



Management Plan 2018

European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC)



Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
PART 1. MAIN OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR	4
PART 2. MAIN ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR.....	13

INTRODUCTION

Three years since its creation, the European Political Strategy Centre is fully operational and plans its activities for the year 2018 around the political agenda described by the President in his 2017 State of the Union address. The "Roadmap for a more united, stronger and more democratic union" and the 2018 Commission Work Programme are also providing the framework for our yearly agenda.

DG EPSC will continue bringing its added value to the Commission through:

- Timely, relevant and evidence-based advice;
- Strengthened foresight capabilities through long-term trend analysis and scenarios to inform and complement present initiatives, ensure their sustainability and manage by anticipation;
- Interdisciplinary, open and interactive ways of working across intellectual and institutional silos;
- Effective outreach to relevant stakeholders in the think tank, academic, research and practitioners' communities.

DG EPSC will support the President in delivering on the Commission's positive agenda and the implementation of President's 10 Priorities. The relevance of this value added will gain a particular importance in 2018 supporting work on the forward-looking perspective for the new Union of 27 and its future till 2025; work that already kick-started with a strong involvement of the EPSC around the White Paper on the Future of Europe in 2017.

The innovative way of functioning in DG EPSC introduced last year will be fundamental in driving the reflection around the Future of Europe and the Road to Sibiu. Indeed, in order to best respond to the ever challenging political agenda for the years to come, all the EPSC staff take part or take the lead of "projects", organised beyond the teams and the themes which were so far pre-determined by the organisational structure of the DG. This "management by projects" facilitates an interdisciplinary approach to the projects' content and pursues the objective of the EPSC's model, namely to strengthen the synergies in its expertise for a better contribution to the Commission's objectives.

EPSC projects continue to be designed to be in echo with the main priorities of the 2018 Commission's Work Programme but they also have the ambition to go one step forward by supporting the reflection on foresight and anticipation capabilities.

PART 1. MAIN OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

The presentation of the EPSC's outputs is based on the definition of projects, which were designed to respond to its specific role of the internal Commission's "think tank" encouraging open, collaborative and inter-disciplinary ways of working.

All projects are presented according to the European Commission's priorities, General Objective(s) and specific Objective(s) with the exception of those that have been classified as "horizontal" due to their impact on several Commission's priorities.

Given the complexity of the challenges in the political environment, the management planning in the EPSC does take into account a large degree of flexibility in order to stand ready to quickly, efficiently and to the highest standards respond to unexpected requests and needs for expertise and analysis.

1.1 COMMISSION PRIORITY: A NEW BOOST FOR JOBS, GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.		
Specific objective: Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission		Related to spending programme(s) : NA
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output (project title)	Indicator	Target
Europe as an Investment Destination - Policy Briefs	Delivery	Q1-Q4
Sustainable Finance - Contribution to the new Commission policy initiatives	Delivery	Q1-Q4
Innovation/competitiveness - Policy papers – internal and for publication	Delivery	Q1-Q4

- Brainstorming sessions	Availability of in-house expertise Outreach to relevant external experts	Throughout the year
--------------------------	---	---------------------

The EPSC teams will continue contributing to the discussion on the right climate for innovation and investment in Europe, to help create industries and jobs to tackle societal and environmental challenges and improve people's well-being. We will continue looking at new business models, including from internal and external competitiveness angles. The Renewed Industrial Policy Strategy for Europe as well as the Circular Economy Action Plan will serve as a reference. The EPSC is also expected to contribute to the discussion on the sustainable European future (with a 2025 perspective).

1.2 COMMISSION PRIORITY: A CONNECTED DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

DG EPSC will support the work of the Commission in completing the Digital Single Market. We will look at the challenges and opportunities coming from innovation and technological developments, with a focus on artificial intelligence and digital platforms. A special attention will be given to work on social media and countering fake news. Raising awareness about the cyber security threat as well as reflecting about ways to counter it will be also high on our priorities list.

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.		
Specific objective: ... Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission		Related to spending programme(s) : N/A
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output (project title)	Indicator	Target
Artificial Intelligence		
- Policy briefs and ad hoc high level events	Organisation	Q1-Q2
- Contribution to new Commission policy initiatives	Delivery	Q1-Q4
- Strategic notes	Delivery	Q1-Q2
Countering fake news		
- Policy briefs and ad hoc high level events	Organisation	Q1-Q4
- Contribution to new Commission policy initiatives	Delivery	Q1-Q4

- Strategic note	Delivery	Q1
Cyber-security threat		
- Policy briefs and ad hoc level events	Delivery	Q1-Q4
- Contribution to Commission policy papers, speeches	Delivery	Q1-Q4

1.3. COMMISSION PRIORITY: A RESILIENT ENERGY UNION WITH A FORWARD-LOOKING CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

With a focus on the implementation of the Energy Union "Clean Energy for All European Package", we will continue working towards the delivery on our commitments needed to make the modernisation of our economy a reality while ensuring a socially fair transition. A particular focus will be given to the field of transport and mobility. The EPSC will play a crucial role in preparing the Communication on the future of EU energy and climate policy, including the future of the Euratom Treaty (initiative to be launched with a 2025 perspective).

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.		
Specific objective: ... Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission		Related to spending programme(s) : N/A
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output (project title)	Indicator	Target
Energy Union and Modernisation of the Economy		
- Policy papers	Delivery	Q1-Q4
- Contribution to Commission's papers	Delivery Availability of in-house expertise Outreach to external expertise	Q1-Q4
- Ad hoc events	Organisation	Q1-Q4

- Experts meetings	Organisation Availability of expertise	Q1-Q4
--------------------	---	-------

1.4. COMMISSION PRIORITY: A DEEPER AND FAIRER INTERNAL MARKET WITH A STRENGTHENED INDUSTRIAL BASE

Our projects will continue to focus on competitiveness, innovation, digitalisation and industrial transformation. Our activities will contribute to the work leading to the completion of the Capital Market Union with a view to ensure easier access to finance for business and to support investment in the real economy. A link will be made to the work on the next Multiannual Financial Perspective in the EPSC reflection on the recalibration of EU financial instruments to better serve the needs of competitiveness of the European economy.

DG EPSC will be present in the discussion about social fairness and labour rights, which are the hallmarks of the Single Market, with a focus on labour mobility and social security coordination challenges.

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.

Specific objective: ... Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission

Related to spending programme(s) : N/A

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
Social fairness		
- Contribution to Commission internal policy papers	Delivery	Q1-Q2
- Ad hoc policy briefs and experts workshops	Organisation	Q1-Q2

1.5. COMMISSION PRIORITY: A DEEPER AND FAIRER ECONOMIC AND MONETARY UNION

The EPSC will continue contributing to the Commission work on the EMU strengthening, including in the context of the White Paper on the Future of Europe. Links will be made with the delivery of the proposals made in the package of measures. Projects under this heading are obviously also linked with the preceding priority around the Single Market. Completing the Banking Union together with the Capital Market Union will constitute a separate pillar of work. The EPSC will bring its value added in the discussions about the structural reforms and convergence attracting the attention of policy-makers to the micro level of the economy. This work will also take place with a 2025 perspective.

Now that the European Pillar of Social Rights have been adopted, the EPSC work will focus on the operational of some of its elements, including the operationalization of the social scoreboard in the context of the European semester. The Future of Work and of Welfare, in particular the reflection on the skills, effective and efficient social protection, modern public services and inter-generational equity will feature high under this project.

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.		
Specific objective: ... Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission		Related to spending programme(s) : N/A
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output	Indicator	Target
<i>Strengthening EMU</i>		
<i>-Contribution to Commission internal reflection papers</i>	<i>Delivery</i>	<i>Q1-Q2</i>
<i>-Ad hoc high level policy briefs</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Throughout the year</i>
<i>Europe Pillar of Social Rights and Future of Work and Welfare</i>		
<i>-Papers</i>	<i>Delivery</i>	<i>Q1-Q2 Q1-Q4</i>
<i>- Ad hoc events – policy briefs and meetings with experts</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	

1.6. COMMISSION PRIORITY: AN AREA OF JUSTICE AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST

Over the last years, the EPSC has built strong expertise in this field and will continue nurturing the work on the EU security agenda and contribute to designing actions to pave the way towards developing a Security Union, including on cyber-security. New work-strands will add compared to last year: counter-radicalisation as well as the disinformation in the social media. A link will be made with work carried under the Commission priority "Connected Digital Single Market" when it comes to fake news and disinformation (see point 1.2 above).

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.

Specific objective: ... Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission Related to spending programme(s) : N/A

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
Security Union		
- Policy papers	Delivery	Q1-Q4
- Contribution to Commission papers	Delivery	Q1-Q4
- Ad hoc events	Organisation Availability of in-house expertise Reach out to external expertise	Q1-Q4

1.7. COMMISSION PRIORITY: TOWARDS A NEW POLICY ON MIGRATION

The EPSC will continue being involved in the discussion on a more effective and sustainable migration management and the identification of further efforts needed. The DG will contribute to identifying trends, including in the demographic change.

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.

Specific objective: ... Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission Related to spending programme(s) : N/A

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
European Agenda on Migration		
-Policy papers	Delivery Availability of in-house expertise	Q1-Q4
-Public speaking engagement and outreach	Active participation	Q1-Q4

1.8. COMMISSION PRIORITY: EUROPE AS A STRONGER GLOBAL ACTOR

The EPSC will continue playing a central role in all work streams towards a stronger Europe in defence, including in the implementation of the Europe Defence Action Plan and operationalization of the European Defence Fund. It will also contribute to the implementation of the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy and support the role the Commission is called to play in the delivery of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Outreach, along and in conjunction with relevant portfolio holders, to Member States, European Parliament and other key stakeholders for matters related to the Defence Action Plan, will constitute an important part of the EPSC activities.

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.

Specific objective: ... Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission

Related to spending programme(s) : N/A

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
European Defence		
- EPSC speakers series on defence	Organisation	Q1-Q4
- Policy papers and notes – internal and for publication	Delivery	Q1-Q4
- Public speaking engagements and outreach	Active participation	Q1-Q4
Foreign policy priorities		
- Policy notes and papers	Delivery: EPSC policy-related contributions	Q1-Q4
- Experts meetings	Organisation	Q1-Q4
- Public speaking engagements and outreach	Active participation	Q1-Q4

1.9. HORIZONTAL PROJECTS

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.		
Specific objective: Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission		Related to spending programme(s) : NA
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output (project title)	Indicator	Target
ESPAS Strategic Foresight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ESPAS Young Talent Network - training on strategic foresight - Annual Conference - Ad-hoc (high level) events - Events with ESPAS and international partners - Public speaking and outreach engagements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation Organisation Organisation Outreach Organisation Active participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q1-Q4 Q4 Q1-Q4 Q1-Q4 Q1-Q4
Future of the EU Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High level conference Future of Finance in collaboration with the Cabinet Oettinger - Contribution to notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation Delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q1 Q1-Q2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ad hoc (high level) events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q1-Q4

1.10 Roadmap to Sibiu. Delivering by 2025: A more united, stronger and more democratic Union

DG EPSC has been entrusted in supporting the President and his team in the forward-looking work on the new Union of 27 and its future till 2025. The EPSC will bring its value-added across the institutional themes and policy areas through strategic thinking and specific written contributions on key issues, but also through outreach to and debate with the think tank community and other relevant stakeholders. The timeline is defined by the 2018 Commission's Work Programme and the Leaders' Agenda.

Relevant general objective(s): To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.		
Specific objective: ... Provide strategic analysis, policy advice and foresight to the President and the College related to the ten policy areas set by the Commission		Related to spending programme(s) : N/A
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output	Indicator	Target
Road to Sibiu. Delivering by 2025.		
-Policy papers	<i>Delivery Availability of in-house expertise</i>	Q1-Q4
-Public speaking engagement and outreach	<i>Active participation</i>	Q1-Q4

PART 2. MAIN ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT OUTPUTS FOR THE YEAR

A. Human resource management

The EPSC management remains committed to maintaining the highest staff engagement (84% in the last Commission's staff survey). A particular attention is being paid to the learning and development activities. In 2017 EPSC moved towards a 'management by project' operating mode. The need of training in project management was detected while developing new working methods. The Management and Resources Unit is looking at possibilities to organise a tailor made project management course, including various coaching actions. Being a very small DG, the EPSC staff benefits from the well-being activities organised by the Secretariat-General and AMC 5. Internal communication is done by email as well as orally during the regular weekly staff meetings held every Monday afternoon.

The EPSC remains committed to ensuring gender balance. The gender balance target for the middle management set by the Commission has indeed been maintained with the nomination of the Head of Unit in charge of Management and Resources. The Head of the EPSC and the Head of Unit in charge of management and resources are women, which means that 50% of the management posts are occupied by women. As far as team leaders are concerned, the share of women also reaches 50%.

Objective: The DG deploys effectively its resources in support of the delivery of the Commission priorities and core business, has a competent and engaged workforce, which is driven by an effective and gender-balanced management and which can deploy its full potential within supportive and healthy working conditions.

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
<i>To maintain a very high score of staff engagement by promoting the learning and development activities in particular in the field of project management</i>	<i>Indicators as of staff survey</i>	<i>Positive trend compared to baseline through 2016-2020</i>
<i>Commission caring about staff well being</i>	<i>Indicators as of staff survey (73% in 2016)</i>	<i>Positive trend compared to baseline through 2016-2020</i>

B. Financial Management: Internal control and Risk management

The EPSC manages a small administrative budget (around 700.000 euro) covering conferences' organisation, speakers series, missions, low value contracts for reflection papers and communication costs. The 100 % ex-ante control of financial transactions is performed by the Management and Resources Unit and the error rate was estimated at 0% in the last Annual Activity Report. It is important to underline that the EPSC has no spending programme nor policy expenditure and therefore no ex-post control, which could impact the estimated overall amount at risk and the estimated amount of future corrections.

Payments will continue to be reviewed ex-post twice a year through the accounting quality exercise. A new tool was implemented in ABAC in May 2017 (registration of the results of ex-Ante controls) to assess the effectiveness and reliability of the internal control concerning the legality and regularity of financial transactions.

The main output for 2018 will be the implementation of the new Internal Control Framework with the definition of Internal Control Principles applicable to the particular environment of the EPSC, which has a low risk profile for financial management. The Internal Control's reliability will also continue to be based on the periodical analysis of the register of exceptions and non-compliance events.

No revision of the EPSC anti-fraud strategy is foreseen for 2018 as no new risks have been identified concerning the anti-fraud controls effectiveness and that no significant weaknesses have been put to light.

Objective 1: Effective and reliable internal control system giving the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and the regularity of the underlying transactions.

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
<i>Payments transactions in the DG</i>	<i>Sample of 25% of the payments reviewed ex-post through the exercise of accounting quality twice a year</i>	<i>Q2-Q4</i>

Objective 2: Effective and reliable internal control system in line with sound financial management.

Main outputs in 2018:

Output	Indicator	Target
<i>Implementation of the new Internal Control Framework (ICF)</i>	<i>Completion status of the implementation of the revised internal control framework</i>	<i>100% Q1</i>
<i>Conclusion reached on cost effectiveness of controls</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Maintain</i>

C. Better Regulation

N/A

D. Information management aspects

The principle of collaborative working expressed in the Communication on "Data, Information and Knowledge Management at the European Commission" strongly echoes the "management by projects" approach endorsed by DG EPSC since mid-2016. The files/tasks that are dealt with in the EPSC are treated beyond the thematic teams in order to share information and knowledge in the most efficient and broad way to feed the reflections on complex matters and best respond to the demands from the political level.

One of the core activities of the EPSC is the production of Strategic Notes or policy briefs. Those are written through a process of a series of "editorial boards", bringing together all the colleagues that have a potential input to provide to the text. Some of them are conceived during weekly analysts' meetings and/or announced at the staff meetings taking place every Monday. EPSC publications are then made available on our website, and are consequently accessible not only to colleagues in the EPSC but also in the Commission and beyond.

These weekly meetings as well as electronic communication by email on management matters replace in our small organisation more formal exchanges of data and information, such as an internal webpage.

The administrative signatories are almost exclusively used by the Management and Resources Unit. The e-signatory is being used more and more frequently.

Objective: Information and knowledge in your DG is shared and reusable by other DGs. Important documents are registered, filed and retrievable.		
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output	Indicator	Target
<i>Mission reports 2018 filed in financial files and political files</i>	<i>100 %</i>	<i>100 %</i>
<i>Systematic registration of Weekly Highlight</i>	<i>100 %</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Systematic identification of publications</i>	<i>Number of publications published on the EPSC website</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>E-signatory in Ares for all administrative documents signed by the Head of Unit</i>	<i>Pilot Project</i>	<i>Q4</i>

E. External communication activities

The main objective of the communication activities is to build the 'EPSC brand' both within the European institutions and among the community of think tanks, researchers and academics, opinion leaders and intellectuals in Europe and beyond.

Its aim is to leverage the Commission's key political messages and help obtain third-party endorsement of the President's priorities. To achieve this objective, quality, relevance and timeliness are of the utmost importance. While supporting the efforts of DG COMM, SPP and of the Vice-Presidents and Commissioners' teams, the EPSC also aims to communicate differently both in substance and form – complementing institutional communications with out-of-the box, visually-compelling, citizen-friendly products.

The main tools for the EPSC's communication and outreach activities include its publications (strategic notes, policy briefs and newsletters), its website and social media presence, the organisation of or participation in events and conferences.

Objective: Citizens perceive that the EU is working to improve their lives and engage with the EU. They feel that their concerns are taken into consideration in European decision making and they know about their rights in the EU.		
Main outputs in 2018:		
Output	Indicator	Target
<i>Publications</i>	<i>Number of Strategic Notes</i>	<i>Circa 12 over the year</i>
	<i>Number of Policy Briefs / special publications</i>	<i>No quantitative objectives, Production is driven by qualitative objectives: quality policy-making, timeliness, relevance.</i>
	<i>Number of Newsletters</i>	<i>Minimum 2 per year</i>
	<i>Number of subscriptions to the publications mailing list</i>	<i>Positive trend</i>
<i>Online presence</i>	<i>Website – number of visits</i>	<i>Positive trend</i>
	<i>Twitter: number of tweets, number of retweets, endorsements, etc.</i>	<i>Positive trend</i>
	<i>Medium: number of articles published, number of followers, number of endorsements.</i>	<i>Positive trend</i>
	<i>LinkedIn</i>	<i>Positive trend</i>

It is important to emphasize that EPSC has only an administrative budget covering all activities' costs described in the financial management part and therefore no specific budget for communication activities.

Annual communication spending:	
Baseline (2017)	Estimated commitments (2018)
N/A	N/A

F. Example(s) of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities of the DG

The Management and Resources unit is constantly exploring ways of saving money, in particular in the field of conferences' organisation. The conference and financial teams are scrutinizing the Framework Contracts available in the Commission for events organisation in order to improve the cost efficiency aspects (e.g. one provider for several types of services to have a better coordination and avoid duplication of work). All items of offers are carefully reviewed and a particular attention is paid to the coordination and management fees which are negotiated and decreased when it is proved necessary.