

2020

Environmental Results

2019 data



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Our Environmental Management System

Let's tackle the climate challenge together!

Since the environmental management system was put in place at the EESC and CoR in 2011, we have achieved positive results on the main environmental targets that we set ourselves. In less than ten years, thanks to the participation of all stakeholders, consumption of energy, water and paper has decreased significantly. Many initiatives have also been launched in this period which have made it possible to significantly reduce the Committees' environmental impact in areas such as renovation and maintenance of buildings, waste management, cleaning and catering.

Although we can celebrate our good environmental performance, we can't just rest on our laurels. According to the latest reports published in 2019 by the IPCC, it is more urgent than ever to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2019 marked a turning point in this respect. On the global level, it was marked by climate marches on an unprecedented scale. On the European level, in 2019 the European Commission adopted the **European Green Deal**¹, which calls on all of us – Member States, institutions and people – to take action to make Europe the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050.

This is an immense challenge, even more so as the global COVID-19 crisis has emerged and we cannot yet measure the full extent of its impact. With the help of vital environmental management tools such as EMAS and Bilan Carbone (carbon balance), we will face the challenge together!

July 2020



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¹ The European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640 final).

2019 Main Results



Electricity

↘ **3%** in 2019 ↘ **31%** since 2009



Gas

↘ **15%** in 2019 ↘ **57%** since 2009



Water

↘ **8%** in 2019 ↘ **35%** since 2009



Paper

↘ **42%** in 2019 ↘ **74%** since 2009



Office Waste

↗ **34%** in 2019 ↘ **40%** since 2009



Carbon Footprint

20.427 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent

= emissions of **2.375** EU citizens²

² Source: Eurostat.

2019 Highlights

January



Installation of energy meters for more efficient energy management (continuation of the first phase initiated in 2018).

February



Collection of electrical and electronic waste organised for staff.

March



Interinstitutional EMAS days: workshop on reducing plastic waste and screening of the documentary *A Plastic Ocean*.

April



Friday Bike Day. Raising staff awareness on sustainable mobility.

May



Inauguration of the zero plastic canteen. The EESC and CoR canteen is the first zero plastic canteen in the European Union institutions.

June



Raising staff awareness of organic and sustainable products and sustainable fishing during Organic Food Week and World Oceans Day.

July



Reduction of energy consumption in summer in the JDE building thanks to installation of a new gas boiler used exclusively for producing domestic hot water.

August



Installation of five new filtered water fountains and promoting tap water as a way to reduce plastic waste at source.

September



On average over 95% of vegetables on offer at the canteen during the summer were seasonal.

October



Conference on reducing single-use plastic in the EU institutions.

November



European waste reduction week on the theme Change your ways, Reduce your waste and participation in the first Zero Waste Fair for professionals in Brussels.

December



Environmentally responsible staff party thanks to the provision of reusable water carafes and glasses and a particular focus on waste sorting and food waste.



Energy

Sustainably heating and cooling almost 115 000m² of office space, including 11 conference rooms, 3 reception rooms, 4 catering spaces, many training rooms and server rooms is a huge challenge. The aim is to improve energy efficiency in the buildings while maintaining a level of comfort for the occupants in every season. The EESC and the CoR have achieved excellent results in energy management, although there has been some downturn in recent years. Major investments will be needed in the future to keep improving the energy performance.

Indicator: electricity consumption per person per year. 2019 Results: 4 625 KWh/person.



Electricity consumption

↓3% in 2019 ↓31% since 2009

Indicator: gas consumption per person per year. 2019 results: 2 792 KWh/person.



Gas consumption

↓15% in 2019 ↓57% since 2009

2019 Actions

- Installation of meters to manage energy more efficiently.
- JDE: installation of a new boiler exclusively dedicated to producing domestic hot water. Environmental benefit: not running other boilers during the summer.
- JDE: replacement of the green roof with a new layer of insulation and melliferous plants. Environmental benefit: improving the thermal insulation and energy performance. The green roof is also a way to promote urban biodiversity.

Upcoming actions

- Feasibility study on ISO 50001 certification. This standard proposes measures to reduce energy consumption by implementing an energy management system.
- Installing LED lamps with dimmer in all buildings.

Ongoing actions

- The Committees' energy supply is 100% green.
- The Committees produce renewable energy through solar panels installed on the roof. In 2019, the 150m² of panels produced 10 MWh, or 0.15% of the total consumption.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



Water



Water is mainly used for catering, cleaning, toilets, humidifying air and watering the indoor plants and outside gardens. The challenge is not only to continually reduce water consumption, but also to ensure regular monitoring of the quality of water to guarantee that it is safe for all users.

Indicator: water consumption per person per year. 2019 results: 12.2m³/person.



Water consumption

↘ **8%** in 2019 ↘ **35%** since 2009

After a slight increase in 2018, water consumption decreased in 2019. Factors influencing consumption include the number of visitors (JDE) and the work carried out in the various buildings.

2019 Actions

- JDE: the green roofs were replaced with ones that do not require irrigation, which entails a decrease in water needs.
- Installation of new fountains providing fresh, filtered tap water. In addition, insulated water bottles were distributed to EESC staff and members by the administration.
- Installation of a water softener in the kitchens (JDE), which reduces lime scale.

Upcoming actions

- Installation of water meters in strategic locations to ensure better water management.
- The CoR administration will follow the EESC's example and provide insulated water bottles for members and staff of the CoR.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION





Paper

Producing and printing paper as well as managing paper waste requires the use of significant natural resources and has a significant impact on the environment. Driven by the desire to operate as modern and responsible institutions, the EESC and the CoR have committed to a more efficient use of paper, opting for paperless meetings and prioritising electronic documents and procedures.

Indicator (paper for office use): number of pages printed per person per working day.

2019 results

7.8 pages/person/working day.



Paper for office use consumption

↓42% in 2019 ↓74% since 2009

Between 2018 and 2019 paper consumption decreased by 42%, which is the largest decrease in 10 years (in 2009 paper consumption was 30 pages/person/day). The reason behind these results is the good practices that everyone has adopted and the measures put in place.

2019 Actions

- Staff: almost total removal of personal printers, replaced by shared printers. In 2019 there were only nine personal printers.
- Staff, members and suppliers: continuing to digitalise administrative and financial procedures, particularly electronic invoicing.

Upcoming actions

- EESC: implementation of “paper poor” meetings strategy. From October 2020, members will receive meeting documents in electronic form with the possibility to receive a paper version on request only.
- CoR: the paperless approach will be commonly applied.

Ongoing actions

- The A4 paper used for printing (office paper) is 100% recycled and eco-labelled.
- The paper used for publications is not exclusively recycled, but the proportion of recycled paper has been steadily increasing since 2015. In 2019, 66% of paper for publication is recycled paper³.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



15 LIFE
ON LAND



³ 2019: occasional use of FSC-labelled paper due to the closure of the mill which provided the Committees with recycled paper.

Green procurement



By introducing environmental requirements in tender procedures (for goods, services and works) the EESC and the CoR have chosen to select their suppliers in line with their environmental policies. When the subject of the contract allows, the Committees opt for the goods and services with the least environmental impact. In this way, they want to adopt more sustainable consumption practices while protecting everyone's health.

Indicator: insertion of environmental clauses in calls for tender whose value is equal to or exceeds EUR 60 000.

2019 results

100% of significant tender documents included standardised environmental clauses.

Standardised environmental clauses

These clauses include a reference to the Committees' environmental policy, the obligation to comply with the rules on waste (sorting and traceability) and the storage of dangerous products.

Specific environmental clauses

These clauses are tailored to the categories of products and services concerned. Where possible, the products and services must meet the requirements of recognised environmental labels (e.g. European Ecolabel, Blauer Engel) and energy labels.

2019 Actions

- 13 public procurement procedures were analysed.
- Four calls for tender with high environmental impact were identified: framework contracts for ecological maintenance of green spaces, sustainable mass catering, organising events at the CoR and replacing and re-covering the floor with bamboo in the Committees' buildings.
- Specific environmental criteria were added for each of them.

Ongoing actions (multi-year contracts)

- Electricity is 100% green.
- Cleaning products are eco-labelled.
- Paint and varnish are eco-labelled.
- Wood used in work is FSC or PEFC certified.
- The paper used in offices is 100% recycled and eco-labelled⁴.
- Office supplies meet environmental criteria.
- No pesticides or chemical fertilisers are used for green area maintenance.

⁴ 2019: occasional use of FSC-labelled paper due to the closure of the mill which provided the Committees with recycled paper.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS





Food

The Committees are pioneers in the sustainable management of their canteen. Thanks to the good practices put in place to combat food waste and the stronger criteria for sustainable food, the EESC and the CoR obtained the Canteen Good Food label in 2017. In May 2019, the Committees' canteen became the first canteen in the EU institutions to not use single-use plastic.

Indicators: percentage of seasonal vegetables on the menu, percentage of organic products relative to total products, percentage of vegetarian dishes and sandwiches relative to total dishes and sandwiches sold, percentage of MSC-labelled fish relative to the total of fish purchases, percentage of fair trade-labelled products relative to total products.

These percentages are calculated for the whole year based on numbers of purchases and sales provided by the supplier.

2019 results



83%
seasonal
vegetables



18%
organic products



23%
vegetarian dishes



24%
sustainable fish
(MSC label)



8%
fair trade
products



jeudi
Veggie



Upcoming actions

- A new catering supplier and contract with stronger environmental and sustainability requirements.
- Minimum 25% organic products.
- Minimum 25% products from short supply chains.
- Ban on single use plastic bottles and supplies in all catering areas.

Ongoing actions

- Good Food Label.
- Veggie Thursday.

Food Waste



Thanks to good practices, food waste has been drastically reduced in the canteen and remains under control during events. Please note that due to the unpredictability of certain aspects (such as the number of participants attending compared to the number of registrations, dietary habits, quantities served, etc.) and despite the efforts in raising awareness, it is difficult to fully eliminate food waste during events. This is why the Committees have set up a food donation project.

Canteen waste indicator: number of remaining portions.

Event waste indicator: number of remaining portions.

Food donation indicator: weight of food and number of sandwiches to be donated.

These figures are communicated by the supplier and subject to monitoring by the Catering department.

2019 results



< 1% waste in the canteen



25% waste during events

Food donation: approximately 450 kg of food and 676 sandwiches donated.

Ongoing actions

- Preserving unconsumed food products under strict conditions and reusing them.
- Purchasing products and managing stocks more efficiently.
- Monitoring waste generated by the canteen and during events, which makes it possible to analyse the causes and areas for improvement.
- Prevention and raising awareness of food waste among event organisers.

Food donation

Combating food waste has social, environmental and economic dimensions. The Committees are proud to have put in place an innovative and pioneering system to donate food to people in vulnerable situations. Since 2016, leftover food from events is stored in strict hygiene and temperature conditions and donated to a Brussels charity. The beneficiaries are migrants and homeless people. Since 2017, the leftover food has been delivered by bike to reduce its carbon footprint.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

2 ZERO
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



14 LIFE BELOW
WATER



15 LIFE
ON LAND





Organisation of events

Each year, the EESC and the CoR host on average 20 000 visitors and organise many events⁵. A significant number of these are dedicated to climate issues. It is therefore essential that the Committees put their words into action and adopt a sustainable approach to organising events. This means reducing waste at source by avoiding disposable supplies and making more environmentally responsible choices in general to reduce the environmental impact of events.

Indicator: quantity of waste produced at the three biggest annual events (kg).

2019 results

Open Doors Day: 244 kg of waste

The European Week of Regions and Cities: 274 kg of waste

Staff Party: 433 kg of waste

Upcoming actions

- New supplier responsible for catering services at events. Environmental and sustainability criteria will be strengthened.

Ongoing actions

- Providing videoconference rooms to reduce the carbon footprint of transport.
- Reducing the volume of printed material in favour of electronic documents.
- Raising awareness among organisers in advance of the event of environmentally responsible practices, particularly waste sorting.
- Reducing the number of items offered to participants, with preference to reusable and green items.
- Alternatives to plastic badges (e.g. self-adhesive paper badges). Plastic badges are collected after conferences to be reused.

Events with a catering service

- Filtered water fountains and carafes replacing plastic water bottles.
- Sustainable and reusable dishes. Single-use plastic supplies are excluded.
- The option of a local and seasonal organic or vegetarian lunch.
- Food waste management and organisation of food donations.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



⁵ 2019 data (before the COVID 19 pandemic).

Mobility



1 250 members of staff come to work in the Committees' buildings every day and 655 members regularly travel here from across Europe. According to the carbon balance, transport of people is the largest source of CO₂ emissions at the EESC and the CoR. Mobility also has a direct impact on air quality and therefore on everyone's health and is therefore a major environmental challenge. The Committees have an active policy to encourage staff to use more environmentally friendly forms of transport: public transport, bike, walking and car-pooling.

Indicator: Percentage of staff claiming to use mostly a sustainable mode of transport in their commute.

2019 results



Staff using environmentally friendly modes of transport

79% (CoR)

69% (EESC)

2019 Actions

- Creating dedicated parking spaces for cargo bikes.
- Providing staff with two bikes for charging smartphones.
- Creating two working groups on staff mobility and members' mobility.

Upcoming actions

- Awareness-raising campaign on the environmental impact of means of transport.
- Extending the possibilities for teleworking.

Ongoing actions

- A financial contribution to the cost of public transport season tickets (EESC and CoR).
- Kilometre-based subsidy for commuting to work by bike (EESC).
- Teleworking and flexible working hours to reduce traffic congestion at peak times.
- Service bikes, parking spaces and infrastructure for cyclists.
- Increasing the number of parking places for car-pooling and motorbikes.
- Promotional events such as Friday Bike/Walk Day or the Step Challenge.
- Participation in the inter-institutional initiative VéloMai.
- Charging facilities for e-bikes and e-cars.
- Increased possibilities for organising videoconferences and webstreaming of conferences.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES





Waste

With 296 tonnes of waste⁶ produced in total in 2019, the Committees face two major challenges: reducing the quantity of waste and implementing a waste sorting system in line with legislation. From obsolete IT equipment to organic waste from the kitchens through to waste from printing or medical services, there are many types of waste.

Indicators: quantity of office and kitchen waste per person per year. Other types of waste such as waste generated during renovation works are monitored separately.

2019 results

182.50 kg of waste per person per year.



Waste generated

↗ **34%** in 2019*

↘ **40%** since 2010

* The increase in waste in 2019 relates mainly to paper/cardboard waste (160 tonnes in total for the year). This is explained by the disposal of a large number of archived documents.

2019 Actions

- Collection of electrical and electronic waste.
- Plastic waste: removal of single-use plastic in the canteen.
- Serving filtered tap water at events.

European Waste Reduction Week 2019

- Cleaning up Cinquantenaire park in cooperation with the Council of the European Union and the municipality of Etterbeek.
- Collection of toys and books for a charity working with children in vulnerable situations.
- Conference of the association Zero Waste Belgium.
- Zero Waste Fair: presentation of good practices regarding food waste.

Upcoming actions

- Plastic waste: extending the ban on plastic to all catering facilities. Only supplies from sustainable, recyclable or compostable materials will be allowed.

Ongoing actions

- Encouraging staff to use reusable rather than disposable crockery.
- Obsolete IT equipment and furniture are donated to a charity.
- Leftover food from events is donated to a charity helping people in vulnerable situations.
- Some of the organic waste from the canteen is converted into biogas (16 tonnes in 2019).

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



⁶ Office and kitchen waste. Total waste generated in 2019 is approximately 597 tonnes.

Waste sorting



2019 results

Waste is sorted correctly by the Committees' staff members, but errors have been seen in areas frequented by visitors. This could be because visitors come from different countries of the European Union which have not adopted the same colour coding or requirements of the Brussels-Capital Region in terms of waste sorting.

Ongoing actions

- Monitoring the quality of waste sorting
- Strict management of hazardous waste by the relevant departments and suppliers.
- Hazardous waste: obsolete electronic and electrical equipment, toners and printer cartridges, light bulbs and lighting tubes, used oil from the building maintenance services, printing waste, empty paint pots, needles from the medical services.

Upcoming actions

- Improving waste sorting signage for visitors.
- "Recycling corners" to be arranged in every building for the most common types of small waste.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
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AND PRODUCTION





Biodiversity

According to the latest expert reports – including the 2019 FAO⁷ and IPBES⁸ reports – almost a million animal and plant species could disappear in the coming decades. The loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems is a particularly significant threat and could eventually lead to a high risk of food crisis. The EESC and the CoR are committed to helping protect biodiversity.

Indicator: Land use (surface area built on and unbuilt).

Built-on land is sealed, and therefore plants cannot grow there, which is not conducive to biodiversity.

2019 results



The EESC and CoR occupy a surface area of

13.500 m²

nearly **28%**
is made up of green roofs
and gardens.

Ongoing actions for biodiversity

- Green areas are maintained without pesticides or chemical fertilisers.
- Two beehives have been installed on the JDE roof since 2012.
- The 1 800 m² of green roofs improve thermal and sound insulation of the buildings while reducing air pollution and CO₂ emissions. They include melliferous plants.
- Two participatory gardens were installed on the terraces of JDE and B68. Herbs, vegetable, fruits and flowers are grown without pesticides or chemical fertilisers.
- Organic products are available in the catering facilities.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

15
LIFE
ON LAND



⁷ UN Food and Agriculture Organisation.

⁸ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

Carbon Emissions



The carbon inventory is a tool for calculating an organisation's environmental impact in terms of CO₂ emission equivalent. It gives a clear picture of the activities that contribute most to the Committees' CO₂ emissions. Transport of people occupies the top spot at the EESC and CoR. The challenge is to find measures to reduce the CO₂ emissions while maintaining the quality of the services offered to the Committees' staff and members.

Indicator: carbon emissions in CO₂ equivalent in tonnes per FTE (full-time equivalent).

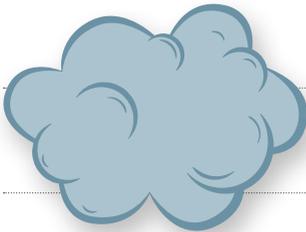
The Bilan Carbone® (carbon inventory) method used by the Committees was developed by a French institution, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), and is managed by the Institut de formation carbone (Carbon Training Institute).



2019
20.427 tonnes
of CO₂ equivalent

= emissions of **2375** EU citizens⁹.

81%



Transport of people
Members: 93%
Staff: 7%

9%



Procurement
(goods/services)

5%



Buildings and
furniture

4%



Energy

Upcoming actions

- Establishing a target for reducing CO₂ emissions which takes into account the European Union's climate targets defined in the European Green Deal¹⁰ as well as those of the other institutions.
- Offsetting the Committees' CO₂ emissions (participation in an interinstitutional call for tender).

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



⁹ Source: Eurostat.

¹⁰ The European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640 final).

The Committee's environmental management system

The EESC and CoR have been EMAS- and ISO 14001-registered since 2011. These certifications guarantee that we assess, manage and continuously improve our environmental performance.

The Committees

115.000 m²
of buildings
(total surface area including
grounds and basement)

655 members
(326 EESC members
and 329 CoR
members)¹¹

1.286 staff
members¹²

20.000
visitors per year¹³



The environmental management system

1	EMAS team in the Infrastructure Unit – Directorate for Logistics
70	EMAS contact persons each representing a directorate or unit
12	members of the EMAS Steering Committee (secretaries-general, directors, staff representatives)
1	annual audit by an accredited environmental auditor (Vincotte)
2	environmental certifications EMAS and ISO 14001

¹¹ Until 31 January 2020, when the United Kingdom left the European Union, the number of EESC and CoR members was 350 each and included British members.

¹² 2019 data in FTE.

¹³ 2019 data (before the COVID-19 pandemic).



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This document summarises the 2020 environmental statement (2019 data) available on the websites of the CoR and EESC. It is also available in French.

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