste Reduction.
  - Rapporteur was member of the Jury for the European Week of Waste Reduction.
  - Invitation from the Intergroup Climate change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development of the European Parliament.
3. The European Year of Rail:
  - Support with the organisation of three regional events (“Cross-border rail connections: fostering connections between regions and their citizens”, “Towards a multimodal Adriatic-Ionian major line with multiple connections to the Tyrrhenian coast”, “Role and importance of rail transport in the European regions. Building effective transport systems based on rail”).
  - Promoting participation in the journey of the Connecting Europe Express among ECR members, a number of whom actively took part in the events.
  - Organisation of ECR conference as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities titled “Transport policy fit for XXI century” with representatives of the European Commissions and the European Railways Agency.
4. Cross-border Public Services:
  - Support for the participation of the rapporteur at the European Congress for the Demographic Challenge in San Pedro de los Majarretes (Spain), where he presented the Cross-Border Cooperation Report.
  - Support for the rapporteur’s participation in the debate on the future of cross-border cooperation for the 11th EGTC Platform meeting in Innsbruck, Austria.

<p>Elaboration of and follow-up to CoR priorities and ECR policy proposals at strategic meetings of the ECR Group – the Localism Summit and the ECR Study Days, as well as Group meetings in the margins of plenary sessions.</p>	<p>ECR Localism Summits (1 x year) and Study Days (1 x year) to serve as platforms for discussions with citizens and public representatives.</p> <p>ECR training (1 x year) to serve as instrument helping to boost communication skills of members and staff, which will allow the Members to communicate CoR and ECR messages in the most efficient manner.</p>	<p><b>Achieved:</b> Despite the difficult pandemic situation, the ECR Group held both of its strategic meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ECR Study Days took place in hybrid form and were held in the Polish region of Podkarpackie. The event involved MEPs, as well as representatives of government, academia, and the private sector. On the agenda were two issues of high priority to local and regional authorities: the new EU financial perspective and smart specialisations.</li> <li>Localism Summit took place in Assen, the capital of the Dutch province of Drenthe, where almost 80 politicians and experts from ten Member States gathered to discuss regional energy strategies and building a hydrogen economy.</li> </ul>
<p>Events addressing EU policy and/or governance issues.</p>	<p>Continue organising well-attended events that address policy issues and present key messages of the ECR Group to the most relevant institutional actors, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECR event as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities on a theme corresponding with CoR priorities.</li> <li>Thematic activity in Kraków on the organisation of large-scale sports events by European cities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Achieved.</b></p> <p>The ECR Group organised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event as part of the European Week of Regions on Cities dedicated to fostering a modern transport policy.</li> <li>Thematic activity titled “Post-Brexit Europe - a local government perspective” in which a number of local and regional politicians from the EU and the UK participated, as well as some Conservative Party Members of the UK House of Commons. That event was organised in virtual format due to the pandemic situation.</li> </ul>

## 2. Strengthen ECR Group and CoR profile vis-à-vis institutional clients.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators

Newsletters and leaflets circulated to members of our Group, ECR MEPs, ECR Party, relevant EP ECR EP Group Secretariat members, MPs, wider conservative and reformist circles, EU Commissioners and local and regional representations in Brussels.

Number of Twitter followers.

Press releases sent out on key ECR-led initiatives.

Create a new website for the Group.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

- Continue to prepare the ECR newsletter for at least every second CoR plenary session (hard copy and e-newsletter).
- Continue the wide circulation of the newsletter to all relevant stakeholders.
- Maintain a steady growth in the number of followers on social media (target: 10%/year).
- Increase the number of press releases by at least 15%.

Develop and launch the new, modern ECR website in the first half of 2021.

#### Latest known result:

##### **Achieved:**

Issued four printed versions of the newsletter (March/April/June/July) and one digital version (December). Each newsletter was sent to approximately 250 recipients.

Press releases issued after all ECR-organised events.

In 2021 the Group gained 144 new followers on Twitter (increase by 11.3%).

**Achieved:** The website can be accessed here: <https://www.ecrcor.eu/>.

Meetings: Arranged for every ECR rapporteur in relation to his/her opinion and for members who want to strengthen their visibility in Brussels.	Continue to organise high number of bilateral meetings for each rapporteur in cooperation with commission secretariats.  Continue to assist Chairs of Intergroups and other Members who wish to hold more bilateral meetings in Brussels.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Organise and encourage commission secretariats to organise bilateral follow-up meetings for rapporteurs.	At least maintain the number of bilateral meetings with senior officials at the current level.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Organisation of events, ensuring good attendance, inviting high profile speakers from all partner institutions, developing new contacts, agreeing policy proposals.	Organise the four activities in both 2021 and 2022 in either face-to-face, hybrid or fully digital mode, depending on the pandemic situation.  Continue to invite senior officials from EU institutions, central government, and policy experts. Organise some of the events outside Brussels if public health situation allows.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Hosting of ECR Group MEPs at ECR Group meetings and organisation of bilateral meetings between ECR CoR Members and ECR MEPs.	Host ECR MEPs and other senior EU officials at least at every second ECR Group meeting in Brussels.  Maintain high number of bilateral meetings of ECR CoR Members and ECR MEPs.	<b>Achieved.</b> The following guests participated in ECR Group meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bert Jan Ruissen MEP (ECR/NL), on 28/01/2021.</li> <li>• Dace Melbarde MEP (ECR/LV), on 15/03/2021.</li> <li>• Tomasz Grosse, professor at the Warsaw University and Member of the CoR High Level Group on European Democracy, on 30 /04/2021.</li> <li>• Raffaele Fitto MEP, Co-Chairman of the ECR Group in the European Parliament, on 28 /06/2021.</li> </ul>
Hosting visitors' groups and young elected politicians	Increase the number of visitors in 2020 and 2021 and invite YEPs to our flagship events (Localism Summit and Study Days) if the pandemic situation allows. If not, invite them as guests to some of the virtual meetings.	<b>Achieved.</b> Thirteen YEPs attended the ECR Group Localism Summit in Drenthe.

### 3. Ensure good use of public resources.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

Proposals for good and cost-effective governance: follow the application of key decisions relating to the running of the CoR e.g., through CFAA, bilateral contacts and the Ad Hoc Group on the Revision of the Rules of Procedure. Help ensure that institutional partners have sufficient information on budget spending and needs of the CoR.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

Provide briefings for all meetings relating to the running of the CoR.  
Monitor and review if and where necessary.  
Participate in discussions with counterparts from other EU institutions to inform them about the budgetary needs of the CoR and help ensure that the budget is at an adequate level allowing the institution to fulfil its functions.

#### Latest known result:

**Achieved.**  
Briefings provided for ECR Members ahead of all CoR plenaries, commissions, Conferences of Presidents, Bureaus, joint consultative committees, working groups and activities related to the Conference on the Future of Europe.  
Stimulating discussions about the CoR budgetary needs with counterparts in the European Parliament.

Responsible use of the own budget: Working within allocated amounts and ensuring that only activities with added value are proceeded with.	Not exceed overall budget allocation and use existing budget efficiently. Use the resources at the disposal of local and regional offices in addition to CoR resources when organising conferences.	<b>Achieved.</b> The execution rate of the group's most important budget line (for communications and political activities) was at the level of 88.2%.
Number of documents submitted for translation with urgent character.	Reduce the proportion of documents submitted for urgent translation to below 25%.	<b>Achieved.</b>

### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the ECR Group to change the format of most of its meetings from physical to remote or hybrid. All our extraordinary group meetings were initially planned as "in person" meetings. Firstly, the format of the ECR Study Days in Podkarpackie region in Poland had to be changed to "virtual", with limited presence in Rzeszów.

Secondly, the ECR Localism Summit in Assen (The Netherlands) took place in person, but it was highly uncertain until the very last minute whether the event would not need to be cancelled due to constantly changing health situation and regulations.

Thirdly, our ECR event held as part of the European Week of Regions and Cities, ECR panel at the Łódzkie European Economic Forum and the thematic activity on Brexit have taken place in virtual format, despite the initial plans to hold them in person.

Overall, the ECR Group organised all its extraordinary group meetings and events planned for year 2021, despite numerous logistical challenges. All ordinary ECR Group meetings and

preparatory meetings before commission meetings also took place as scheduled. It was particularly challenging to conduct those of the meetings, which took place in hybrid format, as they required more external IT support.

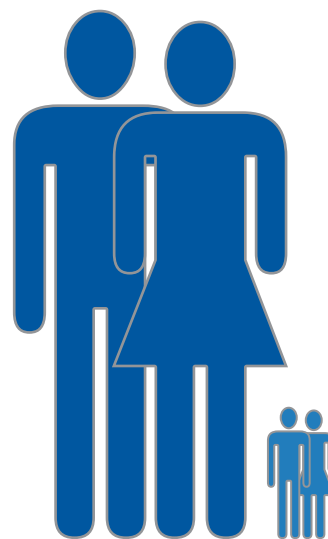
Inviting young, elected politicians to ECR events was more challenging given the travel restrictions, but a large group of EU councillors attended the ECR Localism Summit, nevertheless.

The pandemic has created a situation in which the ECR Group could finance its new modern website (<https://www.ecrcor.eu/>) thanks to savings stemming from organisation of some meetings in virtual format.

The ECR newsletter has been fully digitalised as circulation of a newsletter in hard copy became less relevant..

### Human resources of the ECR Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	3	1		4
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>





## 2.5 European Alliance (EA) Group

### 1. Enhance the Political Identity of the European Alliance group and of the CoR in EU institutions, Regional and Local Authorities and Political Groups.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

#### Target for 2021-2022:

#### Latest known result:

Number of joint meetings and initiatives.

Ensure that we have two joint initiatives with MEP's / EFA Political Party.

**Achieved:** Substantial increase in cooperation with the European Parliament EFA group including joint events in Corsica and virtual / hybrid meetings.

Number of articles on EA group members activity in various publications.

Increase the number of key EU events, which EA members will speak linked to EA opinions.

**Achieved:** EA members spoke at an increased number of the EFA EP group meetings (4), as well as during European Commission organised events in particular relating to EA led opinions.

Members being briefed for all their meetings / seminars or events.

The EA group will re-launch a series of short lunchtime (1hr) briefings on areas of key importance to members.

**Achieved:** Lunchtime briefings on the PEACE programme and Scotland / BREXIT arranged.

Number of MEPs and CoR members participating in each other's activities.

Build on the Regional recovery after the pandemic by sharing members strategies for regional recovery.

**Achieved:** Events where EA members were able to share COVID-19 regional recovery strategies organised. Very regular events related with the Conference on the future of Europe organised with MEP's / Former members and local representatives.

The EA group organised a number of meetings where members shared recovery strategies post pandemic

### 2. Achieve goals as defined by the EA group, organise group meetings, achieve 'rapporteur' positions in key policy areas.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result/impact indicators:

#### Target for 2021-2022:

#### Latest known result:

Number of successful group meetings held.

EA group meetings organised along each plenary session of the CoR in 2021-2022.

EA extraordinary group meeting during 2021-2022 in Poland.

**Achieved:** All meetings alongside CoR plenary were organised. EA held one extraordinary meeting on the CoFE (Conference on the Future of Europe) and the second which was to be in Poland was converted to a strategic planning and Rural development meeting.

Number of EA seminars organised / EA briefings held.	Study visits for EA members on key EA priorities. #Euregions week event to be organised. EA will also hold Local dialogues in 2021.	<b>Achieved:</b> Study visit was organised in partnership with the EFA party in Corsica along with a local dialogue. <b>Achieved:</b> Revitalising town centres was the focus of our EWRC seminar which had over 120 participants. The EA Group members also organised 3 local dialogues in 2021
Number of articles published in EU / National / Regional and local press.	Increase in articles in local and regional press of 10%. Increase use of social media to ensure all commission meetings are covered.	<b>Achieved:</b> a greater focus on local newspapers and radio in 2021 in particular in Ireland and Poland. All meetings with EA members speaking and commission meetings covered by our social media.

### 3. Increase the profile and the 'value added' of the European Committee of the Regions among specifically targeted stakeholders. Link with European Alliance Group political priorities 2021-2025.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result/impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Number of primary schools participating in the annual children's art competitions: "my region, my...".	Find a new way to engage secondary schools' students via digital platforms. More recognition of the annual primary schools' competition and preparing a digital as well as physical exhibition.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> The planned Secondary school's engagement was postponed as EA did not wish to encourage people to work in proximity due to COVID19. Instead, this was used for online training courses on the use of social media for members. The EA primary schools' competition was held on the topic of "My Region, My window to the world".
Level of dialogue established with specific stakeholders or new stakeholders joining our dialogues.	Increasing invitation to different events of specific stakeholders by holding at least four local events or lunchtime briefings. Continue building relations and understanding of the CoR with MEP's.	<b>Achieved:</b> EA's members were involved in three local dialogues in Ireland, one in Corsica and one in Flanders.

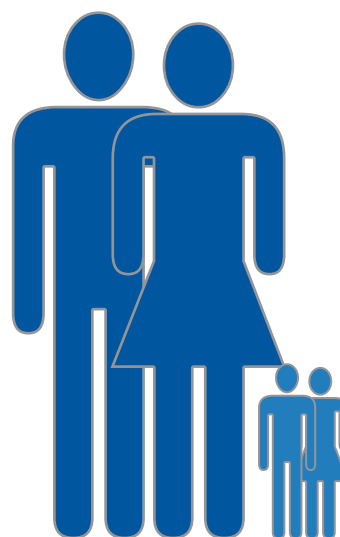
#### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Unfortunately, COVID19 reduced the possibility of EA group members pursuing contact in Brussels but they were highly active online, and this necessitated us to think differently and use more technology to discuss priorities and implement policy. EA took the opportunity to organ-

ise lunchtime briefings on topics of importance to our members and arrange training on European political messaging for members. Members and the EA team were able to work effectively but look forward to more meetings in person for the future.

## Human resources of the EA Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	3	1		4
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>



## 2.6 The Greens Group

### 1. Ensuring participation of Greens members and providing support in preparation of CoR statutory meetings.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicator(s):	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Number of briefings for statutory meetings.	To have all coordinators and presidents briefed and fully informed ahead of all statutory meetings.	<b>Achieved.</b> All coordinators and presidents received briefings and information ahead of all statutory meetings.
Quality of analysis of opinions.	Increase the level of service to members regarding analysis.	<b>Achieved:</b> Members were provided quality analysis to a number of opinions, considering the available capacity and expertise of the staff in the secretariat.
Number of proposals for amendments.	Increase the level of service to members regarding proposed amendments.	<b>Achieved:</b> Members of the Greens tabled 137 amendments to draft opinions in commissions, and 109 of them were adopted. Members also tabled 213 amendments in Plenary and 196 of them were adopted.
Number of voting lists provided to members.	Provide members with voting lists ahead of all voting procedures.	<b>Achieved:</b> Members received voting lists ahead of all voting procedures, both in commissions and plenary sessions.
Number of rapporteurships obtained.	Obtain 4% of CoR rapporteurships, proportional to the size of the group.	<b>Achieved:</b> The Greens drafted three opinions, which is 4% of the opinions drafted in the CoR.

The staffing of the secretariat was organised during the year: the secretary-general started on 1 February, and the political adviser on 1 July. The recruitment of the assistant will only be completed in 2022. From October 2021 until then, an interim secretary is providing administrative support.

Servicing all members in all their activities was a challenge with such a small team, but thanks to very high commitment and level of efficiency, the set targets were met.

## 2. Building and strengthening co-operation with Greens in other institutions and the European Green Party.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result/impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Joint activities (meetings, communications, statements etc.).	Establishment of joint activities across the wider Greens political family.	<b>Achieved:</b> The secretary-general and the Co-Chair of European Green Party (EGP) attended three of the seven group meetings of the Greens in the CoR; we were invited to participate in a Local Councillors' Conference in Valencia (postponed to May 2022), and EGP helped to organise a meeting of Co-President Bernd Voß with local Greens in Slovenia in September 2021. Furthermore, information was shared on local and regional elections and the results for green candidates. In the context of the European Year of Youth and the CoR YEPs programme, connections with the Federation of Young European Greens were refreshed.
Members and MEPs involved in each other's political activities.	Establishment of direct contacts and cooperation between members and MEPs.	<b>Achieved:</b> Nine members of the Greens/EFA in the EP joined four of our seven group meetings for exchanges on concrete topics; information was shared during the year on specific dossiers; we collaborated on the campaign 'for a welcoming Europe' and supported the campaign to declare the EU as a 'LGBTIQ freedom zone'. Further very constructive meetings were held with Greens/EFA rapporteurs on relevant dossiers, including the 2022 CoR budget.

## 3. Strengthening the group internally: organising group meetings, developing, and adopting political priorities and communications strategy.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result/impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Successful organisation of Group Meetings.	Group Meetings organised alongside each CoR Plenary Session and an external Group Meeting.	<b>Achieved:</b> Six ordinary and one extraordinary group meetings were organised; on average they were attended by 14 members and alternates.
Other gatherings held.	Successful organisation of an informal gathering.	<b>Postponed:</b> Postponed to 2022 due to the pandemic.

Development of a political programme.	Adoption of a political programme.	<b>Achieved:</b> The political programme was developed and formally adopted by the group on 24 January 2022.
Analysis and refinement of current communications strategy.	Adoption of a communications strategy.	<b>Achieved:</b> A project for expert communications consultancy was launched in 2021. Visual identity guidelines and other communication templates and materials will be delivered in spring of 2022.

### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The remote recruitment procedure for the secretary-general as well as her start under these conditions was a challenge, but quite well managed.

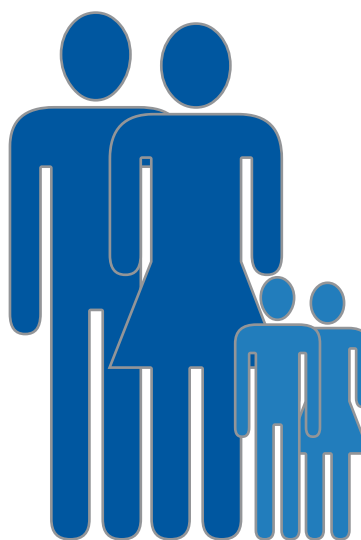
The pandemic did not allow us to organise events as initially planned to bring together CoR Greens with other Greens across EU institutions and other Greens organisa-

tions in Brussels, and to co-organise a meeting with Green Local Councillors with the European Greens Party. Both events are postponed to 2022.

On a positive note, online or hybrid meetings allowed members and alternates to participate in meetings with less efforts and lower carbon footprint.

### Human resources of the Greens Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	1		3
<b>Contract staff</b>				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>



## 2.7 Directorate for Members and Plenarities (Dir A)

### 1. Facilitate the political activities carried out at the CoR by providing efficient legal, financial, and administrative support to CoR members and bodies

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result/impact indicators:	Target for –2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Consistent quality of the Conference of Presidents, Bureau, Plenary Sessions agendas and meetings.	<p>Re-evaluation of the timing, organisation and future planning of Bureau meetings and plenary sessions including the reduction of last-minute changes.</p> <p>Best possible technical services (sound, screens, web-streaming, electronic voting, etc.) within the allocated budget.</p> <p>Further development and use of technical facilities for the organisation of remote meetings including interpretation.</p>	<p><b>Achieved.</b> Electronic voting provided for all statutory meetings as of June 2021 in either remote or hybrid meeting. New framework contract to provide electronic voting for statutory meetings to be prepared in 2022. Pilot project “Streamovation”, implemented in cooperation with Dir D.</p> <p><b>Partially achieved.</b> Project to renovate interpretation systems in all conference rooms to be prepared in 2022 in cooperation with the EESC. Hybrid meetings will be considered for this project.</p>
Adoption of the new CoR language policy	Language policy adopted by the CoR Bureau in 1st semester 2021.	<p><b>Partially achieved:</b> Thorough discussions took place at administrative and political level on the language policy to take into account the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. The language policy was reviewed, in good cooperation with Directorate for Translation, to take stock of the current practices and set up a system for establishment of priority languages when reductions prove necessary because of “force majeure”. It is expected to be adopted by the CoR Bureau in April 2022.</p>
Increase number of visits on the website (measurable via a heat map)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Link the website to social media and Members’ App by end 2021.</li> <li>2. Install interactive chat box by end 2021.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Transferred:</b> The task of monitoring and coordinating further changes in the CoR website page has been finally transferred to Directorate D. Directorate A is no longer in charge of the website.</p> <p><b>Not achieved:</b> The chat, which was initially planned to be developed in the frame of the OSS (intranet not internet), was finally considered technically too complex by the IT Coordination.</p>
Adoption of new regulation and quality assessment based on feedback from all actors involved (members, groups, hierarchy, and task force).	Establishment of an internal Task force (February 2021) in charge of preparing the new regulation for adoption by CFAA in September/October 2021 and Bureau in October/December 2021.	<p><b>Partially achieved:</b> Task force completed its work in early autumn 2021. Draft regulation was presented to the PGs shortly before the October Plenary session. However, PGs did not support the project submitted. Further comments are expected. The work is continuing.</p>

Finalize the implementation of Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct entered into force on 24 January 2020).

Full implementation of the Code of Conduct in 2021:

- submission of the declaration of financial interest by all (or at least virtually all) members
- formal appointment of the members of the Advisory Board on Harassment.

**Partially achieved:** a limited number of members/alternates have not yet submitted the declaration of financial interests.

## 2. Contribute to the internal functioning of the CoR by providing efficient legal, financial, and administrative support and tools to CoR services.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



### Result/impact indicators:

### Target for 2021-2022:

### Latest known result:

Technical upgrade of conference rooms.

Interpreter consoles upgraded in all conference rooms.

Signature of new multiannual plan by CoR and EESC Sec Gen by December 2021.

**Not achieved.** The CoR supplier for consoles announced in 2021 that they would stop their business in this field. A new project to renovate all consoles in all rooms will be conceived in 2022 in cooperation with the EESC and implemented between 2023 and 2027, depending on budget.

**Not achieved.** The unexpected announcement from the CoR supplier for the interpretation system has modified the scope and delayed the drafting of the multiannual plan. It is under preparation and will be signed in the first semester of 2022.

Increase number of electronic workflows simplifying and consolidating the processes ensuring same function takes care of the same type of validation.

Project to be put on the priority list for 2021 and operational by end 2021.

**Not achieved:** two separate projects have been initially identified (*Establishing electronic workflows for all logistical services & Financial monitoring tool including budget monitoring*). However, due to the complexity of the existing IT architecture, it was concluded in 2021 that an excessive number of changes would be needed in Agora. Therefore, the project was re-scaled to be developed in 2022 outside Agora in a completely new separate tool.

Support to the ad hoc commission in charge of revising the CoR Rules of Procedure (RoP).

Complete the revision by the end of 2021.

**Achieved:** The revised RoP were adopted by the Plenary Assembly in October 2021, published and entered into force on 31/12/2021.

Adoption of new rules on data protection, in co-ordination with EESC.

Complete the drafting and adoption of the new rules by the end of 2021.

**Partially achieved:** The Decision on the application of Article 25 of Regulation (UE) 2018/1725, laying down internal rules concerning restrictions of certain rights of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data in the context of activities and procedures carried out by the CoR, was drafted and ready for adoption by the Bureau in January 2022. This decision, which is along the lines advocated by the EDPS, is substantially similar to the equivalent decision adopted by the EESC.

Implementation of the new CoR rules on public access to documents.	Translation into all official languages, publication in the OJ and establishment of a public register of documents where all the documents listed in the Appendix to Decision 18/2020 are available.	<b>Achieved:</b> Decision 18/2020 is available in all official languages in the OJ and in the CoR website and the documents listed in the Appendix to Decision 18/2020 are available through a search tool (Document Manager).
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### 3. Modernisation Objective - Pursuing simplification of the administrative environment.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result/impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Business workflows prepared.	Project to be put on the priority list for 2021.	<b>Not achieved:</b> Project merged into one single project "Financial monitoring tool" initially intended to be developed in Agora (see objective 2). In 2021, due to the complexity of the existing IT architecture, it was concluded that an excessive number of changes would be needed in Agora to develop the new project. Feasibility and scope of the project to be re-assessed in 2022.
Final "content approval" workflow CoP, Bureau, Plenary Session.	Validated "content approval" workflows for Conference of Presidents, Bureau, and Plenary.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> Existing Workflows for the draft agendas for Bureau and Plenary Session are available on a "SharePoint", managed by the Registry and used by the colleagues (from several services).
Clear display of the content of the Legal Service's intranet and the register of regulations and decisions in a more user-friendly way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rearrangement of the content of the Legal Service's intranet by topic.</li> <li>Redevelop the Register of regulations and decisions making it searchable and clearly indicating the validity dates of the regulations and decisions.</li> </ul>	<b>Partially achieved:</b> rearrangement of the content of the Legal Service's intranet is ongoing.

Below is a new objective in line with the changes in the organisational structure implemented that took effect from 1 March 2021. The below list represents the full remit of the newly created AI team:

- Act as secretariat to the CoR Conference of Presidents
- Strategic planning (SP)
- Inter-institutional relations (IIR)
- European and National Associations (ASSOC.)
- Foresight (F)
- COVID-19
- High-Level Group on Democracy (HLG)
- Modernisation and digitalisation of the CoR's work environment.



#### 4. Coordinate and strengthen relations at a horizontal level between the CoR and other EU institutions, with the Council Presidencies, and with the European and national associations of local and regional authorities, to strengthen the CoR's impact in the EU decision-making process.

##### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Conference of Presidents (CoP).	Develop a rolling planning process to provide an overview of upcoming agendas of CoP meetings, together with PresCab and SGCab.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Strategic Planning.	Maintain dynamic of Annual Strategic Planning Cycle across the mid-mandate changes. Maintain frequency of 4-5 TF1 meetings/year.	<b>Achieved.</b> Implementation of the first full Annual Strategic Planning Cycle; first meeting of CoP with CoR commission chairs 30/11/2021. Organised 4 meetings of TF1.
IIR- Interact systematically with the EP political and legislative planning process, through its key political planning bodies (EP CoP, Bureau and Conference of Committee Chairs-CCC-).	Try to establish closer links with EP CCC and EP CoP.	<b>Achieved.</b> Continuous attendance of Inter-institutional coordination group (ICG) meetings before each EP plenary, reporting back to TF1 members.
IIR- Organisation of joint events and thematic activities; European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS).	CoR ESPAS Ideas paper to be delivered in Q 3 2022; further foresight activity subject to political decision/resources.	<b>Achieved.</b> Continuous presence and increased visibility of CoR in ESPAS Steering Group; CoR ESPAS ideas paper proposed and accepted.
IIR- Coordination of the organisation of external Bureau meetings and other co-organised activities with the relevant EU Presidencies, as well as the process for their requests for CoR opinions.	External Bureau meeting in Slovenia (Lipica) September 2021. External Bureau Prague September 2022.	<b>Achieved.</b> Preparation Started.
IIR- Strengthen the ongoing cooperation with the EP, with particular attention to the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS).	Virtual retreat with EPRS to be organised on 16-02-2022; Joint Action plan with ESPAS to be prepared.	<b>Achieved:</b> Virtual retreat with EPRS organised on 27/04/2021; prepared briefings for bilateral meetings SG-DG EPRS.
IIR-Facilitate thematic cooperation with major institutions and Trio Presidency on key political dossiers through the different planning processes.	Seek to promote greater CoR involvement and recognition in the inter-institutional planning and prioritisation processes.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> Trio Presidency was invited to the Bureau meeting. Contacts took place to facilitate the identifications of opinions.
ASSOC- Signing and implementation of formal agreements (e.g., Action Plans and MoUs).	Consultation with CALRE on EC Work Program 2023 launched – aimed to increase participation of CALRE members.	<b>Achieved:</b> Consultation of CALRE on Commission Work Program 2022 carried out in 2021 – 13 contributions received, prepared synthesis to be included in CoR Resolution on EC WP 2022.
ASSOC- Participation in the events/ activities of the partner organisations; other cooperation initiatives.	Develop cooperation within the Conference on the Future of Europe (COFE).	<b>Achieved:</b> Pursuit of the cooperation developed within the COFE.
ASSOC- Help LRAs to pursue partnership and multilevel governance when implementing EU policies (exchange of experiences, mutual learning).	Develop regular interaction with the European associations to promote exchange of information and priorities.	<b>Achieved:</b> Liaison with relevant CoR commissions for specific thematic input and follow-up.

HLG – Preparation of Report and exchange with CoR members, YEPs, and outreach.	Follow-up actions related to the report and the HLG recommendations.	<p><b>Achieved:</b> Organised 8 HLG meetings and 6 meetings of the Senior Expert Advisers, a HLG Conference, and a YEP-HLG event.</p> <p>Coordinated participation of HLG members in CoR statutory meetings, set up a “SharePoint Platform” and published relevant CoR background information and positions; CoR written contributions; Regular sharing of COFE updates; report adopted and translated into all languages.</p>
COVID-19	Having implemented the CoR Action Plan on COVID between March 2020 and October 2021, the Task force is dormant.	<p><b>Achieved:</b> Organised 3 task force meetings, sent a weekly update on inter-institutional COVID-related news, revamped the COVID-19 Platform, coordinated initiatives related to the action plan’s implementation, such as the inter-institutional social media campaign, reported to the Secretary General/ Management Meeting and to the CoP.</p>

### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Directorate for Members, Plenaries and Strategy adapted well to the new ways of working required by the COVID-19 pandemic, but particular strain was put on some of the teams.

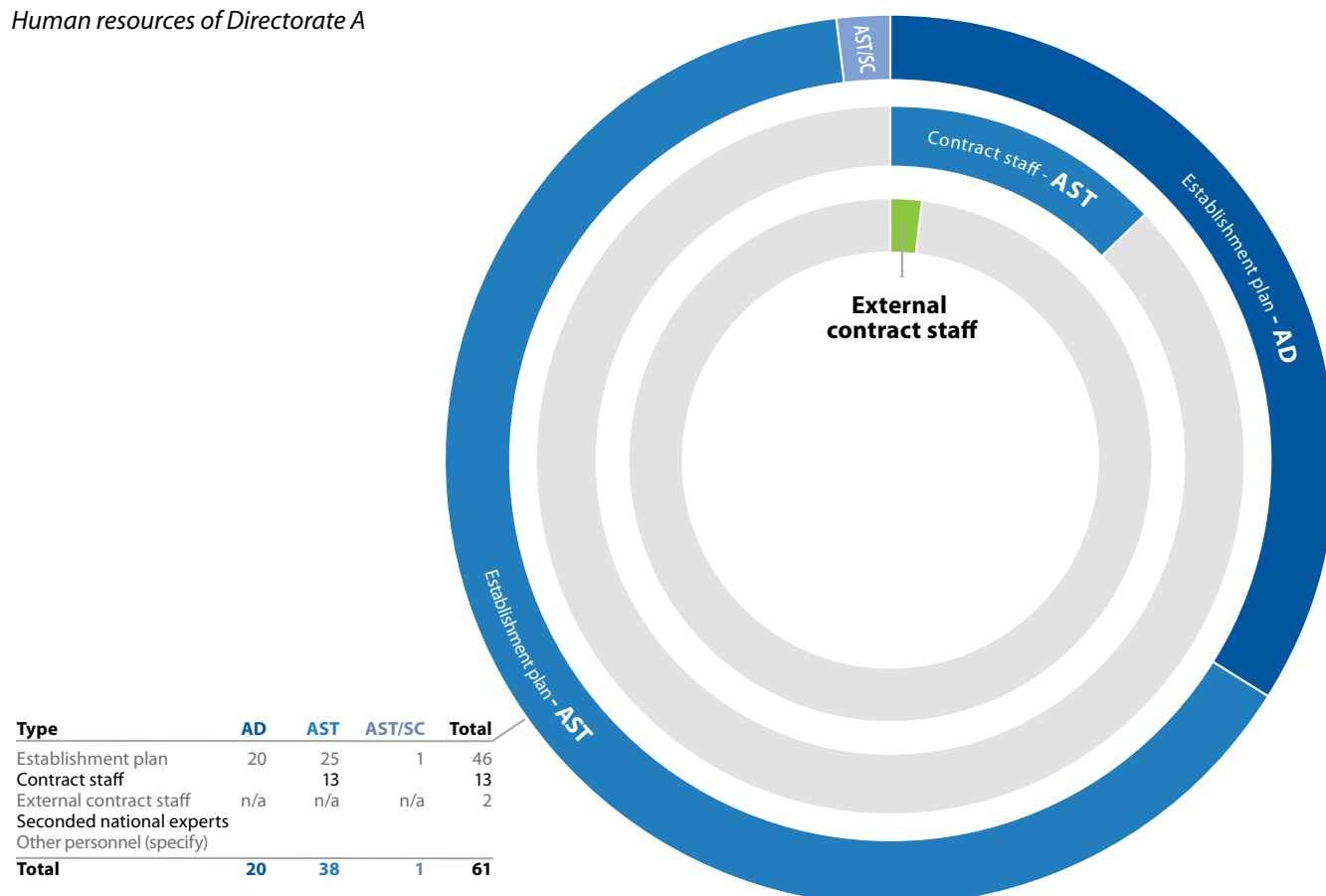
There was clear progress and increased efficiency in the areas of **Finance, OneStopShop, Archives and Documentation**, all the teams having strengthened their capacity and knowledge of fully dematerialised work and having been able to carry out all their tasks. Only a few difficulties with the travel agency were detected and are in the process of being resolved, as the Agency clearly had difficulties for several months to properly fulfil some of its contractual obligations, with respect to some members who have therefore protested. Delays in the allocation of human resources requested in 2021, leading to difficulties within the finance sector, have been addressed. The situation is gradually improving in 2022.

The main impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as regards the **organization of statutory meetings and other meetings** was in 2020. In 2021, all the measures and working procedures previously put in place were consolidated, with an ongoing high workload on all 4 responsible teams, and especially on the coordination team due to the implementation of the new Central Financial Initiation Service (SCIF) and the transfer of additional, financial tasks from Unit A1 to Unit A2 as well as the preparation of the implementation of the new central meeting service. Stability in the teams will be key in the near future to be able to keep the same level of service and reach the objectives for 2022.

In the year 2021, like in the previous one, the **Legal Service** prepared all the decisions of the President and the Secretary-General that provided the CoR with the legal framework necessary to perform its political work during the pandemic. The Legal Service also provided several legal opinions related to the pandemic, including a complex opinion on the implementation of EUDCC controls for visitors and badge holders. This additional workload did not affect the implementation of the objectives laid down in the 2021-2022 SMP in the areas that were directly dealt with by the Legal Service, but put considerable strain on its staff since the Legal Service had to work in urgency.

The Directorate adapted extremely well to the integration of an **important set of additional remits** during the COVID period. Given the high level of interaction needed in each of the horizontal responsibility and strategic planning remits, both between team members and with colleagues from other services and Directorates, this required additional effort during COVID to develop and maintain these interactions, and to achieve the required results, through the online systems (Webex, Teams, etc.). We successfully managed the workings of the **external High-Level Group on European Democracy**, and its team of Senior Expert Advisors, reaching a very positive and useful conclusion through the production of its Final Report in January 2022. The HLG and senior advisors held a total of 14 meetings during their mandate (compared to the 2 meetings envisaged in the Bureau decision).

## Human resources of Directorate A



## 2.8 Directorate for Legislative Works 1 (Dir B)

1. Ensure timely and effective adoption of the CoR opinions in 2021-2022 and carry-out planning, follow-up, and impact related activities in support of the political priorities of the mandate.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



### Result /impact indicators:

Annual Work programme (WP) for each commission.

Annual Work programme for each of the joint consultative committees (JCC) and working groups (WG).

Annual Work programme Subsidiarity.

### Target for 2021-2022<sup>2</sup>:

3 agreed commission WP 2021 by 1st Bureau 2021 and 2022.

Work programmes 2020 - 2025 to be presented to Bureau in 2021.

WP 2021 by Bureau Q2/2021.

### Latest known result:

**Postponed:** Due to Rules of Procedure change, Commissions will adopt their WPs in Q1 2022 and submit for information to Bureau in Q2 2022.

**Achieved:** CIVEX: 6 (WPs 2020 – 2025 of the WG were presented to Bureau in 2021 for adoption. WPs 2020 – 2025 of the JCCs were adopted by JCCs only.

**Achieved:** adoption by Bureau on 16/03/2021.

<sup>2</sup> Subject to the proposed revision of the Rules of Procedure

Bi-annual Action Plan for ARLEM.	Implement the current Action Plan 2020-2022 in 2021; draw up a new action plan after mid-term renewal 2022.  Adopt the new Recommendations for 2021 by beginning of 2021.	<b>Achieved:</b> adoption of Recommendations for 2021 at 12th ARLEM Plenary on 22/02/2021.
Bi-annual Action Plan for CORLEAP.	Adopt CORLEAP Action Plan 2021 – 2022 at 10th CORLEAP annual meeting in spring 2021 – tbc.	<b>Achieved:</b> adoption at CORLEAP Annual meeting on 14/12/2021.
Work programme of Ukraine Working Group.	WP 2021-2025 to be presented to Bureau in 2021.	<b>Achieved:</b> WP 2021-2025 adopted by CoR Bureau on 04/05/2021.
Number of non-statutory events/seminars/workshops (including online) and hearings/stakeholder consultations (including written).	CIVEX: 12 ENVE: 10 NAT:6-8	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX :13, ENVE: 193, NAT: 7.
Number of participants in surveys/consultations.	CIVEX: 150 replies. ENVE: 30 replies per consultation. NAT: 20 replies per consultation.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX: 99 replies. ENVE: 70 replies per consultation. NAT: 8 replies per consultation.
Number of inputs from networks/platforms in CoR Thematic Commission debates / CoR conferences.	CIVEX: 8 ENVE: 4 NAT:3	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX 8-10, ENVE: 114 NAT: 135.
All opinions adopted during the year have clear and reliable objectives and impact in KIKLOS when inter-institutional procedure is over.	100% of adopted opinions include both objectives and impact.	<b>Achieved:</b> 100% of opinions with objectives.
Follow-up e-mail to each rapporteur sent.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Follow-up document for each commission meeting.	1 follow-up document per commission meeting.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Leaflets on key opinions and on rapporteurs' request produced.	100%	N/A: No longer applicable as the CoR went paperless.
Number of "follow-up of opinions meetings" organised.	CIVEX: 7 ENVE: 6 NAT:6	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX:13, ENVE: 14 (rationale: 8 opinions in 2021 allowing for follow-up meetings for 7 of them), NAT:16.
Organise, every 1st commission meeting of the year, a debate on the impact evaluation of the previous year.	Next debates to be organised in Q1 2021 and Q1 2022.	<b>Achieved:</b> Moreover, commissions discussed their 2021 impact in their last 2021 meeting in Q4.
Produce "Annual impact report" (AIR) by June/July's PS of the CoR.	Present AIR 2020 in June/July 2021.	<b>Achieved.</b>

3 ENVE commission organised 11 stakeholders' consultations in 2021 mostly related to the "Fit4 55 package".

4 Several networks intervened in the debates organised during the ENVE commission meetings.

5 The result takes into account the high participation of networks to consultative works and the events organised by the NAT commission.

## 2. Provide timely and clearly defined support for the work of all CoR rapporteurs and other CoR commissions members.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Planning documents established and communicated to the rapporteur for each opinion.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Percentage of policy analysis prepared for each opinion.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Percentage of stakeholder consultations/hearings or other specific monitoring activities organised at the request of rapporteurs.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Percentage of briefing notes/speeches prepared.	100 %	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Percentage of analytical notes on key topics prepared.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Number of file studies launched.	Approximately 15 studies per year (depending on scope and price of individual items and amount of credit transfer allowed by COVID situation).	<b>Partially achieved:</b> 9 studies launched in 2021 <sup>6</sup> .
Studies produced with EPRS.	2-3 studies.	<b>Achieved:</b> 14 studies.

## 3. Coordinate and strengthen relations between the CoR and other EU institutions on one hand, and with Local and regional authorities, networks, associations, and international organisations on the other hand, to increase the territorial dimension and impact the European policies.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Number of MEPs/commissioners in commission meetings.	CIVEX: 57, ENVE: 4, NAT: 4.	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX: 5, ENVE: 4 NAT: 5.
Number of CoR rapporteurs participating in EP committee meetings.	CIVEX: 2, ENVE: 2 NAT:2.	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX: 2, ENVE: 2, NAT: 108.
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR and EP rapporteurs.	CIVEX: 12, ENVE: 5, NAT:5.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX: 9, ENVE: 4, NAT: 6.

<sup>6</sup> In comparison to 2020, there was no external budget transfer in 2021 and consequently the appropriation available was lower.

<sup>7</sup> Considering thematic debates on the Conference on the Future of Europe

<sup>8</sup> A large delegation of CoR rapporteurs participated to a AGRI committee meeting.

Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and EC.	CIVEX: 12, ENVE: 15, NAT:15.	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX: 12 <b>Partially achieved:</b> ENVE: 13 Achieved: NAT: 17
Number of consultation meetings between CoR rapporteurs and other institutions (including EESC) and stakeholders.	CIVEX: 10, ENVE: 10, NAT:5.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX: 6, ENVE: 6. <b>Achieved:</b> NAT: 229
Number of CoR members participating systematically in the activities of the bodies set-up by the EC.	CIVEX: 6, ENVE: 5, NAT:5.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX: 3 (Fit 4 Future) <b>Achieved:</b> ENVE: 6, NAT: 3
Number of CoR members participating as speakers in the conferences and events organised by the EC.	CIVEX: 10, ENVE: 15, NAT:10.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX:610 <b>Achieved:</b> ENVE:2311, NAT: 14
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and Permanent Representations on legislative dossiers	CIVEX: 0, ENVE:2, NAT:2.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX: 1, ENVE: 1, NAT: 012
Participation of the CoR in events of the EU Presidency.	CIVEX: 1, ENVE:1, NAT:3.	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX: 2, ENVE: 2 <b>Partially achieved:</b> NAT: 2.
Number of CoR members in meetings with EP Inter-groups.	CIVEX: 2, ENVE: 2, NAT:2.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX: 013, ENVE: 3, NAT: 1.
Number of new formal agreements or MoUs signed (this includes MoUs and Action Plans that involves activities from other commissions).	ENVE: 3	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX: 1, ENVE: 2, NAT: 2 (action plans).
Number of joint events or thematic activities organised with partners.	Forum: Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation (to be held end 2021 physically, tbc), 4 events on migration, EWRC, ARLEM + CORLEAP with presidency: If possible, try to have ARLEM plenary 2021 as PT presidency event.	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX: 7, ENVE:2514, NAT: 5.
Number of events / activities organised by partners and attended by the CoR.	CIVEX: 20, ENVE: 20, NAT:20.	<b>Achieved:</b> CIVEX: 4015, ENVE: 3916, NAT: 20.
Number of capacity building projects implemented.	5 projects in the areas of home affairs and external relations.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> CIVEX: 2

9 Several NAT commission rapporteurs opted for organising several bilateral meetings instead of a single multilateral stakeholders' meeting.

10 CIVEX supports many horizontal dossiers where speakers are actually members of other commissions (such as in F4F platform)

11 Virtual participation to the EC meetings allowed to a higher attendance by the CoR members.

12 NAT: exchange with the Council presidency did not refer to legislative files.

13 CIVEX: EP intergroup regarding the policy portfolio of the CIVEX commission are very limited.

14 The CoR delegation to the UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow participated in 23 events.

15 Virtual participation to the stakeholders' meetings allowed to a higher attendance by the CoR members.

16 CoR members were actively involved in events organised with partners on climate change and Green Deal related debates.

#### 4. Modernisation Objective - Pursuing simplification of the administrative environment.

##### Political/Administrative priorities supported



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022, per year:	Latest known result:
KIKLOS module on follow-up to opinions ready by 2021.	Business case delivered and developed on-time.	<b>Achieved.</b>
KIKLOS module on Impact report ready by 2022.	Business case delivered and developed on-time.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> KPIs identified and business analysis on-going.
New tool for management of amendments of rapporteurs' amendments.	Implementation of e-AM by the end of 2021.	<b>Postponed:</b> E-AM deployment planned in Q2 2022 following the adjustment of the scope.
Number of simplified procedures.	5	<b>Achieved.</b>

##### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

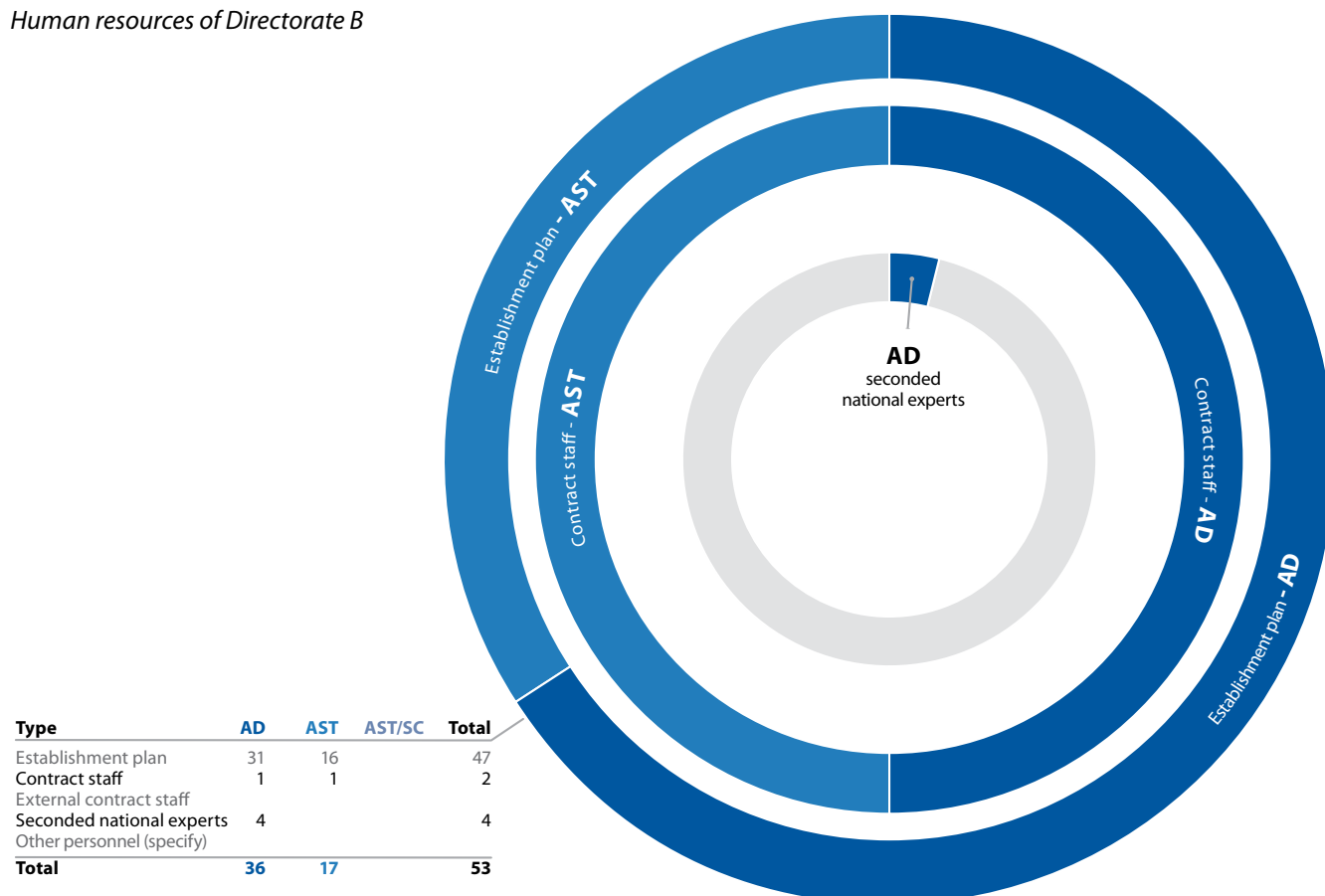
The most relevant impact of COVID has been on Members' engagement in remote/hybrid format for commissions meetings and their main activities (the first round of JCCs/WGs, Integration Network co-organised with DG HOME workshop, 2021 Enlargement Day, ARLEM commission, Bureau and Plenary). As a consequence, not all the JCCs/WGs met in timely manner and JCC/WG WPs for 2020-25 were adopted in 2021. Seminar linked to Nicosia initiative was one of rear examples of the external meetings held in person in 2021. On the contrary, most external activities had to be cancelled and some were postponed to 2022 (10th Subsidiarity Conference, CoR-UK Contact group first meeting) The in-person participation to UNFCCC COP26 has also created an opportunity for high-level engagement with Members. In overall very few members had the possibility of coming to Brussels even for Statutory meetings.

Due to the work arrangements linked to the COVID pandemic, the digital tools made available by the Committee

rendered work efficient and seamless. Emails, Teams, calls and WhatsApp groups were used to stay connected and the quality of outputs has remained praiseworthy (content, timeliness, writing style...). The impact of these changes on team cohesion and a shared work culture was much more prominent than it would have been under normal circumstances.

The impact of COVID pandemic on the ENVE commission in 2021 was also significant in terms of legislative works. The second year of COVID-19 generated sustained interest in health policy and brought the released of a significant legislative package mainly under NAT and ENVE remits. Despite the pandemic, which have also reinforced the relevance of its exercise, the Conference on the Future of Europe was launched in spring 2021 and became a key priority for the Directorate and CIVEX, responsible of the coordination of CoR contribution to this process and the support of the 30 Delegates (CoR members and representatives of local and regional authorities).

## Human resources of Directorate B



## 2.9 Directorate for legislative works 2 (Dir C)

1. Ensure timely and effective adoption of the CoR opinions in 2021-2022 and carry-out planning, follow-up, and impact related activities in support of the political priorities of the mandate.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



### Result / impact indicators:

Annual Work programme for each commission.

Annual Work programmes and/or Action Plans adopted for each Network/platform to support commissions' work.

Number of file notes and studies launched.

### Target for 2021-2022:

3 agreed commission WP 2021 and 2022 respectively by 2nd Bureau 2021 and 2022.

WP and Action Plans 2021 and 2022 to be submitted respectively to the CoR Bureau 2021 and 2022 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

COTER: 5, SEDEC: 2 each year, ECON: 3-6 each year.

### Latest known result:

**Achieved:** Due to RoP change Commissions will adopt their WPs in Q1 2022 and submit for information to Bureau in Q2 2022.

**Achieved.**

**Partially achieved:** COTER: 2.  
**Achieved:** SEDEC: 2, ECON: 3.



Number of non-statutory events/seminars/workshops (including online), and hearings /stakeholder consultations (including written).	COTER: 12, ECON: 12-15, RegHub: 3 each year, EGTC: 4, TIA: 6, SEDEC: 6-8 each year.	<b>Achieved:</b> COTER: 17, ECON: 15 from which 5 related to RegHub, EGTC: 4, TIA: 4, SEDEC: 24.
Percentage of briefing notes/speeches redacted.	100 %	<b>Achieved:</b> 100 %
Percentage of analytical notes on key topics redacted.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100 %
Number of participants in surveys/consultations.	EGTC: 1 survey or 100% of requests of the rapporteurs ECON: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey of national associations on Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF): ~30 replies.</li> <li>RegHub surveys: 2-3 per year sent to 40 RegHub Members; expected replies to each survey: ~25 replies.</li> <li>Survey on Brexit: ~100-150 replies.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved:</b> EGTC: 1 Public Consultations, COTER: 2, ECON: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey on SDGs as a framework for recovery in cities and regions: 150-160 replies.</li> <li>RRF targeted consultation: 25 national associations of LRAs from 19 MS.</li> <li>Jonkman written stakeholder consultation: 21 responses.</li> <li>Three RegHub consultations with 25 Replies (Infrastructure, INSPIRE and eProcurement), one additional two-step consultation on planning and permitting (20 replies).</li> <li>CoR parallel consultation on Digital Rights and Principles (29 replies).</li> <li>Survey on Brexit is ongoing (results are not yet available).</li> </ul>
Number of inputs from networks/platforms in CoR Thematic Commission debates / CoR conferences.	EGTC: 2 per year, ECON / Monitoring of the SDGs in the European Semester: 2, RegHub implementation reports: 2-3 per year, Broadband platform: 2, KEP: 1.	<b>Achieved:</b> EGTC: 2, COTER: 1, ECON: 7/ The multi-stakeholders' platform on SDGs has been discontinued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RegHub consultations taken on board in four F4F Opinions.</li> <li>Broadband platform: 3.</li> </ul> KEP: 1, Science meets regions: 1.
Have reliable objectives for each planning/follow-up document that can be monitored throughout the process of elaborating an opinion (via KIKLOS).	Close planning documents when interinstitutional procedure is over and present impact of the opinion in KIKLOS, 75 % of opinions adopted in the previous year (N-1).	<b>Partially achieved:</b> SEDEC: 67 %, ECON: 75%, COTER: 57%.
Follow-up e-mail to each rapporteur sent.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Follow-up document for each commission meeting.	1 follow-up document per commission meeting redacted.	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Number of "follow-up of opinions meetings" organised.	COTER: 7 , ECON: 8-10, SEDEC: 5.	<b>Achieved:</b> COTER: 5 , ECON: 8, SEDEC: 5.
Organise, every 1 <sup>st</sup> commission meeting of the year, a debate on the impact evaluation of the previous year.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> Impact reporting timing was changed in the CoR therefore every commission is discussing its impact at every last commission of the year so that the overall impact of the institution is presented to the first Bureau and Plenary Session of the year N+1.
Produce "Annual impact report" (AIR) by July's PS of the CoR.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> As from impact reporting for 2021 the AIR is to be produced by January's PS of the CoR.

In 2021 new studies were launched as reported above, however there was more substantial work performed on the studies launched late 2020, notably for COTER commission which worked on additional 3 studies.

In 2021 the CoR through its SEDEC commission highly increased cooperation with the European Commission, as a

steering committee with Commissioner Gabriel was created (Action Plan signed end of 2020 – implementation started as from beginning 2021) and a cooperation with DG EAC on Bauhaus was established. This led to significant raise in non-statutory events number, notably within SEDEC commission.

## 2. Provide timely and concise support for the work of all CoR rapporteurs, other CoR commissions members and members of joint bodies.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Planning documents established and communicated to the rapporteur for each opinion.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Percentage of policy analysis prepared for each opinion.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Percentage of stakeholder consultations or other specific monitoring activities organised at the request of rapporteurs.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Percentage of studies delivered at the request of rapporteurs.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Studies on EGTC.	1	<b>N/A:</b> The European Commission carried out studies in the same policy area, no need for an EGTC study in 2021.
Percentage of briefing notes/speeches prepared.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Number of EPRS consultations performed.	COTER: 3, E CON: 1-2, SEDEC: 1 (NB: those targets depend on Legislative files.)	<b>Achieved:</b> COTER: 3, ECON: 0 (Files postponed to 2022), SEDEC: 2.
Number of references of results of networks/platforms in CoR opinions/resolutions.	EGTC: 2 opinions, TIA: 2 opinions, ECON/ Monitoring of the SDGs: 1-2, RegHub consultations: 2-3 each year.	<b>Achieved:</b> EGTC: 2, TIA: 3, ECON: The multi-stakeholders' platform on SDGs has been discontinued. RegHub consultations taken on board in 4 F4F Opinions: 4, KEP: 1, Science meets regions: 1.

### 3. Coordinate and strengthen relations between the CoR and other EU institutions on one hand, and with Local and regional authorities, networks, and associations on the other hand, to increase the territorial dimension and impact the European policies.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Number of MEPs/commissioners in commission meetings.	ECON: 2, SEDEC: 3, COTER: 40.	<b>Achieved:</b> ECON: 6. SEDEC: 6. <b>Partially achieved:</b> COTER: 28.
Number of CoR rapporteurs participating in EP committee meetings.	ECON: 2, SEDEC: 2, COTER: 2.	<b>Achieved:</b> ECON: 3, SEDEC: 5, COTER: 3.
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR and EP rapporteurs.	ECON: 5-7, SEDEC: 5, COTER: 5 (depends on number of opinions).	<b>Partially achieved:</b> ECON: 2. <b>Achieved:</b> SEDEC: 8, COTER: 6.
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and EC.	ECON: 10-15, SEDEC: 13, COTER: 10 (depends on number of opinions).	<b>Achieved:</b> ECON: 8, SEDEC: 15, COTER: 12.
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and Permanent Representations on dossiers.	ECON: 1 (depending on whether we get legislative dossiers), SEDEC: 2, COTER: 2.	<b>Achieved:</b> ECON: N/A, SEDEC: 6, COTER: 2.
Participation of the CoR in events of the EU Presidency.	ECON: 2, SEDEC: 2, COTER: 2.	<b>Achieved:</b> ECON: 2, SEDEC: 11, COTER: 4.
Number of occasions in which external experts (scholars and practitioners) contribute to activities of platforms and networks.	Monitoring of the SDGs: 1. RegHub: up to 3 speakers per workshop. Broadband platform: up to 2 speakers per workshop. SEDEC: 9 (2 KEP Thematic Seminars, 1 KEP peer-to-peer, 3 Science meets regions).	<b>Partially achieved:</b> The multi-stakeholders' platform on SDGs has been discontinued, RegHub: 2, Broadband platform: 1, SEDEC: 2, EGTC: 3, TIA: 4.
Number of EER awarded regions.	Up to 6 for EER 2021-22 edition	<b>Achieved.</b>
Number of events/meetings (co)-organised.	COTER: 2, EGTC: 4, OECD: 1 EER: 5-6 (3 Brussels-based events + up to 3 evaluation missions to EER regions), RegHub: 4, Monitoring of the SDGs: 1, SEDEC: 5.	<b>Achieved:</b> COTER: 6, EGTC: 4, ECON: 5, OECD: postponed to 2022. No EER missions due to the pandemic, RegHub: 4, Broadband platform: 3, the multi-stakeholders' platform on SDGs has been discontinued, SEDEC: 14.

The number of MEPs in COTER meetings depends on the organisation of joint meetings with the EP (REGI-COTER, TRAN-COTER). In this respect, the target number can only

be reached if both REGI-COTER and TRAN-COTER are organised in the year in question, which was not the case in 2021, where it was not possible to hold a joint meeting with TRAN.

#### 4. Modernisation Objective - Pursuing simplification of the administrative environment.

##### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022, per year:	Latest known result:
KIKLOS module on follow-up to opinions ready by 2021.	Business case delivered and developed by the end of 2021.	<b>Achieved.</b>
KIKLOS module on Impact report ready by 2022.	Business case delivered and developed by Q1 2022.	<b>Achieved:</b> KPIs identified. Business analysis ongoing.
New tool for management of rapporteurs' amendments.	Implementation of e-AM by the end of 2021.	<b>Postponed:</b> e-AM deployment planned in Q2 2022, following adjustment of the scope.
New <i>SharePoint</i> structure for the work of the Directorate.	Fully operational by the end 2021.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Number of adopted/simplified procedures. 5		<b>Achieved.</b>

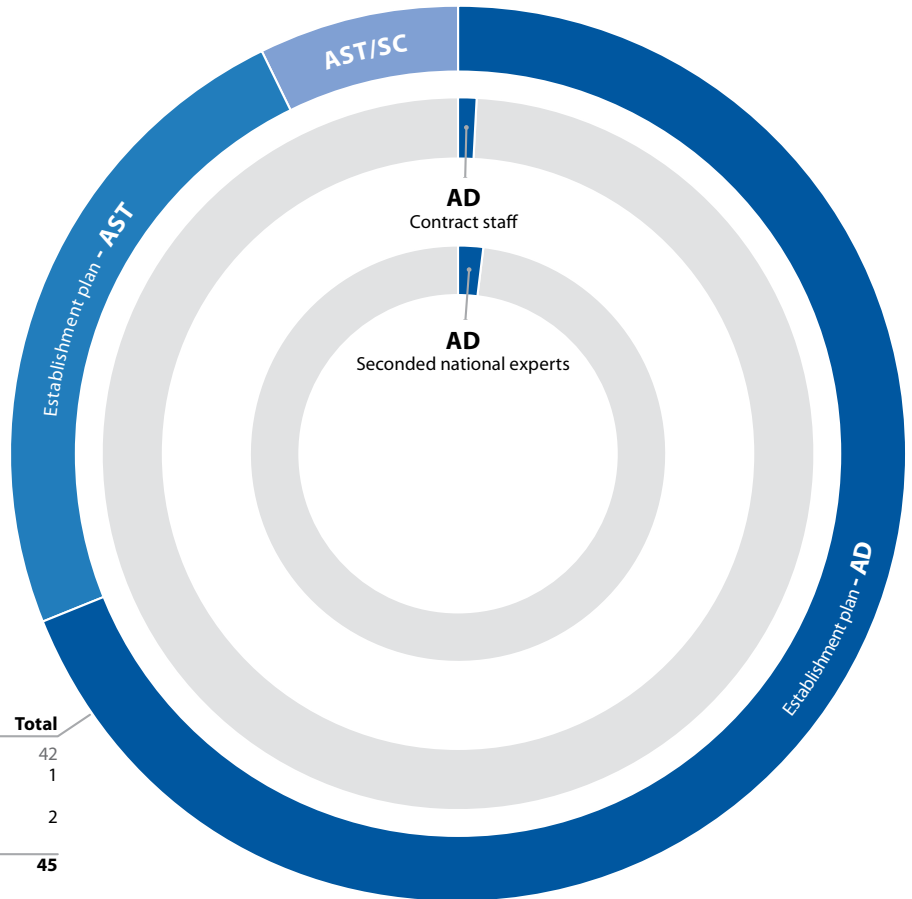
##### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the system of teleworking led to a limitation of personal contacts. This was compensated by a relative increase in electronic communication, which is more time-consuming than personal contact. However, the availability of electronic collaboration tools (such as SharePoint and Teams) and their increased overall usage helped maintain a good level of idea-exchange and ensured the necessary coherence in outputs.

The Directorate dependant commissions continued to hold its meetings in 2021 in hybrid or full remote mode via Interactio, with remote voting being facilitated via the IDS voting system. Rapporteurs were supported by the organisation of online stakeholder meetings and written consultations.

Although the external activities planned for 2021 had to be cancelled, the services were nevertheless able to organise a considerable number of events with other EU institutions and other partners. Despite the pandemic, the Directorate also managed to successfully continue its alliance building activities in 2021, including the #CohesionAlliance, as well as the organisation of a multi-level dialogue on just transitions as a part of the Just Transition Platform. The Directorate ensured the full implementation of the two important Joint Action Plans with the services of Commissioners Gabriel and Schmit respectively (DG RTD, JRC and DG EAC; DG EMPL) and was also in the lead in drawing up the EU Annual Regional and Local Barometer, which focused in 2021 on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Human resources of Directorate C



Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	29	10	3	42
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts	2			2
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>45</b>

## 2.10 Directorate for Communication (Dir D)

### 1. Focus CoR communication on three campaigns.

Since 2015, the CoR implements its communication activities through up to three campaigns, which present an integrated set of tools and channels to enhance visibility and impact

of the assembly's political work. The three campaigns are: (1) Building resilient communities; (2) Cohesion, our fundamental value; (3) Bringing Europe closer to people.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicators:	Target for 2021:	Latest known result:
Media outreach attributable per campaign.	Maintain overall same level of media mentions, with more emphasis on the coverage of campaign #1, considering the upcoming launch of the local events and the Conference on the Future of Europe.	<b>Achieved:</b> 80% of media mentions were related to the three communication campaigns, with "Building resilient communities" leading (30%), followed by "Cohesion, our fundamental value" (28%), and "Bringing Europe closer to people" (22%, which is a 7% increase compared to 2020).
Social media outreach per campaign.	Per campaign: #1 - 20 % increase for all campaigns. #2 - 20 % increase for all campaigns. #3 - 20 % increase for all campaigns.	<b>Not achieved due to non-physical events:</b> #1 – 4,700 mentions (-30%) mostly by authors other than CoR, 14,600+ engagements (-45%); lower levels due to non-physical events. #2 – same results as in 2020. #3 - most mentions were related to the European Week of Regions and Cities, 19,800 (-47%) generating 51,600 (-38%) engagements. Other than campaigns at the end of 2021, the CoR had 151,300 followers on its channels (+16%), of which 50,700 followers (+9%) were on Twitter, 55,000 (+19%) on Facebook, 39,300 (+20%) on LinkedIn and 6,300 (+49%) on Instagram. Again, it is important to underline that these increases came on top of an overall increase of nearly 30% last year compared to 2019. After an unusual peak in digital activities in 2020, online fatigue among our followers could be observed in 2021, confirming the overall trend that organic posts on social media generate less and less continued engagement. Social media promotion depends increasingly on paid promotion.
Deliver narratives for CoR members in all EU languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• same number of 'narratives' (information packs for CoR Members built around press releases).</li> <li>• 50% of other members to be involved in "narratives" also when they are not rapporteurs, following the successful example of the narratives built around the Barometer 2020.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved:</b> 244 press releases and highlights (+92%). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language versions of press releases.</li> <li>• special narratives created for 8 March, COFE, #EURregionsweek, local events, MPAA, COP26, #CohesionAlliance.</li> <li>• 100+ Green Deal best practices stories.</li> <li>• national fact sheets Barometer 2021.</li> </ul>

Increase the proportion of CoR members making use of them.	100% rapporteurs using the narratives.	<b>Achieved:</b> See above.
Deliver key events on the three priorities including the 19 <sup>th</sup> European Week of Regions and Cities.	#EURegionsWeek as a political platform/ vehicle for 3 campaigns. #EURegionsWeek centred on politicians (including Members and potential future members and YEPs).	<b>Achieved: Campaign 1</b> focused on the participation of the CoR in the Conference on the Future of Europe, which was launched on 9/05/2021. All CoR communication activities have been implemented with the objective of bringing the Conference to the local and regional level and efforts culminated during the CoR's 9th Summit of Regions and Cities in Marseille on 3-4/05/2022 with a Manifesto. In addition, the CoR implemented, together with the Bertelsmann Stiftung, the project "From local to European", which made cities' and regions' voices heard through about 40 citizens' panels applying participatory methods. Also, the new CoR network for local politicians, the "European Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors", was launched and had 1,000 members from all EU member states at the end of the year. <b>Campaign 2 and 3:</b> 101 of the 300 events delivered during the European Week (record 17,000 online participants) by all event partners were referring to the topic of "green transition", providing an opportunity for inter-institutional debate on the Green Deal, less than one month before the COP26 the EURegionsWeek and its side events also served as a platform for fostering the ongoing debate on democracy and citizen's engagement on the future of Europe; It also voiced a common political message of the CoR and the European Commission on cohesion policy as a value. 96 sessions were dedicated to cohesion. The main CoR outreach tools of campaign 3 are the Cohesion Alliance, the mentioned EURegionsWeek and the "Barometer" report.

## 2. Increased outreach of the CoR's consultative works through targeted communication.

The purpose is to raise the CoR's institutional and political profile as the assembly of Europe's regions and cities and the role of its members, both in Brussels and at a local level

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



### Result / impact indicators:

Further development of the "standard package" of communication products and services for legislative works.

### Target for 2021:

More actively inform members about the products and services in this package.

### Latest known result:

**Achieved:** Regular update through Group of Communicators (GoC)- and PGs meetings. NEW: European Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors.

Organise 12 <sup>th</sup> European Conference on Public Communication together with other EU institutions.	Maintain level of participation and quality of event.	<b>Achieved:</b> EuropCom participants benefitted from an exceptional experience thanks to the networking facilities of a new digital event platform.
Prepare for the 9 <sup>th</sup> Summit of Regions and Cities in 2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 800 politicians participate.</li> <li>• dissemination to politicians.</li> <li>• dissemination through media.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved:</b> Summit preparations relied on the roll-out of a series of outreach activities aimed at strengthening the territorial dimension of the Conference on the Future of Europe. In addition, targeted audio-visual and social media campaigns attracted some 3,000 participants at the summit, among whom some 200 CoR members, 150 YEPs, 100 French local politicians, 100 high-level speakers and members of the European Network of local and regional EU councillors. Associations were actively involved in dissemination.

### 3. CoR in the digital post-COVID world.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result /impact indicators:

Decision on IT service provision model.

#### Target for 2021:

Timely decision on IT service provision model.

#### Latest known result:

**Achieved:** Highly appreciated new lean government structure with tangible results as per Management Meeting decisions and accompanying TF8 work and reports.

### 4. Modernisation Objective - Pursuing simplification of the administrative environment.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result /impact indicators:

Potential time-savings for the political works of members.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

Increased time-savings for the political works of members.

#### Latest known result:

**Achieved:** Even though unintended the online Commission- and Plenary meetings freed time for Members to be in their constituencies in the time of COVID crisis.

Time-savings at the level of the administration.

Increased time-savings at the level of the administration.

**Achieved:** Due to COVID related working from home, travel time and resources were saved.

Reduction of the number of rules and procedures.

Reduction in the number of rules and procedures.

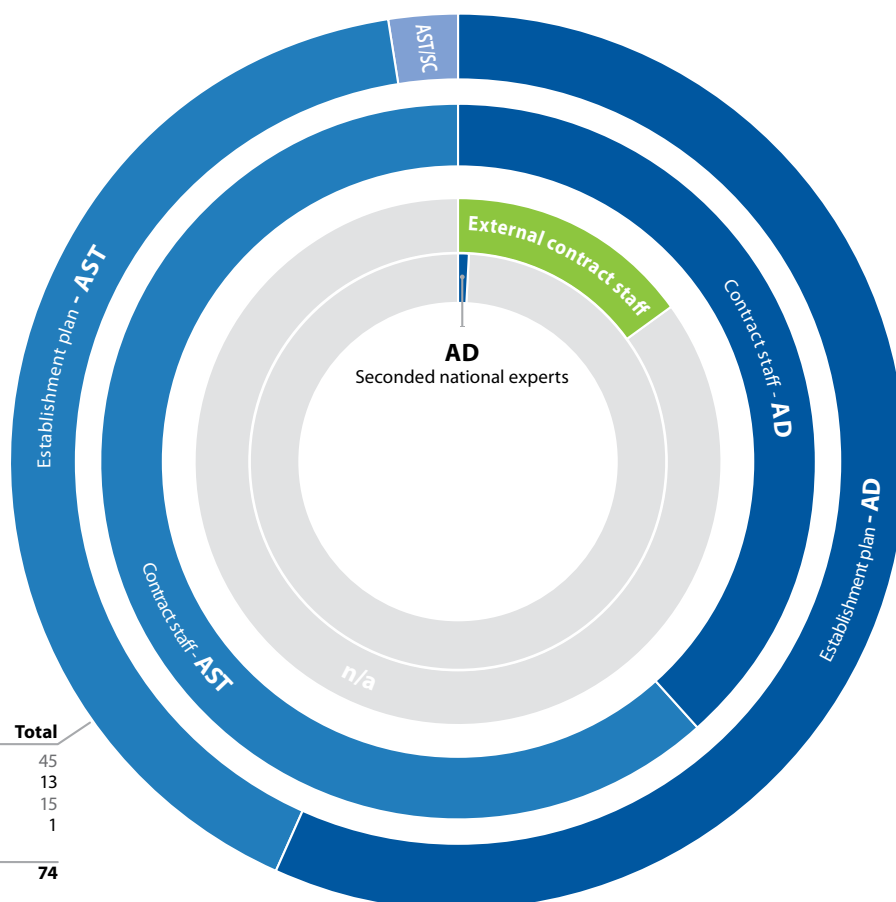
**Achieved:** Easier procedures for online meetings were developed and the use of TEAMS by the staff was a big gain in time.



### Overall impact of the COVID pandemic

See above information on objective 4.

#### Human resources of Directorate D



Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	25	18	2	45
Contract staff	5	8		13
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	15
Seconded national experts	1			1
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>74</b>

## 2.11 Directorate for Human Resources and Finance (Dir E)

**1. Ensure appropriate budget allocation, uphold sound and regular management of financial resources and monitor a cost-effective internal control environment in the institution.**

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Acceptance of the CoR's 2022 budget by the Budget authority.	CoR Draft Budget 2022 to be adopted by the CoR's Plenary in March 2021.	<b>Achieved:</b> CoR Draft Budget 2022 was adopted by the CoR's Plenary in March 2021.
Acceptance of 2021 external transfers by the Budget authority.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100% (7 out of 7).
Percentage of commitment execution.	99%	<b>Achieved:</b> 98.9%
Percentage of payments execution.	90%	<b>Partially achieved:</b> 85.1%, inter alia affected by COVID-19 and increased C8 appropriations.

Average number of days for recording of invoices.	2 days	<b>Achieved:</b> 0.9 day in 2021.
Percentage of commercial invoices paid in the deadline.	85%	<b>Achieved:</b> 94% in 2021.
Treasury balances.	Max 3 million € daily balance on the account.	<b>Achieved:</b> In 2021 daily balance was always below 3 million €.
Number of suppliers using IT systems PEPPOL and E-PRIOR to submit their invoices electronically	2 suppliers on PEPPOL. 15 suppliers using E-PRIOR.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> 1 supplier on PEPPOL in 2021 and 40 suppliers using E-PRIOR in 2021.
Number of remarks from European Court of Auditors in the annual report on CoR internal control system and in the annual report on public procurement files.	No remark.	<b>Achieved:</b> No remarks from the ECA following its audit of the 2020 budget implementation year.
Rate of return for correction of transactions (by verification service).	2-2.5%	<b>Achieved:</b> 1.7% in 2021.
Number of exceptions.	No significant increase as compared to previous year.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> Slight increase as compared to 2020.
Rate of timely verified files (within 5 working days) out of all files submitted to the Verification service.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100% (average of 1.7 days)

- The CoR reallocated some € 8.7 million or 8.2% of its 2021 budget through **transfers** during the year to a large extent from the domains that have produced substantial savings, often due to COVID-19 (members meeting and travel allowances, interpretation, missions) into the domains that needed the reinforcement (IT, buildings, communication, remuneration, legal costs, etc.).
- The **Legal Commitment Kernel (LCK)** became mandatory at the CoR since 1/01/2021 as integrated module of the financial application ABAC. All tender procedures and contracts are recorded in ABAC LCK. As of 15/06/2021, the Registry of Contracts was no longer used as central registration tool but remains accessible for consultation of all data stored.
- Since the **e-Submission** tool was deployed in January 2021, all high-value tender procedures (i.e., above the Directive threshold of 140.000€) have been launched with e-Submission, allowing for a digital submission of tenders. As from 2022, e-Submission will be made available also for low and middle value procedures (i.e., above 15.000€), thus expanding further the digitization of the public procurement sector (e-Procurement).
- To adapt to the extraordinary COVID-19 circumstances, the CoR Accounting Officer followed the practice of the other EU institutions and agreed to accept invoices received in pdf format. This policy discouraged some suppliers to go for the electronic invoices (E-PRIOR or PEPPOL). Nevertheless, in 2021 there was 1 supplier that was sending its invoices via PEPPOL.
- Building on the satisfactory results of the pilot project launched in June 2020 whereby the ex-ante verification of certain low risk/value transactions was limited to a purely technical verification by the Financial Verifying Agent (FVA), a **simplified workflow** on a more structured and permanent basis has been set up since the 1st of July 2021 for certain transactions handled by Directorates A, D and E. A sample-based ex-post verification is performed on a quarterly basis and the related findings and recommendations are communicated to the principal authorising officer responsible.
- The **Internal Financial Rules (IFR)** have been slightly reviewed to provide a frame for the transition to a smart and modern administration, putting the emphasis on electronic treatment of files and more efficient and effective financial management as reflected in the Bureau's decision on principles guiding the new organisational chart. The revised IFR entered into force on 1 March 2021.
- The **Central Financial Initiation Service (SCIF)** has been officially set up within Unit E4 as from the 1st of July 2021 and is responsible for the financial initiation of all financial transactions of the CoR own services (Members' expenditure and staff salaries excluded). The practical modalities of the process and the division of tasks between the different actors have been laid down in a new service instruction on "the cooperation between the SCIF and the operational service (ISS 5/2021)" and are explained in more detail in a "Vademecum" for joint financial management.
- The procedure for defining financial workflows and appointing financial actors assisting the authorising officer by subdelegation (AOS) has been simplified, with the right balance between responsibilities and controls. It came into effect on 1 December 2021.
- Actions in the sphere of **internal control** continued to be monitored in the Internal Control Standards working group throughout 2021. More details are to be found in Chapter 3. As far as the specific issue of **exception reports** is concerned, notwithstanding the extra-ordinary COVID-19 circumstances, there has

been in 2021 only a slight increase compared with the low number of financial exception reports registered in 2020.

- In June 2021, the CoR Bureau approved a project “**Tapping into the regional and local authorities’ potential to strengthen the EU**” aiming to correct the historical understaffing and under-financing of the CoR compared with similar bodies while increasing the

CoR’s added **value** for the EU. With additional staff and budget (ensuring budget neutrality within Heading 7 of the EU Budget), the CoR could deliver innovative services to its members as well as local and regional politicians in the EU, focusing on better law-making and territorial impact and reinforcing citizens’ trust in the EU. Dir E coordinates the administrative and budgetary part of the project.

## 2. Optimise the use of human resources on the basis of the institution’s talent management strategy and further develop a human resources policy adapted to the institution’s priorities.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicator:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Percentage of occupied posts at the end of the year	At least 96%	<b>Achieved:</b> 97.77 %
Gender balance in senior management	M: 65% F: 35%	<b>Achieved:</b> M: 62%, F: 38% (01/01/2022)
Number of cases of internal mobility	12 (depending on reinforced mobility policy)	<b>Partially achieved:</b> 7 (excluding reassignments due to organisational chart change).
Percentage of operational/overhead posts	Increase share of operational posts (≥54%).	<b>Achieved:</b> Operational: 54% Neutral: 23% Overhead: 23%
Average number of training days per staff member	5 days.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> 4.58

### Talent management

- Since its adoption in 2018, the **Integrated talent management strategy** has been progressively rolled out, with additional initiatives implemented in 2021 and the nomination of 6 functional managers.
- A **think tank for high-achieving ADs** as a pool for innovative ideas and proposals has been established as a non-hierarchical, informal, and cross service network.
- The **360-degree feedback exercise for managers** was revised on the basis of a profound evaluation of the format, questions and focus, with a new exercise run in 2021 with the participation of 7 middle managers.
- As individual management support for middle managers, 8 middle managers have made use of the opportunity to work with a **professional coach**. In addition, the CoR L&D service opened up this opportunity also for junior managers in 2021 considering that this level of managers has had particularly close ties with staff during the COVID pandemic and extended telework.
- A new comprehensive package of implementing provisions to the talent management strategy has been prepared by the HR services and is in the pipeline for negotiations with the staff representatives. The **package contains provisions for establishing an enhanced, proactive job rotation scheme** for certain categories of staff as well as the establishment of functional managers at the secretariat general of the CoR.
- Based on the success of previous **internal job shadowing** exercises and due to the extended telework, in 2021 a digital version was run for 22 staff (11 hosts and 11 guests) with very high satisfaction levels (rating 7.78).
- Through extended negotiations with other EU institutions, the CoR has prepared the launch of the interinstitutional initiative of **external job shadowing**, where CoR is lead actor. The pilot project will see the participation of the Commission/DG GROW, the Council and the EESC. The goal of such exercise stretches from talent management to network building, job satisfaction, enhanced interinstitutional cooperation and corporate identity building.
- During the year, a **new induction programme for newcomers** has been introduced with improved support for new staff to quickly become operational and integrate successfully in their teams. The new package includes checklists for receiving services, input from all HR services as well as the opportunity to meet with the Secretary-General at the start of their career at the CoR.

- Following a social dialogue completed in December 2020, a **new appraisal system** with points has been implemented in accordance with the updated regulatory framework, requiring a major update of the IT system used for staff assessment (EVA COR). A comprehensive set of implementing provisions of the Talent management strategy was elaborated in view of a social dialogue to be initiated in spring 2022.

#### Staff allocation and recruitment

- The year 2021 was marked by continued efforts to strengthen the political role of the Committee and to ensure optimal use of the available expertise according to the political and administrative priorities of the institution, still in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As a result of the Going for IMPact! initiative launched by the Secretary-General and in view of matching the CoR's political action with smart and modern administration, a **new organisational chart** approved by the Bureau in December 2020 entered into force on 1 March 2021.
- In July 2021, the organisational chart was further optimised with the progressive implementation of a new central financial initiation cell. Further units were merged within the Directorate for Translation.
- In addition, the new cooperation agreement with the EESC entered into force as of November 2021, foreseeing, among others, the creation of a new Directorate for IT, which will require further adjustment of the organisational chart in 2022.

#### Staff engagement

- To maintain the commitment, sense of belonging and motivation of staff massively teleworking, HR services continue to publish **newsletters** twice a month containing various information keeping the staff constantly up to date with the situation regarding COVID, HR matters, L&D opportunities, new rules and measures of the institution, etc. These newsletters are a valuable tool for internal communication.
- A **comprehensive survey** was launched among staff and managers to assess the level of satisfaction during the extended telework, to identify areas for improvement and gather proposals and ideas on how to improve conditions and job/personal satisfaction during the pandemic. Subsequently the survey formed the basis for the proposed new decision on telework and working time, which has been the subject of concertation with the staff unions and representatives, to be adopted early 2022. The concepts of result-based management, right to disconnect and work life balance form essential parts of the new decision.
- In order to replace and reinforce the institution's five-year strategy on equal opportunities a profound evaluation of the results to date has been conducted which has laid the foundation of a new draft strategy with a shift in focus from equal opportunities only to the wider perspective of **diversity and inclusion**. The aim of increasing female representation in senior management positions has seen progress during the year with the appointment of one female Director, and the objective of mainstreaming the diversity and inclusion perspective in various policy areas with increased

diversity focus form the backbone of the new strategy, foreseen to be adopted in the spring of 2022.

#### Health and well-being

- The extended telework period due to the pandemic has had extensive impact on the health and wellbeing of staff. Whilst the number of shorter term absences have reduced, most probably because it is possible to work from home despite milder symptoms of colds and similar conditions, the number of long-term absences has increased, similar to the development reported in other institutions.
- The Medical and social service closely monitored staff on medical leave. Thanks to this and a policy for progressive return to work following long-term absence (longer than 3 weeks), the institution has been able to reintegrate 40 staff members in 2021.
- As a concrete initiative to streamline email communication, reducing the number of emails throughout the institution and promoting the Right to disconnect, a policy has been adopted and widely distributed to that effect. The policy contains guidelines on drafting clear emails, sound emailing habits as well as an instruction not to send emails after 19.00 unless necessary for the service.
- During 2021, a new decision on Dignity at work has been introduced, accompanied by an extensive communication campaign to explain the new rules and support mechanisms for all staff and managers of the institution.

#### HR implementing decisions and general matters

- A new **sensitive posts policy** was adopted in December 2021 and entered into force on 1 January 2022 in the context of internal mobility policy. The first sensitive posts exercise will be carried out during 2022, including a risk assessment of the posts, determining the controls in place and the residual risks. For the posts where the risk is still found to be above the tolerable level and which cannot be further mitigated, the mandatory mobility will be considered for colleagues more than 5 years on the post.
- As part of the CoR's **employer branding policy**, the "Jobs" and "Internships" pages of the CoR website have been revamped. The aim is to upgrade the CoR branding policy in HR management and to position the institution as an attractive employer and an interesting workplace. A particular emphasis has been placed on making the site accessible from any device and for people with disabilities. To raise awareness of the CoR, a group of staff ambassadors has been created and their stories are posted on the new jobs' pages of the CoR website.
- The CoR's social media channels and LinkedIn accounts were used to promote some vacancy notices and reach a wider audience (senior managers, specific profiles such as nurse, etc.). EPSO's EU Career channels also relay some open positions.

### 3. Support and follow-up on CFAA meetings, coordinate the management planning and reporting cycle and carry out other horizontal administrative functions in an efficient and transparent way.

#### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Number of CFAA meetings organised in the year.	5 per year.	<b>Achieved:</b> 7 of which 2 were extraordinary meetings focusing on budget strategy and on the negotiations of the new CoR-EESC cooperation agreement.
Discharge from Discharge Authority.	Discharge obtained.	<b>Achieved:</b> Discharge was obtained for the 2019 budget implementation year in April 2021.
Percentage of missions' expenses reimbursed within time limit (i.e., within 3 months upon receipt of a complete file).	Stay within a 5% margin as compared to 2020.	<b>Achieved.</b>
Percentage of staff responding to the mobility survey	60%	<b>Partially achieved:</b> 50% (due to the pandemic)
Percentage of staff coming to work by a green transport mode (walk, bike or public transport)	70%	<b>Achieved:</b> 75.8%

- The **planning & reporting cycle** was timely coordinated (SMP 2022-2023 by end 2021, risk analysis 2021 by June 2021, 2020 AAR by end June 2021). In the course of 2021, an action plan was drawn up aiming at increasing the cost-effectiveness of the planning & reporting cycles. This review has been carried out in the context of the **Project Convergence**, which aims at enhancing the synergies with other administrative instruments to provide coherence and simplify the procedures and adapt them to the CoR's mission and political priorities. Some first changes were introduced in the framework of the 2021-2022 process (i.e., reduction of number of objectives and better performance monitoring) and further improvements are foreseen to be implemented in the 2022-2023 cycle.
- After an in-depth analysis, the existing Business Continuity Plan was reviewed and restructured into a **new Business Continuity Framework**, aiming at making the methodology more strategic, practical, self-contained, concise, clear, known and practised, and drawing lessons from the experience gained with the handling of the extraordinary COVID-19 situation. It will provide more precise information on the phases of the procedure, the core business functions that need to be restored, the time limits for it, the responsible staff, the recovery strategies and the resources required.
- Dir E contributed to the negotiations of the new administrative **Cooperation Agreement with the EESC** on HR, budget and financial matters, leading to the signature of the new Cooperation Agreement in October 2021, with an entry into force on 1st November 2021. The agreement aims at further effectiveness and efficiency of both administrations, with an impact on staff and organisation.

For instance, the reception and paper mail distribution of the two Committees will be merged, as well as video-conference equipment and maintenance. The agreement also provides for the set-up of a new Directorate dedicated to IT in the Joint Services (by end of April 2022). Regarding budget, the lowest common denominator principle was introduced and followed for the establishment of the Joint Services 2022 budget based upon the Budgets of two Committees adopted by the Budget Authority.

- Building on the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, works on a revised **mission guide** have been pursued with a view on adopting a revised mission policy aims at reducing the number of missions (only where physical presence has genuine added value as compared to remote participation via videoconferencing), to increase the impact and reach out of staff missions and to foster sustainable traveling modes for mission purposes wherever feasible.
- A staff survey was organised in Autumn 2021 to assess their envisaged means of transport for **home-office commuting** in the post COVID era. The participation rate of 50% can overall be considered duly representative. The fact that this is lower than for the previous survey organized in 2017 (58%) stems to a large extent from the uncertainty (in Autumn 2021) regarding the post-COVID telework rules. The results of the 2021 mobility survey demonstrate progress in the use of greener commuting modes, with 75,8% of staff members doing so. They fed into a new 2022-2024 mobility plan ('Plan de déplacement d'entreprise' – PDE) submitted to the Brussels regional authorities in February 2022.

#### 4. Modernisation Objective - Pursuing simplification of the administrative environment.

##### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



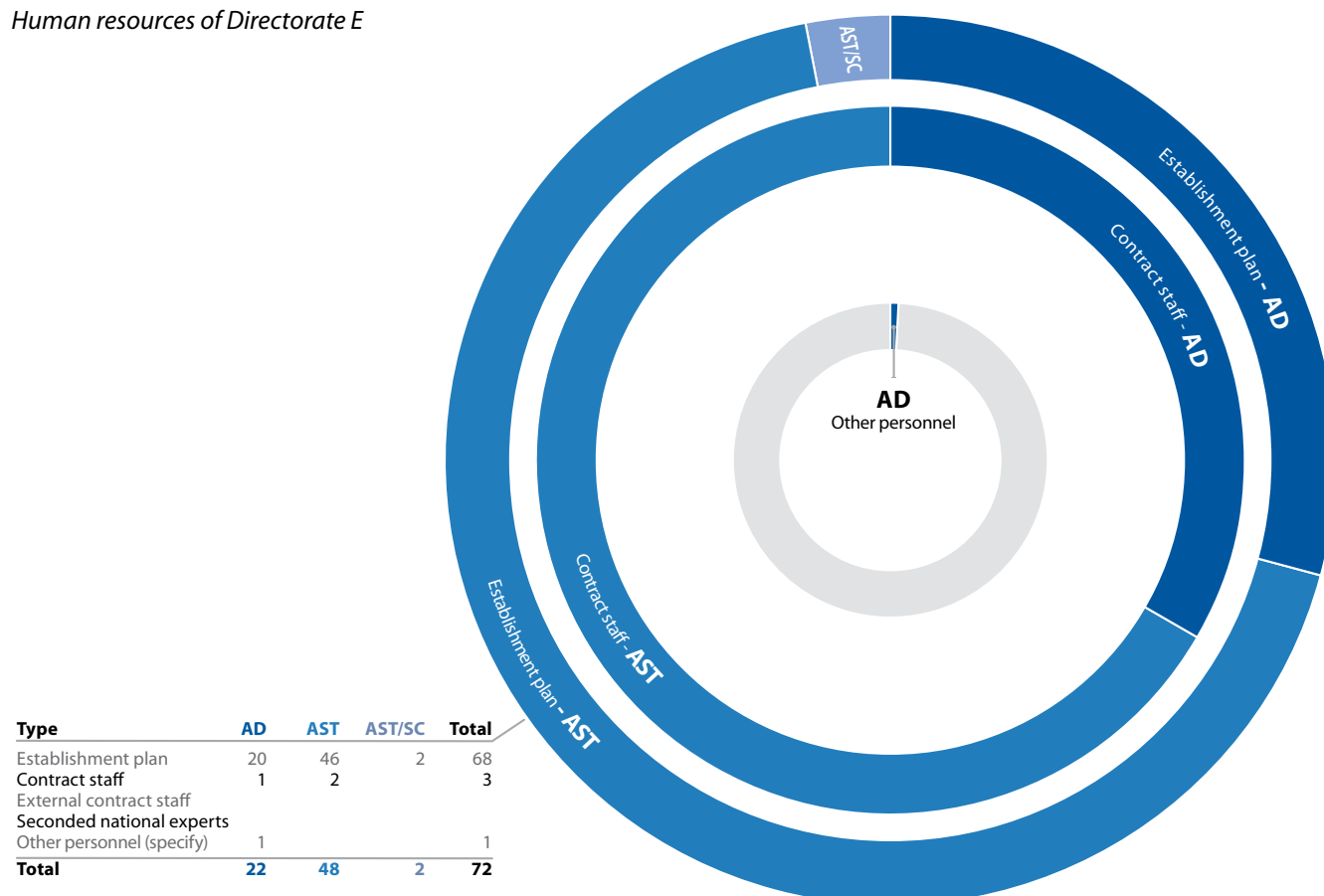
Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Percentage of selection procedures for which Share point is used.	60%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Number of training courses offered online.	+15% compared to pre-COVID situation.	<b>Achieved:</b> 222 training sessions organised in total in 2021, 100% online.
Number of decisions no longer necessary by grouping individual decisions with low financial impact into collective decisions.	75-100 decisions per year no longer needed to be adopted.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> 64 decisions avoided (66 decisions grouped into 2 collective decisions).

- Dir E implemented **22 simplification projects** under Task Forces 2 and 7 in 2021, by digitalising several workflows or using SharePoint team sites (e.g., digital workflows for financial transactions, SharePoint team sites for selection, certification, appraisal and promotion procedures; electronic submission of medical certificates; birth/divorce declarations; interim agents files; management of financial actors). Other projects are ongoing such as the reduced ex ante verification in certain areas, compensated with a modulated ex-post control mechanism (in line with works of Task Force 6). As part of Task Force 8, Dir E has also started prioritising e-Workflows with Dir D IT Coordination team in view of testing tools to decentrally develop form-based workflows.
- In addition to the identified simplification projects, Dir E developed:
  - › A new procedure, Excel “smart” forms and a SharePoint team site for managing financial actors assisting the AOS in a simplified and more efficient way.
  - › The Convergence project for a simplified, yet more purposeful, administrative framework that will reduce overlaps and enhance synergies between different instruments related to Planning and Reporting, Risk Management, Impact Report and Business Continuity.
- Dir E also contributed to the works of a joint EESC-CoR working group on **electronic signature**, suggesting the type of signature needed for each type of document and developing internal instructions for the use of the simple electronic signature in Adonis.

##### Overall impact of the COVID pandemic:

- Due to the pandemic and the unforeseen but urgent need for a new decision on telework and working time in the post pandemic period, the objective of introducing a **reinforced proactive mobility policy** in 2021-2022 has had to be postponed as priority had to be given to drafting, negotiating, and implementing the new telework and working time decision.
- Though the project of **external job shadowing** had been prepared and finalised internally as foreseen to take place via physical exchanges of staff, the feedback from the participating institutions was such that the actual implementation was postponed as there was no interest in pursuing this exchange in digital format. However, following the successful internal digital job shadowing exercise, the project was relaunched interinstitutionally with positive feedback for a digital version as of February 2022.
- The extended telework scheme and the increased pressure on staff to remain connected in front of their screens long hours every day may have been a catalyst for the launch of the policy to restrict the sending of emails after 19.00 as part of the ‘**right to disconnect**’ concept.
- In the area of **public procurement**, half of the (23) procedures foreseen in the 2021 work programme were either cancelled or closed without awarding the contract because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The procedures concerned were related to planned commissions and Political groups meetings which went from a hybrid setting to a fully remote format.
- The travel restrictions applicable throughout a significant part of the year complicated management of the mission budget. Nonetheless, proactive forecasting allowed to liberate appropriations for other purposes in good time throughout the year.
- In the course of 2021, major efforts were made in towards further **optimisation of office space**. These were accompanied with additional investments in security and in progressively adapting the work floor to an increasingly hybrid work setting expected in the post-COVID-19 era.
- In the area of financial management, a direct impact of the COVID-19 was the acceleration of the move towards fully digital financial workflows. Many positive changes have been made since 2020 and pursued in 2021, but there is still need for better harmonisation and room for further improvements. Reflections on the subject must continue and this will be done through Task Force 8, for everything concerning electronic signatures.

## Human resources of Directorate E



## 2.12 Protocol Service

### 1. Provide the Presidency, political groups and other CoR entities with protocol support (including online) and visa/travel assistance.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result /impact indicators:

Number of VIPs.

Number of official receptions.

Number of diplomatic correspondence (acknowledgments, congratulations, patronage requests, condolence letters, verbal notes, etc) initiated by Protocol.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

60 VIPs to assist (in CoR premises or online).

2 receptions to organise.

30 items to initiate and draft.

#### Latest known result:

**Achieved:** 102 online/59 onsite.

**Achieved:** 2 small receptions.

**Achieved:** 372 letters, of which: national day letters: 81, condolence letters: 8, congratulation letters: 24, letters of invitation to the plenary session: 132, Thank you letters plenary session: 112, patronage request: 15.

The Protocol service has continued to provide mostly on-line assistance to VIP participants attending our statutory and non-statutory events. It consisted in following up the political contacts with logistics assistance, communication of connection link and protocol arrangements ahead of

the participation, testing the connection and following up the participation with sharing photos, and thank you letters. Due to the pandemic restrictions, only two small receptions could be organised during the summer period.

## 2. Develop a new service within protocol service to provide coordination of preparation and quality check all CoR official letters signed by the president.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result / impact indicators:

Number of letters checked and revised for the CoR President.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

Up to 400 letters to check and revise.

#### Latest known result:

**Achieved:** 1,072.

In 2021 we developed a new service in charge of coordinating the CoR institutional written communication and assuming the quality control of outgoing letters of the president.

## 3. Better adapt the visitors service to remote (online) functioning and develop new Network of Former CoR Members.

### Political/Administrative priorities supported:



#### Result / impact indicators:

Number of groups and visitors received in CoR premises or hosted online.

#### Target for 2021-2022:

5,000 visitors to host in CoR premises or online.

#### Latest known result:

**Achieved:** 207 presentations (in the CoR premises and online) with a total of 9,474 visitors; including 8 Members engaged for 8 groups (virtual presentation).

Former members attracted to become part of the new CoR "Network of Former Members".

50 members to attract to become part of the Network.

**Achieved:** 215 members, all member states included.

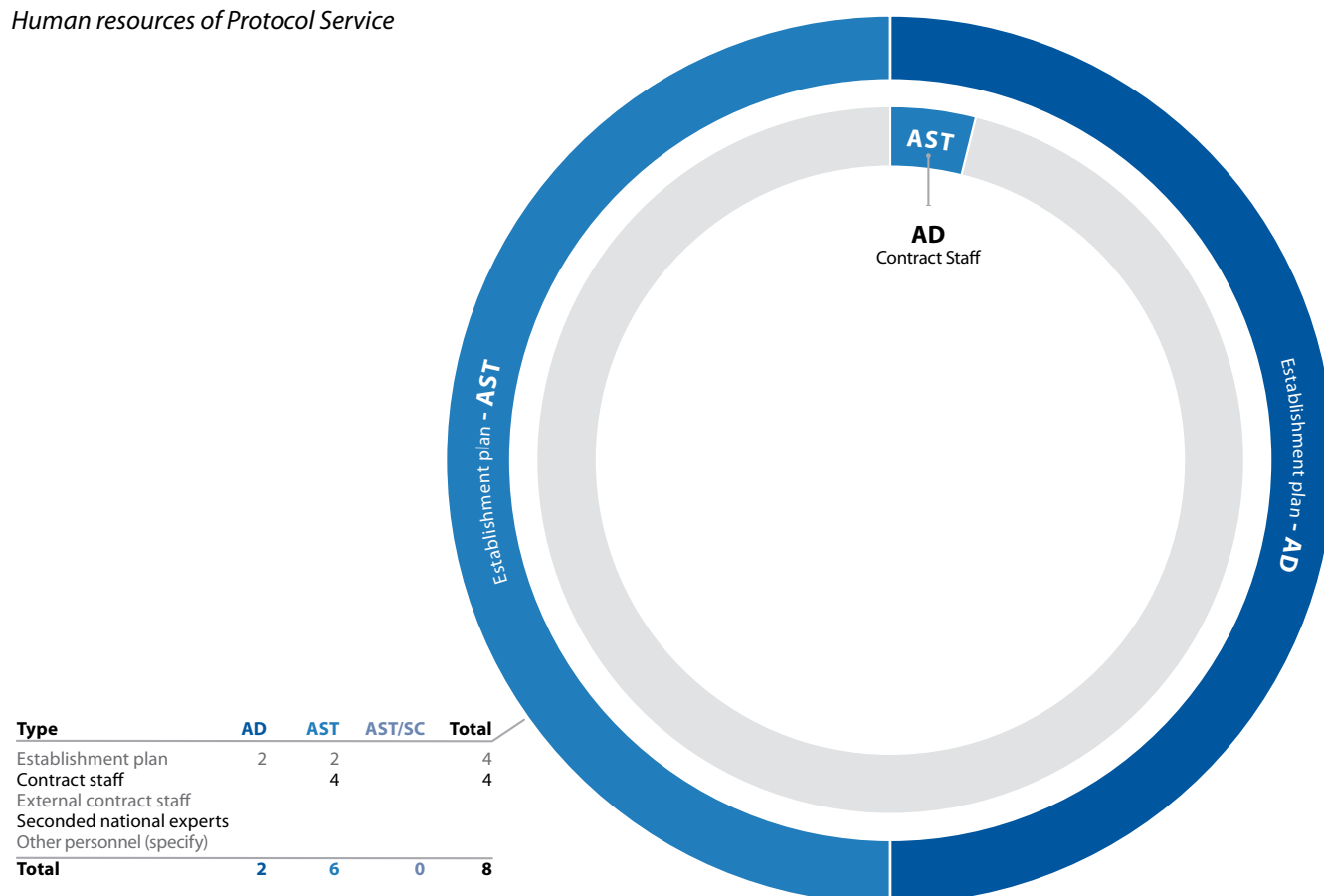
### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Visitor service successfully managed technical difficulties with support from the helpdesk and reacted quickly to demands – even those that did not respect deadlines. Moreover, the Visitor service offered a flexible response for visits in the transition period (physical visits were allowed in European Commission, European Parliament and EEAS

while still forbidden in the CoR and EESC from October 2021). CoR speakers went to give physical presentations in the EU institutions, hotels and universities while our premises were still closed and offered TEAMS presentation if the groups could not be present.



## Human resources of Protocol Service



## 2.13 Internal Audit Service (IAS)

*1. Provide the Authorising Officer by Delegation with opinion and related recommendations on the adequacy of risk management, control and governance processes in the framework of his declarations for 2020 and 2021 and for the preparation of the 2022 declaration, with references to the areas already audited.*

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



### Result / impact indicators:

### Target for 2021-2022:

### Latest known result:

Level of acceptance of the audit recommendations by the Authorising Officer by Delegation.

100%

**Achieved: 100%**

Level of implementation of the audit recommendations within deadlines.

50%

**Achieved: 50%**

- Internal audit unit is carrying audits for the CoR own services as well as for the joint services shared with EESC. Indicators are presented for the audits related to own services and not for joint services as the acceptance and the level of implementation of the audit recommendations are not under the control of CoR given the governance system established by the CoR-EESC cooperation agreement.
- In 2021, two audit reports were agreed and respectively concern the adequacy of the territorial impact assessment system in own services and the performance of EMAS in joint services. Regarding this first audit, all the recommendations were agreed by the AOS.
- For each audit, an action plan is defined by the audited entity in agreement with the AOS. In 2021, three out of the five action plans still open concern the own services and

are respectively related to the audits on the adequacy of the planning and the management of allowances and reimbursements to members for attendances at meetings, ethics staff awareness and adequacy of

territorial impact assessment system. It was found that 49% of the audit recommendations were implemented within one year.

## 2. Modernisation Objective - Pursuing simplification of the administrative environment.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



**Result /impact indicator:**

**Target for 2021-2022:**

**Latest known result:**

Supporting documents referenced with hyperlinks and linked to audit matrix.

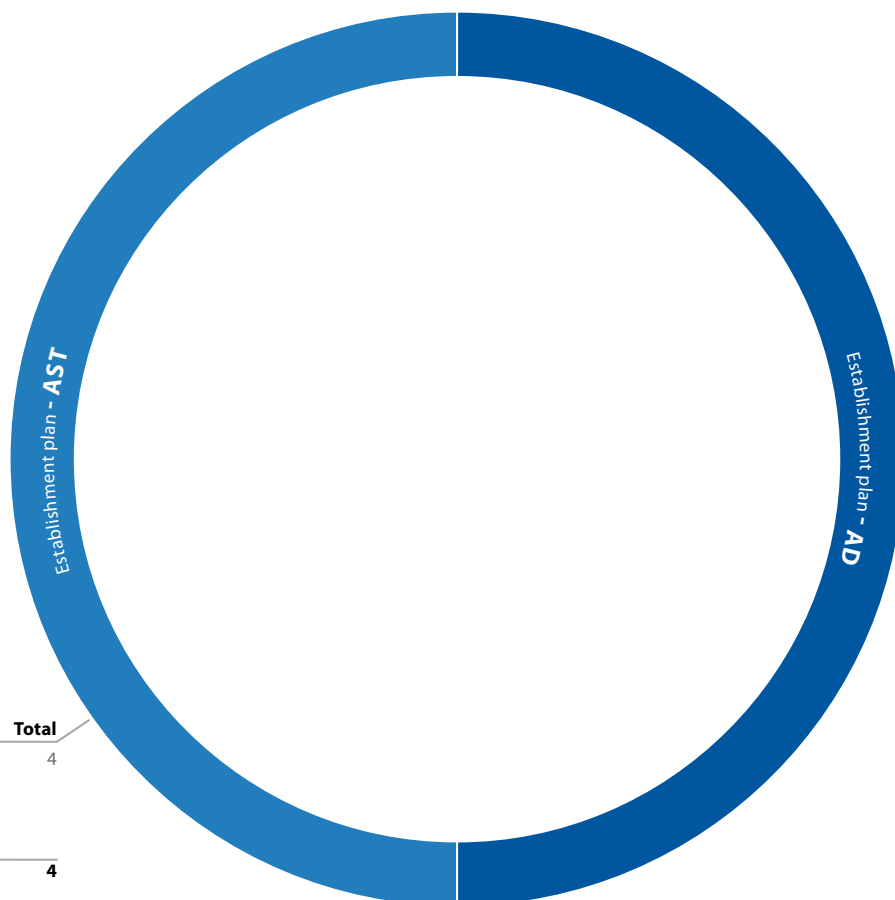
100%

**Achieved:** 100%

The internal audit unit is working remotely for all audits which supporting documents are fully referenced and linked to each finding.

*Human resources of IAS*

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	2		4
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>



## 2.14 Directorate for Logistics (DL)

### 1. (INFRA) Prepare for the exchange of B68/TR74 buildings with VMA building, assess the impact in terms of office space needs and on the budget of the DL.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Assure sufficient space and meeting rooms to pursue the activities of the Committee.	The signature with the EEAS of an agreement for the take-over of the lease of the B100 building, as from September 1 <sup>st</sup> 2021, is foreseen for the 1 <sup>st</sup> semester 2021.	<b>Achieved:</b> Administrative agreement on the take-over of the lease of the B100 building signed by EEAS and both Committees on 22/06/2021 (exchange effective on 1/09/ 2021).
Light renovation of office surfaces in VMA building.	Renovation works of third until ninth floor to be tendered and ordered in the 1 <sup>st</sup> semester 2021. Works to be carried out in 2021 and to be finalised before summer 2022.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> Works have been ordered in December 2021.
Leading the working group on the future allocation of space after September 2022, without B68 and TR74 and with VMA lightly renovated.	<p>May 2021: Removal of occupants from VMA building to BvS and REM buildings</p> <p>February 2022: Removal of remaining VMA occupants, included EEAS Members' offices to B100 (first of occupation of B100 building)</p> <p>July, August and September 2022: Return to VMA of all occupants, included Members' offices, after renovation works</p> <p>Examine the related budgetary aspects and propose an action plan.</p> <p>Present a project plan spelling out the different steps leading to the exchange of buildings in September 2022, including the spending plan year by year, starting from 2021.</p>	<p><b>Partially achieved:</b> Removal of occupants from VMA (CoR DIR B and C).</p> <p>In autumn 2021, the plan spelling out the different steps leading to the exchange of buildings in September 2022 has been presented to the Budgetary Authority.</p>

- The main results obtained in 2021 related to the implementation of this objective are the following:
    - › **B100 – fitting out works** : The fitting-out works started in 11/ 2021 and were finished in 03/2022. This represents a delay of about 2 months in relation to the original schedule and were caused by the discovery of asbestos in B100 which implied that all safety measures had to be taken before starting the actual fitting-out work.
    - › **Works in BvS and REM building**: Modernisation and refurbishment of the offices has been completed on the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 10th floor of the BvS buildings:
  - on the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th floors above-mentioned as well as 9th and 11th floor the walls have been renewed, a new ventilation system has been installed and new lighting has been fitted.
  - on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10th and 11th floor a new ventilation system has been installed.
  - Since November 2021 and progressively by March 2022, new furniture and video conference connections will be provided. In the meantime, temporary furniture is provided.
- Archives in the central areas of the Remorqueur wing on 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th floor of the BvS building have been transformed into social spaces, small kitchens and meeting bubbles.
- **VMA renovation works**: The delays in the takeover of B100 (only on 1/09/2021 compared to the initially foreseen date of 1/04/2021 because of the delay in the fitting-out works of EEAS new building) have increased the pressure on the general planning of the renovation work and the takeover of the VMA in 09/2022.
  - **Preparation of VMA renovation works**:
    - › meetings have been organised with the future occupants of VMA and B100 to finalise the future office layout as well as the layout of the central zones.
    - › works have been ordered and have started in 12/2021.
    - › The moves from the VMA to B100 have been prepared and took place in February and March 2022.

## 2. (IT) Contribute to the implementation of the CoR Digital Strategy. Provide information systems, IT infrastructure and user support services, according to the best practice of IT management while optimising the use of human and financial resources.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Infrastructure availability	99%	<b>Achieved:</b> 99.55% (Nov. 21)
Helpdesk reaction time	90% within 15s. 95% within 30s.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> 86.7% (Nov. 21) 93.7% (Nov. 21).

- **IT Information Systems** support the Committees' activities in four operational domains: Political Work, Document Management, Communication and HR/ Finance. The main activities during the year for each domain are summarised below.
- For **Political Work**, the main operational applications, Agora and Members Portal, were adapted to support remote and hybrid meetings in accordance with the decisions taken at the political level. The Phoenix application was adapted to manage the corresponding financial aspects. In addition, the recommendations of the security assessment were implemented and the new service-oriented architecture (SOA) interface to the Commission's ABAC financial management system became operational. Development of the applications for processing amendments progressed according to plan. Kiklos, Members+ and the Common Consultative Platforms were maintained and developed in line with business requests.
- For **Document Management**, the search engines reached a high degree of maturity and required less work than in previous years. On the other hand, considerable effort was devoted to the Adonis document workflow tool which provided solid support for paperless document workflows. There was continuous improvement of the other document and translation support services and applications, notably as regards automatic document publication and information exchange for translation outsourcing. The requested technical support for the new computer aided translation tool was provided.
- For **Communication**, the existing catalogue of web services was maintained. Special attention was paid to the DL intranet revamp. Contact management using the Dynamics platform was further developed and improved.
- For **Human Resources and Finance**, the work of Dir E was supported by both shared and in-house developed applications now managing a wide range of fully electronic processes. Of particular note in 2021, was the second complete cycle of the staff assessment exercise supported by the EVA application.
- In addition, a specialised **Technical Domain** works on transversal improvements to all applications. During 2021, further improvements were made to the reporting environment and the database layer. A new service for supporting advanced electronic signatures was developed. The Technical Domain also participated in the inter-institutional working group on Emerging Technologies.
- The main projects completed by the **IT Infrastructure** service during 2021 were database automation, Teams deployment and the change of internet service provider. The performance of the remote working environment was continuously improved by the introduction of new VPN software and by increasing the capacity of the Terminal Servers. Other innovations included the deployment of a soft phone for teleworkers, the option of accessing Terminal Servers either using a Token or using Multifactor Access and the deployment of a new self-service password reset portal. In the area of IT security, considerable attention was paid to monitoring the threat landscape, hardening the IT system configuration and following up on the alerts sent to the institutions by CERT-EU.
- **IT User Support Services** provide user support, develop user solutions, maintain user relations, organise logistics and manage user policies. The main achievement during 2021 was to complete the distribution of portable PCs, although the replacement of some older models was delayed due to the global chip shortage. Considerable effort was devoted to the support of web conferencing tools across a wide range of use cases: remote meetings, hybrid meetings and web conferences. This work was carried out in close cooperation with the meetings and training services. The principal service indicators remained stable.

### 3. (IMP) Reorganisation of the Printshop Unit – project Horizon 2025.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result / impact indicators:	Targets for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Number of remaining staff.	20 staff by end 2022.	<b>Achieved:</b> 23 by end of February 2022.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since 09/2021, a constantly growing number of incoming requests are received, for plenary sessions and other recurrent big meetings. These requests tend to be less voluminous in terms of copies to be printed, but increasingly time consuming as they are more technical and are received increasingly at the last minute, thus needing 100% physical presences and availability of all production staff involved. In addition, a SLA has been signed with the Printshop of the European Parliament at the end of 2020 and another SLA will be signed with the Printshop of the European Commission in spring 2022. Also, the Printshop of the Council is making increasingly ad hoc printing requests. If this tendency is confirmed in 2022, this will influence the total number of FTE to be maintained to ensure efficient business continuity in line with the progress of the Horizon 2025 reorganisation project.</li> <li>Currently, the total number of FTE needed on a structural basis can be estimated at 18 to 20 instead of the initial objective of 15 that was foreseen at the start of the Horizon 2025 project. This is to be considered in the recruitment decisions for the</li> </ul>	<p>replacement of staff going on retirement by the end of 2022 (approximately 6 FTE), to maintain the current high level of quality and speed which is very appreciated by the different stakeholders requesting printing and distribution services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Main outputs:</li> <li>the ongoing implementation process for the reorganisation project Horizon 2025 is rolled out as expected and in accordance with the set objectives and timeline.</li> <li>the Service Level Agreement with the European Parliament has been signed and is implemented.</li> <li>The Service Level Agreement with the OIB has been delayed on their request. The signature and implementation are now planned for Q1 2022.</li> <li>The call for tender for national and international post mail services has been successfully finalised, contract has been signed and entered into force in Q3 2021.</li> <li>The call for tender for ecological food delivery has been delayed due to circumstances related to COVID-19 situations. It will be launched and finalised in Q1 2022.</li> </ul>	

### 4. Modernisation Objective: Pursuing simplification of the administrative environment.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Targets for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Improve reliability and time devoted on each financial transaction.	Q4 2021. After the introduction of electronic signature, most transactions digitalised.	<b>Partially achieved:</b> Access to qualified digital signature was requested for all the CoR AOSs working in DL at the end of 2021. The access was obtained in 2022.
Reduce dependency of office presence.	Q3 2021: Increase the number of staff teleworking under "non-COVID-19" compulsory confinement.	<b>Not applicable:</b> Logistics has an important number of services that require the presence of colleagues in the premises in order to ensure business continuity. Therefore, increase the number of teleworkers as such is not an objective for DL.

Improve payment delays.	Q2 2021: to achieve 92% target of the invoices treated by the Initiating agents within 14 days.	<b>Achieved:</b> In 2021, 96,34 % of the invoices received by DL were paid on time. If calculated in terms of amounts paid on time the percentage is even higher: 97,82%.
Improve user friendliness of DL intranet.	Q1 2021: Design of new intranet in collaboration with stakeholders/users in own services in CoR and EESC.	<b>Achieved:</b> 01/2022: Second usability tests with stakeholders (DL units and other key stakeholders in EESC and CoR), continuation of development.
Improve communication, access to information and increase knowledge sharing:  Improved communication flow and distribution of information, leading to less requests via email or telephone to DL colleagues.  Increased awareness of the work of DL among Committees' staff leading to improved image of DL as a service provider.  Provider of accurate updated information.  Improved stability and reliability of the intranet (less error messages, less technical issues).	4.Q:2021:Operational DL intranet.	<b>Achieved:</b> 02/2022: Finetuning of units page together with unit correspondents (translation of pages FR/EN, updating of content).
Number of procurement procedures implemented via eSubmission.	All supported procedures are implemented via eSubmission.	<b>Achieved:</b> All procedures processed via eSubmission.

### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Building on the 2020 experience, it appears that in general most of the DL services have coped quite well with teleworking. Nevertheless, from a "social" perspective, this modus operandi is not ideal and staff suffers from this peculiar virtual dynamics.

The following DL sectors have been particularly affected by the pandemic:

#### *Infrastructures:*

More difficult and uncertain planning and budgeting due to longer and sometimes unpredictable delivery times and higher prices for certain supplies.

Remote management and control of suppliers' activities and performances on site, such as construction works, maintenance and moves, are almost impossible and very difficult. This always requires more physical presence in the office than in other services. However, improvement could be possible through specific practical training.

There was a need to maintain a compulsory presence of smaller teams at the premises for assuring the business continuity and to supervise the activities on site.

A very big challenge is moving offices of people who cannot be physically present to prepare for the moves. It would be beneficial in the future if the staff is warned that their private items can be moved on a very short notice, and consequently ask staff to limit their items in the offices.

The occupation of shared offices, meeting rooms, conference rooms and public areas had to be adapted following

the COVID regulations or internal decisions. As a result of new insights into the risk of infection, the use of the premises may be changed again in the future.

#### *Budget and finances:*

A disadvantage is that it is necessary that operational staff (OIA, OVA) has to use ABAC on a daily basis. For them it is rather complicated to obtain the access on the CoR side for these functions due to the obligatory trainings. An adapted "light" training program should be developed for them. Before the COVID-19 pandemic everyone could sign the paper file without having followed a heavy training programme.

A more streamlined – ideally identical - approach of the financial circuits between EESC and CoR is strongly recommended for the joint services.

Immediate savings were possible due to the general teleworking arrangements and the partial closure of some buildings.

Nevertheless, in the short term, some costs have raised, in particular for:

- energy, several services as well as maintenance and construction works due to a general increase of prices as a consequence of a higher demand combined with a delay in production;
- cleaning and disinfection due to a higher standard of service;
- catering due to a new economic model.

Several contracts had to be adapted to take into account the new COVID-19 pandemic reality.

**EMAS service:**

COVID-19 pandemic has had a positive evolution of the environmental impact in several fields with a significant environmental impact of Committees' activities such as energy consumption, paper consumption, waste management, commuting and missions as well as in a better work-life balance. However, the large-scale teleworking and remote meetings of late 2021 are not permanent. There will be a return to less teleworking and fewer remote meetings in the course of 2022 and into the future but, compared to the organisation in 2019, the new normal will include teleworking, hybrid and remote meetings to a large extent.

**Catering service:**

All Committees' catering activities have been very significantly affected. As an economic sector, catering is highly impacted by the crisis. Economical damage will appear. The business case of catering in organisation like the Committees is changing.

The Catering service had to cope with strong security measures, reduced customer flows and the need to keep up some crucial services for the continuation of the Committees' core business. Due to lack of physical presence of people, significant financial loss in the catering contract forced to reduce and even stop offering catering services.

In June 2020, it was decided to open only one catering site, the cafeteria in the JDE building, and to provide catering services for political meetings and staff working in the Committees' premises during the pandemic. With most activities being held virtually and the more stringent security measures, it was decided to temporarily suspend all catering activities from the beginning of November 2020. Catering activities restarted in 2021, and the canteen was open again thanks to the provision of a financial compensation granted by the EESC and CoR to the catering company. The lesson learned during the pandemic relates to the nature of the catering contract and the need for more flexibility and modularity in the offer and in the opening of the catering sites, including the possibility of paying a compensation to the contractor.

**IT:**

Most operations could be carried out successfully by officials and contractors working remotely. The main exceptions were the Helpdesk and Telecommunications sectors much of whose work requires on-site presence.

The extra IT investments financed by credit transfers have been very useful indeed. During 2021 some 750 000 EUR were transferred to IT budget lines. These transfers were used to finance sixteen new projects aligned with the objectives of the Digital Strategy (Innovative Information Systems, Resilient Infrastructure and Digital Workplace).

**Printshop:**

During the first months in 2021, the sanitary rules restricting the physical presences resulted in the establishment of a scheme of weekly shifts with a combination of minimum physical presences in combination with teleworking in

order to guarantee delivery of service to the clients while respecting strict hygiene measures.

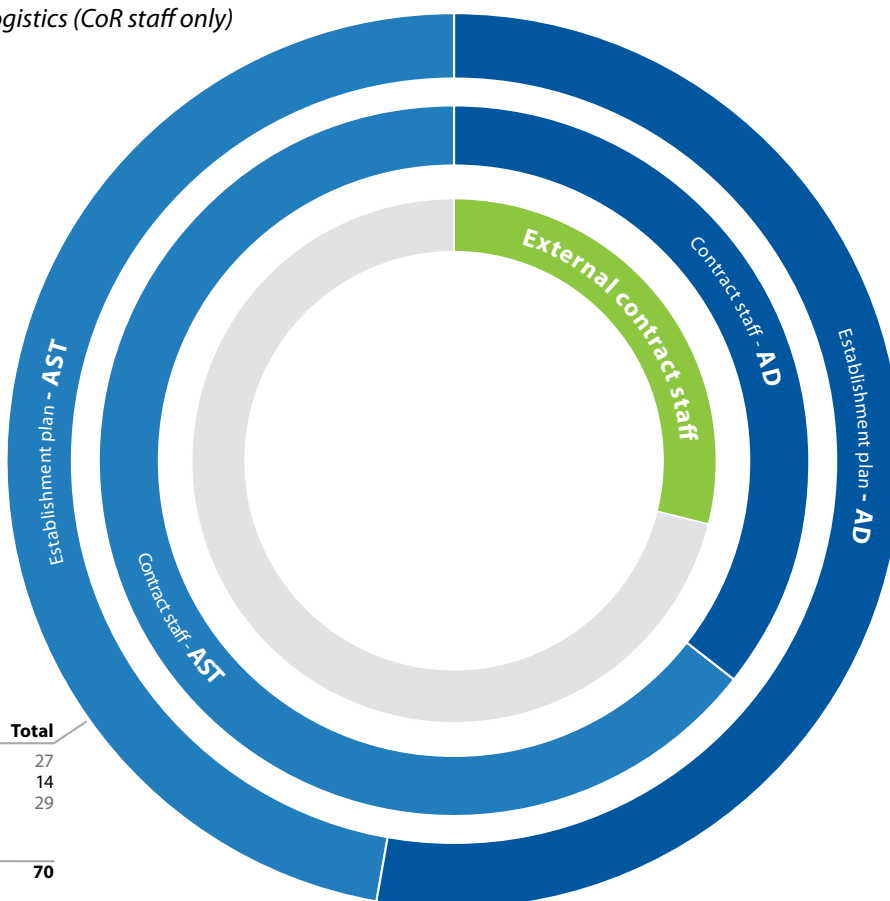
Due to the fact that most of both committees' meetings took place in a hybrid way there were less requests than the pre-COVID years although there was an increase in copyshop productivity of 78.55% and an increase of 101.75% in copyshop jobs per full-time employee compared to 2020.

Since September 2021, a constantly growing number of printing incoming requests are received, in particular for plenary sessions and other recurrent big meetings. These requests tend to be less voluminous in terms of copies to be printed and distributed, but are received more and more at the last minute, needing 100% physical presences and availability of all production staff involved.

**Digitalisation:**

The pandemic has enhanced the flexibility of the staff members in the organization of the daily activities and the promotion of remote working methods, preserving the need to ensure the efficient implementation of the mission statement. The main lesson learned is that teleworking goes hand in hand with the digitalisation of the procedures. One of the main obstacles to full digitalisation of processes is the absence of an electronic signature of documents framework. Therefore, DL has launched a working group in 2021, to adopt a legal framework on the use of different types of signatures and to ensure a common agreed approach with the other institutions.

## Human resources of the Directorate of Logistics (CoR staff only)



Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	9	18		27
Contract staff	5	9		14
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	29
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70</b>

## 2.15 Directorate for Translation (DT)

*1. To further deepen and develop the sustainable multilingualism policy for both Committees, in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement and the Code of Conduct for Translation.*

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Deadline compliance.	> 95% <sup>17</sup>	<b>Achieved:</b> 96.5%
Documents exceeding the maximum length as defined in the Code of Conduct.	≤ 2020 level	<b>Achieved:</b> 5.8%
Percentage of new versions to documents in translation.	<6% <sup>18</sup>	<b>Not achieved:</b> 11.4%
Timely submission of translation requests as defined in the Code of Conduct.	90%	<b>Not achieved:</b> 88.5%
Outsourcing rate.	20% <sup>19</sup>	<b>Achieved:</b> 19.73%

<sup>17</sup> As established in Appendix I to the memo on Annual monitoring of the workload and productivity levels in the Directorate for Translation compared against interinstitutional benchmarks (KIAPIs).

<sup>18</sup> Idem.

<sup>19</sup> Idem.



Proportion of direct translation.	> 90% <sup>20</sup>	<b>Achieved:</b> 95%
Percentage of budget line 1420 used.	Full coverage of needs	<b>Achieved:</b> Full coverage of needs
Percentage of budget line 2622 used.	Full coverage of needs	<b>Achieved:</b> Full coverage of needs

## 2. To consolidate relations with DT stakeholders and improve integration of translation in the legislative work of the Committee.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Proportion of success criteria defined for clear writing campaign met.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Attendance at DT conference.	≥2020 level	<b>Achieved:</b> 519.
Organisations represented at DT Conference.	≥ 2020 level	<b>Achieved:</b> 14.
Number of units in the own services targeted by awareness-raising measures (including job shadowing).	≥ 2020 level	<b>Postponed:</b> as it requires physical presence.

## 3. To create synergies in the framework of interinstitutional cooperation in the field of translation.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
KIAPI (Key Interinstitutional Activity and Performance Indicators)– Average cost per page.	EUR 163 <sup>21</sup>	<b>Partially achieved:</b> EUR 172.22 <sup>22</sup>
Daily workload reference rate.	DT: at least 8 pages.	<b>Achieved:</b> 8.8 <sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Idem.

<sup>21</sup> Average of the KIAPI moving average (2016-2020) for all institutions except the Translation Centre.

<sup>22</sup> KIAPI moving average (2016-2020) on the cost per page for the CoR-EESC translation service.

<sup>23</sup> Daily work rate for the CoR-EESC translation service in 2021.

Work-sharing.	≥2020 level (if possible and depending on the evolution of internal translation demand and staffing levels).	<b>Achieved:</b> Pages translated for the European Parliament: 170 Pages translated for other EU institutions: 205 Pages edited for other EU institutions: 0 Pages translated by the European Parliament for CoR-EESC: 0 Pages translated by other EU institutions for CoR-EESC: 0
Representation at interinstitutional network meetings.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Number of staff on exchanges/ILVs to other institutions (per year).	Achieve at least 2019 figures, if the situation allows.	<b>Postponed:</b> as it requires physical presence.

#### 4. Modernisation Objective - Pursuing simplification of the administrative environment.

Political/Administrative priorities supported:



Result /impact indicators:	Target for 2021-2022:	Latest known result:
Proportion of compliant DT Procedures published in the repository and validated electronically.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Proportion of SLT applications submitted and processed online.	100%	<b>Postponed:</b> as it requires physical presence.
Deployment and migration to new translation environment completed.	100%	<b>Achieved:</b> 100%
Average time to look up results from translation memory reduced by 33%.	3.3 seconds (from 5 seconds late 2020)	<b>Achieved:</b> 3 seconds.
Increased use of online video tutorials available to staff.	> 2020 figure	<b>Achieved:</b> 317 views

#### Overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

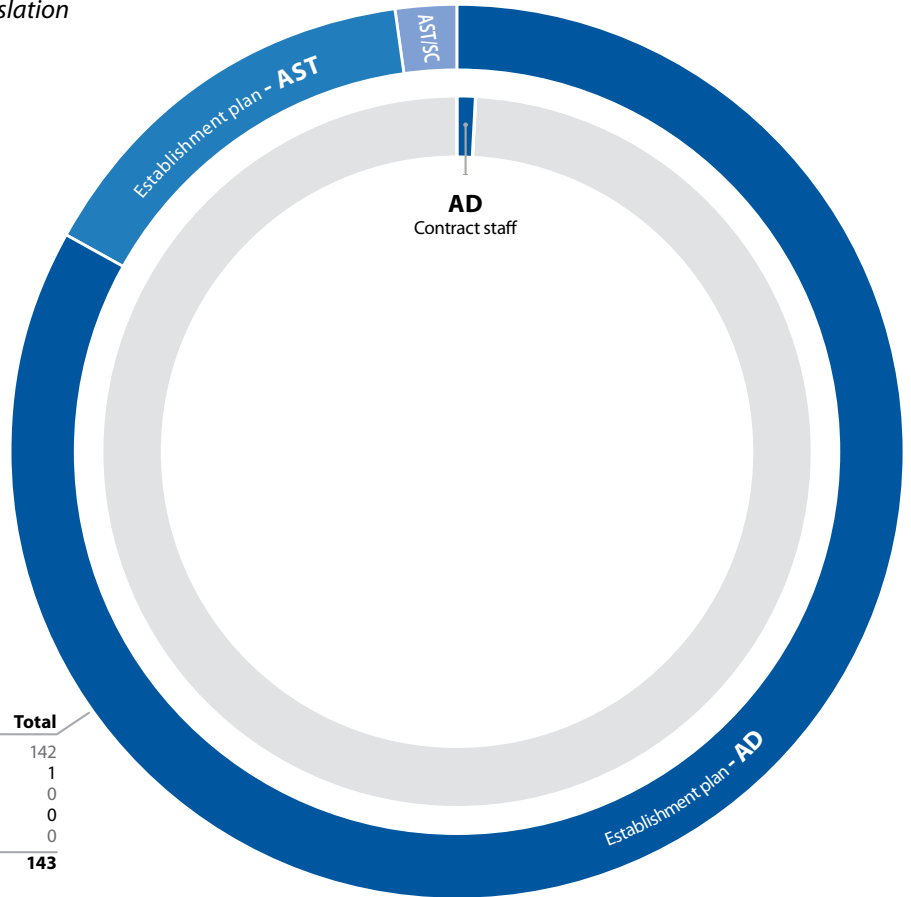
The COVID-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on the DT. Just like in all other directorates, DT staff had to continue extended teleworking, whilst ensuring business continuity and timely delivery of meeting documents, despite a very high workload.

One important lesson learned is that full business continuity in translation requires stable and reliable IT systems, as translation tools are very heavy in terms of data transfer. The deployment

of the new server-based translation environment (GroupShare) allowed the DT to reduce the amount of data transferred; however, this did not reduce the need for a stable IT system.

Nevertheless, despite struggling with uneven and, at times, exceptionally high translation demand and IT issues, the DT managed to mostly reach its objectives set for 2021, with a couple of exceptions where physical presence was needed (for example, staff exchanges and job shadowing)

Human resources of Directorate for Translation  
(CoR staff only)



Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	118	21	3	142
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				0
Seconded national experts				0
Other personnel (specify)				0
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>143</b>

## 3. INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS, AUDIT AND FOLLOW-UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY FINANCIAL CONTROL BODIES

### 3.1 Risk Management as an integrated part of the Internal Control environment at the CoR

A holistic planning & reporting cycle is organised every year at CoR. In this context, the CoR **Strategic Management Plan (SMP)** describes the actions which the CoR implements to reach its political and administrative objectives. It reflects the budgetary and human resources mobilised and the actions undertaken.

In parallel to the SMP, a yearly **risk assessment** exercise is carried out for the objectives laid down in the SMP. Following the Risk Analysis methodology, depending on the risk level, risks are stored either in a central risk register or in the decentralised risk register of the respective CoR departments. Whereas the follow-up to the most important risks (laid down in the central risk register) and the related mitigating measures is monitored by the CoR Board of Directors, the implementation of the local risk registers is followed-up by the concerned Directorates.

A risk analysis on the objectives of the 2021-2022 SMP and the new challenges emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic

was performed in 2021 and a central risk register was elaborated on that basis and formally adopted.

At the end of the planning & reporting cycle, the results of actions are reported in the **Annual Activity Report** and in the Declaration of Assurance of the Authorising Officer by Delegation. Given that the CoR has no operational credits, its financial and political risks are predominantly tied to its administrative expenditure (and notably the risk of non-respect of the regulatory environment) and to the internal organisation and functioning.

Given the political character of the Institution and the size of the budget, any resource inappropriately spent would indeed constitute a risk. To mitigate this risk, the CoR has organised a centrally monitored internal control environment coupled with a partially decentralised financial model with (central) counterweight in the context of which a central verification service verifies all transactions, with “zero tolerance” towards inappropriate resource spending (see also points 3.4 and 3.5 below).

### 3.2 Internal control system

A compliance and effectiveness exercise was launched in 2021, to assess to what extent the CoR complied with the 16 Internal Control Standards (ICS) and to what extent their implementation was effective.

The exercise consisted of a questionnaire designed to evaluate compliance with and effectiveness of the requirements specified for each ICS, with contributions from members of the ICS Working Group responsible for their coordination (at least one person per Directorate). The results were discussed in the ICS Working Group meeting of 24 March 2022.

The 2021 compliance exercise has shown that the overall state of implementation and effectiveness of the requirements remained at a high level and stable as compared to 2020.

Future efforts should focus on a cost-effective consolidation of the level achieved, together with targeted efforts to further step up the level of compliance and the degree of effectiveness of selected internal control measures in place. In 2022, special attention will be devoted to:

- **ICS 5 - Objectives and Performance Indicators** – first year when the new revised Management Plan will be implemented, envisaged within the [Convergence project](#), which will consist of two layers: the multi-annual Strategic Management Plan and Annual Operational Working Plan.
- **ICS 6 - Risk Management Process**: rated as ‘weakest’ standard in 2021, the risk management methodology is under revision. The Risk Management process will consist of a Strategic Risk Assessment and an Operational Risk Assessment.
- **ICS 8 - Processes and Procedures**: the entry into force of the new Rules of Procedure requires the updating several procedures regarding consultative works. Moreover, the transversal objectives of simplification and digitalization will be further pursued.
- **ICS 11 – Document Management**: the type of signature needed for each type of document as well as the document management workflow. Moreover, it will be important to further finetune rules for the Official Mail Registration electronic system (Adonis).

### 3.3 Internal Financial Legal Framework

On 2 February 2021 new Internal Financial Rules (IFR) for the implementation of the CoR Budget were adopted by the Bureau and entered into force on 1 March 2021 (Decision No 007/2021). All related revised implementing decisions entered into force on 1 July 2021. The main objectives pursued with the latest new revision of the IFR is on the one hand to ensure efficient and effective financial

management by allowing the AOD to adapt the organisational structure and the internal control systems (i.e., through centralisation of the financial initiating agent function and a revised ex-ante financial verification policy) and to ensure the transition to a smart and modern administration by putting the emphasis on electronic treatment of financial files.

### 3.4 Budget planning, execution and monitoring

The CoR is a political body with a focussed mission. Its budget appropriations are included entirely under Administrative Heading 7 of the EU-budget (MFF (Multiannual Financial Framework) 2021-2027). The CoR has no spending-oriented programmes of the type the EC manages under other headings of the EU-budget.

The CoR applies a coherent political and supportive administrative system of budgeting, planning, execution and monitoring supporting the realisation of the CoR's political and administrative objectives. The performance-oriented system works principally as follows:

- The CoR's President, after having obtained advice from the CoR's Conference of Presidents, presents guidelines for establishment of the CoR's draft budget to the CoR's Bureau for adoption.
- The CoR's draft budget, with appropriations allocated with a view to reach the political and administrative objectives, is established by the CoR's Secretary-General based upon the adopted CoR Bureau guidelines.
- The draft budget is then vetted and approved by the CoR Member-driven Commission of Financial and Administrative Affairs (CFAA), then submitted to the CoR's Bureau and to the CoR's Plenary Session for adoption. In this way, subsequent expenditure is tied to the multi-annual planned objectives, actions and political priorities of the CoR Presidencies.
- Once the Budget Authority has adopted the CoR's budget for a given year, the appropriations for its activities are subject to a budget planning adopted at the beginning of the budget implementation year.
- The CoR's planning instructions established by the Secretary-General based upon the CoR's political and administrative priorities require that the final appropriations for every budget line be linked to at least one action defined in the planning and there are requirements for establishment of indicators to measure implementation.
- The planning for a given year is executed by sub-delegated Authorising Officers empowered to that function by the CoR's Secretary-General, acting in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation (AOD). Individual nominations are made by updating the general decision with coherence of delegations given and ABAC accesses granted.
- Prior to a specific actual budget implementation decision on what in detail the CoR will do in the specific political circumstances, the CoR puts together proposals with estimates of how much appropriation are needed from various budget lines. The proposals are then scrutinised / followed up on by the CFAA.

- The financial circuits applied in the CoR's budget implementation are established respecting the following principles and rules as outlined by the CoR's Internal Financial Rules:
- Segregation of duties between initiation, verification, authorisation and payment.
- Codification of the operational and financial responsibilities.
- Centralised financial initiation and ex-ante verification (see section 3.5). Trained actors (delegations are given based upon followed training).

The monitoring of the CoR budget execution is carried out at several levels:

1. Regular monitoring of budget execution is required to be established and implemented by managing services to steer operations for budget lines falling under their responsibility and management.
2. An analytical tool for monitoring the budget execution, "Budget Watch", is used to centrally monitor the execution (commitments and payments) of all budget lines and sub-lines for C1, C4, C5, C8 and C9 appropriations. This tool supports the identification of possible over- and under-spending at an early stage. Based on this tool, monthly budget execution notes are prepared and circulated to the Directorates' and financial actors of the CoR.
3. Progress of the overall budget execution of politically important budget lines is regularly monitored by the CoR CFAA.
4. Estimates of the execution of salaries' related budget lines, covering some 60% of the CoR total budget, are carried out/updated each month.

In order to better prepare for the possible reallocation of appropriations, when conditions merit and opportunities exist, quarterly budget execution in-depth reviews are coordinated centrally but carried out by the CoR Authorising Officers by sub-delegation, per Directorate and for all CoR budget lines. This contributes to the optimisation of the budget execution through a better preparation for reallocation of resources within budget lines and, if and where estimated necessary, by initiating transfers of appropriations during the budget implementation year.

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

### 3.5 Financial initiation and verification

As from 1/07/2021, a reorganisation of the financial management setting at CoR has been decided, reinforcing the centralised counterweight to the decentralised model. In addition to the previously existing central financial verification function, also a Central Financial Initiation Service (SCIF) has been set up within Directorate E and is responsible for the financial initiation of all financial transactions of the CoR own services (Members expenditure and staff salaries excluded).

It results from the new setting that:

- as a rule, the *financial initiation* is done in a centralised manner by the SCIF, except for a set of budget (sub) lines (defined in the subdelegation decision) where the financial initiation is done in a decentralised manner.
- the *financial verification* continues to be undertaken in a centralised way, by an independent financial verification service in Directorate E.
- the *operational initiation, operational verification and authorization* of financial transactions are done in a decentralised manner.

In the same spirit of simplification, and building on the satisfactory results of the pilot project launched in June 2020 whereby the ex-ante verification of certain low risk/value transactions was limited to a purely technical verification by the Financial Verifying Agent (FVA), a simplified workflow has been set up on a more structured and permanent basis since 1/07/2021 for certain transactions handled by Directorates A, D and E. A sample-based ex-post verification is performed on a quarterly basis and the related findings and recommendations are communicated to the principal authorising officer responsible. It is foreseen to evaluate the results of the situation/ex post controls after one year, in June 2022, before permanently embedding the modalities and possibly extending the scope of the simplified workflow for low risk/value transactions.

### 3.6 Ex-post control

An ex-post control exercise was carried out in 2021. The aim of this exercise is (1) to provide a tool for managers to review internally their own procedures and operations in order to identify any potential systemic issues and, based on the findings, (2) to propose and implement measures that would lead to structural improvements.

No major issues were identified. However, a recurrent recommendation resulting from the different ex-post ex-

### 3.7 Exception reports

A new procedure for exception reporting was adopted on 1 July 2021.

The main change concerns the introduction of a de-minimis rule, whereby only financial exceptions regarding transactions with an amount involved above 1,000 € or not known in advance are submitted to the AOD for approval. Financial exceptions relating to transactions with an amount involved less or equal to 1,000 € are approved

In 2021, the financial verification service verified 16,329 transactions (salaries excluded) out of which 9,816 transactions have been subject to merely technical ex ante validation (in the framework of the pilot project and the simplified approval workflow). This represents an overall increase of 25% of files submitted by the operational services in 2021 compared to 13,023 in 2020 (which was a particular year, heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) and a slight decrease of less than 5% compared to the pre-pandemic year 2019 (17,152 transactions). These entail a large variety of files: budgetary commitments and legal commitments, payment orders, recovery orders, recruitment decisions, establishment or modification of statutory rights, promotions, salaries, etc.

In 2021, 278 CoR and EESC transactions out of a total of 16,329 (compared to 318 out of a total of 13,023 in 2020) verified by the financial verification service either were refused for correction (222) or were the subject of financial exception reports or negative opinions from the financial verification service (56 files). This represents an average monthly refusal/correction rate of 1.7% (significant decrease compared to the 2.4% in 2020 and 2.2% in 2019). This indicator can be considered as a very satisfactory outcome which can be partly explained by the setting up of the new central pool of Financial Initiating Agents since 1/07/2021 which has had a positive impact on the quality of files transmitted to the financial verification service.

The financial verification service has also a counselling role and is in a permanent dialogue with financial actors with a view to constantly improving financial management. Starting in 2020 and pursued during 2021, the verification sector made a substantial investment in the advisory function because of the COVID-19 situation and its immediate consequences, such as the transition to 100% of paperless financial workflows in an extended telework setting for all staff.

ercises is the necessity to update written procedures. In 2021 the completeness of the register of procedures was maintained at 2020 level (93%). Considering the changes triggered by the exceptional circumstances (COVID-19) in 2021 and in the light of the various administrative simplification measures being implemented across CoR, many written procedures are being updated to take into account new and paperless working methods.

at the level of the AOS. The AOD is informed on a quarterly basis of the exceptions initiated.

In 2021 exception reporting was therefore implemented under two different procedures. For reporting purposes, an exception (administrative or financial) occurs when there is non-compliance with established rules and procedures detected and approved ex ante.

### Financial exceptions

The overall number of financial exception reports increased compared with the low number of financial exception reports registered in 2020.

The CoR maintains a central register of exceptions and monitors the follow-up of the remedial measures identified therein. The reporting on exceptions is an important element of assurance for the AOD when drafting his declaration of assurance.

All authorising officers by sub-delegation (AOS) report to the AOD on financial exceptions and remedial measures when

### Administrative exceptions

Also, three administrative exception reports were registered for non-compliance with internal procedures and corrective

measures are being implemented to prevent this type of exception from reoccurring.

presenting their declarations of assurance for the budget lines for which they are responsible.

For the 2021 exercise all AOSs have signed their individual declarations of assurance (also see Annex 2). All exceptions reports in the central register are mentioned in the relevant declarations of assurance and corrective measures are being implemented and monitored to prevent these exceptions from reoccurring.

## 3.8 Overall assessment of the costs and benefits of control

The budget of the CoR is a purely administrative budget for a political assembly. With regard to risks and loss, the CoR seeks not only to minimise financial loss but also to mitigate reputational risks when deploying controls. Therefore, the costs and benefits of controls cannot be appreciated merely in monetary terms but need also to be considered from a political angle.

Specifically, the benefits of controls which cannot be quantified in the context of the CoR concern deterrent effects and compliance with regulatory provisions.

The CoR has estimated the overall costs of controls in terms of the cost of all staff directly involved in control activities (including ex-ante financial verification, internal control, internal audit, and control activities related to procurement procedures) to approximately EUR 2 M. In relation to the total budget of 2021 of EUR 106.74 M, around 2% was thus dedicated to control. However, since quantitative data of the volume and amounts of errors that have been prevented (ex-ante) or detected (ex-post) is not available, it is not possible to quantify the related benefits other than what can be deduced from the exception reports (cf. point 3.7 above), and thus to determine the cost-effectiveness of controls by comparing costs with benefits.

Given that ex-post controls did not identify any major issues (cf. point 3.6 above), that financial exceptions were detected prior to validation of the expenditure (cf. point 3.7 above) and that there are no ongoing litigations related to procurement decisions, CoR considers its controls to be effective.

Yet, considering that CoR has reached a high level of organisational maturity, and as article 74(2) FR demands that internal control measures should take into account their

measures are being implemented to prevent this type of exception from reoccurring.

cost effectiveness, a cost-effectiveness of the internal control environment and planning & reporting cycle in place at CoR was carried out in 2020, with the help of an external expert and in close association with key internal stakeholders. The goal of this analysis is to simplify, modernise and/or find synergies of processes without jeopardising an adequate internal control environment and to explore possible ways to further enhance the purposefulness of the CoR planning & reporting cycle, to increase its added-value and to align it in an optimal manner to the mission, means and risks of the institution.

In 2021, on the basis of the external expert's report, the ICS working group proposed a multi-annual action plan for a gradual revision and simplification of the existing internal control environment. The action plan will also contemplate a series of further improvements to the planning & reporting cycle (to complement the first rationalisation efforts made in 2020 in respect of the 2021-2022 SMP). Some first steps have been already taken in this sense; the concept note of the "Project Convergence" outlining the main changes to be introduced was presented and approved in the Management Seminar in October 2021.

The Project Convergence has been already launched and aims at providing a consistent framework to simplify the Planning and Reporting, Risk Management, Annual Impact Report and Business Continuity instruments and other Internal Control elements, making them more strategic, instilled by the mission and political priorities of the CoR and coherent amongst themselves, using a common terminology and better allowing the monitoring and reporting on the CoR's performance and impact.

## 3.9 Public procurement

The sector dedicated to the management of CoR's procurement procedures for contracts with a value equal to or greater than EUR 15.000 launched by the CoR Own Services has been operational since January 2016. A similar specialised procurement service assists operational services of the Joint Services when they launch tender procedures

on behalf of the CoR. The working arrangements and the allocation of responsibilities between the CoR's public procurement sector and organising departments are defined in service instruction n°04/2019.

### 3.10 Internal audit function

The monitoring of the internal audit function is provided by the Audit Committee composed of one member per political group of the CoR Commission of Financial and Administrative Affairs and one high-level external advisor. In 2021, the Audit Committee held two meetings where internal audit matters were presented such as the 2020 annual internal audit report, the 2022 audit work program, the audit progress report and the IAS quality assurance and improvement program.

In 2021, the audit on the adequacy of territorial impact assessment was carried out and finalised. On the basis of its findings, the audit report formulated 18 recommendations consisting in the redefinition of the territorial impact assessment strategy and its organisational implementation; the improvement of the risk analysis and the cooperation agreement with EP and EC; the documentation of the op-

erational, planning, monitoring, supervision, reporting, validation, dissemination, and evaluation procedures as well as the methodology.

According to the work programme 2021, a consulting engagement was also performed on the efficiency of the human and financial resource allocation for the management of the logistics activities. At its own initiative, the internal audit unit provided advice on sensitive posts and on a performance measurement framework. These engagements were followed by ad hoc advice at the request of the Secretary-General on these issues.





## 4. ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

Taking into account the conclusions of the review of the elements supporting assurance, it is possible to conclude that the internal controls systems implemented by the European Committee of the Regions provide sufficient assurance to adequately manage the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. Furthermore, it is also possible to conclude that the internal control systems provide sufficient assurance with regards to the achievement of the other internal control objectives.

## 5. THE DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

I, Petr Blížkovský, Secretary-General of the European Committee of the Regions, in my capacity as authorising officer by delegation,

declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view,

state that I have a reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for the purposes intended in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and that the control procedures put in place provide satisfactory guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the Internal Control self-assessment, the ex-post controls, the work of the internal auditor, and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

I confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported which could harm the interests of the institution.

Done at Brussels, on 16 June 2022.

Petr Blížkovský





## **6. ANNEXES**

**Annex 1: Financial resources**

**Annex 2: Declarations of the Authorising Officers by sub-delegation (table of names and date of signature)**

**Annex 3: Transfers of appropriations**

**Annex 4: Negotiated procedures 2021**

**Annex 5: Report on compliance of the time limits suspension**

**Annex 6: Provisional annual accounts 2021**


**Annex 7: Human resources table**

**Annex 8: Building policy**

**Annex 9: Activities of the Members of the CoR in 2021**

**Annex 10: Follow-up to the 2020 discharge resolution**





<b>ANNEX 1: FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>4</b>
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## ANNEX 1: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Total 2021 approved budget of the European Committee of the Regions ("CoR") was € 106.7 million (5.2% more than the final budget of 2020).

### 1. Use of resources

#### Commitments in 2021

At the end of the year, the percentage committed from the approved budget was 98.9%.

The commitment execution rate for Title 1 "Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution" was 98.8% and 99.2% for Title 2 "Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure".

€ 1.1 million (or 1.1%) of all C1 credits was uncommitted at the end of the year and thus was returned to the EU budget. Both, in relative and monetary terms, this was considerably less than in 2020 where € 7.4 million (or 7.3%) was left uncommitted in C1 credits.

#### Payments in 2021

The overall execution rate for payments was 85.1%. This is more than in 2021, but somewhat below the rates observed before COVID-19 outbreak and it is mainly due to the cancellation of a number of meetings and events in 2021 (or replacing them with virtual events) because of the travel and meetings/events restrictions in Belgium and in a number of other Members States caused by the COVID-19. The payment execution rate was 82.4% in 2020 and 88.8% in 2019.

It should be noted that the actual payment execution rate for 2021 will only be known by the end of 2022 when the final payment execution rate of C8 credits of 2022 will be determined.

The final payment execution rate at the end of the budget cycle will be notably higher and ideally shall approach the commitment execution rate, as part of the committed credits related to 2021 was carried forward to C8 credits of 2022 and most of it shall be paid in 2022.

€ 105.6 million (98.9%) of all appropriations has been committed by the end of 2021 and € 90.9 million (85.1%) has been paid.

#### *Title 1: Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution*

In this title, most of the payments relate to staff remunerations. For Chapter 12, the total final budget amounted to € 56.8 million of which 56.4 million (99.3%) was paid in 2021. This is more in monetary terms but the same in percentage terms as in 2020, when € 55.0 million (99.3%) was paid out.

In 2021, the amount of € 2.9 million (68.2%) was paid from the budget item 1004 "Members travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure". This is considerably more in percentage and in monetary terms than in 2020 (€ 1.9 million and 34.6% respectively). These results are substantially affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and transfers of appropriations.

#### *Title 2: Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure*

In total, 68.6 % of the Title 2 budget was paid out in 2021, principally due to the 84.3% payment execution rate of chapter 20 "Buildings and associated costs". The other chapters of Title 2 showed lower payment execution rates.

#### Comparison with the previous years

The following table gives a comparative overview of execution rates for commitments and payments per title, for the years 2021, 2020 and 2019.

	2021			2020			2019		
	Budget 000 €	Commitments	Payments	Budget 000 €	Commitments	Payments	Budget 000 €	Commitments	Payments
Title 1	72,213	98.8%	93.0%	71,340	90.3%	88.8%	72,332	99.6%	94.5%
Title 2	34,528	99.2%	68.6%	30,168	98.5%	67.2%	26,420	99.7%	73.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>106,741</b>	<b>98.9%</b>	<b>85.1%</b>	<b>101,508</b>	<b>92.7%</b>	<b>82.4%</b>	<b>98,751</b>	<b>99.6%</b>	<b>88.8%</b>

*Title 1: Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution*

The execution rate for commitments in 2021 was considerably higher than the respective rate in 2020 but slightly lower than in 2019. The 2021 payment execution rate was also higher than the rate of 2020 but lower than in 2019. These results are considerably affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and transfers of appropriations carried out in 2021 and 2020.

*Title 2: Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure*

The execution rate for commitments in 2021 was higher than the equivalent rate in 2020 but slightly lower than in 2019. The payment execution rate was also higher than the rate of 2020 but lower than in 2019. This, in turn, was affected by the significant reinforcements of some of these domains by the means of transfers of appropriations carried out in the second half of 2021. It takes some time before the "transferred in" appropriations are used (paid).

## 2. Implementation of the budget

### Current year appropriations (C1 Credits)

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
<b>10</b>	<b>Members of the institution</b>	<b>4,453,601</b>	<b>4,452,672</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,022,149</b>	<b>67.9%</b>
1000	Office expenses members	164,113	164,113	100.0%	120,925	73.7%
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	4,244,488	4,243,559	100.0%	2,893,890	68.2%
105	Courses for Members of the institution	45,000	45,000	100.0%	7,334	16.3%
<b>12</b>	<b>Officials and temporary staff</b>	<b>56,780,673</b>	<b>56,395,054</b>	<b>99.3%</b>	<b>56,395,054</b>	<b>99.3%</b>
1200	Remuneration and allowances	56,317,539	56,015,776	99.5%	56,015,776	99.5%
1202	Paid overtime	29,302	26,257	89.6%	26,257	89.6%
1204	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	216,832	142,328	65.6%	142,328	65.6%
1220	Allowance for staff retired in the interests of the service	217,000	210,693	97.1%	210,693	97.1%
<b>14</b>	<b>Other staff and external services</b>	<b>9,213,169</b>	<b>8,788,457</b>	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>7,207,684</b>	<b>78.2%</b>
1400	Other staff	4,137,753	3,961,254	95.7%	3,866,393	93.4%
1402	Interpreter services	3,056,000	3,047,254	99.7%	1,978,132	64.7%
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	800,734	718,013	89.7%	702,503	87.7%
1408	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service and other expenditure for services to staff during their career	53,682	46,937	87.4%	46,937	87.4%
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service	845,000	695,000	82.2%	543,399	64.3%
1422	Expert assistance related to consultative work	320,000	320,000	100.0%	70,319	22.0%
<b>16</b>	<b>Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution</b>	<b>1,765,881</b>	<b>1,701,754</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>560,457</b>	<b>31.7%</b>
1610	Miscellaneous expenditure on recruitment	27,000	23,327	86.4%	22,335	82.7%
1612	Further training, retraining and information for staff	330,000	329,559	99.9%	232,342	70.4%
162	Missions	219,856	194,856	88.6%	75,021	34.1%
1630	Social welfare	20,000	5,000	25.0%	2,696	13.5%
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	31,000	17,918	57.8%	16,610	53.6%
1633	Mobility/Transport	25,500	25,500	100.0%	4,882	19.1%
1634	Medical service	81,530	74,893	91.9%	32,696	40.1%
1636	Restaurants and canteens	78,995	78,700	99.6%	75,684	95.8%
1638	Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries	952,000	952,000	100.0%	98,191	10.3%
<b>20</b>	<b>Buildings and associated costs</b>	<b>21,013,130</b>	<b>21,002,828</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>17,719,101</b>	<b>84.3%</b>
2000	Rent	1,904,680	1,904,481	100.0%	1,899,571	99.7%

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
2001	Annual lease payments	9,311,270	9,311,270	100.0%	9,303,203	99.9%
2003	Acquisition of immovable property	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
2007	Fitting-out of premises	4,622,052	4,622,052	100.0%	4,476,432	96.8%
2008	Other expenditure on buildings	387,916	387,916	100.0%	313,224	80.7%
2022	Cleaning and maintenance	3,352,421	3,347,019	99.8%	314,751	9.4%
2024	Energy consumption	100,000	100,000	100.0%	100,000	100.0%
2026	Security and surveillance of buildings	1,253,360	1,250,322	99.8%	1,238,124	98.8%
2028	Insurance	81,431	79,768	98.0%	73,797	90.6%
<b>21</b>	<b>Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance</b>	<b>7,334,063</b>	<b>7,249,564</b>	<b>98.8%</b>	<b>3,999,944</b>	<b>54.5%</b>
2100	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software; and related work	1,596,722	1,594,912	99.9%	1,466,910	91.9%
2102	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems	4,518,987	4,517,934	100.0%	1,691,189	37.4%
2103	Telecommunications	185,791	185,657	99.9%	185,657	99.9%
212	Furniture	171,433	156,129	91.1%	109,629	63.9%
214	Technical equipment and installations	788,272	742,655	94.2%	505,076	64.1%
216	Vehicles	72,858	52,278	71.8%	41,483	56.9%
<b>23</b>	<b>Administrative expenditure</b>	<b>662,098</b>	<b>610,011</b>	<b>92.1%</b>	<b>435,582</b>	<b>65.8%</b>
230	Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	67,769	45,169	66.7%	29,970	44.2%
231	Financial charges	1,500	1,500	100.0%	151	10.1%
232	Legal costs and damages	345,497	345,497	100.0%	315,497	91.3%
236	Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	58,344	38,286	65.6%	5,414	9.3%
238	Other administrative expenditure	150,287	140,942	93.8%	84,550	56.3%
239	EMAS <sup>1</sup> activities, including promotion, and the carbon offsetting scheme	38,701	38,617	99.8%		0.0%
<b>25</b>	<b>Meetings and conferences</b>	<b>1,192,965</b>	<b>1,175,758</b>	<b>98.6%</b>	<b>147,141</b>	<b>12.3%</b>
2540	Costs of meetings organized in Brussels	66,149	65,900	99.6%	20,598	31.1%
2541	Third parties	124,100	124,100	100.0%	676	0.5%
2542	Organisation of events in partnership with local and regional authorities, associations and European Institutions	863,647	863,647	100.0%	100,138	11.6%
2546	Representation expenses	139,069	122,111	87.8%	25,730	18.5%
<b>26</b>	<b>Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and distribution</b>	<b>4,325,300</b>	<b>4,220,733</b>	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>1,376,777</b>	<b>31.8%</b>
2600	Relationships with press, audio-visual support	1,694,854	1,694,854	100.0%	334,412	19.7%
2602	Web and social media, print materials	1,210,960	1,210,436	100.0%	576,698	47.6%
2604	Official Journal	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
2620	External expertise and studies	450,000	441,765	98.2%	151,445	33.7%
2622	Documentation and library expenditure	305,866	305,807	100.0%	109,177	35.7%
2624	Expenditure on archive resources	268,571	221,009	82.3%	158,689	59.1%
264	CoR Political groups' communication activities	395,049	346,862	87.8%	46,356	11.7%
<b>Total Budget:</b>		<b>106,740,880</b>	<b>105,596,831</b>	<b>98.9%</b>	<b>90,863,889</b>	<b>85.1%</b>



## Appropriations carried over from 2020 to 2021 (C8 credits of 2021)

The appropriations committed in 2020 but not yet paid out by the end of that year, were carried forward and converted into C8 appropriations of 2021. In total, € 11.2 million – or 11.0% of the CoR's 2020 budget – was transferred into C8 appropriations at the beginning of 2021. This amount was mainly derived from C1 appropriations of 2020.

The total amount of C8 appropriations carried forward from 2020 to 2021 was slightly lower in monetary and percentage terms as in the previous year when € 11.7 million was carried forward to 2020 (or 11.8% of the CoR's 2019 budget).

The following table gives a summary of the carried forward appropriations from 2020 to 2021.

	Budget (€)	Commitments	Payments
Title 1	1,086,824	92.2%	74.1%
Title 2	10,111,668	96.6%	90.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,198,492</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>89.2%</b>

The execution rate for C8 appropriations of 2021 was 89.2%. In total € 10.0 million was paid out during this year. This is higher than the execution level of 2020 (83.5%). As a consequence,

€ 1.2 million or 10.8% of C8 appropriations of 2021 was left unused and returned to the EU budget at the end of 2021.

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
<b>10</b>	<b>Members of the institution</b>	<b>200,921</b>	<b>200,921</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>124,523</b>	<b>62.0%</b>
1000	Office expenses members	54,433	54,433	100.0%	11,178	20.5%
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	120,047	120,047	100.0%	98,125	81.7%
105	Courses for Members of the institution	26,441	26,441	100.0%	15,221	57.6%
<b>12</b>	<b>Officials and temporary staff</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1200	Remuneration and allowances	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
1202	Paid overtime	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
1204	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
1220	Allowance for staff retired in the interests of the service	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
<b>14</b>	<b>Other staff and external services</b>	<b>628,352</b>	<b>564,890</b>	<b>89.9%</b>	<b>545,535</b>	<b>86.8%</b>
1400	Other staff	79,605	69,309	87.1%	69,309	87.1%
1402	Interpreter services	316,914	309,593	97.7%	309,593	97.7%
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	30,747	757	2.5%	757	2.5%
1408	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service and other expenditure for services to staff during their career	42,779	42,779	100.0%	42,779	100.0%
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service	134,152	118,297	88.2%	118,297	88.2%
1422	Expert assistance related to consultative work	24,155	24,155	100.0%	4,800	19.9%
<b>16</b>	<b>Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution</b>	<b>257,551</b>	<b>236,241</b>	<b>91.7%</b>	<b>134,983</b>	<b>52.4%</b>
1610	Miscellaneous expenditure on recruitment	23,919	21,591	90.3%	21,591	90.3%
1612	Further training, retraining and information for staff	69,306	51,353	74.1%	51,353	74.1%
162	Missions	33,257	33,257	100.0%	277	0.8%
1630	Social welfare	1,610	668	41.5%	668	41.5%
1632	Internal social policy	2,794	2,707	96.9%	2,707	96.9%
1633	Sustainable staff commuting	21,643	21,643	100.0%	17,248	79.7%
1634	Medical service	79,350	79,350	100.0%	29,659	37.4%
1636	Restaurants and canteens	20,000	20,000	100.0%	5,808	29.0%
1638	Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries	5,672	5,672	100.0%	5,672	100.0%

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
<b>20</b>	<b>Buildings and associated costs</b>	<b>2,322,722</b>	<b>2,260,932</b>	<b>97.3%</b>	<b>1,975,171</b>	<b>85.0%</b>
2000	Rent	11,882	11,882	100.0%	11,882	100.0%
2001	Annual lease payments	6,178	6,178	100.0%	4,037	65.3%
2003	Acquisition of immovable property	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
2007	Fitting-out of premises	1,200,819	1,144,251	95.3%	1,076,161	89.6%
2008	Other expenditure on buildings	141,203	135,981	96.3%	134,593	95.3%
2022	Cleaning and maintenance	639,702	639,702	100.0%	498,084	77.9%
2024	Energy consumption	156,374	156,374	100.0%	98,176	62.8%
2026	Security and surveillance of buildings	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
2028	Insurance	166,564	166,564	100.0%	152,239	91.4%
<b>21</b>	<b>Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance</b>	<b>3,443,688</b>	<b>3,346,240</b>	<b>97.2%</b>	<b>3,304,374</b>	<b>96.0%</b>
2100	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software; and related work	950,418	926,756	97.5%	926,756	97.5%
2102	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems	2,229,045	2,196,353	98.5%	2,196,353	98.5%
2103	Telecommunications	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
212	Furniture	50,911	50,906	100.0%	48,416	95.1%
214	Technical equipment and installations	207,338	168,698	81.4%	130,717	63.0%
216	Vehicles	5,977	3,527	59.0%	2,132	35.7%
<b>23</b>	<b>Administrative expenditure</b>	<b>164,109</b>	<b>133,850</b>	<b>81.6%</b>	<b>68,366</b>	<b>41.7%</b>
230	Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	62,103	49,345	79.5%	46,387	74.7%
231	Financial charges	1,349	0	0.0%		0.0%
232	Legal costs and damages	34,805	34,805	100.0%	6,160	17.7%
236	Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	38,169	36,924	96.7%	3,732	9.8%
238	Other administrative expenditure	27,683	12,777	46.2%	12,087	43.7%
239	EMAS activities, including promotion, and the carbon offsetting scheme	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
<b>25</b>	<b>Meetings and conferences</b>	<b>1,214,921</b>	<b>1,137,331</b>	<b>93.6%</b>	<b>1,040,519</b>	<b>85.6%</b>
2540	Costs of meetings organized in Brussels	47,636	2,192	4.6%	2,192	4.6%
2541	Third parties	8,795	8,795	100.0%	700	8.0%
2542	Organisation of events in partnership with local and regional authorities, associations and European Institutions	1,061,565	1,029,419	97.0%	1,029,419	97.0%
2546	Representation expenses	96,924	96,924	100.0%	8,208	8.5%
<b>26</b>	<b>Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and distribution</b>	<b>2,966,229</b>	<b>2,890,506</b>	<b>97.4%</b>	<b>2,800,324</b>	<b>94.4%</b>
2600	Relationships with press, audio-visual support	870,572	831,902	95.6%	831,902	95.6%
2602	Web and social media, print materials	820,514	793,963	96.8%	793,963	96.8%
2604	Official Journal	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
2620	External expertise and studies	648,561	640,286	98.7%	640,286	98.7%
2622	Documentation and library expenditure	191,962	189,772	98.9%	185,150	96.5%
2624	Expenditure on archive resources	58,179	58,143	99.9%	58,143	99.9%
264	CoR Political groups' communication activities	376,442	376,442	100.0%	290,881	77.3%
<b>Total Budget:</b>		<b>11,198,492</b>	<b>10,770,910</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>9,993,796</b>	<b>89.2%</b>

## ANNEX 2 - Declarations of the Authorising Officers by sub-delegation

According to the European Committee of the Regions' Charter of Missions and Responsibilities of the Authorising Officer by delegation and the Authorising Officers by Sub-delegation (AOS), the latter have, inter alia, a responsibility to contribute to the establishment of the annual report of the Authorising Officer by Delegation through their reporting on the activities for which they have received sub-delegation. On top of the regular reporting, the Authorising Officer by Delegation, in preparing the declaration in his annual report for the year 2021 asked the Authorising Officers by Sub-delegation to report on the control environment for which they are responsible and to sign a declaration in the same format as his, as indicated below. Every AOS had to report on individual exceptions and applied remedial measures to the Authorising Offer by Delegation when presenting his declaration of assurance for the budget lines for which he is responsible.

For the budget exercise 2021, 29 officials appointed as Authorising Officers by Sub-delegation authorised transactions.

### Authorising officers by Sub-delegation: Declaration(s) signed on:

Bachotet Sophie	10 March 2022
Barber Ian	29 April 2022
Battiston Cristina	10 February 2022
Beljaars-Verhoeven Saskia	07 March 2022
Bodova Andrea	10 February 2022
Bouquerel Caroline	14 March 2022
Canoto Argüelles Juan Carlos	10 March 2022
Caruso Paola	09 February 2022
Cercone Michele	10 March 2022
Cervilla Pedro	10 March 2022
Collins Michael	25 February 2022
Da Luz Cintia	28 February 2022
Damyanova Ani	10 March 2022
De Brier Yves	8 February 2022
De Schrijver Patrick	14 March 2022
De Schuiteneer Bart	04 March 2022
Essender Boris	08 March 2022
Feral Pierre-Alexis	10 February 2022
Filipek Francois	09 February 2022
Firmin Thierry	18 February 2022
Gnan Reinhold	04 March 2022
Haenebalcke Tom	15 February 2022
Jakobsson Peder	10 February 2022
Janicaud Benjamin	14 February 2022
Kaduczak Joanna	28 February 2022
Kudlinska Agnieszka	03 March 2022
Ladwig Achim	08 February 2022
Lamour Michael	07 February 2022
Lavigne Eric	08 February 2022
Mitelman Anna	03 March 2022
Mokhtari Rachida	09 March 2022
Nardi Serafino	28 February 2022
Neascu Milika	23 February 2022

Pankova Katia	22 February 2022
Petzold Wolfgang	22 March 2022
Schaumans Patrick	08 February 2022
Schmidle Carmen	08 February 2022
Strautina Ineta	04 March 2022
Suciu Serban	08 February 2022
Taulegne Beatrice	09 February 2022
Thieule Laurent	09 March 2022
Thome Florence	02 March 2022
Tsirimiagos Kyriakos	08 February 2022
Van Hoeymissen Dimitri	09 February 2022

## ANNEX 3 - Transfers of appropriations

Seven external transfers of appropriations have been prepared by the CoR and approved by the Budget Authority in 2021.

### INF 1/2021

The purpose of this transfer was to reinforce 5 budget lines. Namely:

- budget item 105 "Courses for Members of the institution" with € 30,000.
- budget item 1420 "Supplementary services for the translation service" with € 200,000;
- budget item 1610 "Miscellaneous expenditure on recruitment" with € 7,000.
- budget item 239 "EMAS activities, including promotion, and the carbon offsetting scheme" with € 12,861.
- **budget item 2622 "Documentation and library expenditure" with € 2,500.**

The **total amount** of the transfer was € 252,361.

This transfer was approved by the Budget Authority in May.

### INF 2/2021

The purpose of this transfer was to reinforce budget item 2102 "IT" (development and maintenance) with € 467,721.

This transfer of appropriations was urgently needed in order to allow the CoR-EESC joint IT services to ensure business continuity in (i) the standard IT Help Desk team and (ii) covering the additional needs related to teleworking and videoconference.

This was joint CoR/EESC projects for which the CoR was paying its share of the joint cost.

This transfer has been approved by the Budget Authority in May.

### INF 3/2021

With this transfer of appropriations, the CoR reinforced 2 budget lines. Namely:

- budget item 1200 "Remuneration and allowances" with € 700,000.
- budget item 1220 "Allowance for staff retired in the interest of the service" with € 17,000.

The **total amount** of the transfer was € 717,000.

This transfer was approved by the Budget Authority in October.

### INF 4/2021

The purpose of this transfer was to reinforce 3 budget lines. Namely:

- budget article 232 "Legal costs and damages" with € 315,497.
- budget item 2622 "Documentation and library expenditure" with € 178,168.
- budget item 2624 "Expenditure on archive resources" with € 127,881.

The **total amount** of the transfer was € 621,546.

This transfer was approved by the Budget Authority in November.

### INF 5/2021

The purpose of this transfer was to reinforce budget item 1638 "Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries" with € 300,000.

The reinforcement was needed to allow the CoR to finance the recently communicated significant increase in the bill for the Early Childhood Centres (managed by the European Commission's OIB). The latest estimates provided by the OIB significantly exceed the OIB's initial provisions (of a year before), upon which the calculation for budget needs was made at the time of the preparation of CoR 2021 budget estimates.

This transfer was approved by the Budget Authority in December.

### DEC 1/2021

With this transfer of appropriations, the CoR reinforced 4 budget lines. Namely:

- budget item 2102 "Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems" (IT) with € 1,130,377.
- budget item 2542 "Organisation of events in partnership with local and regional authorities, associations and European Institutions" with € 200,000.
- budget item 2600 "Relationship with press and audio-visual support" with € 900,000.
- budget item 2602 "Web and social media and print material" with € 310,000.

The **total amount** of the transfer was € 2,540,377.

This transfer was approved by the Budget Authority in July.

### DEC 2/2021

The purpose of this transfer was to reinforce 3 budget lines. Namely:

- budget item 2102 "Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of

software systems" with € 286,871.

- budget article 212 "Furniture" with € 42,360.
- budget article 239 "EMAS activities, including promotion, and the carbon offsetting scheme" with € 25,840.

The **total amount** of the transfer was € 355,071.

This transfer was approved by the Budget Authority in November.

### List of executed external transfers of appropriations

No	Donor line		Amount	Recipient line		Amount
INF 1/2021	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-252.361	105	Courses for Members of the institution	30.000
				1420	Supplementary services for the translation service	200.000
				1610	Miscellaneous expenditure on recruitment	7.000
				239	EMAS activities, including promotion and the carbon offsetting scheme	12.861
				2622 JS-DICOTRAD	Documentation and library expenditure - JS - dicotrad	2.500
<b>Total</b>			<b>-252.361</b>			<b>252.361</b>
INF 2/2021	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-467.721	2102 JS-I.T.	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - JS - IT	467.721
<b>Total</b>			<b>-467.721</b>			<b>467.721</b>
INF 3/2021	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-717.000	1200	Remuneration and allowances	700.000
				1220	Allowances for staff retired in the interests of the service	17.000
<b>Total</b>			<b>-717.000</b>			<b>717.000</b>
INF 4/2021	2000 JS-B. RENTS	Rent - Joint services - buildings' rents	-75.000	232	Legal costs and damages	315.497
	214 MEETINGS	Technical equipment and installations - meetings	-432.795	2622 OS-LIBRARY	Documentation and library expenditure - OS - library	178.168
	214 JS-BUILDINGS	Technical equipment and installations - JS - buildings	-21.000	2624	Expenditure on archive resources	127.881
	214 JS-CATERING	Technical equipment and installations - JS - catering	-20.000			
	230 JS-PRINTING	Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables - JS - printing	-58.000			
	2540	Cost of meetings organized in Brussels	-14.751			
<b>Total</b>			<b>-621.546</b>			<b>621.546</b>
INF 5/2021	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-300.000	1638	Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries	300.000
<b>Total</b>			<b>-300.000</b>			<b>300.000</b>

No	Donor line		Amount	Recipient line		Amount
DEC 1/2021	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-2.479.918	2102 JS-I.T.	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - JS - IT	315.401
	162	Missions	-60.459	2102 OS-I.T.	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - OS - IT	129.976
				2102 OS-DIGIT	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - OS - IT - Digital strategy	685.000
				2542	Organisation of events in partnership with local and regional authorities, associations and European Institutions	200.000
				2600	Relationships with press and audio-visual support	900.000
				2602	Web and social media and print material	310.000
<b>Total</b>			<b>-2.540.377</b>			<b>2.540.377</b>
DEC 2/2021	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-355.071	2102 JS-I.T.	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - JS - IT	286.871
				212 JOINT-SERVICES	Furniture - JS	42.360
				239	EMAS activities, including promotion and the carbon offsetting scheme	25.840
<b>Total</b>			<b>-355.071</b>			<b>355.071</b>

### 1.1 Annex 4 - Negotiated procedures 2021

The present appendix shows, in accordance with article 74(10) FR, the list of contracts concluded in 2021 by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) under negotiated procedures in accordance with points (a) to (f) of point 11.1 and point 39 of Annex I to FR. The data is extracted from ABAC Legal Commitment Kernel by means of Business Intelligence reports.

Procedure Local Key	Procedure Lot Number	FW Contractor LE Name List	FW Local Key (Root)	FW User Reference	FW In Force From Date	FW Expiry Date	Procedure Negotiated Type/Legal Basis Desc	Procedure Lot Awarded Amount (Eur)	Organisation Ceiling Amount (Eur)
SI2.20583	1	ORACLE BELGIUM BVBA*	SI2.2523	FWC DI/07870 ORACLE SERVICES	27-05-21	06-05-29	Annex 1 - 11.1 (b) - Artistic/ technical reasons or exclusive rights or technical monopoly/ captive market	258.286.442,36	893.687,08
SI2.22102	1	ORACLE BELGIUM BVBA*	SI2.2791	FWC DI/07871 ORACLE SERVICES	22-12-21	18-10-29	Annex 1 - 11.1 (b) - Artistic/ technical reasons or exclusive rights or technical monopoly/ captive market	49.427.764,90	0,00



## **ANNEX 5 – Report on compliance with and suspension of time-limits for payment of the institution’s creditors**

Article 116 of the Financial Regulation<sup>2</sup> (FR) defines the time-limits that should be respected for payments made to the institution’s creditors and specify the circumstances in which those creditors paid late are entitled to receive default interest charged to the budget heading from which the principal was paid.

Article 116(6) also lays down the obligation for each institution to submit to the budgetary authority a report on compliance with and the suspension of the time-limits for paying its creditors.

Over the years, the European Committee of the Regions has set up different actions to enable the authorising services to improve their performance in relation to payment time limits:

- Close monitoring of the payment deadlines by the accounting officer.
- Regular reports (quarterly and on an ad-hoc basis if needed) addressed to the authorising services on the follow up of payment deadlines.
- Communication given to members of staff involved in financial transactions.
- Improvement of the workflows.
- Introduction of paperless workflows and electronic invoices.

Moreover, the integrated system of financial and budgetary management ABAC (owned by the Commission and used by the CoR since 1/01/2007) possesses specific functionalities that make possible:

- the real time visualisation by the authorising services of the tracking of invoices and corresponding payments throughout the internal chain of verification and approval.
- the production of specific follow-up or warning reports that integrate the management of suspension of time limits for payment and the automatic calculation of default interest to be paid on any invoices paid late.

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 193 of 30/07/2018)

The table below presents the evolution of the average time taken for payments and the number of days of suspension over the years:

Financial year	Commercial invoices paid		Average time taken for payment (in days)	Number of suspensions of time-limits
	Number	Amounts		
2009	2.523	32.549.780	25,77	201
2010	2.255	33.263.362	28,49	220
2011	1.956	34.277.780	22,99	244
2012	1.938	35.768.277	18,86	205
2013	1.820	31.123.497	18,85	124
2014	1.711	29.238.586	19,72	105
2015	1.790	28.956.837	19,52	96
2016	1.997	31.190.480	26,31	93
2017	2.197	30.642.991	22,71	140
2018	2.452	32.619.280	16,39	96
2019	2.839	32.640.808	17,23	87
2020	2.448	23.403.253	17,21	59
2021	3.629	26.556.036	16,11	84

The minimum requirement under the FR is that payments need to be made within 30 days.

The CoR continues its work to take part in the efforts proposed by the Commission in April 2009<sup>3</sup> in order to improve the financial situation of undertakings, particularly in this period of crisis.

In 2021 the average time for payment was only 16 days and was at the record low level.

This result could be archived thanks to a collective effort of all the Institution but can also be partly explained by the setting up of the central pool of Financial Initiating Agents for the own services transactions as from 1st July 2021 who contributed to the improvement of the quality and rapidity of treatment of the files.

As far as the automatic payment of default interest is concerned, the analysis of data for the financial year shows that there were several cases of payment of mandatory default interest in 2021 for the total of EUR 4.823 (case where the amount of default interest exceeds the threshold of EUR 200 defined in Article 116(5) FR).

3 Communication of the Commission of 8 April 2009 on streamlining financial rules and accelerating budget implementation to help economic recovery (SEC (2009) 477 final).

**ANNEX 6 - Provisional Annual Accounts 2021****BALANCE SHEET**

			<i>eur</i>
	Note	31.12.2021	31.12.2020
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
<i>Intangible assets</i>	2.1	6.122	124.884
<i>Property, plant and equipment</i>	2.2	53.261.191	56.037.833
		<b>53.267.313</b>	<b>56.162.718</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
<i>Exchange receivables and non-exchange recoverables</i>	2.3	8.837.846	9.333.367
<i>Cash and cash equivalents</i>	2.4	1.582.346	1.307.818
		10.420.192	10.641.185
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>63.687.506</b>	<b>66.803.902</b>

<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
<i>Financial liabilities</i>	2.5	-38.784.137	-42.808.747
		<b>-38.784.137</b>	<b>-42.808.747</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
<i>Financial liabilities</i>	2.5	-4.024.609	-3.788.410
<i>Payables</i>	2.6	-366.100	-1.369.958
<i>Accrued charges and deferred income</i>	2.7	-7.886.171	-5.629.418
		<b>-12.276.880</b>	<b>-10.787.786</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>-51.061.018</b>	<b>-53.596.534</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>12.626.488</b>	<b>13.207.369</b>
<i>Accumulated surplus</i>		13.207.369	15.638.361
<i>Economic result of the year</i>		-580.881	-2.430.992
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>12.626.488</b>	<b>13.207.369</b>

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

			eur
	Note	2021	2020
<b>REVENUE</b>			
<b>Revenue from non-exchange transactions</b>			
<i>Funding from the Commission</i>	3.1	89.818.635	80.822.000
<i>Other revenue</i>	3.1	10.515.029	10.107.844
		<b>100.333.664</b>	<b>90.929.844</b>
<b>Revenue from exchange transactions</b>			
<i>Operations with the consolidated entities</i>	3.2	815.216	825.108
<i>Other revenue</i>	3.2	118.118	25.850
		<b>933.334</b>	<b>850.958</b>
<b>Total revenue</b>		<b>101.266.998</b>	<b>91.780.803</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<i>Staff costs</i>	3.3	-61.157.830	-59.090.425
<i>Finance costs</i>	3.4	-4.192.754	-2.503.637
<i>Other expenses</i>	3.5	-36.497.295	-32.617.733
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>-101.847.879</b>	<b>-94.211.794</b>
<b>ECONOMIC RESULT OF THE YEAR</b>		<b>-580.881</b>	<b>-2.430.992</b>

## CASHFLOW STATEMENT

			eur
		2021	2020
Economic result of the year		-580.881	-2.430.992
<b>Operating activities</b>			
<i>Amortisation and impairments - intangible fixed assets</i>		29.292	79.887
<i>Depreciation and impairments - property, plant and equipment</i>		3.472.532	3.434.770
<i>(Increase)/decrease in exchange receivables and non-exchange recoverables</i>		495.521	1.111
<i>Increase/(decrease) in financial liabilities</i>		-3.788.411	-3.565.285
<i>Increase/(decrease) in payables</i>		-1.003.858	813.860
<i>Increase/(decrease) in accrued charges and deferred revenue</i>		2.256.754	-294.075
<b>Investing activities</b>			
<i>(Increase)/decrease in intangible assets and property, plant and equipment</i>		-606.419	-324.946
<b>NET CASHFLOW</b>		<b>274.529</b>	<b>-2.285.670</b>
<i>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</i>		274.529	-2.285.670
<i>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year</i>		1.307.818	3.593.488
<i>Cash and cash equivalents at year-end</i>		1.582.346	1.307.818

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS**

			<i>EUR</i>
	<b>Accumulated Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>	<b>Economic result of the year</b>	<b>Net Assets</b>
<b>BALANCE AS AT 31.12.2019</b>	<b>14.680.225</b>	<b>958.136</b>	<b>15.638.361</b>
<i>Allocation 2019 economic result</i>	958.136	-958.136	0
<i>Economic result of the year</i>	0	-2.430.992	-2.430.992
<b>BALANCE AS AT 31.12.2020</b>	<b>15.638.361</b>	<b>-2.430.992</b>	<b>13.207.369</b>
<i>Allocation 2020 economic result</i>	-2.430.992	2.430.992	0
<i>Economic result of the year</i>		-580.881	-580.881
<b>BALANCE AS AT 31.12.2021</b>	<b>13.207.369</b>	<b>-580.881</b>	<b>12.626.488</b>

## ANNEX 7 : HR Figures of the European Committee of the Regions in 2021 (situation on 31/12/2021)

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	302	181	11	494 (posts)
Contract staff (1)	17	39	0	56 (people)
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	46 (people)
Seconded national experts	7			7 (people)
Other personnel (specify) (2)	1			1 (people)
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>604</b>

(1) contract staff replacing absent staff (e.g. maternity leave or short-term assignments) are not included.  
(2) medical doctor

### President's Cabinet

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	6	3		9
Contract staff	1	1		2
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

### EPP Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	10	4		14
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>

### PES Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	10	4		14
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>

### Renew Europe Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	5	3		8
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

### EA Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	3	1		4
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

### ECR Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	3	1		4
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

### The Greens Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	1		3
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

### Secretary General's Cabinet

Type	SG	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	1	6	5		12
Contract staff		1			1
External contract staff					
Seconded national experts					
Other personnel (specify)					
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>

### Protocol Service

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	2		4
Contract staff		4		4
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

### Internal Audit Service

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	2		4
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

### Directorate A

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	20	25	1	46
Contract staff		13		13
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	2
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>61</b>

### Directorate B

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	31	16		47
Contract staff	1	1		2
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts	4			4
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>53</b>

### Directorate C

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	29	10	3	42
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts	2			2
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>45</b>

**Directorate D**

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	25	18	2	45
Contract staff	5	8		13
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	15
Seconded national experts	1			1
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>74</b>

**Directorate E**

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	20	46	2	68
Contract staff	1	2		3
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)	1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>72</b>

**Directorate for Translation (CoR staff only)**

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	118	21	3	142
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>143</b>

**Directorate for Logistics (CoR staff only)**

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	9	18		27
Contract staff	5	9		14
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	29
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70</b>

**Staff Committee**

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan		1		1
Contract staff		1		1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

## ANNEX 8 : Building Policy



European Economic  
and Social Committee



European Committee  
of the Regions

*Joint Services – Directorate for Logistics  
The Directors*

Report from the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions<sup>4</sup> to the European Parliament and the Council in accordance with Article 266 of the Financial Regulation

### 1) Article 266 FR

Each institution shall provide the European Parliament and the Council, by 1 June each year, with a working document on its building policy, which shall incorporate the following information:

- for each building, the expenditure and surface area covered by the appropriations of the corresponding budget lines. The expenditure shall include the costs of the fitting-out of buildings but not other charges;
- the expected evolution of the global programming of surface area and locations for the coming years with a description of the building projects in planning phases which are already identified;
- the final terms and costs, as well as relevant information regarding project implementation of new building projects previously submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council under the procedure set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 and not included in the preceding year's working documents.

### 2) Part 1: The expenditure and surface area for each building

Information about the premises of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions can be found in the attached table.

### 3) Part 2: The expected evolution of the global programming

A buildings strategy was approved by the Bureau of the European Economic and Social Committee on 17 October 2017 and by the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on 29 November 2017.

This **buildings strategy** provides a reliable and flexible framework for future decisions in this area and contains a set of guiding principles, which include:

- geographical concentration;
- preference for ownership rather than lease and exercising options to buy;
- sustainable buildings management; and
- multi-annual planning.

Regarding the main priority for the buildings strategy – “geographical concentration” – several scenarios were explored in 2018. The preferred scenarios all include retaining the VMA building (rue Van Maerlant 2) for use by the EESC and the CoR after 2021.

It should be noted here that, in 2016, the European Commission secretary-general informed the Committees that the Administrative Agreement on renting the VMA would not be extended beyond February 2019, and that the Commission intended to demolish the building after that date and to build a new one solely for its own use. Following negotiations, that Administrative Agreement was finally extended until the end of 2021, but no arrangement was made for further use of this building by the Committees beyond that year.

On 28 August 2019, a new Administrative Agreement was signed by the Director of the OIB and the secretaries-general of both Committees on the exchange of the Committees' B68 (rue Belliard 68) and TRE74 (rue de Trèves 74) buildings for the Commission's VMA building. The exchange will be

<sup>4</sup> The two Committees are sharing buildings in line with the Cooperation Agreement they signed in July 2015.



come effective on 16 September 2022, the date on which the value of both sets of buildings will be identical<sup>5</sup>.

## NEED FOR A NEW BUILDING

Exchanging the B68 and TRE buildings for the VMA will, however, result in a significant loss of office space for the two Committees (10 440 m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>6</sup>, which cannot be entirely offset by alternative measures in the short term such as stepping up the office-space density of the other buildings and increasing teleworking.

On 11 December 2019, the European External Action Service (EEAS) informed the Committees that the Belliard 100 building would be available by early 2021 and proposed transferring its current lease to them. With 5 200 m<sup>2</sup>, the Belliard 100 building would enable the Committees to partially offset the loss of office space following the building exchange scheduled for September 2022. In addition, renting the B100 as from early 2021 would enable the Committees to accommodate some of the staff vacating the VMA building during the refurbishment works planned between summer 2021 and summer 2022. As the B100 is adjacent to the VMA building, taking over its rental contract will also have the advantage for the Committees of having a fully interconnected, single group of buildings.

Considering these elements, the Bureaus of the two Committees mandated the secretaries-general in February 2020 to undertake negotiations with the EEAS in view of concluding an agreement enabling the Committees to take over the rental contract of B100 as from early 2021.

The negotiations started in March 2020, with the initial aim of being concluded before summer 2020. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 crisis caused a major delay in the works of another building that the EEAS intended to occupy at the beginning of 2021 and as a consequence the services currently housed in the B100 building can only move out later in 2021. In its letter dated 12 November 2020, the EEAS informed the Committees that the takeover of the rental contract of the B100 building could only take effect on 1 September 2021.

The draft Administrative Agreement with the EEAS for the takeover of the lease of the Belliard 100 building was approved by the Bureau of the European Economic and Social Committee on 15 September 2020 and by the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on 9 October 2020.

On 18 March 2021, the Committees referred the matter to the budgetary authority in order to seek its opinion on the financial aspects of this takeover in application of Article 266 of the Financial Regulation (references CESE (2021) D/505 Official registration n° (2021) D/199 and CoR (2021) D/430 Official registration n° (2021) D/352).

The European Parliament has approved this request on 10 May 2021, confirmed by its letter EP(2021)012506 of 1 June 2021. The European Council did not take a decision

contrary to the project by 16 April 2021 and therefore it was deemed approved by the Council.

Following the exchange of buildings with the Commission, savings compared to 2019 will begin to appear from the beginning of 2023, due to the lower cost of renting the entire VMA compared to the three buildings currently being paid for (B68, T74 and partially the VMA): these savings will be sufficient to cover the rent of B100.

For 2021 and 2022, i.e. before the exchange of buildings, the rent for the B100 building represents an additional one-off cost for both Committees compared to 2020.

## NEED TO REFURBISH VMA

The VMA is a more than 35-year-old building. Its office floors from the third to the ninth floor need to be refurbished as soon as possible (2021-2022) in order to function properly in the coming years. It should be noted that if the building exchanges were not happening, the Committees would still need to refurbish the B68 and TRE74 in more or less the same period as these two buildings are also quite old.

The estimated budget for the VMA's refurbishment works from the third to the ninth floor was EUR 6 to 9 million. The main part of this budget for the renovation works of the VMA (around EUR 6 million) was already available in the initial 2021 budget approved by the budgetary authority as a "one off" request for the year 2021. In addition, it was possible to save appropriations for an amount of 3 million from budget lines 2001 and 2000 as well as from other projects on budget line 2007 and to use them for the VMA refurbishment.

On 21 April 2021 in their joint yearly report on Buildings<sup>7</sup> in application of article 266 of the Financial Regulation, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions confirmed and extended their early warning to the budgetary authority, which had already been notified through a letter dated 24 May 2019 sent to Mr Arthuis and through the Buildings Report sent on 29 May 2020, to the Budgetary Authority:

- the need to refurbish the VMA building,
- the launch of a call for tenders in spring 2021 for the renovation works for the VMA building, to be undertaken between September 2021 and September 2022, for an estimated amount of up to EUR 9 million.

The renovation works of the VMA building have been explained to European Parliament's Committee on Budget at its meeting on 10 May 2021.

On 28 October 2021, the Committees referred the matter to the budgetary authority in order to seek its approval on the financial aspects of this renovation in application of Article 266 of the Financial Regulation (references CESE (2021) D/2660 Official registration n° 850 and CoR (2021) D/2035 Official registration n° 1253).

<sup>5</sup> This date was determined by an external real estate expert and takes into account the market price of the buildings minus the long-term lease instalments still to be paid.

<sup>6</sup> 13 396 m<sup>2</sup> minus the VMA surface area of 2 956 m<sup>2</sup> currently occupied by the European Commission. The other part of the building is already occupied by the Committees.

<sup>7</sup> references EESC (2021) D/1012 - Official registration N° 335 and CoR (2021) D/967 - Official registration N° 511

By letter of 17 November 2021 with references ADO EESC (2021) D/2927 and ADO COR, following the questions raised during the shadow rapporteurs meeting of the Committee on Budgets of the European Parliament on 10 November 2021, the Director of Logistics Mr Campilho confirmed to commit himself to represent the file again to the Committee on Budgets in the event that the costs for the renovation of the Van Maerlant building will be higher than the maximum EUR 10 million euro announced in the annexes to the above mentioned requesting letter.

The European Parliament has approved this request on 18 November 2021, confirmed by its letter with reference EP(2021)308595 of 7 December 2021.

The European Council did not take a decision contrary to the project by 26 November 2021 and therefore it was deemed approved by the Council.

The 1 December 2021 the tender for the renovation works has been awarded and a few days after the framework contracts has been signed as well as the specific contracts for the works for a total amount of 9 Mio€:

- the main renovation, including new sanitary facilities, showers and lounge area for EESC members for a total amount of 6,25 MIO€;
- three technical options for a total amount of 2,75 MIO€:
  - › modernise the work environment by installing glass partitions
  - › allow a flexible layout at all times (reasonable flexibility) so that the spaces can be adapted to new forms of work in smaller or larger, individual or shared, or open offices (post-pandemic phase) at low cost,
  - › measures to limit energy and water consumption (EMAS/ Green Deal objectives).

These works started in December 2021 and will be finished by September 2022 and will enable the VMA to be refurbished and operational again on its office floors before its exchange with B68/TRE74 in September 2022.

This total amount represents around 3% of the total accounting value of the two Committees' buildings.

## LIFT OF PURCHASE OPTIONS

In their letter 001071-01909 dated 11 December 2014, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions informed the budgetary authority of their intention to lift the purchase option provided in the long-term leasehold contracts for five buildings occupied jointly, namely:

- JDE building, on Rue Belliard 99-101, 1040 Brussels
- BvS building, on Rue Montoyer 92-102, 1000, Brussels
- B68 building, on Rue Belliard 68, 1000, Brussels
- TRE building, on Rue de Trèves 74, 1000, Brussels
- REM building, on Rue Belliard 93, 1000, Brussels

The budgetary and financial cost of acquiring the residual property rights is a symbolic sum of EUR 1 per building,

this being the price under the contracts for the exercise of the purchase options, to which the indirect costs of legal services and notarial fees have to be added.

It is also important to note that exercising the purchase option will not change the financial conditions set out in the long-term leasehold contracts. The European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions will still have to continue paying the annual leasehold fees in accordance with the contracts for the remainder of their term.

The option to purchase the JDE building was exercised with the signing of the deed on 19 November 2018.

The option to purchase the BVS and REM buildings was exercised with the signing of both deeds on 9 December 2019.

As the Committees will swap the B68 and TRE buildings for the VMA building, the exercise of the purchase options of the B68 and TRE buildings will have to be carried out by the Commission in due time.

The Committees will exercise the option to purchase the VMA building between 1 September 2028 and 31 October 2028 as provided for in the long-term lease contract.

### In conclusion, the budgetary authority is informed about:

- the signing on 28 August 2019 of an Administrative Agreement between the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions concerning the exchange of the Committees' B68/TRE74 buildings for the Commission's VMA building<sup>8</sup>;
- the signing on 22 June 2021 of an Administrative Agreement with the European External Action Service for the takeover of the rental contract of the B100 building as from 1 September 2021, following the agreement of the budgetary authority in June 2021;
- the awarding of a call for tenders in December 2021 for the renovation works of the third to the ninth floor of the VMA building, to be undertaken between December 2021 and September 2022, for an amount of EUR 9 million, following the agreement of the budgetary authority received in November 2021;
- the state of play related to the exercising of the options to purchase the buildings occupied by the Committees, for which there were no changes in 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Both sets of buildings will have the same value on 16 September 2022, the date when the exchange will take effect.

#### 4) Part 3: Project implementation of new building projects previously submitted to the European Parliament and the Council

No projects were presented to the European Parliament and the Council in 2020. On 18 March 2021, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions addressed a request to the budgetary authority in application of Article 266(3) of the Financial Regulation in order to seek its approval on the financial aspects of the takeover from the EEAS of the Belliard 100 building rental

contract, (references CESE (2021) D/505 Official registration n° (2021) D/199 and CoR (2021) D/430 Official registration n° (2021) D/352). See Part 2 of this report for more information.

#### EXPENDITURE AND SURFACE AREA FOR EACH BUILDING (EESC and CoR together)

BUDGET LINE		BUILDING	GROSS AREA ABOVE GROUND (m <sup>2</sup> )	TYPE OF CONTRACT	AMOUNT IN DRAFT BUDGET 2023 (€)
<b>A02001</b>	<b>Annual lease payments</b>				
	<i>OFFICE SPACE</i>	JDE	22,026	Emphyteusis with option to buy (exercised in 2018)	7.250.194
		BVS	18,281	Emphyteusis with option to buy (exercised in 2019)	6.076.573
		REM	2,324	Emphyteusis with option to buy (exercised in 2019)	259.805
		VMA	11,634	Emphyteusis with option to buy, not yet exercised	4.267.627
	<i>Subtotal office space</i>		<i>54,265</i>		<i>17.854.199</i>
	<i>NON-OFFICE SPACE</i>	JDE	14,353		4.724.509
		BVS	2,285		759.530
		REM	0		0
		VMA	4,462		1.636.767
	<i>Subtotal non-office space</i>		<i>21,100</i>		<i>7.120.806</i>
<b>TOTAL LINE</b>			<b>75,365</b>		<b>24.975.006</b>
<b>A02000</b>	<b>Rent</b>				
	<i>OFFICE SPACE</i>	B100	3,708	Rent	1.024.111
	<i>Subtotal office space</i>		<i>3,708</i>		<i>1.024.111</i>
	<i>NON-OFFICE SPACE</i>	B100	2,119		585.245
	<i>Subtotal non-office space</i>		<i>2,119</i>		<i>585.245</i>
<b>TOTAL LINE</b>			<b>5,827</b>		<b>1.609.356</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>			<b>81,192</b>		<b>26.584.362</b>
	<b>Share of office space in total space (%)</b>		<b>71.4%</b>		
	<b>Share of non-office space in total space (%)</b>		<b>28.6%</b>		
	<b>Employees to be accommodated</b>		<b>1,496</b>		
	<b>Office space / employee (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>		<b>38,8</b>		

## ANNEX 9 – Activities of the members of the CoR in 2021

### Statutory meetings

Number	Title	Place
6	Plenary Sessions	Brussels
0	Summit	
2	External Bureau meetings	Brussels and Slovenia
1	Extraordinary Conferences of Presidents	Brussels
30	Commission meetings	Brussels
0	External Commission meetings	
7	Commissions for administrative & financial affairs	Brussels
2	Meetings of the political groups outside Brussels	Spain, Netherland
6	Meetings of the political groups in Brussels	Brussels
2	Meetings of the Working Group Turkey	Brussels
2	Meetings of the Working Group Western Balkans	Brussels
1	Meetings of the JCC North Macedonia	Brussels
2	Meetings of the JCC Serbia	Brussels
2	Meetings of the JCC Montenegro	Brussels
1	Enlargement Day	Brussels
1	Meetings of the Working Group Ukraine	Brussels
2	Meetings of the Ad Hoc Commission on the revision of the RoP	Brussels
3	Meetings of the CoR-UK Contact Group	Brussels
5	Meetings of the Working Group Green Deal Going Local	Brussels

### Thematic and other political activities

1	Seminars/Study visits organised by commission secretariats	Italy
32	Seminars/conferences organised by commission secretariats	Brussels
1	European Week of regions and Cities	Brussels
2	Seminars organised by political groups	Brussels
0	Seminars organised by political groups outside	Brussels
1	ARLEM plenary session	Brussels
1	ARLEM commission	Brussels
1	EUROPCOM	Brussels
1	CORLEAP Annual meeting	Brussels
0	CORLEAP Plenary Session	

## Various

7	Conference on the Future of Europe Brussels and Strasbourg
110	Individual presences of the President, 1st Vice President various or replacements
535	Individual presences for commissions
287	Individual presences for political groups
36	Individual presences for CFAA
40	Local events with Members' attendance (see details in appendix below)

The breakdown per body of the total expenses of € 2 893 890 is the following:

- Plenary Sessions (6): € 1 461 764
- Summit (0)
- Extraordinary Bureau meetings (2): € 49 429
- Extraordinary meetings of the Conference of Presidents: € 8 400
- Commissions: € 717 006
- CFAA: € 13 400
- Working groups, JCC's and ad hoc commissions: € 42 649
- Political groups: € 99 391
- Seminars of commissions and political groups: € 45 561
- ARLEM and CORLEAP: € 15 605
- Presidency: € 40 735
- Communication activities: € 7 122
- Individual presences: € 284 438
- Additional political activities: € 55 821
- Management Fee for the CoR travel agency: € 52 659

### Appendix: details on Members attendance to local events organised in 2021

Country	City/Region	Topics	Date	CoR members involved
Ireland	Northern and Western Regional Assembly	European Green Deal	22-24-26/02/2021	Enda Stenson (IE/EA), Declan McDonnell (IE/EA), Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA)
Poland	Rzeszów	Future of Europe – My future – the principle of subsidiarity at the local level for young people	12/03/2021	Wladyslaw Ortyl (PL/ECR)
Italy	Bologna	Gender Equality, pay transparency, EU Next Generation Fund, public-private partnership, an inclusive and sustainable Europe	26/03/2021	Virginio Merola (IT/PES)
Czech Republic	Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa and Rádló Municipality	Cross-border cooperation in the Euroregion	21/04/2021	Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR), Bernd Lange (DE/EPP), Martin Puta (CZ/EPP)
The Netherlands	Rotterdam	European Climate Pact, European Green Deal	28/05/2021	Ahmed Aboutaleb (NL/PES)
Italy	Abruzzo Region	European Year of rail, transport, inter-regional cooperation	24/06/2021	Marco Marsilio (IT/ECR), Donato Toma (IT/EPP), Michele Emiliano (IT/PES)
The Netherlands	Maastricht	Conference on the Future of Europe, civil society, democracy	1/07/2021	Wilma Delissen van Tongerlo (NL/RE)
Spain	Cantabria		8-10/09/2021	Paula Fernandez Viaña (ES/RE)
Italy	Friuli Venezia Giulia autonomous Region	Involvement of young politicians	22/09/2021	Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP), Piero Mauro Zanin (IT/EPP), Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR)
Austria	Salzburg	European democracy	24/09/2021	Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP), Brigitta Pallauf (AT/EPP), Franz Schausberger (AT/EPP)
Poland	Lodz	Green transition – tips from Nordic cities on European Green Deal	24/09/2021	Hanna Zdanowska (PL/EPP), Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)
Austria	Bad St. Leonhard	Green Deal	26/09/2021	Peter Kaiser (AT/PES)
Austria	Euroregio Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino	Cross-border cooperation	27-28/09/2021	Gunther Platter (AT/EPP)
Spain	Comunitat Valenciana	Sustainable tourism	06/10/2021	Joan Calabuig Rull (ES/PES)
Germany	Saxony	Climate action	4-8/10/2021	Katja Meier (DE/Greens)
Germany	Sindelfingen	Future of Europe	9/10/2021	Florian Hassler (DE/Greens)
France	Bourgogne-Franche-Comte	European democracy	15-17/10/2021	Vincent Chauvet (FR/RE)
Germany	North Rhine-Westphalia	Digitalisation, democracy, employment	18/10/2021	Mark Speich (DE/EPP)
Romania	Cugir	Sustainable tourism	19/10/2021	Adrian Teban (RO/EPP), Wladyslaw Ortyl (PL/ECR)

Austria, Czech Republic	Lower Austria Province - Municipality of Retz and the Association "Europa-Forum Wachau"	Cross-border cooperation	23/10/2021	Martin Eichinger (AT/EPP), Sylva Kováčiková (CZ/EPP)
Hungary	Győr-Ménfőcsanak-Sopron county	Values and rights, rule of law, and security, European democracy	26/10/2021	Zoltán Németh (HU/ECR)
Spain	Comunitat Valenciana	Health	27/10/2021	Ximo Puig Ferrer (ES/PES), Joan Calabuig Rull (ES/PES)
Germany	Land Brandenburg	Green Deal, cross-border cooperation, neighborhood policy	28/10/2021	Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES)
Romania	Harghita County Council	Extreme poverty in the EU	28/10/2021	Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP), Jari Andersson (FI/EPP)
Spain	Cantabria	Rule of law and values	2/11/2021	Paula Fernandez Viaña (ES/RE)
Italy	Sicily	Territorial cohesion in EU islands	4/11/2021	Vasco Alves Cordeiro (PT/PES), Gaetano Armao (IT/EPP), Nanette Maupertuis (FR/EA), Sergio Caci (IT/EPP)
Spain	Castilla-la-Mancha	Environmental challenges	8/11/2021	Virginia Marco Carcel (ES/PES)
Greece	Attica	Green transition	9/11/2021	Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP), Georgios Patoulis (EL/EPP)
Germany	Stuttgart	Ecology and economy	10/11/2021	Joshua Frey (DE/Greens)
Belgium	German-speaking Community	Living in the border region	20-21/11/2021	Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES)
Slovakia	Košice self-governing region	Climate change and the environment	22/11/2021	Rastislav Trnka (SK/EPP)
Slovenia	Trbovlje	Future of Europe	24/11/2021	Jasna Gabrič (SI/RE)
France	Aude - Occitanie	Young women at risk of social exclusion	24/11/2021	André Viola (FR/PES)
Spain	Cantabria, Asturias	Challenges of rural areas, connectivity, innovation and business development, education, health services	24/11/2021	Ana Cárcaba García (ES/PES), Paula Fernandez Viaña (ES/RE), Adrián Barbón Rodríguez (ES/PES)
Austria	Tyrol	Future of Europe	26/11/2021	Arno Kompatscher (IT/EPP), Sonja Ledl-Rossmann (AT/EPP)
Germany	Saxony	Democracy, citizenship, (cross-border) regions of the EU	27/11/2021	Katja Meier (DE/Greens)
Germany, Poland	North Rhine-Westphalia, Silesia	Future of work and education	30/11/2021	Mark Speich (DE/EPP), Jakub Chelstowski (PL/ECR)
Poland	Podkarpackie region	European Green Deal	4/12/2021	Władysław Ortyl (PL/ECR)
Italy	Squillace	Environment, digital transformation	6/12/2021	Giuseppe Varacalli (IT/RE)
Poland	Mazovia Region	Future of Europe	8-9/12/2021	Adam Struzik (PL/EPP), Mariusz Frankowski (PL/EPP), Rafat Trzaskowski (PL/EPP), Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)

## ANNEX 10 - Follow-up to the 2020 discharge resolution

Nr.	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
A	Whereas in the context of the discharge procedure, the discharge authority wishes to stress the particular importance of further strengthening the democratic legitimacy of the Union institutions by improving transparency and accountability, and implementing the concept of performance-based budgeting and good governance of human resources;	-
B	Whereas the Committee of the Regions (the 'Committee') represents and engages with local and regional authorities in the Union decision-making process and pursues its missions of better law making and strengthening Union democracy from the bottom up by sharing their opinions on Union legislation that directly impact regions and cities;	-
C	Whereas local and regional authorities are responsible for one third of public spending and two thirds of public investment, along with holding competencies in key areas such as education, economic development and cohesion, the environment, social protection, health and services of general interest in many Member States;	-
D	Whereas the consultation of the Committee by the Commission or the Council is mandatory in certain cases, the Committee may also adopt opinions on its own initiative while enjoying a wide area for referral as set out in the Treaties, allowing it to be consulted by Parliament;	-
E	Whereas, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and looking at the situation in the regions of the Union, the Committee focused immediately on informing the Union co-legislators of the concrete needs that national and local authorities were experiencing on the ground to fight the pandemic and its consequences;	-
F	Whereas the Committee developed a COVID-19 action plan and launched a COVID-19 exchange platform to assist, inform, engage and represent regions and cities;	-
G	Whereas the Committee in its resolution of 2 July 2020 adopted three political priorities for the 2020-2025 mandate, accompanied by three communication campaigns: <i>'Bringing Europe closer to people: Democracy and the future of the EU'</i> ; <i>'Managing fundamental societal transformations: Building resilient regional and local communities'</i> ; <i>'Cohesion, our fundamental value: Place-based EU policies'</i> ;	-
H	Whereas the Committee identified nine flagship initiatives to make its action more strategic and impactful: (1) Recovery and Resilience Facility, (2) Health related COVID-19 response, (3) The Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, (4) CoR4Climate Pact, (5) The future of cross-border cooperation, (6) The New Pact for Migration and Integration, (7) Conference on the Future of Europe, (8) Long-term vision for Rural Areas, and (9) Strategic Committee's Budget – ensuring a fair share of the resources for the Committee;	-
I	Whereas the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic made it necessary for the Committee to review and adapt its internal functioning and work methods in order to continue to fulfil its mission;	-



1	Notes with satisfaction that the Court of Auditors (the 'Court') identified no significant weaknesses in respect of the audited topics related to human resources and procurement for the Committee;	-
2	Emphasises the fact that on the basis of its audit work, the Court concluded that the payments as a whole for the administrative expenditure of the Union institutions, including the Committee, for the financial year 2020 were free from material error; welcomes the fact that no specific issues relating to the regularity of the transactions were detected by the Court;	-
3	Is aware that Chapter 9 'Administration' of the Annual Report of the Court is focused on expenditure on human resources, buildings, equipment, energy, communication and information technology and that the Court indicates that such spending is low-risk;	-

#### Budgetary and financial management

4	Notes that the Committee budget for 2020 amounted to EUR 101,5 million (a 2,8 % increase compared to the 2019 budget of EUR 98,75 million); notes that the Committee's budget is mostly administrative with the main part being used for expenditure related to human resources, buildings and furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operation costs;	-
5	Notes that EUR 94,1 million (92,7 %) of all appropriations was committed by the end of 2020 and that EUR 83,6 million (82,4 %) was paid; observes that EUR 7,4 million was uncommitted at the end of 2020 and thus was returned to the Union budget, which is considerably more than in 2019 where EUR 0,4 million (less than 0,5 %) was uncommitted; acknowledges that the uncommitted appropriations are mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and encourages the Committee to enhance the monitoring and management of the available appropriations;	<p>Regular monitoring and follow-up of the CoR Budget execution is ensured on several levels via regular monitoring and reporting to the management and financial actors, among others, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular use of the "BudgetWatch" is an Excel based analytical-monitoring budget execution tool,</li> <li>• monthly budget execution notes,</li> <li>• monthly estimates of the execution of the salary-related appropriations,</li> <li>• quarterly in-depth budget execution reviews,</li> <li>• use of different operation's adjusted specific monitoring/reporting tools on a decentralised level.</li> </ul> <p>The results are reported to the management and form a base for further discussions on the optimisation of the budget execution for the current year and reprioritisation of expenditure if and where needed. These discussions may result, among others, in the roadmap for the transfers of appropriations (internal and external) that are carried out throughout the year. The results of the quarterly reviews and roadmap for the possible reallocation of resources is then further discussed with the CoR political representatives in the Committee for Financial and Administrative Affairs (CFAA).</p> <p>In general, the CoR yearly <b>budget outturn</b> has been increasing steadily in the pre-Covid years. The CoR 2018 budget outturn was 99,3% and it was even better in 2019: 99,6%. The budget outturn rate has dropped in 2020 (to 92,7%) due to the sudden Covid pandemic and its significant effect on the CoR operations and finances. The situation was reversed in 2021, when the CoR had a very high budget outturn again (98,9%) <b>despite the still ongoing Covid pandemic and its effect on the operations</b>.</p>

6	Notes that COVID-19 related savings for 2020 are estimated at more than EUR 11 million, and were made mainly in the domains of members' meeting and travel allowances (EUR 120 046 carried forward to 2021), interpretation, missions and, to a lesser extent, building running costs; notes that the additional expenditure caused directly by the COVID-19 pandemic was rather limited, mainly in the domain of medical services (less than EUR 100 000) and staff salaries (more than EUR 400 000);	-
7	Notes that the Committee does not have one specific mopping-up transfer at the end of the year but carries out budget execution reviews at regular intervals during the budget implementation year; notes that in 2020 the Committee submitted five transfers of appropriations to the budgetary authority for approximately EUR 6,6 million (or 6,5 % of its budget) out of which only EUR 4.9 million was authorised by the budget authority and executed by the Committee, to a large extent from the domains that produced substantial savings (members meetings and travel allowances, interpretation and missions) into the domains that needed reinforcement (including IT, buildings, communication and external expertise);	-
8	Notes a negative trend in the overall execution rate for payments (82,4 % in 2020, 88,8 % in 2019 and 91,0 % in 2018); notes that in 2020 this was mainly due to the cancellation of a large number of meetings and events due to the travelling restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic;	-
9	Notes that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent travel restrictions, meetings from mid-March until mid-May 2020 were cancelled, while starting from mid-May remote and hybrid meetings were organised; notes the decision of the Committee's bureau to establish a flat-rate remote meeting allowance for its members of EUR 200 (compared to the standard flat-rate meeting allowance of EUR 323) to cover the expenses incurred while preparing for and participating in meetings, provided that the member was effectively prevented from attending the meeting physically and that attendance was authorised; observes that on 9 October 2020 the Bureau established a similar remote allowance for experts and speakers;	<p data-bbox="847 1088 1442 1462">It must be stressed that the Regulation on the payment of a flat-rate remote meeting allowance for members, experts and speakers has been adopted by the Bureau at the beginning of the year 2021. This in order to ensure the CoR's operational capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic and in particular its advisory role in the EU decision-making process, while at the same time avoiding health risks for members, visitors, staff and other persons working at the CoR. Indeed, members and duly mandated alternates of the CoR and rapporteurs' experts and speakers invited to attend remote or hybrid meetings incur exceptional office and general expenses in preparing for and participating in meetings, especially if working from home.</p> <ul data-bbox="847 1485 1442 1624" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moreover, since 1 May 2022, meetings of CoR constituent bodies (Plenary Assembly, Bureau, Conference of the President, commissions and the so-called commission for financial and administrative matters) are taking place in person only (without any payment of a remote allowance).</li> </ul>

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| 10 | Notes that starting from 2020 members can have up to 100 % of their language course costs reimbursed (instead of 66 % as before), within a maximum amount of EUR 1 200 per year, in order to support their participation in remote meetings that do not always have interpretation services; notes that EUR 27 500 was transferred to the relevant budget line in 2020 to support that change; encourages the Committee to ensure a reasonable correlation between language training and the needs and duties of the requesting member; | With the COVID pandemic, it was not possible to provide members with the normal linguistic regime in 2020: as an average, the linguistic regime was at that moment 6/6, when normally in CoR premises meeting rooms it is more than double. In this context, the CoR Bureau adopted a decision in June 2020, to fully reimburse the costs of the language learning to the CoR members, up to the yearly ceiling of EUR 1 200 (with the assumption that this will facilitate their active participation despite a poor linguistic regime for interpretation). Although the budget line was indeed reinforced in the course of the year 2020, the total reimbursed amount to members was only EUR 21 279,42. According to the internal rules, the CoR members, in order to be reimbursed, have to submit proof from the language school (also related to their language skills after the lessons taken, e.g. progress report or the certificate of attendance). |
| 11 | Notes that in the area of public procurement, 18 calls for tenders above EUR 15 000 were organised, of which eight were awarded in 2020; notes that three procedures were cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic and that the remaining seven procedures were scheduled for contract signing in 2021; observes with satisfaction that six procedures were organised on behalf of the Committee by the joint services shared by the Committee and the European Economic and Social Committee (the 'EESC');                           | -   |
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## Internal management, performance, internal control

- 12 Welcomes the launch in 2020 of the Committee's reform programme, 'Going for IMPact!', the intention of which is to modernise its administration, to use its resources more efficiently and to boost its impact and outreach; notes that four clusters were identified in order to achieve those objectives and highlights the cluster on lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic; appreciates the inclusive analysis of the Committee's priorities (including suggestions by staff), coupled with an exercise of administrative simplification; is aware that nine cross-service non-hierarchical task forces were created as a result and that a new organisational chart was presented on 7 December 2020;
- The Secretary General's "Going for impact!" plan launched a process of systemic analysis (in-house SWOT analyses) followed by various actions to refocus and **modernise the administration**. The plan is implemented as foreseen. Regular stock takes place at the level of the Management Meeting and the Commission of Financial and Administrative Affairs.
- The Conference of Presidents has taken a lead role on the reflection on enhancing **impact of opinions** and on the CoR's action on **foresight**. One of the CoR commission chairs has been nominated as political Impact Oversight Coordinator.
  - **Outreach** has been increased by focusing on member-centric communication approach and reaching out to Europe's one million regional and local politicians.
  - Digitization, transparency, internal communication and social dialogue have become guiding principles for the administration.
  - Administrative and regulatory **simplification** has become a constant consideration and a guiding principle for administrative action. A specific Task Force is constantly monitoring the development of the regulatory environment of the CoR.
  - Several actions have been taken to enhance the motivation of staff and to tap into the potential of their ideas and creativity.
  - Managers, in particular the Deputy Directors, have been made responsible for stronger cross-service work.
  - 9 cross-service **Task Forces** were established in July 2020 on priority areas identified by the Secretary-General and senior management. The Task Forces' achievements have had a great impact on the modernization of the administration and on the CoR's Members and core activities in 2021. At the end of 2021 the Task force on the COVID-19 exchange platform was put dormant and the Task Force on financial management successfully completed its work on the simplification of financial work flows. A new Task Force coordinating the CoR's action to support Ukraine was created in 2022.
  - The **new organisational chart** is in place as of 1 March 2021 and Directors and Heads of Unit have received individual mission letters from the Secretary-General.
  - Ahead of the new organisational chart, staff allocation was aligned with **political priorities** and workload.
  - A Mid-term evaluation report of the Going for impact! was presented to the CFAA meeting on 3 May 2022 including the three **clusters**. The latter have identified main priority areas and linked with specific actions since their creation.
- Further communication action on the implementation of the various measure of the "Going for Impact!" plan are under preparation.

- 13 Welcomes the intensive cooperation between the Committee and the Commission, as the input of the Committee, capturing the views of regional and local authorities, is important for a balanced policy assessment process, in particular with regard to the Fit for Future Platform, the REFIT Platform and the RegHub network, as well as the Committee's contribution to the action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Porto Social Summit in 2021; highlights that the Committee has set up a Committee-United Kingdom contact group to provide a framework for political cooperation;
- 14 Welcomes the Committee's commitment to strengthen its involvement in the entire political and legislative cycle of the Union, building on the cooperation with Parliament and the Commission; believes that more involvement by the Committee throughout all stages of the Union legislative process would be beneficial in order to place regional and local authorities at the heart of drafting and implementing Union policies, in particular in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- The CoR fully shares the Parliament's view on the need of the better involvement of the CoR throughout all stages of the Union legislative process. As institutional partner in the EU legislative process, the CoR is, in particular, asking that it is included in the inter-institutional agreement on Better Lawmaking. It also requests to have full access to the inter-institutional transfer of legislative draft documents which will allow it to fully play its advisory role throughout all stages of the Union's legislative process.
- On top of its institutional role through adoption and dissemination of its opinions, the CoR has developed several support tools that it utilises to improve its evidence-based policymaking approach, notably:
- The **CoR's Network of Regional Hubs** will continue to conduct targeted stakeholder consultations on the implementation of existing EU policies on the ground, via its local and regional contact points. It will share the results of these consultations with the Commission (via the Fit for Future Platform) and the European Parliament (via the EPRS), aiming to contribute to the evidence base of fitness checks, evaluations and reviews of EU policies.
  - In December 2021, the CoR and ESPON agreed on an action plan to reinforce the CoR's strategy on **Territorial Impact Assessments (TIA)**. The internal audit recommendations on TIA are continuously implemented, including a new TIA strategy in the context of the CoR's Better Regulation agenda.
  - The CoR continues its active involvement in the work of the **Fit for Future Platform (F4F)** and contribution to the F4F annual work programmes. In 2021, the CoR members in F4F drafted three of the fifteen opinions included in the Annual Work Programme (AWP) and the RegHub contributed with reports on several topics which served as a main source for the Platform's opinions. The Platform's AWP 2022 includes ten topics, four of which have been identified and suggested by the CoR. The CoR members in F4F have committed to take the rapporteurship for two opinions which makes of the CoR the most actively engaged member of the Platform.
  - **Cooperation with Council:** The CoR, considering it crucial to be informed by the co-legislators of all changes to the initial proposal at each stage of the legislative procedure, including **trilogue** negotiations, and is currently seeking access to the **multi-column tables** of the trilogue meetings, as well as to open the possibility for the CoR Secretariat-General to have access to the **Council Delegates' Portal**.

15	<p>Notes that the Committee adopted 8 resolutions and 48 opinions in 2020 (compared to 5 resolutions and 49 opinions in 2019); takes into account that, due to the difficulties in adopting opinions via referrals within the tight interinstitutional deadlines at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee resorted to the adoption of own-initiative opinions, based on Commission documents, to effectively and timely contribute to the Union response to the pandemic; at the Committee adopted 8 resolutions and 48 opinions in 2020 (compared to 5 resolutions and 49 opinions in 2019); takes into account that, due to the difficulties in adopting opinions via referrals within the tight interinstitutional deadlines at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee resorted to the adoption of own-initiative opinions, based on Commission documents, to effectively and timely contribute to the Union response to the pandemic;</p>	-
16	<p>Notes the Committee's efforts in disseminating its opinions together with other reports and activities that also contribute to achieving its mission; acknowledges that the Commission's impact assessment regularly takes into account the Committee's opinions; calls on the Committee to ensure that every opinion is shared with the Members of the relevant committees of Parliament and to officially and systematically request a speaking slot at the presentation of Parliament's draft reports, in line with the cooperation agreement between Parliament and the Committee;</p>	<p>The CoR is delighted that the EP shares its view on the need for a better and systematic follow-up of its opinions through existing channels. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every opinion is systematically sent to the EP related committee as well as to other inter-institutional partners and contacts. The CoR would appreciate if the relevant EP secretariat could ensure that our opinions reach their members.</li> <li>• As to the speaking slots in the EP committees, the CoR would be glad to achieve it in a systematic way. To ensure this, the CoR will inform the corresponding EP committees at an early stage on the nomination of rapporteurs and will consider, with the EP colleagues, the possibilities to fix speaking slot. As CoR members are primarily elected in their regions and cities a remote participation in EP Committees could be a good option to achieve a higher participation rate.</li> </ul>
17	<p>Is aware that compliance and effectiveness exercises were carried out in 2019 and in 2020 to assess to what extent the Committee complied with the 16 internal control standards and to what extent their implementation was effective; underlines that the task force on 'Simplification of the administrative environment' elaborated a set of administrative simplification measures, many of which are currently being implemented; notes with satisfaction that an <i>ex post</i> control exercise was carried out in 2020 and that no major issues were identified apart from the need to update written procedures as a result of the new paperless working methods; notes that the central verification service of the Committee processed more than 13 000 files, and that 318 verified transactions (compared to 381 in 2019) were either corrected or rejected;</p>	-

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| 18 | <p>Is aware that the Committee, in order to comply with the Financial Regulation, contracted an external expert to carry out a cost-effectiveness analysis; appreciates that, to reduce any risk of inappropriate use of the budget, the Committee has created a centrally monitored internal control environment coupled with a partially decentralised financial model in a way that ensures that all financial transactions are subject to verification by an independent verifying agent; notes that the Committee launched a multi-annual action plan for a gradual revision and simplification of the existing internal control environment; asks the Committee to report on the progress of the implementation of that plan that started in 2021 and will continue in 2022;</p> | <p>In autumn 2021 the administration adopted and launched the Convergence project. This plan aims at streamlining the planning &amp; reporting cycle, risk management, impact assessment and business continuity processes and create additional synergies between them.</p> <p>A number of revisions of these instruments started in March 2021, including the general orientations of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) review that were approved and, subsequently, the first Strategic Business Impact analysis was performed. As a result of this, the 6 main Core Business Functions of the CoR (one of the two backbones of the Convergence project) were adopted by the Bureau. Equally, a first set of changes in the Strategic Management Plan was already introduced in autumn 2021 for the 2022-2023 SMP and other, more in-depth changes will be explored in the course of 2022.</p> <p>During the first quarter of 2022, an in-depth analysis of the Risk Management methodology was carried out and the revised methodology has been adopted in May 2022. It is foreseen that the first Risk Assessment exercise using this new methodology will take place over the summer 2022.</p> <p>In addition to that, a Project Initiation Request has been submitted to the CoR IT Coordination Board in order to launch the Convergence IT tool that will support the project.</p> |
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#### Human resources, equality and staff well-being

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| 19 | <p>Notes that the number of posts in the establishment plan amounts to 491 which the Committee considers to be insufficient; notes that the Committee resorts to hiring contract staff for mid- to long-term replacements and for specific projects which entails the risk of considerable loss of knowledge and expertise for the Committee when those contracts come to an end; supports the Committee as it continues to negotiate the enlargement of its establishment plan; notes that the occupation rate of the Committee's establishment plan is 96,3 %, thus reaching the target of at least 96 %; notes that at the end of 2020 the total workforce was 601 (including both statutory and non-statutory staff), compared to 610 at the end of 2019; encourages the Committee in this context to deepen its administrative cooperation with the EESC via the joint services arrangement to pool staff in order to continue to develop more synergies;</p> | <p>The CoR is making its case to get an enlarged establishment plan. It very much welcomes the European Parliament's support in this regard.</p> <p>The new EESC-CoR Cooperation Agreement signed in 2021 is a renewed expression of the will of both Committees to efficiently use and share resources. The Committees are exploring more synergies when developing further implementing provisions.</p> |
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20	<p>Observes that flexible working arrangements are accessible to the large majority of staff of the Committee, but that part-time work and parental leave are used by a limited number of staff of which women represent 77,5 % and 78,72 % respectively; is aware that the Committee provides awareness raising sessions for staff about the flexible working arrangements and recommends that the Committee engages in more intense communication on the viability and benefits of those arrangements and that it ensures that making use of the flexible working arrangements does not penalise in any way the career progress of the relevant members of staff; welcomes the staff survey on telework and work flexibility from which managers and other staff can draw lessons and build flexible work regimes for the future;</p>	<p>It is to be assumed that the extended telework scheme and travel restrictions, which were in place in 2020 due to the pandemic, may be the principal explanation for the reduced use of both part time work and parental leave and other flexible arrangements.</p> <p>The HR services offers individual advice and counselling to all (new) parents on their working time possibilities, including parental leave and part time leave.</p> <p>Additional information is readily available at all times on the institutions intranet.</p> <p>On 1 April 2022 a new post pandemic decision on telework and working time has been introduced in the CoR by way of a pilot project for 6 months based on a comprehensive analysis of the staff survey results carried out early 2021.</p> <p>This new decision allows for telework for all staff who carry out tasks compatible with telework, to work from home 2-3 days/week.</p> <p>To further safeguard staff wellbeing and flexibility, the new decision allows for a working day to be started and ended at home, even for a day considered to be spent in the office. By doing so, the institution shows awareness of the additional stress commuting may cause for its staff.</p> <p>Furthermore, for the first time the concept of Right to disconnect is introduced as a general principle alongside that of result based management.</p>
21	<p>Notes that teleworking was already widely used before the COVID-19 pandemic, but that the necessary IT equipment, experience and teleworking culture were not yet present throughout the Committee; observes that IT services of the Committee deployed significant efforts to allow the entire organisation to operate fully remotely; remarks that staff were quickly trained on how to use the different online platforms;</p>	-
22	<p>Observes with satisfaction the absorption rate of the general internal competition completed in 2019 ('talent pool') with 100 % of the appointments for the AST/SC and AST group and 81 % of the appointments for the AD group coming from the laureates; welcomes the enhanced talent management strategy foreseen for 2022, which aims to implement a more dynamic internal mobility scheme;</p>	-



- 23 Is concerned about the 12 possible cases of burnout reported in 2020, but acknowledges the Committee's personalised follow-up of absences to facilitate reintegration after a long-term absence; stresses the importance of the Committee's medical officer and social service worker to provide support and to be in contact with people in difficulty; encourages the Committee to keep the focus on primary prevention to reduce psychosocial risks and burnout as well as the annual medical visits;
- Follow-up of long-term absences and repeated short-term absences continue to be closely monitored, for example by requesting medical reports and/or organising medical checks, whenever necessary.
- In addition, staff members with frequent short-term absences are systematically asked for a conversation with the medical officer.
- There has been a steady decrease of sick leave in the CoR in the last years and 2021 has marked a significant evolution in this direction.
- Moreover, the increase in long-term sick leaves which was noticeable in 2020 was less pronounced in 2021.
- The Administration and the Medical/social service are continuing their work based on an approach combining prevention with a proactive, individualised return-to-work policy in partnership with the medical officer, the social assistant, the working conditions service and the line manager.
- In 2021, tailored measures put in place to foster a smooth return to work after a long-term absence due to illness resulted in the successful re-integration of 30 staff members having been in long-term sickness.
- Despite the COVID pandemic, the Medical Service has endeavoured to continue providing as many annual visits as possible in order to ensure staff health and wellbeing.
- The institution's social assistant is readily available to meet with all colleagues in difficulty to help explore solutions to their problems.
- Close cooperation between the social, medical and HR services provides for holistic and individually tailored approaches to various problems.
- 24 Notes that the gender ratio in the Committee's staff in 2020 was 55,8 % women, compared to 56 % in 2019; regrets the unbalanced distribution in middle (32,4 % women) and senior (25 % women) management; underlines that this is a recurrent issue and reiterates the call for the Committee to continue its efforts to achieve gender balance at all hierarchical levels; notes that the target of 40 % women in management positions established in the equal opportunity action plan is currently in sight (37,5 % in March 2021); welcomes in particular specific incentives to actively encourage female applicants to managerial positions such as the formal recognition of management responsibilities below head of unit level, the mentoring programme launched in 2019 and the pre-managerial training courses; encourages the Committee to put in all the effort necessary in order to achieve its five-year strategy on equal opportunities and to be more ambitious in the annual action plans that implement the strategy; welcomes and encourages, in particular, actions that contribute to balanced gender representation on selection boards and more flexible working arrangements;
- A new Diversity and Inclusion strategy has been drafted with an accompanying action plan for the coming five years. It is discussed in the Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs and in the CoR Bureau in June 2022.
- The strategy sets the short term target of 40% women in management with the main overarching goal of 50%, once the short term goal is achieved.
- A mentoring scheme is in place for aspiring female managers in order to support them in their career aspirations towards management.
- The overall objectives of the strategy are further specified in the 5-year action plan, which has been developed and will be implemented with the dedicated support of the institution's Joint Committee for Diversity and Inclusion.
- The action plan contains concrete, actionable and measurable initiatives to carry on and further reinforce the institution's efforts in all dimensions of its diversity and inclusion policy as an integrated part of the CoR human resources policy.
- In addition, proposed actions include a cycle of awareness raising workshops for managers on various Equal Opportunities related topics as well as the close monitoring of statistics for corrective measures to be taken where necessary.

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| 25 | Notes that the Committee employs staff from all Member States with the exception of one Member State; welcomes the Committee's initiatives to increase the visibility of its vacancies, in particular using staff ambassadors and generating a positive 'employer branding'; calls on the Committee to continue to take steps to reach a proper geographical distribution within its staff, with a particular focus on the management level;  | <p>Through its updated job pages, the CoR has increased its attractiveness as an employer. The new pages show the advantages of working at the CoR and emphasize the diversity of the institution in terms of nationality, gender, age etc. through witness accounts. The CoR aims to expand this practice of employer branding further in the future.</p> <p>All senior management posts are published publicly and include an extensive social media publicity campaign to ensure maximum outreach across all member states.</p> <p>All non-senior management posts are published internally exclusively first, to ensure that the geographical and gender balance of the institution as a whole will also be properly reflected at the management level.</p>   |
| 26 | On a positive note, highlights that following the appointment of an equal opportunities officer in 2019, an inter-service task force was set up in 2020 to mainstream equal opportunities in all HR policies and to prepare the five-year strategy (2022-2027); congratulates the initiative of creating contact points for specific issues related to gender, the LGBTIQ community and disability in order to encourage bottom-up initiatives and contribute to making the Committee a more inclusive workplace; | A new Diversity and Inclusion strategy has been drafted with an accompanying action plan for the coming five years. It is discussed in the Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs and in the CoR Bureau in June 2022.  |
| 27 | Is aware of the harassment case reported to the EESC by a whistleblower and transmitted to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in August 2020 that concerns a member of staff of the Committee working in the joint services and also contains allegations of mismanagement and financial irregularities; calls on the Committee and the EESC to jointly report to Parliament about the outcome of the investigation by OLAF as well as any further internal verification or measure pending investigation;     | <p>On 13/1/2021 OLAF rejected opening a case, stated that there are no grounds for allegation of financial irregularities but recommended nevertheless an internal investigation on the allegation of mismanagement and harassment.</p> <p>On 13/2/2021, CoR SG opened internal investigation by mandating two investigators, one being staff member of CoR and the other staff member of EESC, based on previous agreement of EESC SG. The investigators conducted the investigation pursuant to the rules laid down in CoR decision n° 83/2019, and submitted their investigation report on 9/6/2021, with extensive annexes, notably 41 testimonies and observations of the person concerned, finding general mismanagement in the department, but not confirming the allegation of mismanagement or harassment by the person concerned. Pursuant to the pre-disciplinary hearing taken place on 7/9/2021, the CoR adopted the decision n° 158/2021 that no case can be made against the person concerned based on Art. 19 of CoR decision n°83/2019 (Art. 3(a) of the Staff Regulations). In response to the identified general mismanagement, the two institutions, CoR and EESC, launched conflict management actions by a kick-off meeting on 26/10/2021 with the concerned department. Four range of actions have since been implemented or are still ongoing (individual and group coaching, proposal for external mediation for conflictive parties, external technical and financial expertise on the core business of the department, internal reorganisation measures to clarify the management intervention and to alleviate the workload). A mid-term meeting has been held on 30/3/2022 with the department to evaluate the progress made on the still ongoing conflict management actions.</p> <p>In the meantime, allegations have been brought forward again from staff at the EESC side. These allegations are currently checked as regards their difference to the already known allegations. OLAF will be informed.</p> |

28	<p>Welcomes the intensive discussions between the Committee, the staff representatives, all the relevant internal services and other members of staff involved in the decision on protecting the dignity of staff, managing conflict and combatting psychological and sexual harassment in the Committee and its accompanying guide, adopted in 2021; appreciates the organisation of staff awareness-raising actions and the Committee's zero tolerance approach towards harassment as well as the dedicated online training course; suggests that the Committee makes use of alternative communication activities on relevant topics related to equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion to prevent and manage conflict in the workplace; welcomes the constitution of an advisory board on harassment;</p>	
29	<p>Notes that, to safeguard personal data, no data on staff with disabilities is gathered but points out that a real assessment of the situation and the elaboration of adequate policies in that area is hindered as a result; notes that, nevertheless, the Committee's equal opportunities policy includes a number of practical steps and concrete measures aiming to provide an inclusive working environment; welcomes the fact that the joint buildings strategy of the Committee and the EESC takes disability fully into account;</p>	
30	<p>Notes that the Committee hosted 47 trainees in 2020, all awarded with a monthly grant and an additional EUR 100 lump sum in order to cover the costs related to teleworking; regrets that unpaid study visits were offered to eight trainees in addition to three short-term study visits which started in 2019 and continued into 2020; reiterates the call on the Committee to make sure that all of its trainees receive a decent remuneration;</p>	<p><b>Directorate E: E3</b></p> <p>Like the other European institutions, the CoR organises two annual sessions for paid Blue Book trainees (February and September).</p> <p>"Following the remark in the 2020 discharge report, the CoR is revising its policy and will limit the scope to Bluebook trainees and exchange of governmental officials with the possibility of hosting a limited number of short-term study visit trainees on the basis of individual derogations. The scheme will be further limited to include mainly graduates receiving a grant from other sources and where there is a clear strategic interest for the institution.</p> <p>In parallel, the Traineeships Office will explore ways to expand the use of the other, underused, existing scheme of trainees, that of exchange of governmental officials.</p> <p>The traineeship period of 2021 was strongly impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Given the circumstances, supporting measures were put in place for all trainees in order to guarantee their safety, health, well-being and business continuity and ensure a high level of duty of care at all times.</p>

## Ethical framework and transparency

- 31 Welcomes the outcome of the first phase of the mediation process between the Committee and Mr McCoy, former financial controller and internal auditor, with the signing in December 2019 of a political agreement on principles governing the resolution of Mr McCoy's bona fide whistleblower case; recalls that, based on the 2017 discharge resolution, the appointment of a Member of Parliament as mediator took place and that all parties entered into a mediation process to bring the dispute between the Committee and Mr. McCoy to an end with the objective of reaching an amicable settlement; acknowledges that the Committee pursued the scheduled mediation meetings with Mr McCoy; is aware that the second stage of the mediation concluded on 9 July 2021 with the contribution of Parliament's mediator, Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control, Mr. McCoy and the President and the Secretary-General of the Committee and the signing of a final financial settlement; is aware, lastly, that the Committee, after approval of the transfer by the budgetary authorities, successfully executed the agreed payment to Mr McCoy in November 2021; acknowledges the work done by successive rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs for the Committee's discharge over the past twenty years who, along with the mediation process and the assistance of Parliament's Legal Service, contributed to the resolution of the long-stalled issue; truly regrets the considerable harm caused to Mr McCoy and states that this case should not have remained unresolved for more than eighteen years; expresses its sincere satisfaction with the conclusion of this case and supports the Committee's actions in order to ensure that such a situation cannot arise again;
- 32 Acknowledges that the Agreement of 16 April 2014 between the European Parliament and the European Commission on the transparency register for organisations and self-employed individuals engaged in EU policy-making and policy implementation<sup>9</sup> and the Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register<sup>10</sup>, while allowing the voluntary involvement of Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies, do not cover the activities of regional and local authorities and the associations representing them; objects, however, to the view of the Committee that the use of the transparency register set up by those agreements has limited relevance and questions the validity of the Practical Guide on the interaction of staff with external entities (dating back to 2018); recalls the importance of a high level of transparency with respect to lobbying meetings which might influence the Committee in its advisory role to the Union institutions and thus, reiterates its call on the Committee to join the Interinstitutional agreement on a mandatory transparency register;
- The CoR administration is currently analysing the options and will come forward with its proposals to the political level soon.

9 OJ L 277, 19.9.2014, p. 11.

10 OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1.

33	<p>Regrets that only 66 staff members took part in one or more of the 13 training sessions on ethical issues organised in 2020; encourages the Committee to find ways to increase staff participation in such activities; notes with satisfaction the survey on staff ethics-awareness launched by the end of 2019 and its follow-up in the framework of the internal audit on the same issue; asks the Committee to keep on implementing the recommendations established in September 2020 and to report on the outcomes in due course;</p>	<p>With the adoption of a new decision on mandatory and recommended training, ethics training has become mandatory rather than recommended, including refresher courses.</p> <p>Obligations remain the same:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is up to each <b>staff member</b> to keep <b>up to date</b> with required competencies</li> <li>• it is up to all <b>line managers</b> to ensure <b>compliance</b> for their staff.</li> </ul> <p>In 2021, 14 training sessions took place and 251 staff members were trained, which corresponds to 60% of the managers and overall 57.30 % of staff (managers included).</p> <p>In 2021 another new decision was adopted on protecting dignity at work, managing conflict and combatting harassment entered into force reforming profoundly the previous policy. The decision widens the scope, outlines the rules of conducts and the possible informal and formal conflict resolution mechanisms in place in the CoR. A practical guide provides additional information.</p> <p>In order to raise awareness of the new decision and its implications, info-sessions for staff and managers have been organized, in addition to the regularly provided internal training courses on Ethics and Integrity.</p> <p>The internal HR newsletter HR Update has featured several topics of ethics during 2021 to accompany the introduction of the new decision.</p>
34	<p>Welcomes the entry into force on 26 January 2020 of the Committee's code of conduct and the fact that the Secretary-General is not aware of any breaches; regrets, however, that in January 2021 146 financial declarations from members and alternates had still not been submitted in spite of the obligation under the code of conduct to do so; encourages the Committee to obtain the missing financial declarations, making full use of the options provided by the code of conduct;</p>	<p>The Secretary general and the President are constantly monitoring the situation and are implementing the code as foreseen.</p>
35	<p>Notes with satisfaction that the Committee's intranet has pages dedicated to the ethical framework applicable to members of staff; welcomes its publication on the Committee's website too in addition to the Committee's code of conduct and the list of missing financial declarations; recommends that the Committee increases the visibility of those documents <i>vis-à-vis</i> the public;</p>	<p>The document 'Practical guide on the interaction of staff with external entities' is now also available in the Committee's website.</p> <p><a href="https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/consultations.aspx">https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/consultations.aspx</a></p>

## Digitalisation, cybersecurity, data protection

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| 36 | <p>Welcome that many work processes have been digitalised as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and that all meetings have been held remotely or in a hybrid form since March 2020, while all members of staff have been equipped with the necessary IT tools to work from home; congratulates the Committee on the significant improvement of the members' portal, Phoenix and the Adonis document workflow tool; points out that continuous progress was made with respect to e-invoicing, e-procurement and paperless financial workflows, that a working group on electronic signatures was established, that new versions of the search engines were deployed to better support online meetings for the members while specific measures were drawn up, that an electronic voting system for Committee members was launched, that already existing applications were significantly adapted to better support Committee members and staff, and that the implementation of computer-aided translation tools progressed;</p>  | <p>In order to reach the necessary level of digitisation the CoR had to ask for several budget transfers in recent years. This was only possible due to savings in meeting related budgeted lines related to the pandemic. In the future, if the CoR should keep up with the many challenges in the area of IT, it will need more budget allocated for this objective from the EU budgetary authorities.</p>   |
| 37 | <p>Notes that the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the Committee to substantially accelerate the implementation of a number of IT and videoconferencing projects in 2020 with a subsequent additional investment of some EUR 2,7 million; notes that the Committee spent EUR 6 392 372 on IT projects and equipment in 2020 (compared to EUR 4 033 320 in 2019); notes that as well as the Committee's digital strategy 2019, other projects were developed to digitalise the Committee's administration and ensure its efficiency; echoes the Committee's statement that its IT services have been structurally underfunded for years and that budget transfers cannot replace the necessary structurally sound funding of all IT services; notes, in particular, the Committee's concerns about the cost and overheads for smaller organisations of future common binding cyber-security rules for all Union institutions, bodies and agencies as referred to in its resolution of 10 June 2021 on the EU's Cybersecurity Strategy for the Digital Decade<sup>11</sup>;</p>                       |  |
| 38 | <p>Welcomes the creation of a deputy data protection officer to guarantee business-continuity and to reinforce the Committee's capabilities in that specific area; encourages the Committee to undertake awareness-raising actions and to organise training courses for members of staff handling personal data; <i>notes that, at the request of the EDPS, the Committee mapped the transfers of personal data to third countries and concluded that no activities were affected; notes the fact that the Committee signed the "enrolment" linked to an interinstitutional framework contract with Microsoft and that it has no separate individual licence agreements in place with Microsoft anymore; appreciates the Committee's active policy on open-source technology; encourages the Committee to further prioritise open-source technology in order to retain control over its own technical systems, avoid dependency and vendor lock-in, provide stronger safeguards for user privacy and data protection, as well as increase security and transparency for the public;</i></p> | <p>The Committees continue to adopt open-source technology and track its use in the annual IT Portfolio. During 2021 of note have been the growing number of open-source libraries and frameworks used in the Committees' information systems. For example, the new amendment processing applications are based on open-source technologies. There has also been an increase in the use of open-source technologies in the Data Centre. Open-Source software installed on work-stations has remained stable.</p> |

## Buildings and security

39	Is aware that the Committee and the EESC are implementing their long-term buildings strategy focusing on geographical concentration and reorganisation of office allocations; notes that the responsible working group considered it essential to have an additional building with a capacity of around 200 people in order to be able to create good working conditions; notes that that analysis led the Committee and the EESC to negotiate renting the B100 building from the European External Action Service and that the draft administrative agreement was approved by the bureaus of the Committee and the EESC in the last quarter of 2020; is aware that the COVID-19 pandemic caused a delay in the process;	
40	Highlights that following the exchange of the B68/TRE74 buildings of the Committee and the EESC for the Commission's VMA building, savings will begin to appear in 2023 due to the lower cost of renting the entire VMA building compared to renting the B68/TRE74 buildings and that those savings will be sufficient to cover the rent of the B100 building;	
41	Welcomes the improvements in keys areas within the buildings strategy, namely the refurbishment of existing buildings to create healthier workspaces aligned to ergonomic standards, increase the level of security, reduce electricity consumption and align with environmental obligations;	
42	Notes that the preparatory work for the implementation of the new eVisitors management system started in 2020 and that the eVisitors system was fully functional in November 2021, allowing the efficient management of invitations and online registration of external visitors; reminds the Committee that personal data of visitors should only be held for the time necessary to process the visit;	The European Committee of the Regions confirms that the processing of the personal data and the retention period have been duly notified and verified by the Data Protection Officers of both Committees in full respect of the applicable regulation.
43	Notes that, following the takeover of the B100 building in September 2021, tests and asbestos abatement are ongoing; calls on the Committee and the EESC to periodically monitor the conditions of that building and to inform the staff at all times accordingly; recalls its resolution of 20 October 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on protecting workers from asbestos <sup>12</sup> ;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four asbestos applications were found in the B100 building in September 2021 when establishing an asbestos inventory, prior to the start of Committees' fitting out works;</li> <li>• The most important application is a glue under the carpet containing a very small fraction of asbestos fibres. This glue was encapsulated everywhere except in the area of the ventilation units along the windows. In this area, the glue has been encapsulated too at the end of 2021.</li> <li>• Two of the other 3 small asbestos applications have been removed;</li> <li>• The removal of the 3th one in the basement is foreseen before the end of May 2022</li> <li>• Since the end of the fitting out works in February 2022, an update of the asbestos inventory has been established as well as a new asbestos-safe certificate;</li> <li>• The Committee for Prevention and Protection at Work as well as the Staff Committee have been informed about this matter in due time.</li> </ul>

Environment and sustainability	
44	Welcomes the integration of sustainability, environmental and accessibility standards, including those of the Union eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS), as part of the buildings strategy of the Committee and the EESC; notes that since the setting up of their environmental management system, the Committee and the EESC have taken various actions with the aim of improving the energy performance of their buildings and reducing their carbon footprint; is aware that a study of the carbon neutrality of the Committee and the EESC by 2030 is ongoing; welcomes the participation of the Committee in Parliament's offsetting of greenhouse gas emissions' scheme;
45	Welcomes the adoption by the Committee of the paperless policy in February 2020 and observes that, since then, most workflows have become fully paperless; welcomes that the amount of paper used per person per day in 2020 decreased by 52 % compared to 2019 and by 81 % compared to 2015;
46	Notes that the Committee has a sustainable mobility policy in place which is monitored through staff surveys every three years; observes with satisfaction that the mobility policy includes a 50 % reimbursement of public transport season tickets, service bikes for local professional travelling purposes, 237 bike racks, a number of parking spaces for hybrid or electric cars and the organisation of a number of awareness raising events every year;
47	Welcomes the inter-institutional framework contract that gives the Committee access to the Green Public Procurement Helpdesk, which is focused on sustainable development, environmental issues and social aspects of public procurement; notes that the Committee applies its environmental policy in each and every relevant procurement process, something that is also screened as part of the EMAS; welcomes the fact that the electricity consumed by the Committee is exclusively provided by green energy from sustainable sources;
48	Highlights the 'Green Deal Going Local' campaign with the aim of mobilising Committee members and the larger constituencies of local and regional authorities to take positive actions to encourage sustainable development and the green transition (i.e. urban greening, building energy efficiency, sustainable mobility etc.), taking advantage of reinforced cooperation with Parliament's Directorate for Communication and with the active participation of Members of Parliament;



## Communication and multilingualism

- 49 Recalls the importance of the Committee developing greater visibility in the media and on the internet and social media in order to make its work known; welcomes the external comprehensive evaluation of the Committee's communication strategy 2015-2020; understands that the COVID-19 pandemic forced a digital acceleration of public communication; stresses the importance of maximising the Committee's outreach through the creation of synergies between the Union institutions and the over one million regional and local elected politicians represented by the Committee; encourages the Committee to take advantage of the opportunities offered by its presence on social media and at the same time to explore the possible use of alternative open-source platforms;
- The European Committee continues its digital acceleration. We increasingly make use of EU institution-developed software (European Commission's applications Newsroom, futurium and BASIS) and explore innovative digital communication tools (e.g. LiveBlog, Digital Masterclasses, a new way of web streaming, etc).
- In 2021 our communication report** showed a further 16% growth in its social media audience, around 20% growth in web audience and further advances in online events such as multilingual webstreaming.
- The increases in our digital outreach came on top of the double-digit percentage increases achieved in 2020 and were accompanied by further increases in traditional media outreach.
- As regards the over one million regional and local elected politicians represented by the CoR, the CoR together with the EC and the EP have launched in 2021 the "Regional and Local EU Councillors" campaign aiming to mobilize all regional and local Councils in Europe to nominate one of their elected members as a "Councillor in charge of EU Affairs".

50	<p>Welcomes the involvement of the Committee in the Conference on the Future of Europe, assisting that democratic exercise in reaching the regional and local actors; further encourages the Committee to assist its members in participating in local dialogues with citizens on European matters;</p>	<p>The European Committee of the Regions fully engaged with the COFE.</p> <p>Its contribution includes <a href="#">support to the 30-strong delegation of local and regional politicians</a> who are delegates.</p> <p>Through the digital platform, through the Working Groups and Plenary sessions as well as it has contributed ideas.</p> <p>Through its Commissions, forums and local events, the Committee has boosted the outreach and visibility of the Conference on the Future of Europe beyond EU Institutions and capital cities – here is a <a href="#">summary</a>.</p> <p>The series of events co-organised with <a href="#">Bertelsmann Foundation</a> are among the few which fully respected the Conference Charter.</p> <p>We look forward to working with the European Parliament on implementation of the Conference proposals as part of the EP 'linking the levels' initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CoR followed up on this by assisting two Conference components (CoR and elected representatives of local and regional level, totalling in 30 delegates) in their participation in the Conference, by organising preparatory meetings prior to the Conference plenaries, providing analyses (via reports, studies and background memos) of the nine topics in question and organising debates in its commissions and plenary sessions. CoR members and alternates organized hundreds of debates and communication events in their regions and local authorities with many partners on the ground. On top of these individual events, the following initiatives led by the CoR took place: a) in cooperation with the Bertelsmann Foundation a project took place which involved 68 regions and cities, 2,000 citizens, 200 local politicians – including 14 CoR members - and 100 officials, which altogether led to 400 recommendations uploaded to the digital platform of the Conference. b) more than 30 local information events and citizens' dialogues were organized in cooperation with local and regional authorities, non-governmental organisations, and in partnership with EU institutions. The events reached out to 2 400 citizens. c) a series of 67 local dialogues alongside the European Week of Regions and Cities took place in October and November 2021. Most of these events were organised by the Week's event partners and 58 CoR members were involved in them.</li> </ul> <p>In total there were more than 150 CoR led meetings, events and citizens' dialogues during the work of the COFE.</p>
51	<p>Underlines the campaigns and activities carried out in 2020 targeting interest groups, in particular the memoranda of understanding and action plans with European and national associations representing local and regional interests that include clauses on cooperation and communication matters; understands that the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Committee to temporarily pause its citizens' dialogues; recommends to move the citizens dialogues online to ensure the continuity of this important activity in bringing the Union institutions closer to the people of Europe;</p>	<p>The decision to move citizens' dialogues online was taken in Autumn 2020, within 6 months of the outbreak of the pandemic and well in time for these events to contribute to the Conference on the Future of Europe.</p> <p>Thanks to this preparation, the CoR was able to boost its support for local events throughout 2021 in terms of quantity (over 100 events) and quality (through an innovative methodology of citizens' participation) and delivered an interim report on their achievements by the end of that year.</p> <p>More broadly, digital events have been successfully used to increase outreach, for example on Europe Day 2020.</p> <p>However, members of the CoR are convinced that events and discussions with citizens have to come back to a physical setting again as soon as possible. This means at the same time that online formats can continue where useful</p>

52	<p>Welcomes, in the area of communication, the two flagship events organised in 2020; remarks that the Committee has coordinated the European Public Communication Conference (EuropPCom) since 2011 and that in 2020 this event was held virtually in June and December, reaching about 2 500 communication experts; highlights the European Week of Regions and Cities, a recognised event involving over 10 000 participants and 800 partners, and the new Regional and Local Barometer, presented in October 2020 and acknowledges that both those initiatives contribute to the Conference on the Future of Europe, together with the project specifically created for that purpose, 'From local to European', launched at the end of 2020, involving 50 regions and cities in local, cross-border and transnational citizens' panels;</p>	-
53	<p>Asks the Committee to continue its efforts to improve the visibility of the studies it produces; underlines that, in addition to their publication online, there is a need for pro-active promotion of studies towards all stakeholders; encourages the Committee to reach out to Parliament to enhance cooperation, for instance through the organisation of joint meetings and events;</p>	<p>The CoR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will continue its efforts to improve the visibility of the studies;</li> <li>• Will intensify the promotion of studies towards stakeholders, for example via already established stakeholder's consultations for opinions and other meetings, and also encouraging Members to promote the studies in their follow-up to opinion work;</li> <li>• Welcomes an enhanced cooperation with the Parliament, which could be foreseen, not only via Members and the Directorates for Legislative work, but also via the Library and existing EPRS connections.</li> </ul>
54	<p>Calls on the Committee to provide support to local and regional authorities, including those who are not officially represented in the Committee, on matters related to Union opportunities and networking;</p>	<p>The European Committee of the Regions continues its outreach to the million local and regional politicians elected in the EU.</p> <p>This builds on the development of the <a href="#">Young Elected Politicians programme</a> launched at the Bucharest Summit in 2019, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> promotion.</p> <p>It includes the <a href="#">network of EU councillors</a> developed with the European Parliament (see point 55) and relations with the EU and national associations of local and regional authorities (for example in the <a href="#">#CohesionAlliance</a>). Most recently, it includes the <a href="#">9th Summit of Regions and Cities in Marseille on 3-4 March</a>.</p>

## Inter-institutional cooperation

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| 55 | <p>Welcomes the continuously increasing and effective bilateral cooperation between Parliament and the Committee; encourages both Parliament and the Committee to continue the regular meetings between their Presidents and Vice-Presidents and to enhance the structured cooperation between the respective rapporteurs and both the political groups and the preparatory bodies in which their members are organised; welcomes the decision by the Committee bureau in November 2020 to launch a European Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors which will be aligned with Parliament's pilot action Building Europe with Local Entities (BELE); notes, furthermore, the continuous collaboration on key political issues with the Commission through cooperation agreements and with the trio presidency of the Council via joint action plans; believes that the Committee's political cooperation with Parliament, the Council and the Commission should be more systematic given the importance of the Committee as the representative of Union citizens in regions and cities;</p> | <p>The Councillors idea was developed by the European Committee of the Regions at the end of 2020 ahead of the <b>launch at the Conference on the Future of Europe</b>.</p> <p>It has been developed as a genuinely inter-institutional initiative with the European Parliament (Building Europe with Local Entities pilot project) and the European Commission.</p> <p>The system of Councillors is also among the citizens proposals in the COFE (proposal 36, measure 6) and the European Committee of the Region looks forward to working on the implementation of the initiative with the other Institutions as a genuine "EU" project.</p> <p>As regards the inter-institutional cooperation ;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New cooperation agreements between the CoR and the European Commission and the European Parliament, taking into account the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe, are foreseen to be agreed in 2022.</li> <li>• With the EESC a new administrative cooperation agreement was signed in October 2021 for a period of 5 years. It introduces a more streamlined governance system and inclusive review process, with a mid-term review involving the staff committee. The follow-up and implementation of the agreement at administrative level is ensured by a regular meeting of the two Secretaries-Generals.</li> </ul> |
| 56 | <p>Highlights that the new global service level agreements concluded in 2020 with DG Budget, DG DIGIT and the Paymaster <a href="#">Office</a> of the Commission have significantly reduced the number of agreements, paved the way for improvements in the timeliness of information sharing and extended the possibility of securing the use of new Union inter-institutional IT-applications;</p>  | -  |
| 57 | <p>Highlights the adoption of the new administrative cooperation agreement between the Committee and the EESC that entered into force on 1 November 2021 which reinforces the governance of the cooperation and the control mechanisms to ensure efficient management of the joint services; notes with satisfaction that the Committee considers that the new agreement is more modern and simpler than the old agreement and that it will be instrumental in creating further synergies between the Committee and the EESC:</p>   | -  |
| 58 | <p>Reiterates the position expressed in the previous discharge recommendations on the need to fully implement the cooperation agreement signed between Parliament and the Committee and the EESC from which a total of 60 translators, including 24 from the Committee, were transferred to Parliament in exchange for access to the services of the European Parliamentary Research Service; stresses, in this regard, the Committee's staff shortage in political areas which negatively impacts the fulfilment of its mandate;</p>   | <p>The CoR requests an additional € 1.24 million in its Draft Budget 2023 for the budget line 1400 "Other staff", on top of the normal budget. This is a way to compensate for the unbalanced effect of the implementation of the administrative cooperation agreement with the EP concluded in 2014, and this should allow CoR to hire 19 additional contract agents in 2023. In the future an additional budget needs to be made available annually to honour the cooperation agreement between the EPO and the CoR and to endure its proper implementation.</p>   |

## Covid-19 pandemic

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| 59 | <p>Is aware that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced the Committee's activity, in particular because its Members ordinarily travel to the Committee's premises up to six times a year to debate its opinions and resolutions; acknowledges the collective efforts that ensured continued support to the political activities of the Committee;</p> | - |
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60	<p>Notes that the business continuity plan (BCP), in place since 2009, allowed an initial reaction but was revealed to be insufficiently fit-for-purpose; welcomes the in-depth revision of the BCP launched in late 2020 to take into account the lessons learned from handling the COVID-19 pandemic; understands that the pandemic revealed the impact of accumulated structural under-investments in some areas of the Committee's activities, especially with respect to IT; believes that those lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis, in particular, should remain an integral part of the Committee's future way of working;</p>	<p>In March 2021, the outlines of the reviewed BC policy were approved, establishing a horizontal BC Framework (BCF) that would set the scene for the BC governance (key objectives, key actors, roles, workflows, etc.), complemented with a set of more detailed BC Plans (BCPs) for a number of key activities. Subsequently, the first Strategic Business Impact analysis was performed and the results were adopted by the Bureau.</p> <p>In December 2021 the draft Business Continuity Framework was presented and approved and it is currently under the adoption process.</p> <p>In the coming months, the methodology for carrying out the Operational Business Impact Analysis (OBIA) will be finalized, which will lead to the launching of the first OBIA exercise and, later on, to the completion of the local business continuity plans.</p> <p>BC Correspondents have been designated for every Directorate and a first round of training on BC matters has been conducted.</p>
61	<p>Values the approach of putting health and safety of members and staff first while the organisation adapted to the continuously evolving situation; stresses that communication initiatives in the area of HR were a vector of stability and security for the staff during the COVID-19 pandemic; observes that staff were asked to not register their specific teleworking hours in order to have the necessary flexibility to combine work and personal responsibilities; notes, in addition, that staff having social or medical difficulties were allowed to telework from abroad under specific circumstances and that a general permission was also temporarily applied, resulting in 110 staff members exceptionally teleworking from abroad in 2020; welcomes the dialogue launched with the staff representatives, including a survey on telework;</p>	<p>Based on the results of the staff survey on telework which was conducted early 2021, a new, flexible decision has been introduced by means of a pilot project for 6 months.</p> <p>The concepts of "results based management", "digitalized work", "telework on equal footing to work in the office", "flexibility on the basis of a trust based system" and "right to disconnect" underlie the new policy.</p> <p>It allows for telework for all staff who carry out tasks compatible with telework, to work from home 2-3 days/week.</p> <p>To further safeguard staff wellbeing and flexibility, the new decision allows for a working day to be started and ended at home, even for a day considered to be spent in the office. By doing so, the institution shows awareness of the additional stress commuting may cause for its staff.</p> <p>The decision foresees a possibility for staff to telework away from the place of employment for a maximum of 15 days a year. This mechanism is foreseen to facilitate for colleagues who may need to go back to their home countries from time to time to attend to personal matters, whilst still being able to carry out their duties at work, which is possible with fully digitalized working procedures and methods now in place.</p> <p>The new policy has been accompanied by a substantial communication campaign both in writing via the bi monthly newsletters, and more particularly one edition fully dedicated to the new policy. In addition, 3 info sessions were held ahead of its introduction.</p> <p>The HR Directorate has decided to continue publishing the internal newsletter HR Update every two weeks (FR and EN on a rotational basis) following its success as a vector for stability and organisational belonging during the extended telework period.</p>
62	<p>Supports the Committee's approach, prioritising results over counting working hours, using trust based management and ensuring the right to disconnect, in particular by means of the new in-house email policy; welcomes additional measures such as the establishment of a group of volunteer staff members to help colleagues during the confinement period;</p>	-

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63	Notes the effort to disseminate information on psychosocial topics and topics related to the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme of the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies; further notes the number of appointments in 2020, 246, with the social service, mainly related to stress, conflicts and personal or family problems and the positive results of the coaching for coping mechanism;	-
64	Stresses that core activities were pursued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling the Committee to represent the regional and local elected politicians in the Union decision-making process, thus supporting the Union institutions in the handling of the crisis situation at hand;	-
65	Encourages the Committee to integrate the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in its internal management strategy in terms of business continuity and crisis management, IT responsiveness, resilience of the organisation, duty of care towards its staff, effective communication and flexible working processes, in order to develop a result-oriented management style on which a healthy work-life balance can be achieved.	<p>In order to capitalize on the lessons learnt from COVID, the CoR has based its new telework and working time decision on the principles of result based management, a culture of output rather than input as well as that of the right to disconnect.</p> <p>The latter has further been given a concrete form in a widely communicated policy on communication (avoid sending emails after 19.00, on weekends and during public holidays) as well as clear recommendations on how to write clear emails, who to put in copy, and how to best structure for quick and efficient reading and response as well as avoiding sending unnecessary emails to large groups.</p>

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## European Committee of the Regions

The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is the EU's political assembly of 329 regional and local representatives from all 27 Member States. Our members are elected presidents of regions, regional councillors, mayors and local councillors - democratically accountable to more than 446 million European citizens. The CoR's main objectives are to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council have to consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union as a means of upholding EU law where there are breaches to the subsidiarity principle or failures to respect regional or local authorities.

Edited by the Directorate for Communication of the European Committee of the Regions

Brussels, 2022

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 101 | 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel | BELGIQUE/BELGIË  
Tel. +32 22822211 | e-mail: PublicationsCdR@cor.europa.eu | [www.cor.europa.eu](http://www.cor.europa.eu)  
 @EU\_CoR |  /european.committee.of.the.regions |  /european-committee-of-the-regions

