



European Committee
of the Regions



ANNUAL REPORT **HUMAN RESOURCES** 2021
EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

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FOREWORD

Dear colleagues, dear readers,

Change often creates resistance because, at first glance, it challenges our security and the way things have always been. We feel as though we are losing control and oppose it. The reality, though, is that change is the only thing which is sure to happen. We cannot stop it. Heraclitus' "panta rhei" (everything flows) is as true now as it was 2 500 years ago. Evolution and history tell us that successful systems, organisations and species do not oppose change but embrace it and steer it as well as they can. Because change is not only a challenge, it is also an opportunity, it opens doors and possibilities. You heard me saying this last year. And last year once again confirmed that this is true.



Petr Blížkovský, Secretary-General

The pandemic and its consequences for our work environment was one of these doors we had to walk through in the last few years. The year 2021 was all about coping with the new work environment and about accepting that going back to "how it was before" was not an option. We now know for sure that videoconferencing has come to stay, telework will be part of our work life in the future, and electronic workflows, more digitalisation and a paperless work environment will remain with us. Our institution, our members and our teams had to adapt and will need to further adapt to the consequences of these changes.

I am convinced that the pandemic is just a catalyst for changes which were already in the pipeline. The pandemic has accelerated change and modernisation for all of us. As the Secretary-General who got a mandate to modernise the CoR's administration in December 2019, I decided to drive change and to make it beneficial for our organisation by making it stronger.

This is not only about technical or digital issues. I firmly believe that the changes all modern societies, organisations and work places are going through concern, above all, our capacity to be more agile, more reactive, more mobile and therefore more resilient than in the past. For me, this means, for example:

- embracing new work tools and methods;
- taking new training courses, learning new skills and accepting new jobs at any stage of your professional career;
- changing our work habits and how we work together in – sometimes cross-service – teams;
- adopting an outward-looking attitude which keeps our institution and our work in touch with the reality of Europe's citizens in the regions and municipalities of the Union.

Our members lead and steer these changes every day in all the administrations of their regions and local authorities across Europe and, as I have said on several occasions, we as their European institution have to be a model organisation in this respect. Today, in presenting this report, I am ready to say that we are on the right path.

One of the most successful game changers in history, Mahatma Gandhi, taught us that change will come when you start to be the change you want to see. This is why I have opted for a positive daily attitude towards change and modernisation, seeing them as things that help our organisation to grow and to have more impact. My "Going for impact!" plan is rooted in this attitude. I encourage all staff to join me and senior management in this important transformation process which will ensure that the European Committee of the Regions evolves and becomes stronger than ever before.

Petr Blížkovský
Secretary-General

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Human resources

The main mission of the secretariat-general of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is to provide its members with all the necessary assistance to enable the institution to function properly as an assembly of local and regional representatives and thus to achieve its political mission and objectives.

Management of human resources (HR) is the key responsibility of all managers, although the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance plays a leading role in this respect. The mission of the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance is to allocate available human and budgetary resources in order to allow the institution to achieve its political and administrative objectives and ensure compliance with all applicable provisions when implementing the Staff Regulations, the Financial Regulation and internal control standards, while providing an appropriate working environment and sufficient opportunities for staff to learn, develop and grow.

HR management is interconnected with other important areas such as security and safety, audit, data protection and the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Some staff-related matters are handled in cooperation with other institutions and parties through cooperation agreements, framework contracts, service-level agreements and memorandums of understanding.

The CoR, as the smallest of the EU institutions participating in the EU legislative process, always needs to make smart and effective use of its resources. Recently, its budget outturn rate has constantly been above 98-99% (with the exception of the first COVID-19 year: 2020). In 2021 the CoR budget outturn rate was 98.9% and the job occupation rate was at 99.4%. Both rates are among the highest of all institutions participating in the EU legislative process.

Highlights of 2021

New organisational chart

Following the “Going for Impact” initiative devised by the Secretary-General and the results of various SWOT analyses, staff contributions, management seminars and task forces set up on this issue, the Bureau adopted a new organisational chart on 7 December 2020. The new chart, which entered into force on 1 March 2021, better fits with the institution’s political and administrative priorities and goals for the current term of office.

The new organisational chart has also offered opportunities for staff mobility at all levels.

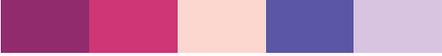
In addition, further steps were taken to implement the strategy for more resource-efficient multilingualism agreed with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), and linguistic units were merged to create more synergies whenever possible.

Business continuity

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which coincided with the start of the new term of office and continued in 2021, had an influence on the way of working. Thanks to a robust IT environment and the flexibility, creativity and commitment of staff in all CoR departments, the institution continued to ensure business continuity during the pandemic in 2021. Nonetheless, the CoR took important decisions to further enhance its IT environment and ability to react to IT-related threats in the future.

Telework was already a widely used working tool before the pandemic, but the necessary IT equipment, experience and teleworking culture were not yet prevalent throughout the CoR. Telework has developed remarkably during the years of the epidemic and has paved the way for a new work organisation and a new working culture. The IT Unit made a significant effort to acquire, configure and deliver the relevant equipment to allow the whole institution to operate in hybrid format or remotely.

Notwithstanding the very demanding circumstances, the collective efforts of all involved enabled the general secretariat to continue supporting the Committee’s political activities. While putting the 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 continued, thus enabling the Committee to play its role in the



European decision-making process without interruption and to work hand in hand with the other EU institutions and the local and regional authorities to deal with the crisis.

In 2022, the CoR adapted and modernised its Business Continuity Framework by drawing lessons and conclusions from the severe test of business continuity rules during the pandemic.

HR in the time of COVID-19

The global pandemic and its impact on all human activities have accelerated the process to modernise the administration as presented and launched by the Secretary-General in his “Going for impact!” plan in December 2019. Over the last two and a half years the CoR has become a modern, paperless, cross-service and teamwork-oriented administration. It is now a resilient organisation that is even better able to support its members and implement its administrative and political priorities efficiently and in a timely manner.

The HR community was also on the front line in 2021 since it was paramount to reassure staff, provide health and social assistance, provide timely information on relevant medical and business continuity issues and ensure that all client services functioned properly. HR processes did not stop working even for a single day during the pandemic. Specific initiatives in the area of HR communication provided stability, creating a sense of security and belonging.

The administration has risen to the challenge the institution faces due to structural understaffing by moving away from purely static resource allocation to an effective and priority-based policy of reallocating human resources through the creation of pools of excellence and staff mobility, as well as the development of new ways of working (like the cross-service task forces).

Integrated talent management strategy

Through an integrated talent management strategy, the institution intends to provide additional development opportunities for staff, to reinforce their loyalty and commitment and to enhance their performance.

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 an enhanced 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.

External job shadowing

Though the external job shadowing project had been prepared and finalised internally and was supposed 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 in favour of a digital version as of February 2022.

Project-oriented work in cross-cutting task forces

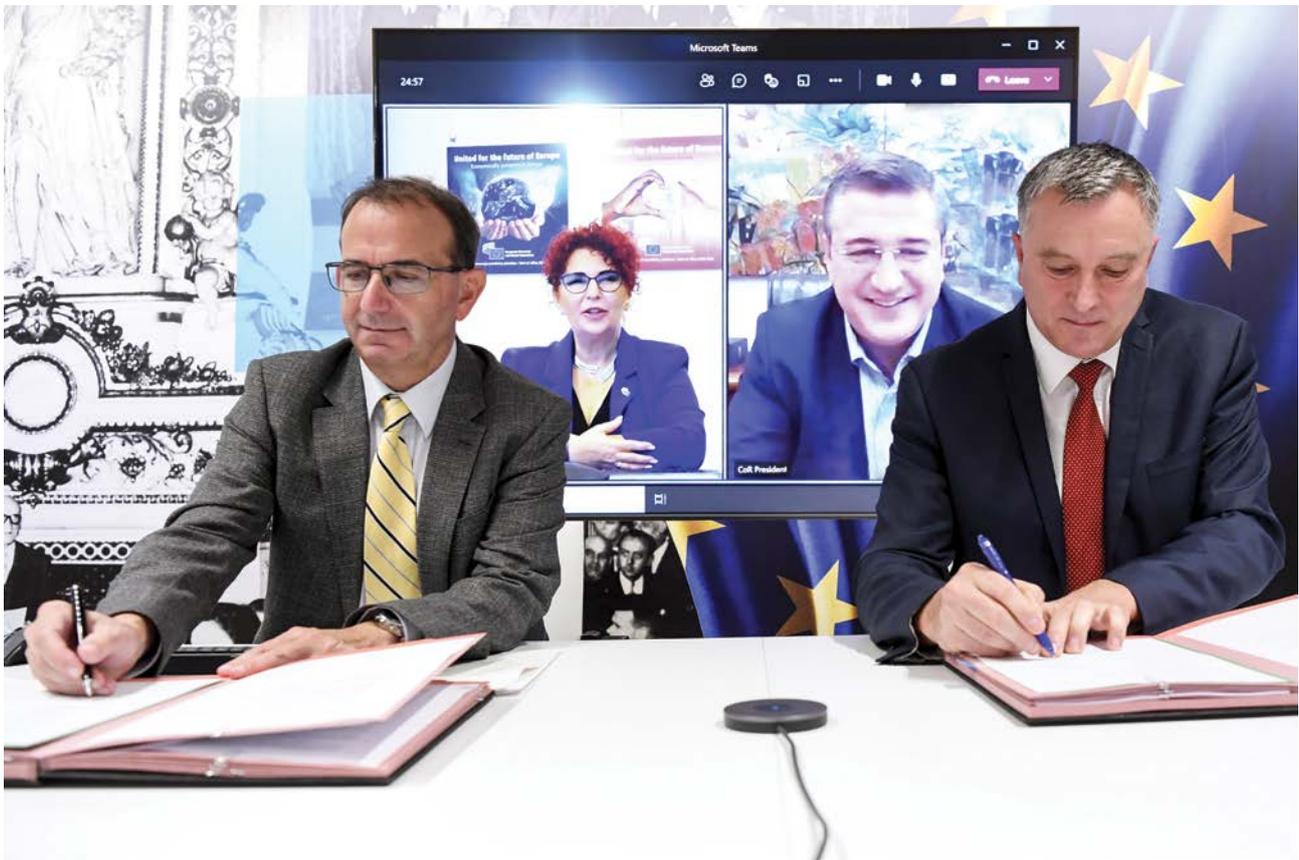
In 2021 the CoR continued to work in ten cross-cutting task forces established by the Secretary-General in his “Going for impact!” plan. The task forces complement the work in hierarchical structures in the seven directorates and the existing inter-service coordination. The task forces bring together the secretariat-general’s most qualified people in a given area and greatly help to motivate staff, who are involved in achieving the institution’s main priorities.

New cooperation agreement with the EESC

In November 2021 a new cooperation agreement entered into force that is valid five years, allowing the CoR and the EESC to operate the joint services.

The agreement, signed by the CoR and EESC Presidents and Secretary-Generals, aims to further reinforce the synergies, and the effectiveness and efficiency gains of both administrations, with an impact on staff and organisation. One of the main features of the new cooperation agreement is the creation of a dedicated Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology. Other services will be further rationalised, taking into account the evolving service needs and the new post-COVID-19 working environment. If a better solution in an area of joint action can be found with another

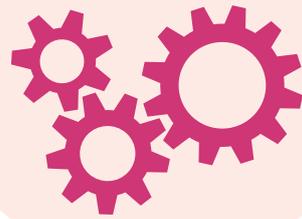
EU institution, the agreement has open clauses to enable each Committee to choose the best possible service for its members.



Sensitive posts policy

A sensitive posts policy was approved on 17 December 2021 and came into effect on 1 January 2022 as part of an integrated talent management strategy. The first sensitive posts exercise will take place in 2022, including a risk assessment of the posts, the controls in place and residual risk. Where the risk is still found to be above the tolerable level and it is not possible to mitigate it further, mandatory mobility will be considered after five years in the post.





CORE HR PROCESSES

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

HR activities are carried out in accordance with the Staff Regulations, the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union, the Financial Regulation, the General Data Protection Regulation, the CoR Rules of Procedure and the implementing provisions for these legal acts adopted by the CoR. The Staff Regulations and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union are interpreted and applied by the CoR in a manner consistent with the approach taken at interinstitutional level as part of the relevant interinstitutional working groups and committees. Furthermore, the relevant case law and recommendations of the Court of Auditors and the EU Ombudsman are also taken into account.

ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

Following the CoR Bureau Decision of 7 December 2020, a new organisation chart of the CoR general secretariat was implemented on 1 March 2021. The ultimate goal of the reorganisation was to make the best possible use of the resources allocated by the budgetary authority to the CoR in view of achieving the main political and administrative priorities of the institution's seventh term of office. The reorganisation also aimed to modernise the administration so that it can better support CoR members in having a greater political impact.

The reorganisation redefined the roles and the responsibilities of deputy directors and emphasised activities such as the Future of Europe, the Better Law-making Agenda, the Green Deal, territorial and cross-border cooperation and Europe's digital transformation, with a specific focus on outreach impact and local dialogues. It also steps up the administration's support for strategic planning, foresight and interinstitutional relations.

Pools of excellence were also created to foster specialisation, efficiency gains and economies of scale in financial management (as of 1 July 2021) and the organisation of meetings (as of 1 January 2022). The CoR Legal Affairs Unit was also placed under the direct authority of the Secretary-General, while the Protocol and Institutional Correspondence Unit was moved to the Directorate for Members, Plenaries, Strategy on 1 January 2022. In total, 9 middle managers and 53 staff members were reassigned to different units, including the newly created cross-cutting units placed under the direct leadership of deputy directors.

The influence of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to be felt in 2022 and the CoR had to continue working hard to adapt the working methods and the resource allocation. The rationalisation initiative in the Directorate for Translation also progressed, with additional mergers of units. Full-time and part-time in-house secondments of officials from the linguistic units to the most critical core business areas helped provide an appropriate level of business continuity.

The drive to reorganise and reallocate resources has had a positive impact on the overall share of operational jobs in the past few years¹. The share of operational jobs has steadily increased from 46% in 2013 to 53.3% in 2021.

In order to rationalise administrative processes and to facilitate the management of recruitment and associated processes (establishment of individual entitlements, salary payments, update of the organisational chart, etc.), the CoR implemented several simplification measures in 2021. As a consequence, recruitments are in principle implemented only at the beginning of each month, which facilitates the organisation of the welcome sessions and the calculation of individual rights and also requires the operational organisational chart to be updated less often. Transfers of officials to the other EU institutions and resignations of contracts are still possible on the 16th of each month where necessary.

Establishment plan posts

The establishment plan refers to permanent and temporary posts available to the CoR under the EU budget.

¹ The CoR distinguishes between three categories of jobs: operational (directly linked to the institution's political and communication activities), overhead (administrative support, including HR and logistics) and neutral (linguistic jobs).

The budgetary authority granted the CoR three new posts in 2021, two of them aiming to consolidate the recently created CoR political group, the Greens. The last post was allocated to the Irish Translation sector to grant the required critical mass and ensure the timely provision of translations into Irish.

Budgeted posts

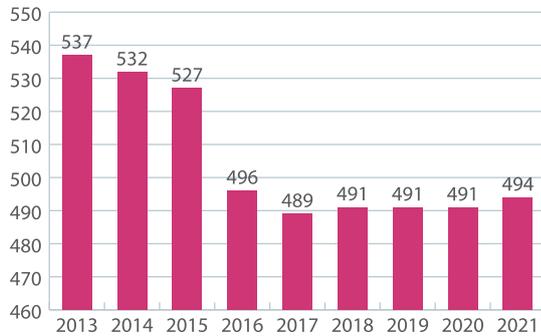


Chart 1 Trend in posts 2013-2021

The trend in permanent and temporary posts is shown in chart 2.

Permanent posts



Temporary posts

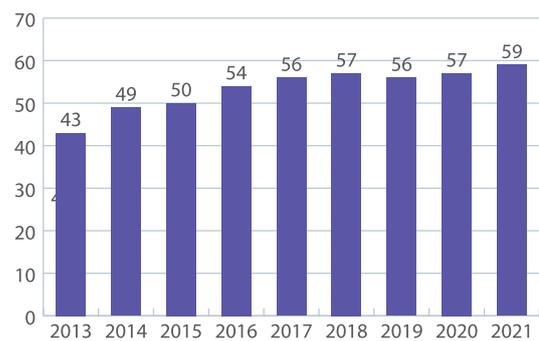


Chart 2 CoR trend in posts

Despite its increasingly important political role in the EU decision-making process and its democratic legitimacy, the CoR still suffers from structural understaffing compared to other EU institutions and bodies as shown in Table 1:

Establishment plan posts per EU institution

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Committee of the Regions	537	532	527	496	489	491	491	491	494
Commission	24944	24781	24428	24044	23756	23671	23613	23578	23566
Parliament	6713	6786	6739	6797	6743	6683	6633	6722	6720
Council	3153	3101	3072	3040	3027	3031	3033	3029	3029
Court of Justice	2015	1991	1998	2073	2063	2063	2068	2073	2097
European External Action Service	1670	1661	1645	1628	1611	1595	1634	1699	1742
Court of Auditors	891	882	872	862	853	853	853	853	853
Economic and Social Committee	734	720	713	670	665	668	668	668	669
Ombudsman	67	67	66	66	65	65	66	69	73
Data Protection Supervisor	45	45	46	47	56	64	71	84	84
	40769	40566	40106	39723	39328	39184	39130	39266	39327

Table 1 Establishment plan posts per EU institution

* Source: Resource allocation on 1 January each year – Official Journal of the European Union
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/budget/www/index-en.htm>

WORKFORCE

CoR workforce in 2021

The CoR's active workforce on 31 December 2021 comprised 606 people, of whom 548 were statutory staff and 58 non-statutory staff (seconded national experts, trainees, interim staff, external service providers, etc.). The demographic structure of CoR staff members remained relatively stable (see age pyramid in chart 5), despite progressive renewal of colleagues departing from the institution (retirements, transfers to the other institutions, early resignation of contracts, etc.). The average age of CoR statutory staff members in 2021 was 47.3, with the average female population being slightly younger (at 46) compared to men.

CoR employment on 31 December 2021 (statutory staff members)

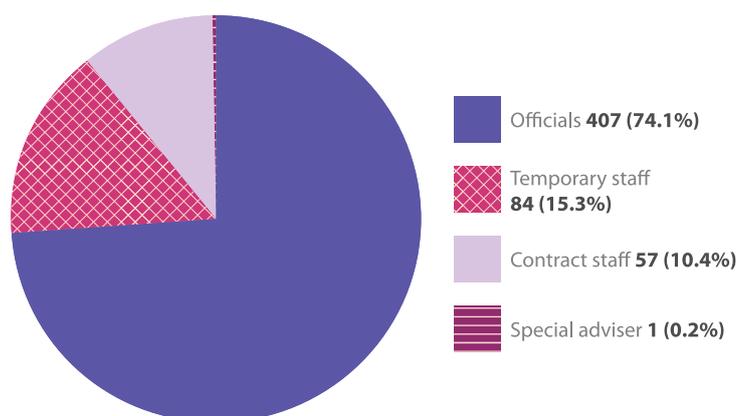


Chart 3 CoR statutory staff members on 31 December 2021

As regards gender, the ratio between male and female members of staff has almost reached parity (see Chapter 4.1 Equal opportunities). The good practices to encourage female staff members to apply for management posts will continue.

CoR statutory staff by nationality on 31 December 2021

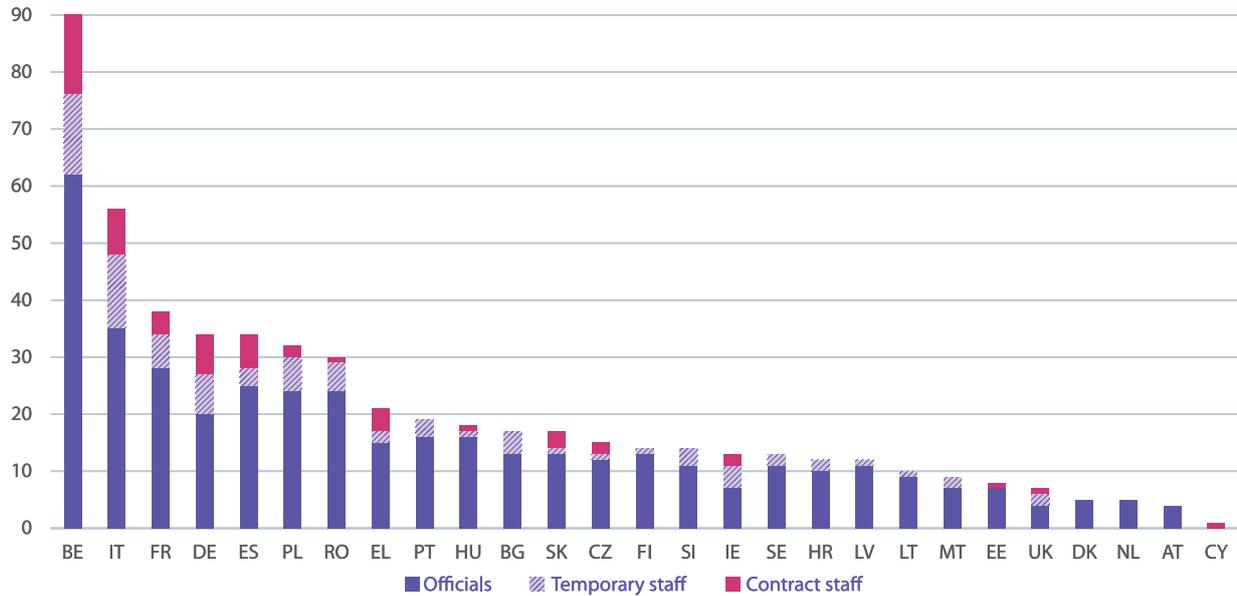


Chart 4 CoR statutory staff by nationality on 31 December 2021

CoR statutory staff by age and gender

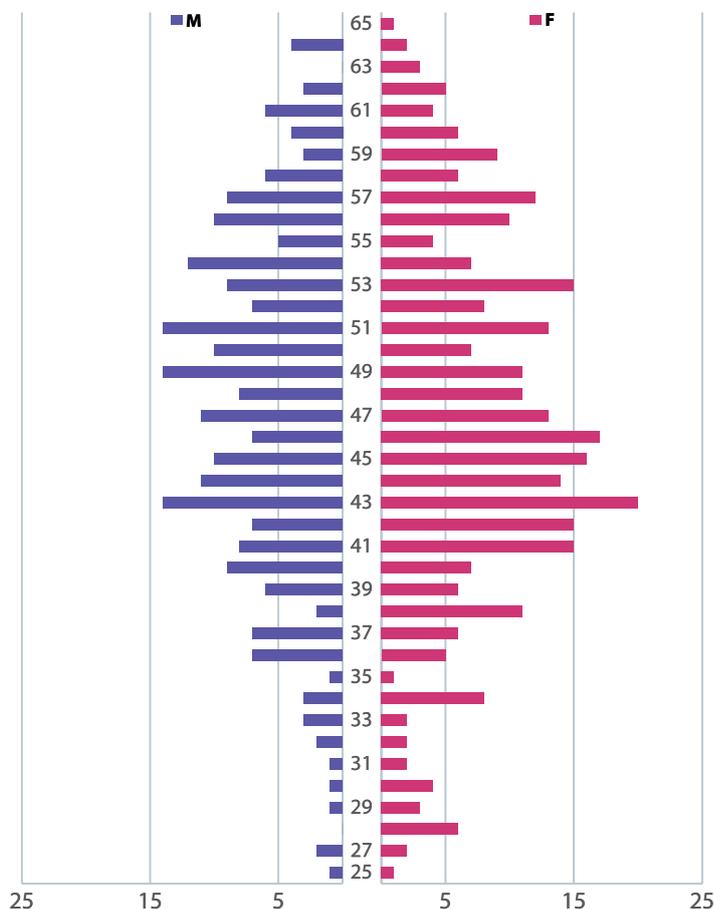


Chart 5 CoR statutory staff by age and gender on 31 December 2021

The issue of the active ageing of staff is a major challenge for our institution since more than 38% of staff are over 50 and the average age is over 47 (see table 2). Joint efforts in terms of employer branding, working conditions and career development opportunities as part of the Integrated Talent Management Strategy will be needed to ensure business continuity, talent retention, knowledge transfer etc.

CoR statutory staff by age in 2021

Statutory staff by age	%	Population
24-29 years	2.9%	16
30-39 years	14.6%	80
40-49 years	43.4%	238
50-59 years	32.1%	176
60-66 years	6.9%	38
Average age		47.03

Table 2 CoR statutory staff by age in 2021

Officials

The workforce is spread over three different function groups: AD, AST and AST/SC. On 31 December 2021, the CoR employed 407 officials in active service, broken down into 249 ADs, 153 ASTs and 5 AST/SCs. The AD/AST ratio is 61.2% to 37.6%. AST/SCs make up about 1.2%, but are gradually increasing their share of the number of posts.

The situation varies between the directorates depending on their core business (staff members in the Directorate for Translation mainly belong to the AD function group, while AST staff members are in the majority in support-providing directorates such as Human Resources and Finance). Due to the limited size of the workforce and the necessary optimisation of human resources in the context of the above-mentioned staff cuts and efficiency measures, staff members are required to be more versatile and to cope with both content-oriented and administrative tasks.

Due to the absence of EPSO reserve lists and a very limited number of officials in the AST/SC function group in the other institutions, it is quite challenging to increase the share of AST/SC staff members. In addition, the smaller an institution is, the larger the scope of tasks, responsibilities and versatility pertaining to each post. The number of jobs entailing purely administrative support or secretarial tasks is reducing, limiting thus the opportunities to increase the share of AST/SC jobs.

Versatility is indeed becoming an increasingly important requirement for all institutions. Over the years, EPSO has also reduced the number of options and profiles published in the annual cycle of open competitions for generalists and most of the institutions have been looking for general profiles in order to ensure future vocational development and offer further career/mobility opportunities for their staff.

Composition of officials, temporary and contract staff on 31 December 2021



Chart 6 Officials – function group breakdown on 31 December 2021

Chart 7 Temporary staff broken down by type of contract

Chart 8 Contract staff broken down by type of contract

Temporary staff

The CoR employs three categories of temporary staff: temporary staff occupying temporary posts (2a), including the Secretary-General, temporary staff in the political groups and the president's private office (2c) and temporary staff on permanent posts (2b) recruited when the publication of a vacancy notice was unsuccessful and/or the recruitment of a permanent staff member was not possible.

On 31 December 2021, 84 people were employed as temporary staff: 3 on 2a posts, 34 on 2b (permanent) posts and 47 in the political group secretariats and the president's private office (2c posts).

The increased number of temporary staff on permanent posts reflects the situation of the EPSO reserve lists. Competitions for several profiles have not been organised or have been subject to delays due to Court judgments and the effect of the pandemic. This mainly concerns financial profiles, AST/SCs and some other specialised functions.

The larger number of 2c) posts in 2021 is due to the recent creation of a new political group in the CoR (the Greens) and the need to ensure the critical mass required to provide an adequate level of service to its members.

Contract staff

Contract staff cover both permanent needs (category 3a, function group I – ushers, drivers, manual workers, etc. on open-ended contracts after two initial fixed-term contracts) and temporary needs in order to deliver specific projects and/or provide support over a limited period of time in the event of absence, high workload, etc. (category 3b, function groups II, III and IV).

On 31 December 2021, the CoR employed 57 contract staff members, including 20 on an open-ended basis.

Special advisor

The CoR employs one special advisor (medical doctor) on a daily basis, recruited under the provisions of Article 123 of the CEOS. The medical doctor was important in the management of the pandemic and all its related aspects. Therefore, her working scheme was upgraded in 2021 to 40 working hours a week.

Interim staff

In the event of temporary needs, the CoR can also turn to interim agencies, mainly to fill temporary needs for secretaries/assistants, conference technicians, nurses, etc. In 2021, 21 persons performed interim missions for the CoR. They performed a total of 88 interim assignments, a rise of more than 30% compared to 2020, when only a limited number of assignments could be performed in the first half of the year due to the pandemic.

Seconded national experts

In order to benefit from their specific competencies, regional expertise and networks, the CoR also encourages the exchange of best practices by welcoming experts from national, regional and local public bodies into its core business services. One new national expert was recruited in 2021 and four had their secondments extended. The CoR employed seven seconded national experts on 31 December 2021 with a total budget of EUR 606 534, two of them at no cost to the institution. A new promotion campaign will take place in 2022 to encourage public authorities at all levels of the European Union to consider seconding their staff to the CoR in order to contribute to the EU decision-making process by involving the national, regional and local authorities and to encourage cross-fertilising and exchanges of best practices.

External service providers

Due to the specific nature of some functions and profiles, expertise is provided by external service providers placed at the disposal of the institution by means of framework contracts (IT helpdesk, security, communication services, etc.).

Trainees

The CoR organises three types of traineeships:

- *Standard traineeships*

Like the other European institutions, the CoR organises two annual sessions for paid Blue Book trainees (February and September). In 2021 the CoR hosted 48 trainees. Due to the health conditions in place at the time, many activities planned for standard (paid) trainees unfortunately needed to be cancelled or switched to remote activities.

- *Short-term study visits*

In a bid to offer EU graduates the opportunity to gain professional experience and insight into the institution, non-remunerated internships are offered at the CoR. In 2021, seven trainees were hosted under this type of internship.

- *Internship for government officials*

This programme is primarily intended for government officials from the Member States or from a state which is an official candidate for accession. Government trainees may come from national, regional or local authorities. The CoR did not host any government interns in 2021.

In addition to the three structured traineeship forms, the institution has hosted Irish trainees to help translate the *acquis* and to gain experience in an EU institution. This is organised in agreement with the Irish Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in connection with the end of the Irish language derogation. In 2021, three short-term study visit trainees were hosted by the English and Irish Translation Unit (out of these, one short-term study visit started in 2020 and continued into 2021).

In conclusion, a total of 58 young people were hosted at the CoR as part of the internship programme in 2021.

Overall number of internships offered at the CoR

Year	Standard traineeships	Short-term study visits	Internships for government officials
2021	48	10	0
2020	47	8	0
2019	46	34	1

Table 3 Overall number of internships offered at the CoR

In 2020, a new version of the online application form for standard traineeship was released and diversity and inclusion priorities were taken into account by adding the following features:

- candidates could specify their gender via a non-specified open space;
- disabled candidates could contact the social assistant for support during the application process.

This initiative to increase diversity and inclusion among candidates is now the established practice.

Gender data have been collected comparing the breakdown of applications by gender with the number of selected trainees by gender.

Selection of trainees by gender (period 2020-2021)



Chart 9 Trainee applications by gender



Chart 10 Selected trainees by gender

Traineeship experience during the COVID-19 outbreak

The 2021 traineeship period was strongly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the circumstances, some measures were put in place for all trainees in order to guarantee safety, well-being and business continuity:

- teleworking was strongly recommended, despite not being provided for in Decision 7-2020 that regulates the traineeship programmes at the CoR;
- they were not allowed to telework from their home countries. Exceptional cases were approved following advice from the social assistant and medical officer.

The Y-Factor

The Y-Factor project is a biannual initiative, designed and carried out by the CoR's trainees. During each traineeship, the trainees have the opportunity to develop a project from a youth perspective according to their political interests and preferences.

In 2021 the trainees worked on two different projects.

The CoR trainees of spring 2021 decided to help raise awareness of the advantages of rail transport by the producing a podcast series called «Next Stop». As the European Union is pushing towards greener mobility, with rail at the centre of its priorities, CoR trainees decided to dedicate their Y-Factor project to highlighting how investing in rail connections and using rail as a way of travel can benefit the whole European community. Railways bring European people, cities and regions closer together and does so in a nature-friendly, cost-effective manner. This is the core message at the heart of the Next Stop podcast.

The autumn group in 2021 worked on “Digital connectivity of youth in rural areas”, where trainees successfully interviewed young people living in rural areas, learning that pursuing strategies to improve digital connectivity for rural areas is really crucial for the development of a job market that offers youth opportunities in a more equitable way.

An initial round of discussions was launched to recreate the alumni network for former CoR trainees in 2022.

Joint services

In order to reach the necessary critical mass and benefit from economies of scale, the CoR shares two directorates with the EESC through an administrative cooperation agreement. A new cooperation agreement was signed in October, entering into force as of 1 November 2021.

The Joint Services (JS) comprise translation services and logistics, including security/safety, IT and telecommunications, infrastructure, Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS), catering and the printshop. While staff management and staff assignments are handled by each Committee independently, staff members working in the Joint Services serve the two Committees and their members irrespective of where they themselves are assigned.

The cooperation agreement which entered into force in November 2021 provides for, among other things, a split of the Directorate for Logistics into two separate Directorates, one being exclusively dedicated to IT and Innovation.

The Joint Services currently account for around 34% of the overall workforce (see chart 11).

Linguistic families – merging of certain translation units

The merging of translation units continued in 2021 on a case-by-case basis.

Ratio of joint to own services (posts)

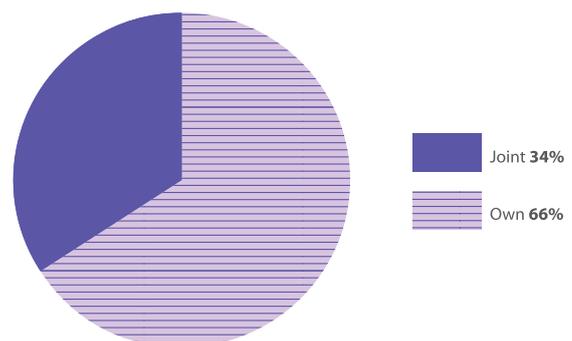


Chart 11 Ratio of joint to own services (posts)

The German and Dutch units as well as the Latvian and Lithuanian units were formally merged on 1 April, while the Spanish and Romanian units were merged on 1 June. The next merger planned for early 2022 is that of the Croatian and Hungarian units.

Each language sector placed under the responsibility of a head of unit is supervised by a language coordinator (head of sector) according to the needs of the service.

RECRUITMENT

Officials

The CoR is one of the few institutions to publish nearly all its vacancy notices on its internet website, thus opening them up and bringing them to the attention of successful EPSO candidates. The Committee's recruitment policy complies with Article 27 of the Staff Regulations. The selection panel does not receive the candidates' personal information (age, nationality or contact details) to ensure that it analyses the application solely on the basis of professional profile and the needs of the recruiting service.

Due to the global pandemic, 2021 saw a decrease of around 30% in the number of published vacancy and recruitment notices, with 25 publications compared to 33 in 2020 and 48 in 2019. This decrease can be partially explained by the new internal organisation put in place in early 2021, which generated additional professional opportunities for many staff members. Six new officials were recruited from both EPSO and CoR internal competition reserve lists. Six officials left the CoR for another EU institution, while eight colleagues were transferred in from another institution in 2021, which indicates the increased interinstitutional attractiveness of the CoR and confirms that the efforts in terms of employer branding seem positive and impactful.

	2019	2020	2021	Variation between 2020 and 2021
Vacancy notices	48	33	25	- 24.2%
Newly recruited officials	23	10	6	- 40%
Transfers in	9	5	8	+60%
Transfers out	13	12	6	- 50%

Table 4 Permanent staff changes in 2019-2021

The CoR has seen a sharp decrease in the number of eligible candidates and interviews organised, despite the aforementioned measures to attract as many candidates as possible. The 22 vacancy notices published for permanent officials in 2021 attracted 84 eligible candidates with 43 candidates who were invited for interview (an average of around two candidates per vacancy compared to three in the previous years). One cause for this can be found in the reluctance of some candidates/successful competition applicants to relocate during the pandemic and the absence of new reserve lists in certain staff categories, specifically following delays at EPSO, also because of the COVID-19 pandemic and due to Court judgments that require new approaches to be identified to correct some legally weak practices.

In this context, the CoR actively participated in several task forces organised by EPSO to improve cooperation at interinstitutional level, to increase the diversity of the candidate pool and to improve the speed, efficiency and effectiveness of EPSO selection boards. The CoR is also actively involved in interinstitutional open competitions via its presence on the EPSO Management Board, the EPSO Working Group, selection boards and several topical working groups (CAST permanent, management of reserve lists, etc.).

Other staff

With the number of posts decreasing from 537 in 2013 to 494 in 2021, the recruitment of non-permanent staff members is still important as a means of providing flexible and temporary support, in particular to meet the overall goal of strengthening the Committee's political activities and delivering deep-rooted changes in its structure.

Political groups and presidency (temporary staff 2c)

Three posts for temporary staff 2c were also published for the secretariats of the political groups in 2021. Two procedures launched in 2021 were completed. This required the organisation of written and oral tests before a selection panel comprising representatives of the administration, of the respective political group and of the Staff Committee in order to guarantee conditions similar to EPSO open competitions and taking into account the COVID-19 safety measures.

Other non-permanent staff (contract staff 3a and 3b and temporary staff 2a and 2b)

In 2021, 40 selection procedures for contract/temporary (2a and 2b) staff members were organised.

As a result, 43 new contract and temporary staff members were recruited in 2021 (this includes procedures initiated in 2020). Furthermore, 20 non-permanent staff members were also granted extensions to their existing contracts. In parallel, 13 non-permanent staff members resigned from the institution in 2021.

The relative increase in temporary staff 2b) recruited on permanent posts is mainly due to the continued difficulties EPSO has been experiencing in the context of the ongoing pandemic and following several law cases where its working methods, selection procedures and proceedings must be adjusted to comply with the new requirements set by the legislator. The switch to fully remote tests and competitions required a lot of work in terms of selection board members, correctors and source persons, and the competitions have been heavily delayed, which has impacted EPSO's capacity to deliver new reserve lists in time. Due to some internal changes within several large institutions, no competitions for permanent linguistic staff have currently been organised. The institutions do not have a sufficient pool of available candidates to appoint new officials in the translation services. Many specialised profiles are lacking (finance, public procurements, communication, IT, law, etc.), resulting in an increased number of temporary staff recruited on permanent posts.

	2019	2020	2021	variation
Newly recruited non-permanent staff members	23	37	43	+ 16%
Extensions of existing contracts	18	21	20	-5%
Resignations	20	15	13	- 13%

Table 5 Changes regarding temporary and contract staff in 2019-2021

Organisational aspects relating to recruitment

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, all files and procedures are completely paperless and organised efficiently and correctly. Candidates are exclusively invited for videoconference interviews, making the selection process speedier and less burdensome for both candidates and selection panel members.

HR representatives participate in every selection interview organised by the institution, as do representatives of the secretary-general's private office for the recruitment of AD officials, ensuring equal treatment of candidates and capitalising on their knowledge and experience to improve the quality of the selection process. HR contact points are also trained and appointed in each directorate to that end.

SysPer and assistance to staff

The HR tool SysPer and its integration into the CoR's broader IT landscape ensure that all staff members, old and new, can perform almost all HR-related tasks in a completely paperless manner. The SysPer Helpdesk ensures that this vital functionality is available for all staff members. In 2021, 440 requests for assistance, or about 39 requests per month, were handled. A new module in Sysper that allows for more flexible management of holidays was also implemented in 2021.

HR-related statistics

This digitalisation also allows the CoR to use more reliable and immediately available HR data to ensure proper management of the institution and its resources while responding quickly to the regular requests for information from Permanent Representations and various internal and external stakeholders. In 2021, the CoR received 52 internal requests for staff data to assist management in directing HR policy, as well as about 12 external requests for information. The HR statistician manages the establishment plan, updates the operational organisation chart once a month and implements any changes in the organisation, assists all internal services with their requests for HR-related statistics, contributes to all HR reporting (annual HR report, summary HR leaflets, CoR budget booklets in the framework of the annual budgetary procedure, etc.).

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Strategy and framework

The **Integrated Talent Management Strategy** (hereunder "the Strategy") forms the basis of and links all activities related to the institution's HR policy in the area of professional development.

The concept of talent management is linked to a set of competencies which help staff and managers to perform well in their tasks and roles. The CoR **Competency Framework**, the tool used for many of the institution's HR processes (recruitment, appraisal, career development, internal mobility, etc.) contains the core competencies (9 for staff and 12 for managers) required by both staff and managers which are assessed during all these processes.



Chart 12 CoR competency framework

Career guidance (staff and trainees)

Career guidance is one of the pillars for career development. It aims to provide individual counselling for staff by helping them identify and recognise skills and interests in order to develop their careers in the interest of both staff and the institution.

In 2021, the career guidance officers assisted 17 clients (24 in 2020), for a total of 34 individual sessions scheduled (44 in 2020). The decreasing number of requests is mainly due to the general uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 situation and an increased workload. The career guidance sessions took place online. Among other reasons (career improvements in their current position, for example), staff requested career guidance more for internal than external mobility, which is already a great achievement in line with the objective of retaining staff.

With regard to trainees, unfortunately the 2021 groups could not benefit from the career guidance training sessions due to the restrictions imposed on group meetings.

Enhanced internal mobility policy

The Mobility Service has put in place a various measures to promote voluntary internal mobility:

1. Keeping an **internal mobility list**, where people interested in internal moves are registered.
2. Looking for **internal candidates** for vacant posts before publication.
3. Actively contacting staff members who have worked in the same post for seven or more years, proposing career guidance sessions in order to make a career review and consider further development if needed.

In September 2021, a draft decision on “Implementing an integrated talent management strategy” was drawn up and will be submitted for social dialogue in early 2022.

Job shadowing

Following the **70:20:10 learning model**, this is how we learn:

- 70% by working
- 20% through collaboration, knowledge sharing and creation
- 10% through formal knowledge sources (e-learning, internet, training, etc.)



Figure 1 “70:20:10 learning and development model” by Charles Jennings. Source: Charles Jennings, former CLO of Reuters

This is why the job shadowing project is part of the “supporting professional development and encouraging mobility” cluster of the talent management strategy.

Internal job shadowing

The third edition of the internal job shadowing took place in hybrid format from 1 February until 31 May 2021. Fourteen staff members applied to be a guest or host.

	2019	2020*	2021
Requests received (total)	37	22	14
Participants’ closing event	no event	22	20
Evaluation replies	paper eval.	13	9
Final score at the evaluation	N/A	7.69	7.78

Table 6 Number of applications and participants in the internal job shadowing

* COVID-19 as from March 2020 -> Increased workload, switch to online format (which a lot of people do not like)

There are multiple goals: to become familiar with a new working environment, expand knowledge and awareness of the institution and all its services, explore and share best practices, have the opportunity to meet new people, create networks, break down silos.

In October 2021, the Mobility Service launched a call for expressions of interest for a new hybrid (both online and face to face) job shadowing exercise in 2022.

Interinstitutional job shadowing

In 2021, an interinstitutional job shadowing initiative was prepared and launched.

Bilateral discussions were conducted with the European Parliament, the European Council, the Secretariat-General and various DGs of the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and other institutions in order to organise pilots in 2022, with the CoR leading it.

Exit interviews

Exit interviews are organised by the Mobility Service with colleagues leaving the institution who agree to share their feedback and reasons for leaving. This enables the institution to gain valuable insight into its strengths and (even more importantly) areas for development as a workplace.

In 2021, only six staff members (officials) left the CoR to join another European institution. This is the lowest number since 2012. The reasons may be linked to the pandemic and the high workload. Staff are aware that starting new tasks in another institution might be more complex due to the virtual teleworking circumstances. Only two colleagues agreed to talk with the mobility colleagues, whereas they usually agree to it.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

As in 2020, the training format was fully online. This required the service to adapt in a more permanent way to the new mind-set and rethink course format and content: shorter sessions, more interaction (online), new IT tools to put in place (learning to work with one new platform after the other), new topics (more focused on wellbeing, managing remotely in a hybrid environment and other concerns expressed by staff members and managers).

In spite of these difficulties, on average, staff spent **4.58 days** in training, reversing the decreasing trend started in previous years. Staff adapted and spent more time in shorter but more targeted training sessions. In 2021 the highest number of courses ever were completed, with **4 584 participants in 949 courses**, including 2 847 participants in 126 CoR courses (one-off or recurrent, i.e. 222 sessions organised in total).

Moreover, the cancellation rate has dropped substantially compared to previous years, even pre-pandemic years.

The main change in 2021 is that, in addition to the traditional ways of learning, a considerable amount of learning took place in the form of informal training, e-learning and other platform-based activities, which are not reflected in the figures, as they are not recorded in EU Learn and therefore are not part of the statistics.

Year	Total number of training days	Average (all staff)	Total number of enrolments	Cancellation rate	Total number of courses completed	Average (all staff)
2021	2490.65	4.58	5202	11.88 %	4584	8.47
2020	2138.41	3.99	3147	18.18 %	2575	4.76
2019	2823.46	5.33	3655	16.72 %	3044	5.63

Table 7 Trend in the number of training days (1 training day = 8 hours) and training courses completed

Internal training with internal trainers

Another important learning and development achievement in 2021 was the development of **internal training sessions**.

In line with action 15 “Peer to peer training” of the CoR Digital Strategy (and also in line with budgetary restrictions), inter-service working groups did considerable analysis and brainstorming. The various **networks** put in place paved the way for new internal training courses (like Dynamics, which could not be organised for years, due to the lack of external trainers who could provide the appropriate knowledge of our internal environment) and for a new procedure to welcome and integrate new colleagues.

In 2021, internal trainers (regular or occasional) delivered a combined total of 79 training sessions on financial and HR topics, ethics and integrity, CoR internal procedures, IT tools, CoR policies, etc. The number of days of training increased by more than 40% (15.9 in 2020, 22.8 in 2021) with the following results:

Year	Internal training sessions	Individual enrolments	Training days	Training hours
2020	64	440	15.9	127
2021	79	1195	22.8	182

Table 8 Internal training sessions/participants per year

More than 2.5 times more colleagues received training delivered by another colleague than the year before.

Training session for newcomers – New in 2021

In 2021, an inter-service working group analysed the best practices in place in the CoR services for welcoming newly recruited colleagues and proposed a new “Welcome newcomers” procedure, which entered into force in September 2021.

The guiding principle has been that of “You never get a second chance to make a good first impression”. In addition, equipping a newcomer with appropriate information and contacts at the start of their employment will yield results in terms of quick and smooth integration.

Newcomers induction programme

Information sessions	Communication channels / Training courses	Useful documents	Other induction tools
<p>EC Morning Session: (outside COVID time)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Introduction by Dir. DG HR & HoU, to give a sense of belonging to EU institution (EC perspective)</i> • <i>General info on insurance, pension scheme, etc.</i> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>EC: “Online networking session”, integrating newcomers presenting their working environment. Not the day of the entry into service CoR Welcome (1st day of the month, in the afternoon):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Intro by an experienced manager from HR: sense of belonging to CoR</i> • <i>Explanation of CoR rules</i> • <i>Signature of documents</i> <p>“HR is all ears”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Welcome by the Director of HR and unit E3 management</i> • <i>Working conditions (Unit E3)</i> • <i>Career development (Unit E2)</i> • <i>Learning & development (Unit E3)</i> • <i>Ethics & equal opportunities (Unit E3)</i> • <i>Career guidance & internal mobility (Unit E3)</i> <p>“Newcomers welcome tour”: 2 specific events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Meet our SG” (twice a year) • “Intro to the CoR’s tasks and structure” by visitors service 	<p>L&D info news</p> <p>HR Update</p> <p>L&D info package:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Onboarding e-learning</i> • <i>“Run, hide and tell” video, to learn what to do in case of a terrorist attack or other kinds of violent situations</i> • <i>Information about compulsory training</i> • <i>Training regulation</i> • <i>Invitation to participate in ‘Lifecycle of an opinion’</i> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Onboarding e-Learning training</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Run, Hide and Tell</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Lifecycle of an opinion</u></p>	<p>Newcomers Guide</p> <p><u>Training for newcomers page</u></p> <p><u>Welcome office page</u></p> <p><u>Information for newcomers page</u></p>	<p>“Entry talk” (follow-up after 6 months): meeting with Internal Mobility service and other newcomers (with the aim to create and consolidate the newcomers network)</p> <p>Mentorship programme (from 2023 TBC)</p>

Figure 2 Newcomers induction programme – 2021 version

In 2021, the CoR Learning and Development and Mobility sectors welcomed 47 new colleagues at the dedicated introductory sessions (34 in 2020). Three online newcomers’ sessions (“HR is all ears”) took place in April, July and October, with three additional online sessions, during which the Secretary-General gave a special word of welcome (in January, June and December – postponed until February 2022).

New projects are in the pipeline for 2022.

Compulsory and recommended training sessions

In 2021, new Decision 52/2020 on compulsory and recommended training entered into force. Several information sessions enabled staff and management to understand the changes and to ask questions.

This new decision **clarifies**:

1. the training needs of the various CoR services;
2. the rules applicable to different job profiles.

The **main changes** are:

1. the inclusion of competencies linked to specific job profiles in Directorates A, B and C;
2. the inclusion of competencies linked to specific categories (OIA, Head EPI, Confidential Counsellor, Career Guidance Officer, etc.);
3. the change from “recommended” to “compulsory” for some training, like “**Ethics and Integrity**” (including refresher courses).

Obligations remain the same:

- it is up to each **staff member** to keep **up to date** with required competencies;
- it is up to all **line managers** to ensure **compliance** for their staff.

Concerning the “Ethics and Integrity” course, 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).

Management training

Management training courses are regularly organised on specific topics, delivered by both in-house trainers and external experts in the field. In addition to the training courses organised at the CoR, managers can attend inter-institutional management training provided mainly by the European School of Administration.

Professionalisation programmes are organised as follows:

Management training for middle management

Aiming to create a valuable platform for aligning policies with practice and contributing to coherent leadership (e.g. workshops on the new appraisal procedure, managing hybrid teams, respect and dignity for a high-performing team and the art of mentoring). In total, 24 managers participated in one or more in-house workshops throughout the year.

Management training programme for managers below head of unit level

In 2021, the courses were the same as for middle managers; 37 colleagues took part in the sessions.

Management coaching

This form of guidance is increasing in popularity due to the advantage of working on skill development on an individual basis, taking into account the individual working environment and often as a follow-up to a 360° feedback exercise:

Year	2019	2020	2021
Number of managers	4	8	16

Table 9 Number of managers who benefitted from assistance delivered by an external coach

360° feedback exercise for managers

To assist managers in their professional development and support the development of a feedback culture based on trust across the institution. In 2020, the CoR adopted a new policy, making the feedback exercise for managers compulsory on a rotational basis every five years. In the 2021 exercise, seven middle managers took part.

Year	2019	2020	2021
Management level	Senior	Middle	Middle
Number of managers	5	8	7

Table 10 Number of managers who participated in a 360° feedback exercise

Training offer

The Learning and Development service can organise training sessions on its own initiative (with internal or external trainers), upon the request of the CoR services, or allow staff members to register for training courses on their own initiative.

Training upon services' request:

Given their direct impact on staff engagement and team cohesion, the number of team building and away day-type events has been growing in recent years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only six away days could be organised in 2021, although 13 away days were planned. Seven were postponed to 2022. Moreover, ten away days initially planned in 2020 took place in 2021.

Year	2019	2020	2021
Team building	2	0	1
Away day	14	20	13

Table 11 Number of team building and away days organised upon the request of services

Team coaching:

Since 2020, team coaching with an external coach has been proposed to units to help them face transition phases or tackle specific problems or issues. In 2021, three team coaching sessions were organised, two more than in 2020.

Tailored training courses for all staff (with external trainers):

In 2021, 67 training courses were organised via either framework contracts or negotiated procedures and involved external trainers.

Own-initiative training:

Staff members may request own-initiative courses (linguistic or other), provided they are in line with service needs and operation. In 2021, 12 staff members were authorised to attend such external own-initiative training courses (2 linguistic and 10 non-linguistic).

Language training:

- Classroom training: organised internally or by the European Commission.

All staff	Number of training days CoR	Number of enrolments CoR	Cancellation rate	No. of courses completed	% of DT staff participation	% of all other services
2021	1002	183	22.40%	142	24.65%	75.35%
2020	944.25	157	14.65%	134	29.10%	70.90%
2019	1176.75	163			37.80%	62.20%

Table 12 Participation in language training 2019-2021 (1 training day = 8 hours)

Unfortunately, we saw a significant increase in the cancellation rate last year, amounting to 22% in 2021 compared to 14% in 2020. As these are cancellations made after the start of the course, the cost of the course is to be paid in full to the European Commission and therefore a net loss to the CoR.

- External training courses:

Due to the ongoing pandemic, external face-to-face training courses and the special scheme for translators were put on hold in both 2020 and 2021.

IT training:

Individual one-hour IT coaching sessions are offered and widely used.

In 2021, the “Technology training programme for IT officials” was carried out entirely online for the first time. This involved not only virtual classrooms and course materials but also access to virtual IT environments to allow completion of the practical exercises. A lot of training courses are available via the Learning Solutions Platform open to staff.

In 2021, the Training Service organised 49 IT training sessions with an external IT trainer (32 in 2020), with a total of 368 participants (96 in 2020), of which 15 sessions of individual IT coaching were held with 47 participants. Additionally, Microsoft organised four specific MS Teams training sessions for all staff, with a total of 263 participants.

A total of 97 participants attended specific targeted IT training sessions provided by other institutions (EESC, European Commission), i.e. 148 enrolments, corresponding to 347 hours of training.

Training sessions on LinkedIn Learning

In 2021, the Training Service purchased 439 licences to access the LinkedIn Learning Platform, which comprises more than 15 000 online courses in seven languages and on multiple topics, providing gradual progression from beginner to advanced levels of learning.

Out of these 439 licences, 93 were actively used until the beginning of October. As from mid-October, the LinkedIn Learning catalogue has been integrated into EU Learn, which means that users no longer need to activate a licence on the LinkedIn platform, but can access the platform directly via EU Learn.

Overall in 2021, CoR staff followed 1 183 courses and 208 were completed. Moreover, the LinkedIn Learning videos proved to be very popular: 6 328 videos viewed and 4 937 completed.

CoR learners’ most popular topics on LinkedIn Learning are: Microsoft Teams, Excel and SharePoint, as well as skills like personal development, critical thinking, project management, communication, strategic thinking and time management.

CAREER GUIDANCE AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIRECTORATE FOR TRANSLATION (DT)

The specific DT competency framework

The Directorate for Translation (DT) has invested considerable effort in applying the two Committees' competency frameworks. The directorate has created a **specific DT competency framework** by merging the frameworks of the two Committees and integrating the DT-specific competencies into it. Several branches have grown out of this DT competency "trunk".

One of them is related to **recruitment interviews**. The competencies were broken down into behaviours that can be observed and evaluated during an interview. Examples of questions were developed that would allow the candidates to prove, mostly with specific examples, that they possessed the competencies. An evaluation grid was also developed based on the same competencies and behaviours and reflecting the DT's priorities.

Another branch grown from the competency framework is the DT **appraisal guidelines**, the objective of which is twofold. First, to bring more transparency to staff assessments and dialogues at the DT. Each staff member can see what the expected performance is in the various competency areas and know on what basis they are being assessed. Second, to bring more coherence to the assessments across translation units. Staff members were involved in developing the guidelines via a focus group run by an external facilitator.

DT knowledge base

The DT has created an online knowledge base, which is designed as a repository for specific technical and procedural information relating to the tools and business processes in use at the DT. The knowledge base is divided into three sections:

Procedures: the main business processes used in the work of the DT and which apply to all staff and all units. The procedures are adopted formally, in a paperless approval process.

Instructions: step-by-step instructions on how a task should be performed, technical troubleshooting and various background technical information. The instructions complement the procedures.

Manuals: detailed operations to be carried out using specific tools or applications, often needing to be updated more frequently as a result of, for example, software updates. Over time, all DT-authored manuals will be centralised within the knowledge base, converting them from PDF documents to structured web pages, which are easier to search and update.

The knowledge base also stores training materials, video tutorials, etc.

Training at the Directorate for Translation

The Directorate for Translation, which has its own dedicated training centre in EU Learn, designs, organises and delivers training courses for its staff on the IT tools used specifically by translators and translation assistants. In 2021, the directorate delivered 14 sessions for newcomers (Newcomers' Infosession – Introduction to DT tools/ Welcome to the DT), six technical workshops on "Managing the Quality of Language Assets", six coaching sessions on "Amendment Sequencer" and another six on "Amendment Merger". It also provided two training sessions on the new GroupShare tool.

Furthermore, it organised individual and group coaching courses on terminology, tailored to suit the needs of individual terminologists and teams.

The Directorate for Translation also organised nine training sessions on clear writing, five in English and four in French .

Thematic training for translation staff

In 2021, the Directorate for Translation organised three sessions of “Translators’ Masterclasses” on “Sustainable Finance Taxonomy and Climate Change”, “Territorial Impact Assessment” and “the Lifecycle of an Opinion”. The planned masterclass on the Green Deal had to be postponed until 2022.

In September 2021, it held a successful online conference for translation staff entitled “AI & Translation”, featuring speakers from international organisations, academia and the private sector, attended by 518 participants from several EU institutions and external participants.

With the cancellation of several planned in-house training courses due to the health situation, the Directorate for Translation developed several video tutorials for DT staff on specific subjects: “New Evaluation Workflow”, “Studio User Settings”, “Studio Plug-Ins”, “Alignments”, “Euramis Retrieval”, “Downloads Tabs”, “TPT”, “Pivot” and “EESC Info”, as well as a few modules specifically designed for new colleagues.

CAREER

Annual appraisal

A new appraisal system with points, designed after an extensive joint social dialogue with staff representatives, was put in place at the beginning of 2021 for the 2020 reference period. This required a major update of the EVA CoR tool. Even though the exercise was launched later than usual (end of March 2021), it was closed within the deadline and 468 staff reports for officials, contract and temporary staff were drawn up. Compared with only one appeal registered under the previous appraisal exercise (under a system without points), 35 staff members used the opportunity to contest the general assessment before the coordinator validate the report (mini-appeals) and 17 formal appeals were lodged.

With the entry into force of the new cooperation agreement between the CoR and the EESC on 1 November 2021, some important changes were made to the appraisal system of the two Committees, especially for staff in the joint services. In order to implement the new staff assessment provisions, a formal update of the general implementing provisions on staff assessment is required, implying a new social dialogue (to be initiated in 2022).

Promotion

The 2021 promotion procedure took place according to new rules and based on a new appraisal system with points. During this promotion round, 102 officials (60 ADs and 42 ASTs) were promoted out of a total of 411 officials in active employment on 1 January 2021. The overall promotion rate was 24.8% (compared with 26.9% in 2020).

In addition, one contract staff member was reclassified into a higher grade and 12 temporary staff members in the political groups were assigned to a post with a higher grade.

Certification

In accordance with Article 45a of the Staff Regulations, the certification procedure is designed to enable a limited number of officials in the AST function group, from grade AST5 upwards, to be appointed to a vacant post in the AD function group, with no change in grade, provided that they have been selected to take part in a compulsory training programme, have followed this programme assiduously and have passed the relevant written and oral examinations; each official must also have been selected for the administrator post in question following the publication of a vacancy notice.

Under the 2020 certification round, launched in October 2020, two CoR officials were selected and participated in the certification training programme in 2021.

Since the introduction of certification procedures in 2005, 25 eligible AST officials have been selected to take part in the training programme and 23 of them have successfully completed the programme. Almost 70% of the CoR’s certified officials have been appointed to an AD post either in the CoR or in the other EU institutions.

Other Career sector activities

Apart from these yearly procedures, the Career sector also manages **personal files** for the whole institution. In 2021, 95 new personal files were processed for probationary officials, temporary/contract staff, incoming transfers, reinstatements and SNEs and more than 249 digital files were created.

In connection with the requirements of Article 45 (2) of the Staff Regulations (“demonstrate the ability to work in a third language before the first promotion”), 12 new files have been opened.

Moreover, 22 implementing decisions concerning leave on personal grounds for officials and unpaid leave for agents were processed. At the end of their leave on personal grounds, three officials presented their resignation.

The career sector manages five mailboxes, processing a volume of more than 4 500 requests from staff and managers yearly.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The CoR has a comprehensive and solid framework in place to ensure a proper work-life balance for staff and managers. It provides an adequate level of flexibility whenever needed, in order to respond in the best possible way to the diversity of situations and expectations encountered by staff, managers and the institution. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all efforts were made to maximise use of the possibilities offered by the existing CoR decisions and to apply them with the necessary flexibility to adapt to a changing environment, new needs and emerging challenges for staff and managers alike.

Working time

Telework

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for the whole of 2021, telework was the principal working mode for all staff whose job allowed it, and was the recommended or compulsory working mode, although it was recommended that staff work in the office for one day a week from 16 April onwards, and were obliged to work in the office between September and November (one day per week from 13 September, two days a week from 18 October, then one day a week from 3 November, after which presence became optional again from 22 November). During all these periods, occasional “force majeure” telework without time registration, was to be encoded by all staff, even during the September-November period when working in the office was required, in order to grant staff greater flexibility.

As the health measures continued all through the year in a fluctuating way depending on the gravity of the situation, the general derogation allowing staff to telework from abroad was once again adopted in the summer and before Christmas in order to allow staff to meet their families and cope more easily with the difficulties. Furthermore, staff who faced particular social or medical problems due to the pandemic, still benefited from a flexible application of the derogation for telework from abroad, based on an prior opinion of the social assistant or medical officer, depending on the staff member’s individual situation. The assessment criteria used by the medical officer and/or the social worker became stricter from June onwards. In total, 79 staff members received teleworking decisions adopted on this basis. Since autumn 2021, 4 staff members were allowed to telework from home at 100% for medical reasons.

Working time and reflection on a new hybrid scheme

From 17 March 2020 onwards, working time was managed on the basis of a common understanding between staff member and manager, while respecting core time. The obligation to encode working time was suspended because of the pandemic: all days were encoded as teleworking days and were therefore neutralised. However, the scheme continued to function. In particular, staff could use up their credit to take recuperation time, and as a supporting measure, managers could also add credit every month in case of high workload.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant change in working methods and has brought about major and unexpected improvements in working conditions for all staff. In order to prepare for a smooth return to the office, while at the same time capitalising on the lessons learned from the pandemic, digitalised workflows, etc., HR has laid the foundation for a new post-pandemic telework and working time environment. The project combines presence

in the office (at least 2 to 3 days a week, depending on the directorate) and teleworking. Staff are able to encode in advance a personalised schedule that can be modified in the event of significant deviations from the pre-set schedule. The project is characterised by a high degree of flexibility: the possibility of adjusting the number of telework days per week (or to delete presence days) if agreed between the line manager and the staff member; the possibility of combining office and home work on the same day to avoid traffic peak hours if the majority of the day is spent in the office; the possibility of teleworking from an address other than one's official residence without additional formalities; an annual quota for telework from abroad and a more flexible system for medical consultations. The project was presented to the trade unions in July 2021 and consultation took place during the second half of 2021. This hybrid scheme will enter into force in 2022.

Overtime

Officials in grades AST1–AST4, SC1-SC6 and contract staff in grades FGI-FGII are entitled to compensatory leave or, if the workload and the interests of the service do not allow for compensation, to remuneration for the overtime worked.

The Staff Regulations provide for financial compensation if the needs of the service do not allow hours worked to be recuperated within two months.

While the number of overtime hours increased from 2020 to 2021, the total of overtime hours was still only around half of the pre-pandemic level. Unlike in the years before 2020, when overtime was managed in a specific CoR application, in 2021, overtime was registered in Sysper, with overtime hours paid automatically following the second month after the overtime worked, in line with interinstitutional practice. This has led to an increase in remunerated hours.

Calendar year	Overtime declared (number of hours)	Average per month over 12 months	Overtime worked in days	Remunerated hours
2021	577.37	48.11	72.2	510.37
2020	295.46	24.36	39	283.46
2019	1088.23	90.69	137.63	190.3

Table 13 Overtime 2019-2021

Shift work and stand-by duties

The joint security service of the CoR and the EESC works under particular conditions and schedules – and under significant pressure. In particular, security staff need to be available during the Committees' operating hours and must be reachable at all times. The work structure of that service, with a working scheme combining shift work (during the Committees' operating hours) and stand-by duties (for the rest of the time), ensures much greater availability and improved responsiveness. Four CoR staff members assigned to the security department participate in these work schemes. Experience throughout the year has shown that the scheme is working to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Working patterns

The Staff Regulations provide for a number of flexible working arrangements, including part-time, parental leave and family leave. Under certain conditions, these flexible work arrangements constitute a right for staff.

In 2021, those working patterns were used by a relatively limited number of staff, mostly women. Use of these flexible working arrangements has been comparable to statistics for 2020, but significantly lower than in previous years. This relatively low uptake, as well as the further increase in the use of family leave can be explained by the enhanced teleworking scheme, including from abroad in the summer and at Christmas.

However, developments in the number of working patterns in the future will need to be monitored in order to follow up possible new trends.

Working patterns in 2021

	Part-time	Parental leave	Family leave
Number of decisions	118 (2020: 118)	69 (2020: 70)	1 (2020: 4)
Number of staff members concerned	58 (2020: 62)	49 (2020: 47)	1 (2020: 4)
<i>Women</i>	46	36	1
<i>Men</i>	12	13	0
<i>AST</i>	19	13	0
<i>AD</i>	39	36	1

Table 14 Working patterns in 2021

Absence management

Consolidating the institution's policy on absences was a priority in 2021. A wide range of measures has been taken in order to underline the importance of tackling the issue, with the focus on understanding the reasons behind absences and ways of supporting colleagues who have been absent as they return to work.

Long-term absences and repeated short-term absences continued 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 were systematically asked to have a conversation with the medical officer.

Sick leave continued to decrease at the CoR in 2021. Whereas in 2019, 455 staff members had been sick at least half a day (or more) during the year, in 2020 this figure fell to 369 staff members and to 350 in 2021 in a reference population of 554 (whereas the reference population was 546 in 2020). Moreover, more than two thirds of CoR staff had between 0 and 7 days of sick leave in the year (37% of staff had no sick leave at all during the whole year).

In the calculation of absenteeism rate in the CoR, medical part-times are also included. With this calculation method, the absence rate evolved in the following way: for 2019 it was 4.53%, for 2020 it was 4.23%, and for 2021 it was 3.84%. There has therefore been a steady decrease in sick leave at the CoR in recent years and 2021 has seen a significant evolution in this direction. Moreover, the increase in long-term sick leaves that was noticeable in 2020 was less marked in 2021.

The Administration and the Medical 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 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 off work due to long-term sickness.

SOCIAL POLICIES

Well-being and healthcare

Well-being at work

The social assistant intervenes at the request of a staff member or upon referral by the Medical service or the Administration. Advice is mainly provided in the fields of hospitalisation, reimbursement of medical costs, administrative questions related to the Staff Regulations and/or the Belgian administration. Individual assistance and assessment of financial or other needs (such as household help) is provided when a staff member and/or family

member has a disability, in the event of financial problems, difficult family situations or long-term illnesses and the coordination of the administrative files. Coaching and mediation are provided in the event of personal problems, stress and conflict at work. The social assistant is also the contact point for colleagues and family members of deceased colleagues for grief counselling and administrative procedures.

In 2021, the social assistant continued the measures which had been introduced in 2020 due to the pandemic:

- Stand-by and easy accessibility by phone, Skype and Teams;
- Assessment of an individual or family situation in order to give an opinion for a special telework derogation. Administrative follow-up with the Administration;
- Coaching sessions for staff returning to work after a long-term illness;
- HR update: drafting articles with general information on psychological or social and JSIS-related topics.

In 2021, 283 appointments were registered (excluding requests directly handled by telephone or email). The one third increase in the number of appointments follows the trend seen in 2020. This increase has mainly been linked to assessing individual social/family situations requiring a telework derogation to telework from abroad. However, there was also a significant increase in the number of coaching sessions for staff returning to work after long-term illness. There were fewer requests for appointments related to stress and conflict at work. However, the conflicts that were dealt with in 2021 were complex in nature and had usually reached an advanced stage by the time they reached the social assistant. Therefore, this type of intervention has typically been very labour- and time-intensive.

The new Decision on supplementary financial aid for staff members or their family with a handicap was presented to staff and implemented as planned.

At the request of the Administration, the social worker, as well as a limited number of HR colleagues in various positions, took mediation courses in the framework of the new decision on conflict and harassment at work.

The social worker represented the Committee of the Regions during the management board meetings of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme; and in different other forums such as the inter-institutional working group on disability.

Healthcare

In the course of 2021, the Medical service and in particular its Medical officer focussed on the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic with a special focus on establishing the institution's health procedures, following-up the suspected cases of COVID-19 and applying health protection procedures, including contact tracing, when such cases were identified.

The CoR Medical service played a key role in the vaccination of staff via an interinstitutional agreement, CoR staff were given access to the European Commission vaccination centre for their COVID-19 vaccinations. In return, the Medical officer and nurse worked two days a week in the vaccination centre for most of the year. As such, the CoR helped out in the vaccination centre work far beyond the CoR's share in terms of population. The CoR Medical service is proud to have contributed to this achievement and to have provided its staff with access to this dedicated vaccination possibility. It is fair to assume that this has contributed to achieving a particularly high vaccination rate among CoR staff: 95% vaccinated with 2 doses and an estimated 75% booster uptake.

The testing capacity of the institution increased in line with developments throughout the year. The CoR renewed its PCR testing capacity through a contract with a laboratory, with tests performed on the CoR's premises to be analysed in a laboratory. It should however be underlined that this PCR capacity is accessible only when essential professional travel is involved, or for the welfare of critical staff, and under no circumstances to be used for private travel or for other reasons. In parallel, masks, including FFP2 masks and gel, were purchased and continued to be provided to staff and Members whenever necessary.

In parallel, the Medical service continued to fulfil its duty to design and implement the institution's preventive health policy, including the organisation of pre-recruitment medical examinations, annual medical check-ups, various medical consultations and interventions, delivering opinions on working time-related matters (notably, in 2021, on requests to telework from abroad), the endorsement of medical check-ups requested by the Administration, the organisation of invalidity committees, etc.

Due to extended teleworking, activity decreased in comparison with previous years. Nevertheless the Medical service endeavoured to organise as many annual visits as possible, in order to ensure staff health and wellbeing.

	2019	2020	2021
Annual medical check-ups	437	206	93
Pre-recruitment medical examinations	30	24	26
Medical consultations	374	163	100
Invalidity committee - completed	4	1	2
- ongoing	0	2	2
- periodic review of previous committees	6	2	10
Check-ups-specialist examinations	20	11	27
Arbitration cases	0	1	2
Laboratory samples	467	207	117
Medical attention via nurse	1272	508	164
Flu vaccinations	84	142	110

Table 15 Activities of the Medical service 2019–2021

The scope of the examinations organised by the CoR Medical service includes, where appropriate – and in addition to the standard features of the preventive examination – personalised services such as:

- body mass composition test, measuring the muscle/fat/water ratio;
- eye test (Visiotest);
- individual stress measurement by means of Firstbeat heart rate monitoring;
- colon cancer tests for staff members aged 40 and over and/or with relatives who have had colon cancer;
- personalised nutritional advice.

Especially in times of pandemic, the CoR Medical service focused on primary prevention so as to reduce psychological risks and burn-out. This involved a personalised approach of optimising action on as many factors as possible to determine the health and well-being of the individual staff member (including in the private sphere), going well beyond the traditional, more conventional policy of secondary and tertiary prevention (detecting and remedying pathologies in a timely manner). This includes:

- a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach designed to inform, follow up and assist the person, and building awareness of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle: possible action on psychological and social aspects, ergonomics, nutrition etc.;
- personalised advice and follow-up: the person is actively invited to follow up talks with the CoR Medical service.

Social initiatives

Various collective social initiatives have been created for staff members (and their families) and include *inter alia* financial backing for schemes to promote social contacts between staff members, for instance for new parents, colleagues of 20, 30 or 40 years of service or retired staff.

Logistical support was also provided for several activities under the equal opportunities policy, EMAS and the Health and Wellbeing at Work programme at the CoR.

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Dignity at work – conflict management - preventing harassment

In April 2021, a new decision on protecting dignity at work, managing conflict and combatting harassment entered into force, thoroughly reforming the previous policy, which was limited to combatting harassment. Following an inclusive consultation process, including the confidential counsellors network and the CoR Staff Committee, the new 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 and the dedicated Intranet page provides all contact details of the relevant individuals. In order to raise awareness of the new decision and its implications, several info-sessions for staff and managers were organised, in addition to the regular internal training courses on Ethics and Integrity.

In 2021, the confidential counsellors met with three staff members in need of assistance or consultation.

In 2021, in cooperation with the EESC, the CoR developed a dedicated conflict management programme for one joint service, which included high-level meetings, individual and group coaching, training and mediation, assistance by HR services and external expertise.

Whistleblowing and disciplinary matters

In January 2021, the CoR closed one case, after a long-lasting enquiry run by OLAF triggered by a whistleblowing procedure at the CoR with a reprimand as the disciplinary sanction on the basis of full acknowledgement of the established wrongdoings, which mainly concerned non-authorised external activities.

In 2021, the CoR opened one investigation, pursuant to a launched whistleblowing procedure at the EESC alleging wrongdoing by a CoR staff member and OLAF's recommendation to open internal investigations on alleged harassment and mismanagement, while dismissing the alleged financial wrongdoings and rejecting a request to open an investigation itself. In agreement with the EESC, the CoR appointed two investigators, one staff member from the CoR and the other from the EESC. Based on their investigation report and the pre-disciplinary hearing, which ultimately did not confirm any wrongdoing, the Secretary General closed the case.

Outside activities

Officials in active employment or secondment wishing to engage in an assignment or outside activity must request permission from the Appointing Authority pursuant to Article 12b of the Staff Regulations.

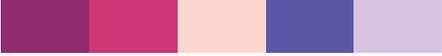
During 2021, in total, 21 external activities (or equivalent) requests were handled during 2021: eight of these concerned requests for a speech or publication, four concerned requests for educational activities, two for volunteering activities, three for being part of an association, a jury or participating in the organisation of elections, one related to an activity during unpaid leave, two requests for activity after retirement (Article 16). Of the 21 requests, eight required no formal authorisation.

The number of requests saw a slight decrease in 2021, from 25 requests in 2020 to 21 in 2021 most probably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A reform of the CoR's external activities decision was launched, to be adopted in 2022, with the main objective of simplifying the process for staff and administration by reducing the number of cases where an official decision is required. Meanwhile, the procedure has already been simplified as regards unpaid external activities where there is no conflict of interest or impact on the interest of the service.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

The Individual rights sector establishes the allowances for staff members upon entry into service and adjusts them throughout their careers in the light of changes, notably in their family situation (marriage, birth, education of a child, divorce, change of place of origin, etc.).

The service is in charge of welcoming newcomers on their first day at the Committee and updates the CoR Newcomers' Guide and the intranet pages of the service, which provide a comprehensive overview of rules, procedures and



contacts at the CoR. In 2021, the institution's ReFit project was implemented to update, streamline and simplify the information available to staff in MYCOR concerning Rights and Obligations.

Matters related to the privileges and immunities of staff members (special identity cards, VAT exemption and tax issues) are subject to a service level agreement with the European Commission (DG HR), with CoR staff files being handled by the Welcome Office of the European Commission. Nevertheless, the service manages non-standard requests for certificates and provides staff with complementary services and information.

Throughout the year, in addition to regular and continuous checks and controls (such as conducting annual checks on household allowances, family allowances received from another source, school allowances and annual travel expenses, and the monthly verification of the proper encoding of individual decisions in Sysper), the Individual rights sector prepared and adopted the following individual decisions:

Entry into service and end of service: 53 notifications of new recruitments were handled in 2021, as well as 31 decisions on installation or resettlement allowances, 13 decisions on travel expenses, nine decisions on removals, six decisions on daily allowances and 12 decisions on revision of the place of origin.

Family allowances: 189 decisions on household allowances, dependent child allowances and school allowances, 58 decisions on allowances of a similar nature received from other sources, six decisions on transfers of school allowances and two decisions concerning the recognition of persons to be considered as dependent children (plus several calculations for similar requests that were ultimately not granted).

Seconded national experts: no notification of secondments and related entitlements.

Annual verifications of rights

- School allowances concerning 491 children
- Household allowances concerning 48 officials/other staff members
- Annual travel expenses concerning 397 officials/other staff members

Retirement and pension rights

The handling of CoR staff pension entitlements has been outsourced by means of a Service agreement to the European Commission's Paymaster's Office (PMO) since 2014. In 2020, the PMO took the initiative to introduce a new Service Agreement replacing the agreements currently in force with the aim of standardising the SLAs at inter-institutional level in order to streamline the legal framework of the various services it provides to the other institutions.

In 2021, 10 CoR staff members retired. One staff member was placed on leave in the interests of the service pursuant to Article 42c of the Staff Regulations and one staff member opted to work half-time in order to prepare for retirement.

In the framework of this service level agreement, the PMO handled five requests for transfers IN of pension rights in 2021.

Despite the Service level agreement in place, it proved necessary to ensure a front-office function in order to prepare the files to be sent to the PMO, manage statistics and provisions for retirement, meet staff to give information and make simulations of pension rights for staff.

Request to remain in service beyond pensionable age

No request to remain beyond pensionable age was submitted in 2021.

End of service: 48 staff members left the CoR in 2021 (end of contract, transfer, invalidity, retirement), eight files concerning eligibility for national unemployment allowances were handled, as well as 14 resignations and seven files for transfer to another institution. Four national experts ended their secondment during the year.

Linked to the service level agreement, the following types of file were prepared and forwarded to the PMO in the course of 2021:

- transfers OUT of pension rights: three files;
- severance grants: two files.

Applications for unemployment benefit are requested directly by the staff member to the PMO.



CROSS-CUTTING HR-RELATED MATTERS

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the year, the Equal Opportunities (EO) officer kept staff informed of EO-related topics via the HR update and L&D newsletter, in particular to mark UN International Days such as the International Women's Day (8 March), IDAHOT (International Day against homophobia -17 May) and the International day for persons with disabilities (3 December)

To mark International Women's Day 2021 the CoR Administration organised, in cooperation with the EESC and CoR's Joint Committees for Equal Opportunities (COPEC), a conference entitled "Women's mental load: decoding and resistance" given by Aurore Kesch, president of the Association "Vie féminine" to raise awareness of the mental load borne by women, a particularly burning issue in the period of lockdown and permanent teleworking.

In 2021, for the first time, the Committees took part in the UN campaign "Orange the world" illuminating its premises in orange to mark the International Day for the elimination of violence against women (25 November).

During the year, a new onboarding project was introduced to highlight Diversity and inclusion values and the ethical framework of the institution via various channels of communication such as the Newcomers' Guide, induction sessions, new digital onboarding modules in MYCOR, etc.

Overall, the equal opportunities situation at the CoR can be considered to be satisfactory despite the COVID-19 pandemic. This concerns particularly the work to raise awareness and the early signs of positive developments in gender balance in management from 2021 as a result of the measures taken over the last four years, and especially in 2020. **The target of 40% set in the 2020 EO Action Plan in management to tackle the issue of gender balance in management positions** was nearly reached (37.5%) in 2021 following the appointment of one female director (the target was originally set for the end of the mandate).

However, sustained attention and efforts are required if the Committee's equal opportunities status is to be further improved by tackling the remaining imbalances and to boost the institution's image as a diverse, attractive and motivating workplace.

The CoR equal opportunities policy focuses on three main areas: **gender, disability and diversity**.

Gender

Overall, 56% of all CoR staff members are women. Over the last five years, this ratio has been quite stable.

However, the gender balance is not spread evenly across all services and function groups. While the CoR is relatively close to gender parity in the AD function group (55% women to 45% men), the proportion of female ADs (66%) in the translation units is still higher than in non-translation units (47%) but this difference has decreased slightly since 2017 and the number of female ADs has increased significantly since 2017 (see table 11), despite a sharp drop in 2021.

As for the AST function group, women are generally over-represented (64%) compared to men. Nevertheless, table 11 shows an encouraging increase in men in the AD function group in translation units and in the AST function group. Among contract staff, the CoR is close to gender parity (54%).

Despite the very good results in senior management (37.5 %) reached in 2021, sustained attention and efforts are needed, especially in terms of women in non-translation middle management posts (26%).

The CoR is committed to achieving a better gender balance in management through a range of incentives, which have been laid down in the annual action plans since 2017. Additionally, in this regard, the HR toolkit for managers is under revision and the new version will include a section concerning the CoR's EO strategy in order not only to raise awareness, but also to highlight how managers can commit to and engage in EO procedures.

Furthermore, the Network for gender balance in management is driven by experienced staff members from the Committee management team, clearly reflects the Equal Opportunities policies of the CoR and constitutes a good example of bottom-up engagement. The first activity of the network was to create and manage a network of internal mentors to support women in their careers by providing guidance and advice. Mentors, both female and male, were identified via a call for volunteers, which resulted in 15 mentors being paired up with 15 mentees. In order to create the best conditions for success, tailored training was provided to the mentors on mentoring and coaching

techniques. The first mentoring exercise was launched in October 2019 and ended in March 2020. A second call for volunteers was launched in September 2021.

Gender balance at the CoR – overall and management posts (31 December 2021)

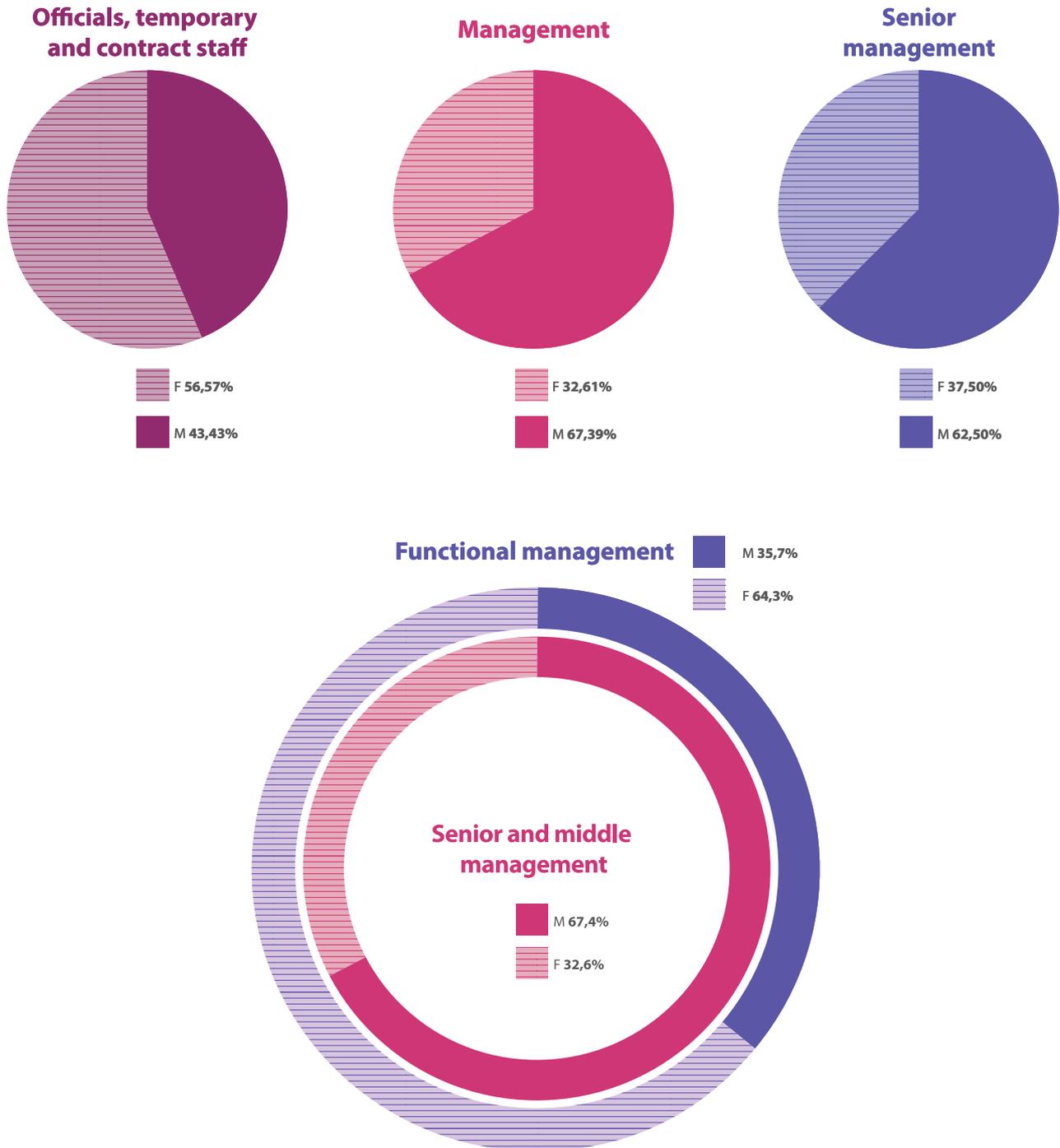


Chart 13 Gender balance at the CoR – overall and management posts (31 December 2020)
 Officials, temporary and contract staff
 Senior management
 Senior and middle management / Functional management

The majority of staff appointed since 2017 to functional management posts (deputy head of unit, head of sector and team leader) are women. This opens up prospects for future appointments to management positions and further improvement of the gender balance in middle management.

Gender balance at the CoR – per staff category (2017-2021)

Staff category	2021 <i>(Proportion of women compared to men)</i>	2020 <i>(Proportion of women compared to men)</i>	2019 <i>(Proportion of women compared to men)</i>	2018 <i>(Proportion of women compared to men)</i>	2017 <i>(Proportion of women compared to men)</i>
Overall	56.57%	55.49%	55.66%	56.24%	56.39%
AD – general	55.38%	55.60%	55.73%	55.02%	55.14%
AD – translation units	66.36%	66.13%	68.81%	72.84%	68.75%
AD – non-translation units	46.81%	52.13%	45.83%	46.43%	43.51%
AST – general	64.43%	64.52%	63.21%	64.95%	66.32%
AST – translation units	65.38%	70.00%	72.22%	77.78%	79.17%
AST – non-translation units	64.29%	63.86%	62.29%	63.64%	64.46%
Contract staff	54.39%	44.64%	46.94%	46.94%	46.30%
Management – overall	32.61%	31.11%	31.82%	35.56%	33.33%
Middle management	31.58%	32.43%	33.33%	37.84%	35.14%
Middle management – translation units	57.14%	57.14%	57.14%	57.14%	57.14%
Middle management – non-translation units	25.81%	26.67%	27.59%	33.33%	30.00%
Senior management	37.50%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%
Senior management – translation units	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Senior management – non-translation units	28.57%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%

Table 16 Gender balance at the CoR – per staff category (2017- 2021)

Gender balance in all institutions – overall and management posts (31 December 2021)

(Numbers rounded up to closest whole number)

Institution	♀ staff (%)	♀ managers (%)	♀ middle managers (%)	♀ senior managers (%)
European Parliament	59.5	37.5	39.3	44
European Commission	56.7	45.2	45.7	43.3
Court of Justice of the European Union	60	40	40	40
European Economic and Social Committee	64.1	52.1	55.3	40
European Investment Bank	51.3	36.8	33.3	32.8
Council of the European Union	57.1	40	42.5	35.4
European Central Bank	46.2	31.3	30.9	34.3
European External Action Service	44	33.8	35.3	26.3
European Court of Auditors	52.2	36.1	36	36.4
European Committee of the Regions	56.5	32.6	31.5	37.5

Table 17 Gender balance in all institutions – overall and management posts (31 December 2021)

Following a service instruction that entered into force in early 2019 with regard to Recruitment practices, gender-balanced selection panels are obligatory. In 2021, all 69 selection panels for recruitment of officials, contract agents and seconded national experts met this requirement and were composed of both genders.

Concerning trainees, gender data has been collected comparing the breakdown of applications by gender with the number of selected trainees by gender (see charts 9 and 10 in chapter 3.3, Workforce).

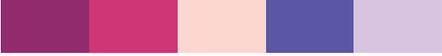
Disability

The CoR, together with the other EU institutions, is committed to implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities of 26 November 2009 (the only international human rights convention to which the EU is a party in its own right, underlining the importance of the issue).

The UN Convention sets out to ensure that people with disabilities receive the specific support they need to fully enjoy their rights in a barrier-free environment. This “social model” and the obligations arising from it for employers relates in particular to the principles of accessibility and reasonable accommodation (adaptation of the working environment for individuals) and is defined in Article 1d of the Staff Regulations.

It follows that the equal opportunities policy of the CoR includes a number of practical steps aimed at providing a suitable working environment within the meaning of the UN Convention and the Staff Regulations, namely for staff members having “long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. Consequently, the CoR has taken several measures to overcome these barriers for the staff concerned, including reasonable accommodations initiated by the Welfare Service in cooperation with the Medical service.

In this field, the Buildings Strategy of the two Committees, adopted by the CoR Bureau on 29 November 2017, takes disability fully into account, i.e. through the principle of “Design for All” in order to make the premises more accessible. In 2021, the Committees completed the renovation of the entrance hall in the VMA building. In 2021, the renovation work of the Bertha von Suttner building entrance included installing a special revolving door for persons



with reduced mobility and a worktop adapted for wheelchair users. A study was also completed to improve signage for visually impaired persons in the building.

The Social Service of the CoR paid special attention this year to liaising with other EU Institutions as well as with the Belgian State authorities. In the Inter-Institutional Working Group on Social Affairs, the legal adviser of the Human Resources Directorate and the social assistant of the CoR participated actively to harmonise the application of the newly adopted Guidelines for the implementation of aid for persons with a disability. The main purpose of this aid scheme is to grant financial support to colleagues or one of their dependents for non-medical costs directly linked to the recognised disability. Additionally, a new informal interinstitutional working group (IINDA - Informal interinstitutional network for disabled persons), with the participation of the CoR social assistant, was created with a view to harmonising the application of these guidelines and to exchanging best practices.

Diversity

Diversity encompasses a wide range of issues related to non-discrimination and equal treatment. Building on efforts made in previous years, the scope of the CoR's work to promote a respectful and inclusive workplace has been gradually stepped up in the yearly action plans, via COPEC, the new HR Update and Harvest Library Newsletter. The institution continuously raises awareness of this important topic, *inter alia* via the promotion of online conferences. In 2021, the CoR hosted a lunchtime conference by the EU staff association "Égalité" (21/05/2021) whose president presented the association and its goals. At this occasion, Slaven Klobučar, the first LGBTI+ contact person was appointed within the already existing network of the EO Contact points created in 2017.

Particular attention is also paid to geographical balance among CoR staff. The situation at the CoR can be regarded as relatively satisfactory in this respect compared to that in other institutions. The geographical balance in the management team is largely in line with the general geographical balance within the overall CoR workforce (nationalities that are more represented among the staff in general are also more represented in management).

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The CoR is actively promoting a constructive social dialogue, as it enables direct and representative staff participation in the drafting and implementation of decisions and policies with an immediate impact on the working environment.

One aspect of the social dialogue is the systematic and regular involvement of staff representatives in various bodies established under the Staff Regulations or set up by the institution (Staff Committee and joint committees), as well as in the process of consultation with the staff unions and associations (OSPs) referred to in Article 24b of the Staff Regulations.

In 2021, the Staff Committee was consulted formally on five projects. In addition, intensive dialogue was held with the Staff Committee and other stakeholders on three other decisions in an effort to involve staff representatives in the drafting of decisions as early as possible.

In challenging times such as 2021, cooperation with staff representatives on key topics has been even more important than usual. In the framework of the structured social dialogue, four regular meetings with the Secretary-General took place, as well as a dedicated meeting on the cooperation agreement. At Directorate E level, seven regular social dialogue meetings were held with the Director of Human Resources and Finance, and numerous other ad hoc meetings took place during the year, on COVID-19 matters, on telework, on the buildings policy (including office allocation), on sensitive posts, on the mobility policy, on functional management, on implementation of the organisation chart, and on 360 for managers.

Moreover, a staff survey on telework, designed to prepare the subsequent "post-COVID-19" hybrid scheme, was drafted, launched, promoted and analysed jointly by HR and the Staff Committee.

Finally, two regular meetings were held with the CFAA Chairman and the partnership with CFAA members was pursued via CFAA meetings.

In addition to the cooperation with the Staff Committee, four consultations took place with the staff unions.

The CoR is looking forward to continuing this policy of closer cooperation with the Staff Committee on topical issues in the future.

COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Internal communication

Internal communication is a very important cross-cutting responsibility for the entire political and management team and staff of the European Committee of the Regions.

It goes hand in hand with organisational strategy, corporate culture and “how things get done around here”.

Since 2020, as part of the improved outreach requested by the secretary-general, the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance streamlined communication to all staff with a series of weekly newsletters on:

- training opportunities on Mondays,
- human resources on Wednesdays,
- vacant posts on Thursdays.

Learning and Development weekly newsletter

The L&D weekly newsletter started in 2017 with the aim of announcing the CoR training sessions each month. From 2018, the newsletter included relevant training courses at the other institutions, selected by the Training service.

Since March 2020, following the new working conditions and environment put in place to adapt to the health measures required by the pandemic (lockdown, telework and subsequent new needs in terms of knowledge, skills, people management and health), the newsletter was adapted to include new learning formats (online learning platforms, webinars, online sessions, etc.) and new topics linked to new needs such as managing people at a distance, establishing a good balance between professional and private life, teleworking tips, etc.

In 2021, 45 newsletters were sent to CoR and EESC staff on Monday mornings and published on the intranet.

HR update

From April 2020, the HR update editorial team published regular newsletters aimed at providing staff with relevant medical and operational information in a timely manner while most staff were still working remotely. The newsletter was published every fortnight in 2021. The HR update is emailed to staff on Wednesdays and displayed on MYCOR. The editorial team is made up of volunteers from the HR units and in total, published almost 22 newsletters in 2021.

Topics include working conditions, health and well-being, social service support, learning and development sector information, the latest important HR information on the talent management strategy and recruitment, employer branding and information on business continuity. It is also used to introduce new colleagues and announce retirements.

MYCOR

In a working environment that is combining teleworking and working from the workplace, MYCOR continues to play a pivotal role in keeping all staff informed about the institution’s latest news and successes.

In 2021, the web team kept publishing more systematic information about CoR key events such as key strategic meetings of the CoR President, inter-institutional meetings such as Europcom, the Marseille Summit, CoR plenaries, etc.

Under Task Force 2 on Simplification of the administrative environment, the web team started a review of the entire content of MYCOR and is working on sorting and simplifying the information available on MYCOR and will set up new guidelines to make navigation on the platform easier.

Group of Communicators meetings

The head of the Learning and Development sector takes part in the monthly Group of Communicators meeting. The first point on the meeting agenda, “Learning zone”, includes information on forthcoming training sessions targeting communication topics. In addition, it is an ideal occasion for the institution’s communicators to give feedback, put forward suggestions and discuss learning needs.

CoR employer branding

The CoR continued the projects initiated through the exchange of good practice following the inter-institutional working group on employer branding launched by EPSO in 2019. The Directorate for Human Resources and Finance is committed to enhancing the attractiveness of the CoR as an employer, and to strengthening staff motivation and engagement, partly by improving its HR communication channels.

Publication of the CoR’s vacancy notices

To cover its recruitment needs, the CoR publishes vacancy notices for officials and recruitment notices for temporary staff in the political groups (2c) on its internet pages and on the inter-institutional vacancy notices portal. For other non-permanent positions, candidates need either to fill in an application form available on the CoR internet page (temporary staff) or to create an EPSO account and take some tests first (contract staff profiles). The webpages on recruitment and traineeships are the CoR’s most frequently visited pages.

In 2021, the job and traineeship pages were completely redesigned to reflect the image of a modern and dynamic EU institution, to meet the expectations of job applicants and promote CoR values. Because the CoR aims to be an inclusive administration, particular attention was paid to the accessibility of the pages.

In 2021, 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, translator, etc.). EPSO’s EU Career channels also publicise some open positions.

Other focus areas?

Communicating on the CoR working environment by creating stories and videos, promoting the CoR’s values thanks to a pool of staff ambassadors and increasing the CoR’s presence on social media are among the initiatives planned for 2022.

SECURITY AND SAFETY

A new electronic system to manage visitor identification and access to the Committees’ buildings, called e-visitors, was prepared and designed in 2020 and was implemented in the first half of 2021.

The renovation of the VMA building entrance was completed in March 2021. This increased the level of security for members and staff to the same level provided by the entrances to the JDE and BVS buildings, which were renovated in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

The security services at the Committees and the European Parliament continued to work closely in 2021 on topics such as training investigations and providing satisfactory security at joint events. Both services are working to ensure that badges are electronically recognised in 2022. This will allow both members and staff to have easy and fast access to the buildings of the other institution. Subsequently, it will be proposed that the electronic recognition of badges be extended to the European Commission and the European External Action Service. Both services also cooperate on making sure that the new passageway between the Committees and the European Parliament will provide users of both European institutions with safe and secure access.

The security service is also in constant contact with the European Commission’s security directorate, which is the institutions’ point of contact with the threat analysis institute of the Belgian State and with the Belgian crisis centre.

This ensures that information is passed on to the other institutions in order to provide comprehensive responses in real time to specific situations that affect them directly or indirectly. It has also proven to be a good channel for exchanging information about the changing measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

During the difficult period of lockdown implemented in order to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, and taking into account other measures taken in this context, the service has been permanently present on the premises to ensure a constant follow-up and dynamic response to the continuously changing challenges.

BUILDINGS

The CoR and the EESC share premises for their activities. The buildings are mainly managed by the Infrastructure unit within the Joint Services. The physical working environment clearly influences satisfaction, productivity and well-being among members and staff. Currently, the Committees have six buildings at their disposal. One of them, the Van Maerlant building (VMA), is leased from the European Commission through an administrative agreement. The Committees became full owners of three buildings (namely the Jacques Delors building, the Bertha von Suttner building and the Remorqueur building) since their options to purchase were exercised in 2018 and 2019. These options to purchase were provided for in the long-term leasehold contracts. The other two buildings are rented from their respective owners on long leases with an option to purchase: Belliard 68 (B68) and Trèves 74 (TRE74).

A long-term buildings strategy was established and approved by the two Committees in 2017. The strategy contains a set of guiding principles in the field of real estate and provides a generic framework for any specific decision to be taken in relation to the buildings. The guiding principles of the buildings strategy include the geographical concentration of buildings, preference for ownership rather than lease and for exercising options to buy, sustainable buildings management and multiannual planning.

Adaptation of buildings due to COVID-19

Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the Committees' buildings have been adapted by installing relevant measures in common areas:

- relevant posters and signs have been placed on walls and floors in entrance halls, close to and inside elevators, staircases, conference rooms, meeting rooms, restrooms, toilets, cafeteria and canteen;
- hydro-alcoholic gel dispensers have been installed in strategic places such as entrances of buildings and close to the entrance doors of elevators, staircases, conference rooms, meeting rooms, restrooms, toilets, cafeteria and canteen;
- the ventilation system operates with 100% fresh air, special "anti-COVID-19" filters have been installed at the ventilation installations;
- cleaning procedures have been adapted and a medical disinfection procedure set up to operate if a COVID-19 infection is suspected;
- the maximum number of people allowed to enter meeting rooms and conference rooms has been determined and is indicated outside and inside the rooms;
- Plexiglas screens have been installed in strategic places;
- all catering vending points have been kept closed except for the JDE cafeteria and canteen;
- CO₂ meters for ventilation were already present in the conference rooms and in some meeting rooms. In a first phase in 2021, CO₂ meters were installed in the spaces used by large numbers of people, such as restaurants, cafeterias, and sports rooms, etc. In the second phase, in 2022, CO₂ meters will also be installed in meeting rooms that are not yet equipped with them.

IT

In 2021, the main activities under the CoR Digital Strategy were to deliver projects in four operational domains: to support political work, document management, communication, HR and finance, together with the necessary IT infrastructure and user support services. The main achievements for the year were as follows:

- 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 with 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 had 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 the Human Resources and Finance Directorate was supported by both shared and in-house developed applications, which now manage a wide range of fully electronic processes. Of particular note in 2021 was the second complete cycle of the annual staff assessment procedure, supported by the in-house developed EVA application.
- In addition, a specialised **Technical Domain** works on cross-cutting improvements to all applications. In 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 EUBIA 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 roll-out 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 in 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 service indicators remained stable.

The IT Unit continued to operate efficiently under **business continuity** conditions and is well prepared for any future hybrid working environment. With the exception of Helpdesk and network management, most operations could be carried out successfully by officials and contractors working remotely.

In 2021, some EUR 750 000 were transferred to IT budget lines. These transfers were used to finance new projects aligned with the objectives of the Digital Strategy (Innovative Information Systems, Resilient Infrastructure and Digital Workplace).

INTERNAL CONTROL AND OTHER HR ASPECTS

Business continuity

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which coincided with the start of the new term of office and continued in 2021, had an influence on working methods. As the pandemic improved, the institution also adapted to the situation. 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.

Even before the pandemic, telework had been 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 paved the way for a new organisation of work and a new working culture. IT services made significant efforts to acquire, configure and deliver the relevant material to allow the whole institution to operate in a hybrid format or remotely.

Notwithstanding the very demanding circumstances, the collective efforts of all involved enabled the general secretariat to provide the Committee's political activities with ongoing support. While putting the 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, took place throughout the 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.

After an in-depth analysis, the existing Business Continuity Plan was reviewed and restructured into a new Business Continuity Framework, aimed at making the methodology more strategic, practical, self-contained, concise, clear, known and practised, and drawing lessons from the experience gained from the handling of the extraordinary COVID-19 situation. It will provide more precise information on the different phases of the procedure, the core business functions that need to be restored, the time limits for it, the staff that are responsible, the recovery strategies and the resources required.

Internal control environment

Actions in the sphere of internal control continued to be monitored in the Internal Control Standards working group throughout 2021.

A compliance and effectiveness exercise was launched in 2021, to assess the CoR's compliance with the 16 Internal Control Standards (ICS) and the effectiveness of their implementation. The exercise consisted of a questionnaire designed to evaluate compliance with and the 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 when compared to 2020. Future efforts should focus on a cost-effective consolidation of the level achieved, together with targeted efforts to further improve compliance and the effectiveness of selected internal control measures in place.

As far as the specific issue of exception reports is concerned, notwithstanding the extraordinary COVID-19 circumstances, in 2021 there was only a slight increase compared with the low number of financial exception reports registered in 2020.

Financial verification

On 1 July 2021, a reorganisation of the CoR's financial management environment was decided, reinforcing the centralised counterweight to the decentralised model. In addition to the previously existing central financial verification function, a Central Financial Initiation Service (SCIF) has also been set up within Directorate E and is responsible for the financial initiation of all financial transactions of the CoR's own services (apart from Members'



expenditure and staff salaries). The aim of this fundamental change process is to further professionalise the financial management community and to reduce the number of financial initiating agents (FIA) at the CoR², while ensuring qualitative and efficient financial management across the institution.

In the same spirit of simplification, and building on the satisfactory results of a pilot project launched in June 2020, whereby the ex-ante verification of certain low risk/value transactions was limited to a purely technical check by the Financial Verifying Agent (FVA), a simplified workflow was set up on a more structured and permanent basis on 1 July 2021 for certain transactions handled by Directorates A, D and E. A sample-based ex-post check is performed on a quarterly basis and the related findings and recommendations are communicated to the principal authorising officer responsible.

The first year of experience with centralised financial management and with the simplified workflows for low risk/value transactions will be evaluated in the Summer of 2022.

In 2021, the financial verification service verified 16 329 transactions (salaries excluded). These transactions cover a large variety of files: budgetary commitments and legal commitments, payment orders, recovery orders, recruitment decisions, establishment or modification of statutory rights, promotions, etc. This activity represents an overall increase of 25% of files submitted by the operational services in 2021 as compared to 2020 (which was a unique year, heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic) and a slight decrease of less than 5% as compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019.

Furthermore, a series of ex-post checks were carried out, on transactions subject to simplified workflows and on files for which the CoR verification service did not intervene ex ante pursuant to the provisions of the CoR-EESC cooperation agreement. The financial verification service has also invested largely in providing guidance to financial actors across the institution, in order, among other things, to help them adapt to the new financial management setting and/or to cope with the specific challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public procurement

The CoR's Public Procurement Service (PPS) assists operational services and decentralised authorising officers in the CoR's Own Services with the handling of high-, medium- or low-value tender procedures (with a value of EUR 15 000 and above)³. On request, the PPS also provides guidance to staff members involved in tender procedures of a lower value and/or answers services' questions related to contract implementation.

The roll-out of e-Submission in January 2021 marked a significant step towards the full digitisation of public procurement at CoR (e-Procurement). Since then, all high-value tender procedures (i.e. above the Directive threshold of EUR 140 000) have been launched with the e-Submission tool, allowing for the digital submission and receipt of tenders. As from 2022, e-Submission will also be made available for low- and middle-value procedures (i.e. above EUR 15 000).

Management of missions

As a result of the travel restrictions that continued to apply in EU Member States due to the COVID-19 pandemic for most of 2021, the Missions service handled some 150 missions in 2021, i.e. approximately 300 files (requests for travel order and declarations of expenses). This is substantially less than in pre-pandemic times (i.e. 829 missions in 2019).

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The CoR participates in a number of statutory inter-institutional joint committees, the most significant of which are listed below, along with their main role(s):

2 Reduction of the number of FIAs at the CoR's Own Services from 35 to 14.

3 A similar specialised procurement service assists operational services of the Joint Services when they launch tender procedures on behalf of the CoR.

Acronym	Name	Main role(s)
	Staff Regulations Committee	Mandatory consultation before adoption of general provisions implementing the Staff Regulations, as well as on all proposals to revise the Staff Regulations.
COPARCO	Inter-institutional Common Joint Committee	Staff + Admin on competition notices. CoR HR deputy director is current chair.
CGAM	Management Committee of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme	
ILISWG	Inter-institutional Infrastructure, Logistics and Internal Services Working Group	
INTERCOPEC	Inter-institutional Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities	
COCEPE	Early Childhood Centre Management Committee	
	EPSO Management Board	Strategies concerning EPSO's operation, competitions, the number of successful candidates, etc.

Table 18

The CoR also cooperates with other institutions in inter-institutional working groups and committees, such as:

Acronym	Name	Main role(s)
CPQS	Preparatory Committee for Matters relating to the Staff Regulations	Interpretation of the Staff Regulations
CCA	College of Heads of Administration	Harmonisation of how statutory provisions are applied across the institutions
CPQBF	Preparatory Committee for Matters relating to budget and finance	Coordination of new budget establishment-parameters, reporting requirements and EU inter-institutional budget processes
CMI	Inter-institutional Medical College	Coordination of the medical officers of all EU institutions
	EPSO taskforces	Five specific taskforces were set up in 2020 to improve the diversity of the candidate pool in EPSO competitions, improve the legal security of language policies, improve cooperation with the institutions and upgrade communication with candidates and review selection mechanisms.

Table 19

Technical questions are dealt with by EPSO working groups or, if necessary, by specific ad hoc working groups (CAST permanent, management of reserve lists, quotas, employer branding, etc.).

ADMINISTRATIVE COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

European Economic and Social Committee

The CoR and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) share a number of “Joint Services”, as agreed in an administrative cooperation agreement which is subject to regular revision. In October 2021, the CoR and EESC presidents and secretaries-general signed a new administrative cooperation agreement between the two committees, entering in force on 1 November 2021 and running until the end of 2026.

European Parliament

In February 2014, a cooperation agreement was signed between the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament, with a view to increasing cooperation between the political and administrative services of the three institutions. On the basis of this agreement, by the end of 2016, 24 staff members (including eight AST) from the CoR were transferred to the EP.

European Commission

Service-level agreements have been concluded in the following areas, outsourcing certain services from the CoR to the European Commission:

- **Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security.** IT tools such as Sysper Career (HR management) and EU-Learn (access to European Commission training courses), Welcome Office (facilities for newcomers and staff family members, first-line access to legal advice on private matters, etc.), Protocol on Privileges and Immunities (special ID cards, specific administrative documents, etc.) and medical services (such as pre-recruitment visits).
- **Paymaster’s Office (PMO).** Sysper Right modules (as PMO is the business owner), rights on leaving the service (pension, unemployment, end of service) and sickness insurance. Except for Sysper, in the area covered by the agreement, the PMO has taken over as Appointing Authority.
- **Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels (OIB).** Childcare facilities.
- **Directorate-General for Informatics (DIGIT).** IT tools such as hosting of the ABAC system, IT procurement, Cloud-brokering services, e-Prior services and NDP services (electronic personal files).

ENVIRONMENT

In December 2019, the European Commission adopted the Green Deal, the European strategy that calls on Member States, institutions and individuals to take action to make Europe the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050. The CoR, in cooperation with the EESC and along with other EU institutions, fully embraced the European Green Deal. A study aimed at defining emission reduction scenarios in order to achieve climate neutrality by 2030 was commissioned in 2021 and will be completed in 2022.

Through the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the carbon footprint⁴, the CoR aims to “put the Green Deal into practice” in all of its work. This means adopting exemplary environmentally responsible practices to reduce its carbon footprint.

Eco-management

The CoR, in cooperation with the EESC within the framework of the Joint Services, has set up an environmental management system as part of a process of continuous improvement in this sphere. These efforts have yielded

4 Method developed by the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) used by the CoR and many other institutions to calculate their emissions.

remarkable results over the last few years and earned the Committees the Brussels Ecodynamic Enterprise label in 2009. In 2011, the Committees were awarded EMAS and ISO 14001 certifications. Under the EMAS certification, the new EMAS objectives for the period 2022-2025 were prepared in 2021 and adopted in January 2022. A new objective on the CO₂ footprint was added. Regarding this newly introduced objective, a reduction of 10% in CO₂ emissions by 2030 compared to 2019 has been adopted in relation to issues that are within the remit of the administration. The proposed target does not include any potential reduction stemming from Member-related activities, thus excluding members' travel, as this does not fall within the remit of the administration.

In 2022, the Committees calculated their carbon footprint, related to the year 2021. Total emissions amounted to 8 425 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent for 2021, which corresponds to 5.61 tonnes per FTE (full-time equivalent). It is obvious that, although the results can be perceived as extremely good (a 58.9% reduction in CO₂ emissions compared to 2019), they are not representative.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced the Committees' environmental impact, with the main environmental indicators also being down on 2021, as was the case in 2020. However, as in previous years, people's travel continues to be the largest source of CO₂ emissions. The second largest emitter of CO₂ is the provision of equipment and services, representing 18.6% of total emissions. This category includes external services (interpreting and external translation, maintenance, catering, security, IT, consultancy), office equipment and the purchase of catering equipment and food supplies. For the first time, the third main contributor is the category of energy consumption, representing 12.7% of total emissions, followed by the fixed assets (12.3%).

Carbon footprint

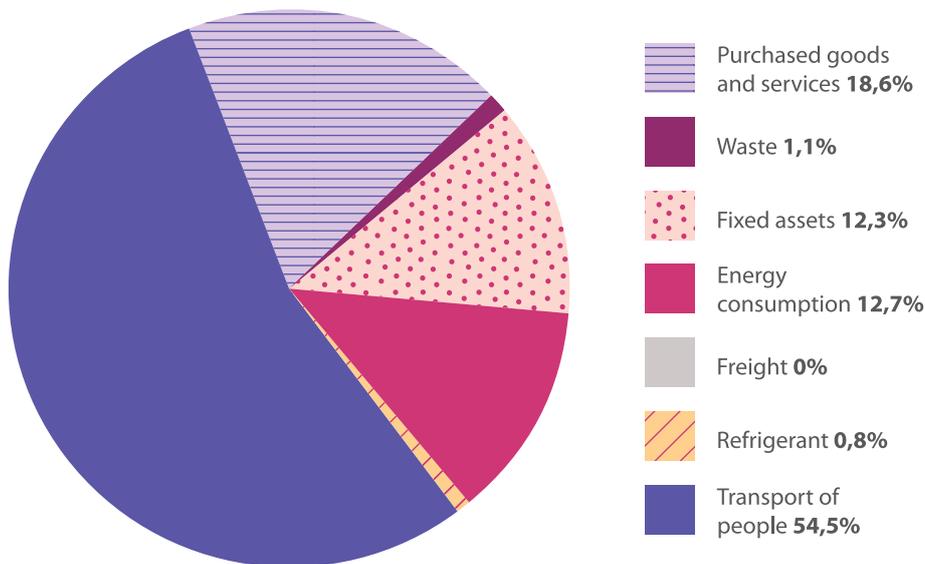


Chart 14 Carbon footprint 2021

Examples of the two Committees' environmental results (2021)

Areas	Results
Electricity (kWh/person)	-30.2 % compared with 2014 100% green electricity
Gas (kWh/DD/person)	-24.8% compared with 2014
Water (m ³ /person)	-33.2% compared with 2014
Paper (pages/person/day)	-94% compared with 2015
Office and kitchen waste (kg/person/year)	-61% compared with 2017
Green public procurement	100% of tenders on which the EMAS Service was consulted in 2021 included environmental clauses ⁵
Cleaning products	100% of cleaning products used in 2021 were ecolabelled ⁶
Plant care products (green areas)	100% of plant health products have been environmentally friendly since 2010 ⁷
Official cars	Increase in ecoscore since 2014 (i.e. reduction in environmental impact of official vehicles)
Staff mobility	69.6% of EESC staff and 75.8% of CoR staff use environmentally friendly means of transport
Sustainable food	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, catering services were suspended for most of 2021. Indicators not available.
Environmental certification	EMAS ISO 14001 Ecodynamic Enterprise (3 stars) Good Food label (sustainable canteen – 2 forks)

Chart 20 Examples of the two Committees' environmental results in 2021

Please note that all figures are under validation by external auditors.

5 The EMAS Service is consulted when the estimated contract value equals or exceeds EUR 25 000 in the case of a call for tenders launched by the Committees' joint services and EUR 60 000 in the case of a call for tenders launched by the Committees' own services. Out of a total of 25 tender procedures meeting these criteria in 2021, the EMAS Service was not consulted on 13 procedures.

6 Except for products used as part of the health measures to tackle COVID-19, such as hand sanitiser gel.

7 98% in 2019 due to one specific plant health treatment.

Catering service

The Catering service aims to provide satisfactory service across its range of catering activities on the Committees' premises.

The key aspects of the Committees' catering strategy are the following:

- Quality, safety and health
- Customer-oriented service
- Sustainability

Overall customer satisfaction with the food served at the canteen was 78%, according to the last independent survey. On 14 May 2019, the Committee set up the first plastic-free canteen in the European institutions. No disposable plastic products or products packaged with plastic are used in the canteen shared by the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.

This is not restricted to plastics banned by the Directive on single-use plastics, including plates, cups and cutlery; water is now only available from water fountains and all other beverages are served in glass bottles or cans. Various types of containers (for oil, salt and pepper, yoghurt, etc.) are also made of glass, stainless steel or other sustainable materials, while butter and cheese are no longer served in individual portions with plastic packaging or cellophane tape. Wooden toothpicks and coffee stirrers complete the green picture.

The COVID-19 crisis had a heavy impact on the catering sector in general and also caused major problems for the Committees' catering activities and services.

The Catering service had to cope with heavy security measures, reduced customer flows and the need to maintain some crucial services for the continuation of the Committees' core business. 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 given the more stringent security measures, it was decided to temporarily suspend all catering activities from the beginning of November 2020.

TRANSPORT

The Mobility/Transport service contributes to the CoR's efforts in support of sustainable development and environmental protection, particularly through a Mobility Plan supporting initiatives to promote the use of public transport and other sustainable means of transport. Examples of such actions are a financial contribution to expenses for public transport season tickets⁸ and a bike-friendly infrastructure. The latter is traditionally also promoted by events such as "Friday Bike Day" and the inter-institutional "VéloMai" competition. However, due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic and with staff working in an extended telework regime for most of the year, most of these awareness-raising events were cancelled in 2021.

A staff survey was organised in autumn 2021 in order to assess employees' planned means of transport for home-office commuting in the post-COVID-19 era. The participation rate of 50% can broadly be considered to be representative. The fact that this is lower than for the previous survey held in 2017 (58%) is probably due largely to the uncertainty (in autumn 2021) regarding the post-COVID-19 telework rules. The results of the 2021 mobility survey demonstrate progress in the use of greener commuting modes⁹, with more than 75% of staff members doing so. They fed into a new 2022-2024 mobility plan ('*Plan de déplacement d'entreprise*' or PDE) submitted to the Brussels regional authorities in February 2022.

⁸ In 2021, the season tickets eligible for partial reimbursement were revised, so as to also include part-time season tickets, which are deemed more compatible with hybrid work patterns involving an increased use of telework.

⁹ In essence, walking, cycling and public transport.

	Comité européen des régions	Zone d'accessibilité similaire*	Région de Bruxelles-Capitale*
Voiture	22,43%	21,81%	35,41%
Covoiturage	0%	0,56%	1,24%
Moto	1,84%	0,96%	1,15%
Train	15,07%	49,58%	35,96%
STIB	25,37%	18,65%	17,30%
DeLijn	0%	1,41%	1,22%
TEC	0%	0,22%	0,33%
Navette	0%	0,07%	0,30%
Vélo	14,71%	3,10%	3,23%
Marche	20,22%	3,65%	3,87%
Trottinette	0,37%	0%	0%
Aucun	0%	0%	0%

Table 21 CoR staff members' main travel mode for commuting purposes, according to the 2021 mobility staff survey [data are available in French only, as they come from a survey tool developed by the authorities of the Brussels Capital Region]

	CO ₂ emission per mode of transport, per day
car	322 kg CO ₂
carpool	0 kg CO ₂
motorcycle	8 kg CO ₂
train	101 kg CO ₂
STIB	46 kg CO ₂
DeLijn	0 kg CO ₂
TEC	1 kg CO ₂
Shuttle	0 kg CO ₂
Bike	0 kg CO ₂
On foot	0 kg CO ₂
Per day	480,76 kg CO₂
Per worker, per day	1,69 kg CO₂
Per kilometer	19 kg CO₂

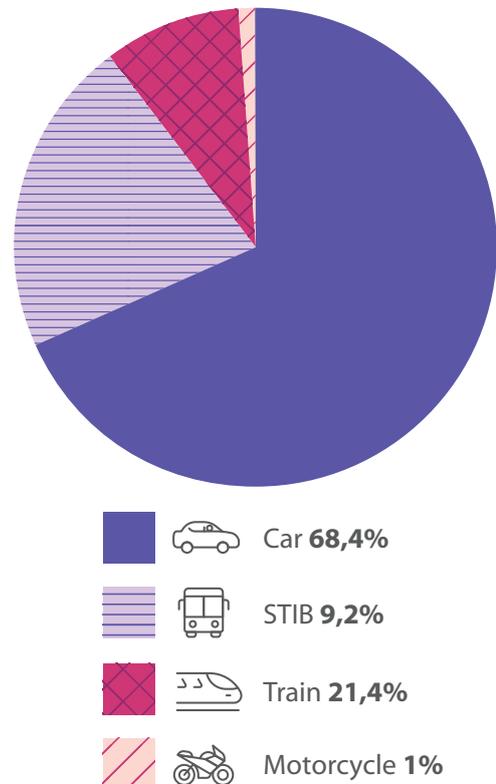


Chart 15 CO₂ emissions

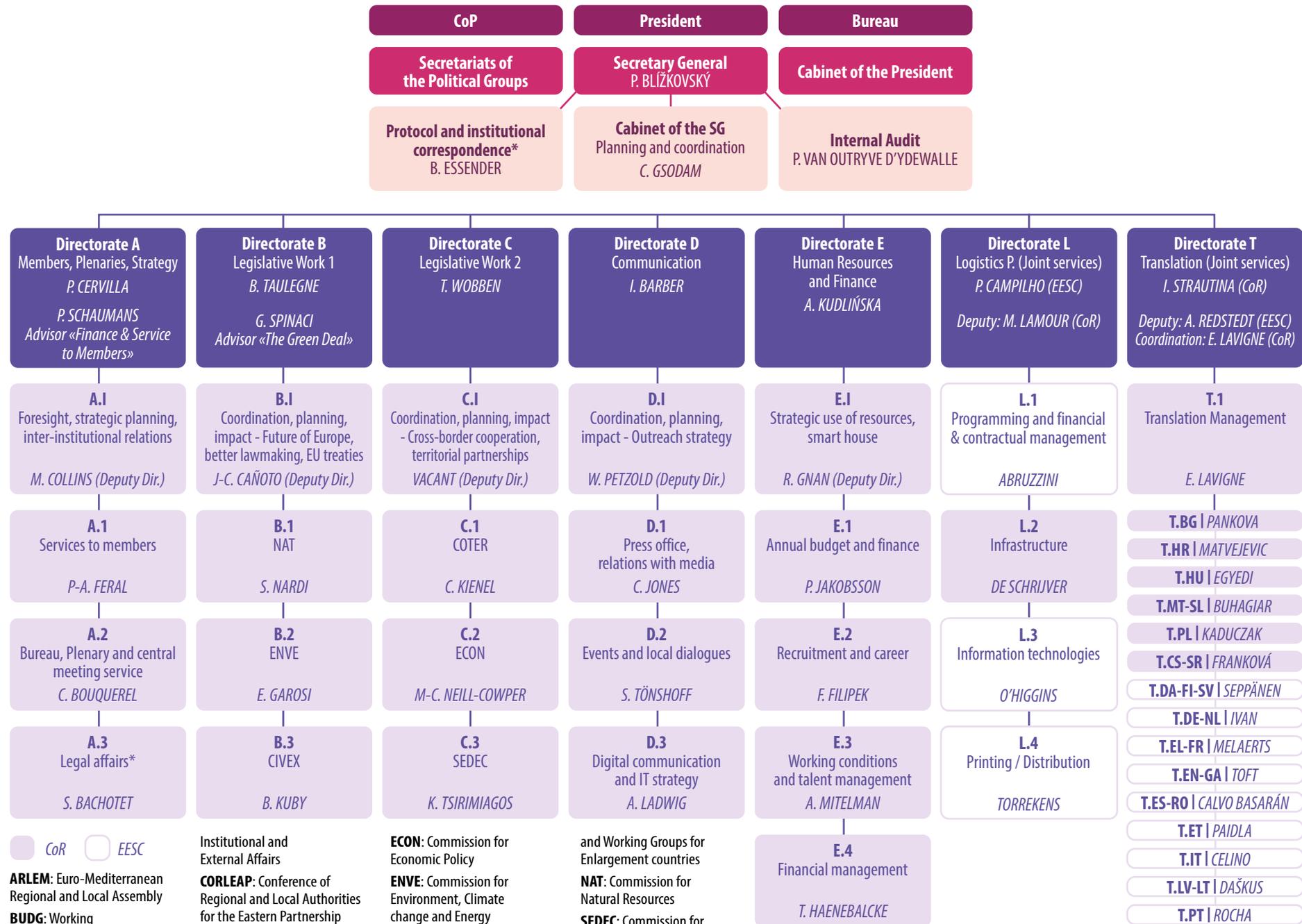


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

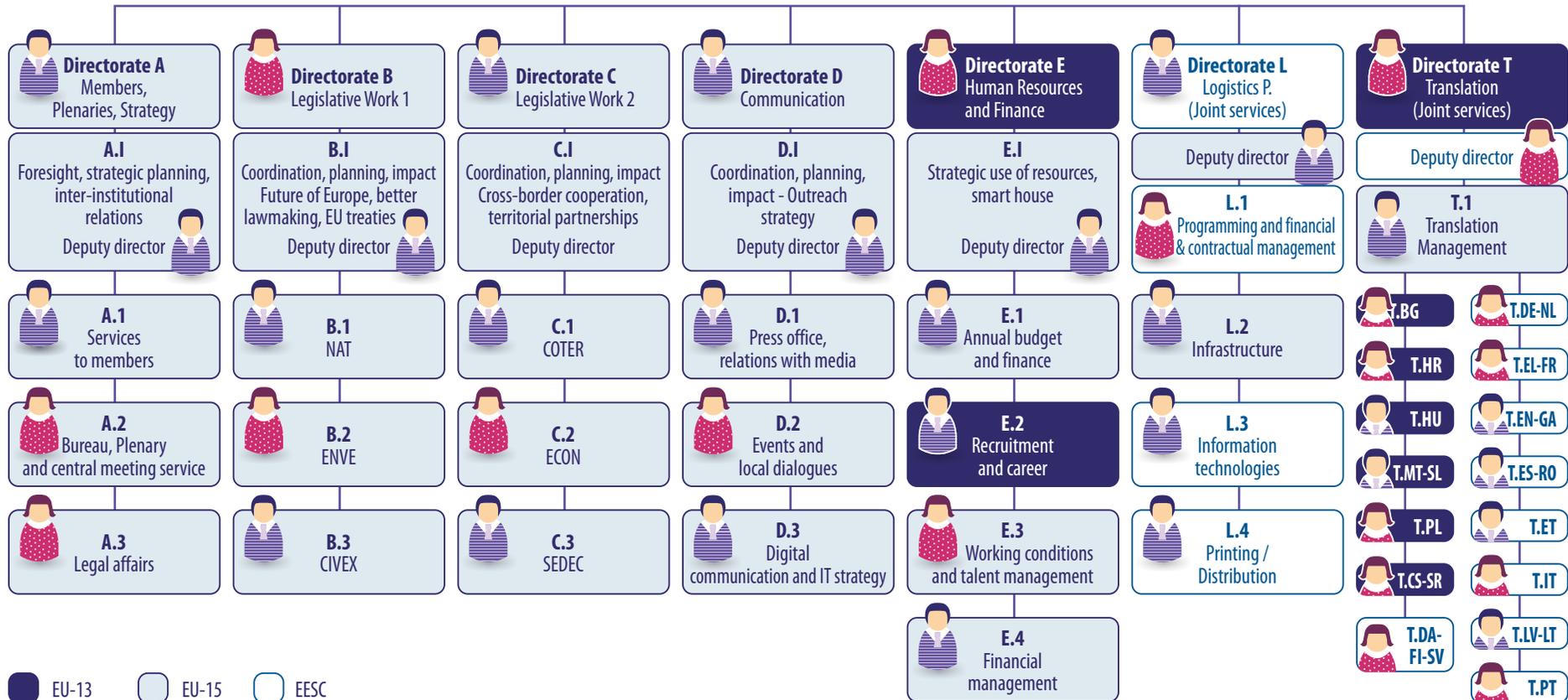
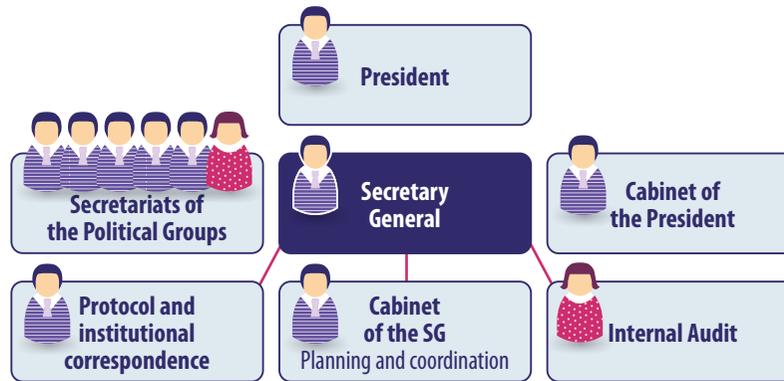
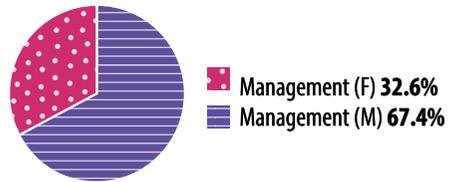
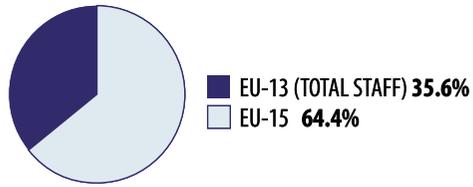
AD	Administrators' Function Group	EPSO	European Personnel Selection Office
AECCE	Authority Empowered to Conclude Contracts of Employment	Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Communities
ANS	[<i>Autorité nationale de sécurité</i>] Belgian National Security Authority	FG	Function Group
AST	Assistants' Function Group	FTE	Full time equivalent
AST/SC	Secretaries and Clerks' Function Group	GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
B68	Belliard 68 building	HR	Human resources
BvS	Bertha von Suttner building	IBGE	[<i>Institut bruxellois pour la gestion de l'environnement</i>] or Bruxelles Environnement, a public service of Brussels-Capital Region for the environment and energy
CAST	Contract Agents for Specific Tasks	IFR	Internal Financial Rules
CCA	[<i>Collège des chefs d'administration</i>] Board of Heads of Administration	ILISWG	Inter-institutional Infrastructure, Logistics and Internal Services Working Group
CCP	[<i>Congé de convenance personnelle</i>] Leave on Personal Grounds	INTERCOPEC	[<i>Comité paritaire pour l'égalité des chances (interinstitutionnel)</i>] Inter-institutional Committee on Equal Opportunities
CEOS	Conditions of Employment applicable to Other Servants of the European Communities	JDE	Jacques Delors building
CFAA	Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs	MS	Member State
CGAM	[<i>Comité de gestion de l'assurance maladie</i>] Management Committee of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme	OCAM	[<i>Organe de coordination pour l'analyse de la menace</i>] Belgian Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis
COPARCO	[<i>Commission paritaire commune</i>] Common Joint Committee	OLAF	[<i>Office européen de lutte antifraude</i>] European Anti-Fraud Office
CPAS	[<i>Comité de préparation pour les affaires sociales</i>] Preparatory Committee for Social Affairs	OSP	[<i>Organisations syndicales et associations professionnelles</i>] Staff Unions and Staff Associations
CPQS	[<i>Comité de préparation pour les questions statutaires</i>] Preparatory Committee for Matters relating to the Staff Regulations	OSS	One-Stop Shop
De Lijn	[<i>Vlaamse Vervoersmaatschappij De Lijn</i>] Flemish transport company De Lijn	PMO	The Paymaster's Office/Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements
DG HR	Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security (European Commission)	RAA	see CEOS
DIGIT	Directorate-General for Informatics (European Commission)	REM	Remorqueur building
DPO	Data Protection Officer	SA	Special Advisor
DT	Directorate for Translation	SC	Staff Committee
EDPS	European Data Protection Supervisor	SR	Staff Regulations
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee	STIB	[<i>Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles</i>] Brussels Intercommunal Transport Company
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme	TEC	[<i>Société régionale wallonne du transport - Transport en commun</i>] - Walloon Regional Transport Company TEC
EO	Equal Opportunities	TRE74	Trèves 74 building
EP	European Parliament	VMA	Van Maerlant building
EPI	[<i>Équipier de Première Intervention</i>] Member of the rapid response team/ Evacuation stewards		
EPRS	European Parliamentary Research Service		

APPENDIX II: STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION CHART (31 DECEMBER 2021)



APPENDIX III: STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION CHART BY NATIONALITY AND GENDER OF MANAGERS

European Committee of the Regions – organisation chart (by nationality and gender – 31 December 2021)



■ EU-13 □ EU-15 □ EESC



**European Committee
of the Regions**



Created in 1994, after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 329 regional and local representatives from all 27 Member States, representing over 447 million Europeans.

Edited by the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance of the European Committee of the Regions

October 2022 — CdR_4799

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