



# ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

# 20 17

## DG COMMUNICATION



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# THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL IN BRIEF

## DG COMM MISSION STATEMENT:

***Listen Advise Engage***

***DG COMM, as a corporate communication service,  
brings Europe closer to its citizens.***

This **mission statement** of the Directorate-General for Communication, as developed through a participatory process, was reconfirmed in the Working Methods agreed between the President's Cabinet and the Director-General.

As a **Presidential Service**, the Directorate-General for Communication has steered the process of streamlining and defining an overarching Commission-wide objective for external communication<sup>1</sup>, aligning it with the changing political environment and the increasing expectations throughout 2017.

### Core services for the three core client groups

The Directorate-General for Communication is a multi-site directorate-general, with its staff split between Brussels and Commission Representations in the Member States (Representations) in each of the 28 capitals of the European Union. True to its mission statement, and in view of the overarching objective shared across the whole 'communication domain' of the Commission, the Directorate-General for Communication provides three types of services for its three client groups.

The Directorate-General for Communication raises public awareness about the European Union as a whole, its values and its work to address current issues, citizens' aspirations and overall European ambitions, in line with the ten political priorities set out by the President and detailed by the Commission in the annual Commission Work programme. This communication approach is made possible through constant alignment of political and corporate communication as well as synergies and efficiencies across the communications domain of the Commission. Examples of such synergies include the management and running of the Europa website and the partial centralisation of communication framework contracts.

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<sup>1</sup> This shared, overarching communication objectives reads as follows: 'Citizens perceive that the European Union is working to improve their lives and engage with the European Union. They feel that their concerns are taken into consideration in European decision making process and they know about their rights in the European Union).'

1. **Communication products and services**<sup>2</sup> of the Directorate-General for Communication provide engaging information for citizens and ensure that the right mix of communication services, traditional and new, are made available to citizens through simple, clear and consistent messages. This allows citizens to access up-to-date and user-friendly information on European Union policies and European Union values. It contributes to citizens' increased awareness and understanding of European affairs; in turn, stimulating citizens' interest in engaging directly with the European Commission, be it locally, nationally or Europe-wide.

2. **Corporate communication products and services**<sup>3</sup> of the Directorate-General for Communication are provided to the external communication domain of the Commission and reflect the Directorate-General's role as domain leader for external communication. These products and services ensure coherence in the Commission's messaging by aligning all Commission communication services to contribute to a consistent, coherent and effective corporate communication on the overarching political priorities. Bringing resources together and building internal communication synergies allows the European Commission to strengthen its brand through recognizable corporate messaging and visual branding.

3. **Executive service**<sup>4</sup> of the Directorate-General for Communication is provided to ensure a more effective communication by the President, the College of Commissioners, the Spokesperson's Service, and senior Commission management. The service offered by the Directorate-General for Communication includes political and economic intelligence, detailed country-specific information, media advice, regular public opinion studies, and analysis from a variety of sources which feeds into the Commission's decision making process. This leads, ultimately, to relevant, evidence-based European Union policy with positive impact on citizens.

## Corporate Communication

At the start of the Juncker Commission, communication was placed at the heart of European Union policy-making. With the Directorate-General for Communication empowered to act as domain leader for external communication within the European Commission, resources started to be pooled for a more effective corporate communication approach. With stakeholder communication assigned to policy Directorates-General, the Directorate-General for Communication focuses on communicating the bigger picture and engaging with citizens in a clear, consistent and cost-effective way.

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<sup>2</sup> Communication services targeted at citizens include audiovisual and multimedia productions, a constantly updated publications catalogue, the Visitors' Centre, information outlets across the European Union, Call Centre services, Representations' outreach and information events, Back to School activities, and Citizens' Dialogues / Democratic Conventions (cf. State of the Union address 13/09/2017).

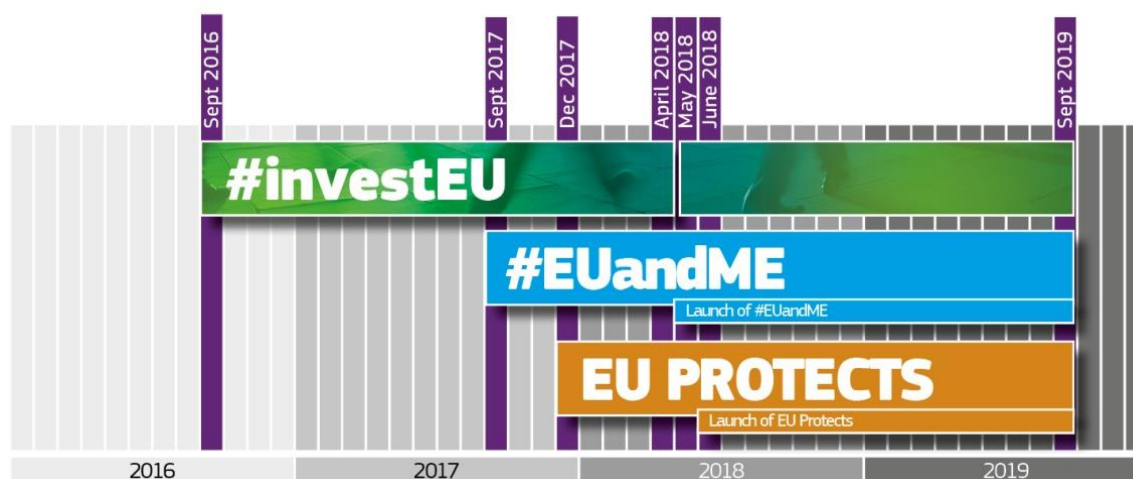
<sup>3</sup> Corporate services include service mode of the new Europa website, implementation of corporate communication actions, including campaigns and flanking measures, alignment / coordination of networks, central management of communication framework contracts and professionalisation measures, together with the identification of further potential for Synergies & Efficiencies and Pooling & Sharing.

<sup>4</sup> Executive services include activities creating media coverage and management of technical facilities (e.g. the audiovisual studios), the logistical aspects of Commissioners' visits and roadshows as well as the regular compilation and analysis of Representations' political and economic reports, stakeholder / citizens' feedback, Eurobarometer polls and media coverage.

In this context, 2017 was a year of consolidation for the corporate communication approach of the Directorate-General for Communication, the main challenge being managing the one, ongoing corporate communication campaign and conceptualising the two, new campaigns in parallel. The **three corporate communication campaigns**, to run in parallel until the end of the current Commission mandate in 2019, convey the over-arching priorities of the Commission, address three different audiences, and are built on three different storytelling approaches reflecting citizens' interests:

1. An **European Union that delivers** on jobs, growth and investment (**#investEU**), the campaign was launched in March 2017 and communicates the results of funding and investment of the Union. Its human-centred stories show how the investment changes lives, revitalises communities and provides citizens with new and exciting opportunities;
2. An **European Union that empowers** young people with opportunities to lead a fuller, more enriching life (**#EUandMe**);
3. An **European Union that protects**, addressing European citizens' safety and security concerns.

The campaigns, centrally-coordinated but fully adaptable to the different realities in Member States, speak directly to citizens and show real-life examples of how the European Union delivers, empowers and protects. While the campaigns target broad audiences, particular focus is put on segments of the population with neutral or ambivalent views about the European Union.<sup>5</sup>



*Timeline for implementing the three-strand narrative.*

With a first phase targeting stakeholders in 2015 / 2016, the **#InvestEU campaign**<sup>6</sup>, broadened its scope in 2017 to reach a much wider audience. Throughout 2017 the campaign told 80 evocative stories about projects that were made possible through the European Investment Plan and other sources of European funding, changing lives, rebuilding communities and providing people with a better quality of life. The campaign

<sup>5</sup> Campaigns are built around real stories, real people and real impact: beneficiaries of projects, people benefitting from opportunities and funding of the European Union, and people working for or on behalf of the European Union to keep citizens safe and secure. The acronym-free campaigns use a clear narrative line appealing to both hearts and minds.

<sup>6</sup> [https://europa.eu/investeu/content/materials-partners\\_en](https://europa.eu/investeu/content/materials-partners_en).

was rolled out in all Member States, with particular emphasis on 14 zoom-in countries where proactive communication was most likely to generate more impact<sup>7</sup>.

Monitoring data of the first six months of the campaign show that in the 14 zoom-in countries alone, an estimated 100 million people came across two to three pieces of campaign material. The estimated 'reach' of paid advertising (print, online, outdoor and social media) stands at 17 million people.

With the #investEU reaching cruising speed in 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication started planning and developing two other campaigns, to be launched in 2018, targeting young people (18 to 35 year olds) and a more mature audience (35 to 55 year olds).

The **#EUandMe campaign**, targeted at a young audience, will highlight European values and will show why Europe is an ideal place for young people to reach their full potential and enjoy an unparalleled quality of life. The campaign starts in May 2018 with a series of five short movies inspired by European values directed by well-known European film-makers.

Preparations were also made, throughout 2017, on the **EUProtects campaign**, showcasing European action to address people's safety and security concerns. The campaign, to start in mid-2018, will focus on people who are finding solutions to help protect European citizens and ensure broader stability in the world.

The **three campaigns**, that will run in parallel until the end of the mandate of the Juncker Commission, convey the overarching priorities of the Commission. They are centrally-coordinated but adapted to the different realities in Member States, **speaking directly to citizens and showing real-life examples of how the European Union delivers, empowers and protects**.

Besides working on the three corporate communication campaigns, the Directorate-General for Communication was involved throughout 2017 in communicating other political priorities of the Commission and important milestones. These included the European Solidarity Corps, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Treaties in March, the Social Summit in Gothenburg in November and the One Planet Summit in December.

## Budget 2017

The **general budget** (in title 16) of the Directorate-General for Communication falls under the **institutional prerogatives** whilst the separate **budget for corporate communication actions** is anchored in the Multiannual Financial Framework proposals of 2011 and the respective annual or bi-annual Commission Decisions<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> The #InvestEU campaign started in April 2017 with 14 zoom in countries – Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Hungary, Italia, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland and Portugal, two other countries (Sweden and Romania) joined in summer 2017.

<sup>8</sup> SEC(2011)867 final – 29/06/2011), SEC(2013)486 – 23/09/2013, C(2015)7346 – 27/10/2015 and COM(2016)710 final – 25/10/2016.

**The general budget of the Directorate-General for Communication for 2017** amounted to EUR 141 512 728.29 (commitment appropriations authorised<sup>9</sup>) and was allocated to its different operational activities as defined in the programme statement which is part of the 2017 Budget.

The commitments made amounted to EUR 137 167 317.95 (see Annex 3 for an overview of key budgetary figures), with a budget implementation rate for commitments in 2017 of 99.97 %; calculated on the basis of Directorate-General for Communication internal reporting for 2017 on budgetary outturn<sup>10</sup>.

| Expenditure detail                                  | Commitment appropriations | Commitment implemented | Payment appropriations | Payments made  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Administrative expenditure - Procurement procedures |                           | 42 553 082.94          |                        | 38 453 993.06  |
| Operational expenditure - Procurement Contracts     |                           | 82 625 035.01          |                        | 71 649 469.78  |
| Operational expenditure - Grants                    |                           | 11 989 200.00          |                        | 12 559 754.68  |
| TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE                                | 46 530 000.00             | 42 553 082.94          | 52 440 000.00          | 38 453 993.06  |
| TOTAL OPERATIONAL                                   | 94 982 728.29             | 94 614 235.01          | 89 383 328.62          | 84 209 224.46  |
| TOTAL (2017)                                        | 141 512 728.29            | 137 167 317.95         | 141 823 328.62         | 122 663 217.52 |

*Directorate-General for Communication 2017 budget overview*

The Directorate-General for Communication manages two **types of expenditure**:

- Administrative expenditure (including real estate expenses related to Representations in the Member States) executed, for example, by using procurement procedures.
- Operational expenditure, executed by using procurement contracts and grant agreements.

**The budget pooled under the corporate communication decision for 2017<sup>11</sup>**, amounted to EUR 21 720 000 (commitment appropriations authorised<sup>12</sup>). The commitments made amounted to EUR 21 720 000 (see Annex 3 for an overview of key budgetary figures).

For this delegated corporate budget, a budget implementation rate of 100% for commitments is calculated on the basis of the Directorate-General for Communication internal reporting for 2017 on budgetary outturn<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Commitment appropriations authorised include, in addition to the budget voted by the legislative authority, appropriations carried over from the previous exercise, amending budgets as well as miscellaneous commitment appropriations for the period (e.g. internal and external assigned revenue).

<sup>10</sup> Including only the operational budget; the administrative budget, carried over appropriations, assigned revenues and others budgetary titles are excluded. The figures from Annex 3 are calculated based on different parameters.

<sup>11</sup> C(2016) 6838 – 25/10/2016.

<sup>12</sup> Commitment appropriations authorised include, in addition to the budget voted by the legislative authority, appropriations carried over from the previous exercise, amending budgets as well as miscellaneous commitment appropriations for the period (e.g. internal and external assigned revenue).

<sup>13</sup> Including only the operational budget; the administrative budget, carried over appropriations, assigned revenues and others budgetary titles are excluded.

## Organisational changes 2017

On 31 December 2017, **Directorate-General for Communication staff** amounted to 1 101, of which 676 were European officials and 425 were external staff<sup>14</sup>.

The Directorate-General for Communication is a multi-site directorate-general and the staff is split between Brussels and Representations in each of the 28 Member States as follows:

- 391 in Directorate-General for Communication Headquarters / Spokesperson's Service;
- 710 in Representations.

The role of the Representations has evolved considerably under the current Commission, in particular in terms of communicating the Juncker Plan and the Investment Plan for Europe and in hosting of Citizens' Dialogues. Management structures needed to be reinforced and clarified, and the organisation chart of the Directorate-General was therefore updated on 1 July 2017, (transferring and re-defining tasks between Units COMM.B.1 and COMM.B.2) and on 1 September 2017 (transfer of Eurobarometer sector from COMM.A.1 to COMM.A.3).

This Annual Activity Report 2017 of the Directorate-General for Communication complies with Director-General for Communication Timo Pesonen's **obligation as Authorising Officer under Article 66 (9) of the Financial Regulation**<sup>15</sup> to report to the Institution on the performance of his duties in the form of an annual activity report containing financial and management information, including the results of controls, declaring that he has reasonable assurance that the:

- Information contained in the report presents a true and fair view;
- The resources assigned to the activities described in the report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principle of sound financial management.

The control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regulatory compliance of the underlying transactions.

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<sup>14</sup> Based on Human Resources report (no trainees or intramuros service providers).

<sup>15</sup> Regulation (European Union, Euratom) No. 966 / 2912 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Official Journal - 01/01/2016).

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Annual Activity Report is a management report of the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Communication to the College of Commissioners. Annual activity reports are the main instrument of management accountability within the Commission and constitute the basis on which the College takes political responsibility for the decisions it takes, as well as for the coordinating, executive and management functions it exercises, as laid down in the Treaties<sup>16</sup>.

## a) Key results and progress towards the achievement of general and specific objectives of the Directorate-General (executive summary of section 1)

In 2017, corporate communication activities focused on the political priorities as set out in the 2014 Political Guidelines for the Commission, the 2016 State of the Union address and in the 2017 Commission Work Programme in line with the Bratislava and the Rome Declarations and the Roadmap to Sibiu (see overleaf).

The general objective of all communication activity of the Commission is that *'Citizens perceive that the European Union is working to improve their lives and engage with the European Union. They feel that their concerns are taken into consideration in European decision making process and they know about their rights in the European Union.'* A variety of services provided by the Directorate-General for Communication contributed in 2017 to achieving this general objective.

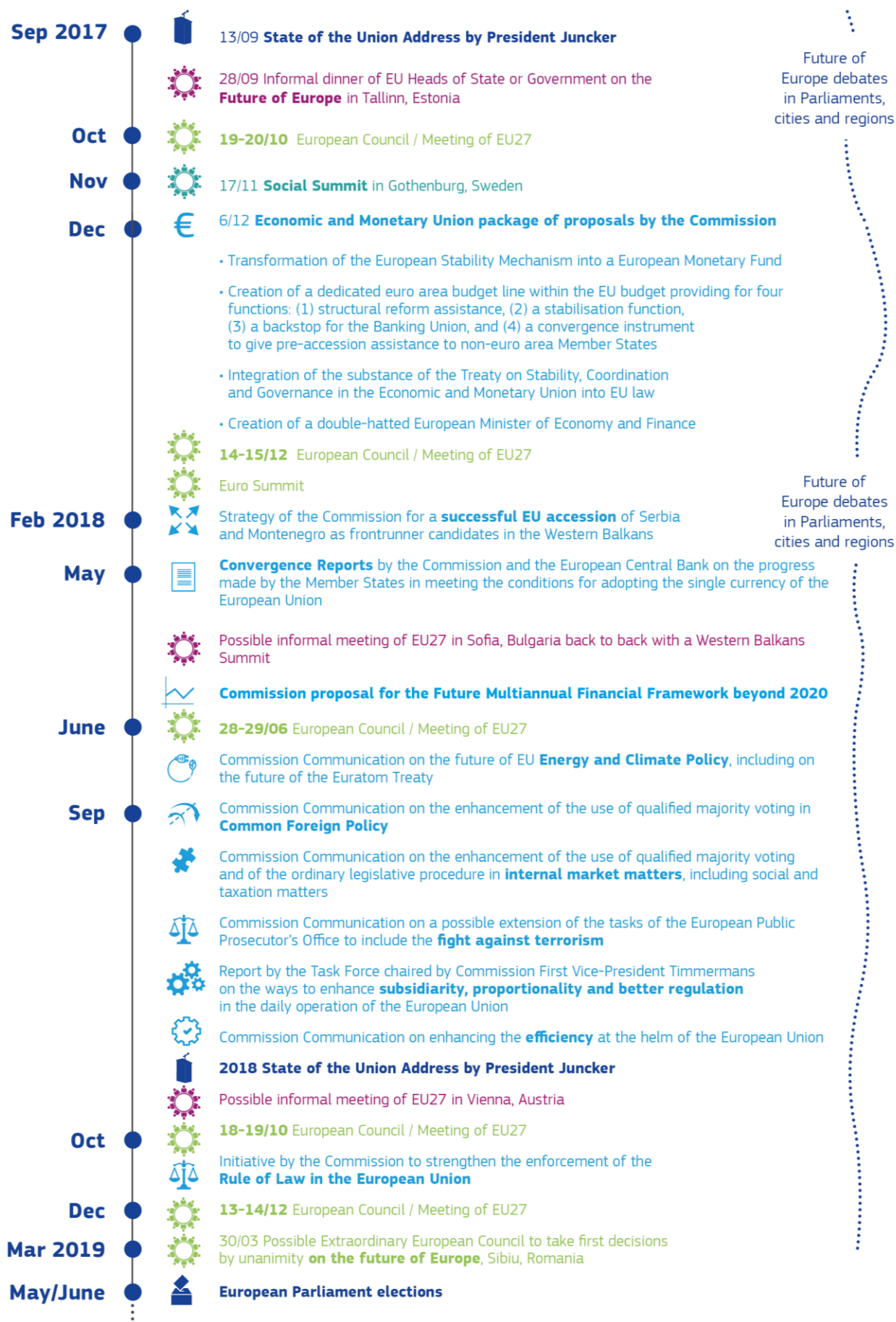
The **Spokesperson's Service** continued in 2017 the work of the President's and Commissioner's communication on the political priorities and the management of multiple crises. In this context, the Spokesperson's Service, together with the Representations, ensured that media were constantly provided with clear, accurate, comprehensive and timely pro-active and reactive communication via all channels. The Spokesperson's Service looks back to yet another successful year with close to 250 midday briefings, 186 visits of the President, Vice-Presidents and Commissioners in the press room, over 140 press conferences, around 100 technical briefings and more than 50 VIP corner press events.

Moreover, in 2017, the central **social media** accounts run by the Directorate-General for Communication continued to grow, generate engagement on the Commission's priorities and provide guidance and support to the other Directorates-General. In spite of its staffing challenges<sup>17</sup>, the social media team, in collaboration with the Directorates-General for Human Resources and Security, set up and promoted an innovative social media employee advocacy tool called SMARP through which staff can multiply Commission messages on their social media accounts. Social media played also a very crucial role in the three corporate campaigns developed in 2017.

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<sup>16</sup> Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union.

<sup>17</sup> New unit for Social Media created as of 16 February 2018.



The Roadmap to Sibiu: Milestone deliverables and related communication measures.

The **#InvestEU corporate campaign** broadened its scope in 2017, targeting a much wider audience. At the same time, preparations for the **#EUandMe and EUProtects campaigns** were underway. Both campaigns will be rolled out in 2018. Following the first six months of the #investEU campaign, monitoring data shows that an estimated 100 million people in the 14 zoom-in countries saw at least two to three pieces of campaign material. The estimated 'reach' of paid advertising (print, online, outdoor and social media) stands at 17 million people.

To better fulfil its role as a communication service and to complement its other activities, the Directorate-General for Communication in 2017 put a special focus on **visual communication across all communication channels**. The most noticeable deliverables included factsheets with data visualisation that were used regularly in the press room and in high-level events, visual story-telling (static and animated) for the Commission's central social media accounts and the consistent high-standard in the laying out of reports and position papers. Notable examples of such reports include the White Paper on the Future of Europe, the State of the Union package<sup>18</sup> and the campaign marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Treaties. Visual social media campaigns, such as #ThisIsTheEU and #EUHaveYourSay, used the power of photos and illustrations to appeal to emotions, promoting European values and citizen engagement in the Union's policy making.

Furthermore, the Directorate-General for Communication **continued to work closely with the other European institutions** in promoting the political priorities in order '*to build a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe for 2025*'<sup>19</sup>. This included paving the way for the cooperation with the European Parliament in the context of the European Elections 2019 through the signature of a joint statement by the Directors-General for Communication of both institutions.

Throughout 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication pursued its mandate as communication **domain leader for the Synergies and Efficiencies** process by **continuing the centralisation of the Commission wide framework contracts for communication**. The implementation of the procurement timeline continued, while the net number of contracts<sup>20</sup> phased out since the beginning of the exercise went up to 22. The conceptual layout of the account management centre for the contractual one-stop-shop<sup>21</sup> (the Corporate Communication Contracts Team) was finalised, focusing on diversifying and reinforcing the consultancy and support offered to partner Directorates-General.

In its role of guardian of the Commission's Visual Identity, the Directorate-General for Communication launched a process of **reconfirming the existing visual identity rules and reinforcing their implementation**, in partnership with all European Commission Directorates-General. A mechanism for the **temporary pooling of graphic designers** was established, to be activated in situations of **high-priority demands of corporate importance**. The mechanism was already activated in 2017 with excellent results.

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<sup>18</sup> This major complex project could only be achieved successfully by overcoming staffing challenges via a project based pooling of resources.

<sup>19</sup> 2017 State of the Union Address – 13/09/2017.

<sup>20</sup> From an original total of 58 contracts.

<sup>21</sup> A taskforce is gathering the necessary expertise and tools to deliver adequate communication procurement solutions.

Examples include the **2017 State of the Union**, the **Tallinn Digital Summit**, and the **Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth**.

Furthermore, **Representations played a crucial role in the Commission's communication**, acting as its 'eyes, ears and voice' on the ground and promoting the Commission's policy. More specifically they ensured a steady stream of communication actions on the ten political priorities outlined in the President Juncker's Political Guidelines, amplifying the corporate communication messages, and being the main contributors in the outreach operations organised around the European Solidarity Corps, the Future of Europe reflection process and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Treaties.

The Representations delivered on the 2016 - 2020 Strategic Plan in three principal domains: political and economic intelligence; media (in close co-operation with the Spokesperson's Service); and citizens and stakeholders. In 2017 the Representations collectively produced 352 political reports and 332 high-level political briefings for the President and Vice-Presidents. There was also an increase in the number of policy-specific horizontal reports. The Representations implemented nearly 8 000 different events and actions targeted directly at citizens – exceeding the target of 7 000 initially set in the 2017 Management Plan.

In addition to the events and actions organised by the Representations, the **Europe Direct Information Centres** reached out to citizens with more than 97 000 events, 750 of them focusing specifically on the White Paper on the Future of Europe. The Centres also answered close to 100 000 enquires from citizens, in all official languages of the Union.

Finally, 2017 saw a strong increase in the number of **Citizens' Dialogues** to a total of 317 dialogues, this target constantly having been increased in view of the political challenges in the Member States. President Juncker and European Commissioners engaged in 156 Citizens' Dialogues across the European Union. They shared the stage with five Prime Ministers, 53 national and regional Ministers or State Secretaries, President Tajani and 33 Members of the European Parliament, President Lambertz and Members of the Committee of the Regions, researchers, business representatives and others. In 2017 the Commissioners' Citizens' Dialogues started being complemented with a series of Citizens' Dialogues with senior Commission officials. A total of 161 such dialogues were held in 2017.

As from the adoption of the White Paper on the Future of Europe on 1 March 2017, the **Citizens' Dialogue served as one of the channels to trigger a broad debate on the future of Europe**. In the subsequent ten months, 210 Dialogues with Commissioners and senior officials focused specifically on this theme. Citizens' Dialogues were organised also around key moments of the political year, such as the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Treaties, Europe Day on 9 May, as well as in the aftermath of the State of the Union address of President Juncker.



Citizen's Dialogues – 2017 Highlights.

The **Visitors' Centre** continued working on improving the quality of visits and organised **1 568 visits** for **46 702 visitors**. New **publications** for young people and for the wider general public were developed, providing clear and relevant information to citizens, with the aim of increasing the awareness of the European Union and its priorities.



*The Visitors' Centre of the European Commission.*

## b) Key Performance Indicators

For 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication identified the following three key performance indicators in its Strategic and Management Plans, two of them concerning core communication activities ('**what we deliver?**') and one stemming from a horizontal activity ('**how we deliver?**')

### 1. Percentage of European Union citizens having a positive image of the European Union (impact indicator of the overarching objective).

*Definition:* Eurobarometer measures the state of public opinion in the Member States. Eurobarometer data is influenced by many factors and externalities, including the work of other European Union institutions and national governments, as well as political and economic factors; it does not only reflect the impact of the communication actions of the Commission. However, it is relevant as a proxy for the overall perception European citizens have of the European Union.

### Percentage of European Union citizens having a positive image of the European Union:

*Source of data:* Standard Eurobarometer carried out in each Member State at twice a year (every May and every November).

| Result/Impact indicator (description) | Target (or milestones)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Latest known results as per Annual Activity Report                                                                                                                                                                                  |         |                 |                 |            |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
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| Ultimate impact                       | <p>To contribute to improving and maintaining a positive image of the European Union in the media and among citizens:</p> <p>Milestone in 2017: 32 %<br/>Target in 2020: ≥ 50 %</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>40 % of EU citizens had a positive image of the European Union in November 2017</p> <p><b>Status as of November 2017</b> - Standard Eurobarometer 88<br/>Total 'Positive': 40 %<br/>Neutral: 37 %<br/>Total 'Negative': 21 %</p> |         |                 |                 |            |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| KPI 1                                 | <p>QA9 In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image? (% - EU)</p> <table><caption>Percentage of EU citizens having a positive image of the European Union (2006-2017)</caption><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Very positive</th><th>Fairly positive</th><th>Neutral</th><th>Fairly negative</th><th>Very negative</th><th>Don't know</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2006</td><td>32</td><td>46</td><td>15</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2007</td><td>34</td><td>52</td><td>15</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2008</td><td>31</td><td>49</td><td>14</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2009</td><td>34</td><td>48</td><td>15</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2010</td><td>35</td><td>45</td><td>17</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2011</td><td>36</td><td>45</td><td>16</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2012</td><td>36</td><td>48</td><td>15</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2013</td><td>37</td><td>42</td><td>19</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>40</td><td>38</td><td>20</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2015</td><td>41</td><td>31</td><td>26</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>39</td><td>31</td><td>28</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>39</td><td>30</td><td>29</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>39</td><td>30</td><td>29</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>39</td><td>30</td><td>28</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>38</td><td>35</td><td>25</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>39</td><td>37</td><td>22</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>41</td><td>38</td><td>19</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2023</td><td>38</td><td>37</td><td>23</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2024</td><td>38</td><td>34</td><td>27</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2025</td><td>38</td><td>35</td><td>25</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2026</td><td>40</td><td>37</td><td>21</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2027</td><td>40</td><td>37</td><td>21</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr></tbody></table> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Year    | Very positive   | Fairly positive | Neutral    | Fairly negative | Very negative | Don't know | 2006 | 32 | 46 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2007 | 34 | 52 | 15 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2008 | 31 | 49 | 14 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2009 | 34 | 48 | 15 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2010 | 35 | 45 | 17 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2011 | 36 | 45 | 16 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2012 | 36 | 48 | 15 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2013 | 37 | 42 | 19 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2014 | 40 | 38 | 20 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2015 | 41 | 31 | 26 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2016 | 39 | 31 | 28 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2017 | 39 | 30 | 29 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2018 | 39 | 30 | 29 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2019 | 39 | 30 | 28 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2020 | 38 | 35 | 25 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2021 | 39 | 37 | 22 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2022 | 41 | 38 | 19 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2023 | 38 | 37 | 23 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2024 | 38 | 34 | 27 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2025 | 38 | 35 | 25 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2026 | 40 | 37 | 21 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2027 | 40 | 37 | 21 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Year                                  | Very positive                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Fairly positive                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Neutral | Fairly negative | Very negative   | Don't know |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2006                                  | 32                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 46                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 15      | 3               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2007                                  | 34                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 52                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 15      | 2               | 3               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2008                                  | 31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 49                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 14      | 2               | 3               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2009                                  | 34                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 48                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 15      | 2               | 3               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2010                                  | 35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 45                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 17      | 2               | 3               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2011                                  | 36                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 45                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 16      | 2               | 3               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2012                                  | 36                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 48                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 15      | 2               | 3               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2013                                  | 37                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 42                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 19      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2014                                  | 40                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 38                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 20      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2015                                  | 41                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 26      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2016                                  | 39                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 28      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2017                                  | 39                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 30                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 29      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2018                                  | 39                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 30                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 29      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2019                                  | 39                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 30                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 28      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2020                                  | 38                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 25      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2021                                  | 39                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 37                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 22      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2022                                  | 41                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 38                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 19      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2023                                  | 38                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 37                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 23      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2024                                  | 38                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 34                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 27      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2025                                  | 38                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 25      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2026                                  | 40                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 37                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 21      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |
| 2027                                  | 40                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 37                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 21      | 2               | 2               | 2          |                 |               |            |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |      |    |    |    |   |   |   |

**2. Number of unique visitors to the EUROPA websites** (interinstitutional and Commission domains including the Representations' and RAPID websites).

*Definition:* 'Unique visitors' refers to the number of distinct individuals requesting pages from a website during a given period. As it is recorded by the device requesting the pages, one person visiting the site from his / her mobile phone and computer will be counted as two unique visitors. Unique visitors are the sum of all the unique visitors per month per EC-managed website tracked by Europa Analytics.

**Number of unique visitors to the EUROPA websites:**

*Source of data:* Europa Analytics (new corporate data collection tool, based on Piwik, reporting for the first time, COMM.A.5).

*N.B.: Website reported data:* In 2017, reporting of website indicators comes from a new corporate web analytics tool (Europa Analytics). It provides more accurate reporting than the previous, older tool (SAS Analytics) and this is reflected in this year's reported data for all Europa websites. On average, the new corporate analytics tool records 60 % less unique visitors and visits than the previous one. This is due mainly to document downloads and internal site searches being recorded as separate indicators in the tool (e.g. as 'downloads' and 'site searches').

See IPG: [http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/services/analytics/faq\\_en.htm#section\\_3\\_5](http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/services/analytics/faq_en.htm#section_3_5).

| Baseline<br>31/12/2014 | Milestone 2017 | Target 2020  | Latest known results<br>as per Annual Activity<br>Report<br>31/12/2017 |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 258 298 695            | 300 000 000+   | 350 000 000+ | 140 053 076                                                            |

**3. Budget execution by commitments** (output indicator defined in the Management Plan).

For each year, the Directorate-General for Communication sets itself the target of 'close to 100 % in the execution of commitments'.

**Budget execution by commitments:**

*Source of data:* 2017 operational budget overall implementation (COMM.D.1).

| Baseline 2015 | Milestone 2017 | Target 2020    | Latest known results<br>as per Annual Activity<br>Report |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 99.83 %       | Close to 100 % | Close to 100 % | 99.97 %                                                  |

## **c) Key conclusions on Financial management and Internal control**

(executive summary of section 2.1)

In accordance with the governance arrangements of the European Commission, the Directorate-General for Communication conducts its operations in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, working in an open and transparent manner and meeting the expected high level of professional and ethical standards.

The Commission has adopted a set of internal control principles, based on international good practice, aimed at ensuring the achievement of policy and operational objectives. The financial regulation requires that the organisational structure and the internal control systems used for the implementation of the budget are set up in accordance with these principles. The Directorate-General for Communication has assessed the internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that the internal control principles are implemented and function as intended. Please refer to Section 2.1.3 for further details.

In addition, the Directorate-General for Communication has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, including those aimed at supervising entities to which it has entrusted budget implementation tasks, as well as the observations and recommendations issued by internal auditors and the European Court of Auditors. These elements have been assessed to determine their impact on the management's assurance as regards the achievement of control objectives. Please refer to Section 2.1 for further details.

Management has reasonable assurance to conclude that, overall, suitable controls are in place and functioning as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director-General, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation, has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

## **d) Provision of information to the President**

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the Director-General and the Cabinet of President Juncker on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration have also been brought to the attention of the Cabinet of the President Juncker on 21 March 2018.



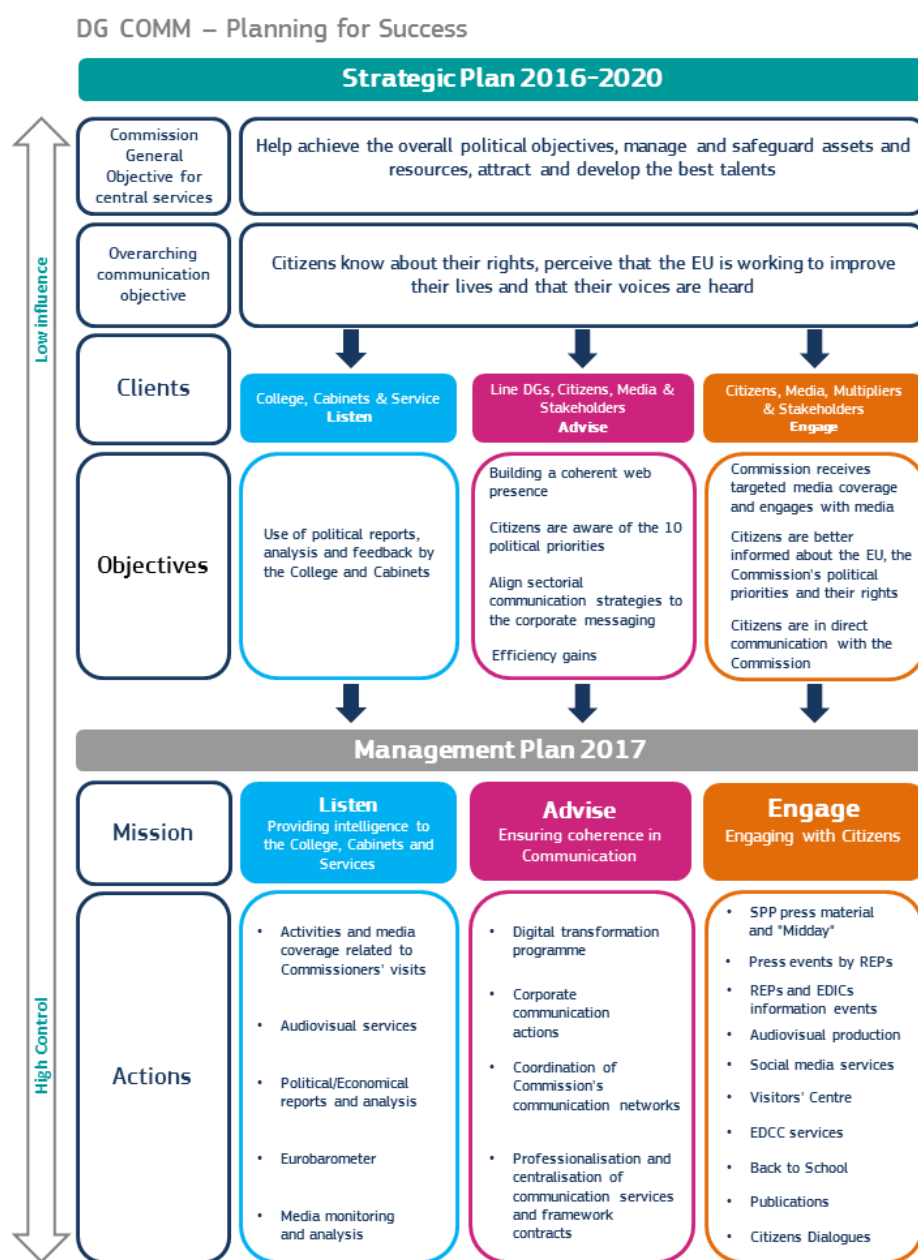
# KEY RESULTS, PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENTS OF GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES





# 1. KEY RESULTS, PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENTS OF GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The objective of the information provided below is to give an overview of '**What Directorate-General for Communication has delivered in 2017**'. The information illustrates how objectives, actions and outputs contributed to the achievement of the general objective for the European Commission's central services<sup>22</sup>, as defined in the 2017 Management Plan and the programme statement of the 2017 Budget.



\* For more information visit the 'Strategic Planning & Programming' section on MyDGCOMM



<sup>22</sup> 'To help achieve the overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.'

Throughout 2017, substantial progress was made on the core business of communicating the European Commission's ten Political Priorities, defining the Directorate-General for Communication's role as domain leader for external communication<sup>23</sup> and implementing the Commission's three-stand narrative EU Delivers - EU Empowers - EU Protects.

### **Directorate-General for Communication as communication service**

Throughout 2017, the **Spokesperson's Service** continued to support the President and the Commissioners so they can communicate effectively – in the media and with citizens. More generally it ensured the political communication on behalf of the President and the entire Commission as its official voice vis-à-vis the press. The Spokesperson's Service managed successfully 250 midday briefings and organised around 250 press conferences and briefings for the media. It oversaw the political content of the Commission's internet homepage and steered the central social media messages pushed out by Social Media Team of the Directorate-General for Communication.



*Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, answering the journalists' questions, in the presence of Margaritis Schinas, Chief Spokesperson of the European Commission, on the left (Brussels, 23/11/2017).*

The central **Social Media Team** of the Directorate-General for Communication ran a variety of social media campaigns in 2017 reaching with its accounts an average of 10 million unique users a month.

The Social Media Team contributed significantly to the corporate campaigns, in particular through social media promotion, and by engaging with social media users through substantive replies to their questions and comments. The Social Media Team, in spite of its staffing challenges, also enhanced the active engagement of citizens with the European Union through social media strategies deployed on the ground for high level events such as the Web Summit in Lisbon or the Gothenburg Social Summit.

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<sup>23</sup> SEC(2016)170 – 04/04/2016.



## Social Media Coverage



*European Commission at the Lisbon Web Summit (6-9/11/2018).*

In terms of **political communication**, the reflection process on the **Future of Europe** featured among the highlights of 2017. A post originally created by the social media central Facebook account asking citizens to express their favourite scenario for the Future of Europe through the use of emoticons, took a life of its own with high level of engagements and a multitude of reactions. Representations leveraged the momentum strategy by sharing the content developed at headquarters on their social profiles, translated into their own languages and adapted to their social media style and tone of voice.

As social media domain leader and working hand in hand with Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security, the Social Media Team set-up and promoted an innovative social media employee advocacy programme called SMARP, allowing staff to multiply Commission messages on their social media accounts.

Throughout 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication produced, in spite of organizational and staffing challenges<sup>24</sup>, hundreds of factsheets to summarise, explain and illustrate with data and examples the key initiatives of the Commission. By using **visual storytelling** and data visualisation techniques, factsheets have become highly effective tools in explaining processes, describing the big picture, visualising impact and comparing options. Factsheets were used both in print for use in the press room, at events and in interinstitutional meetings, as well as electronically, published on the Europa website and on social media. Factsheets were published either as stand-alone pieces, as was the case with the [Roadmap for a More United, Stronger and More Democratic Union](#) (updated several times and used in different contexts), or as part of a broader package, such as the 12 factsheets prepared for the [EU Leaders' meeting on migration](#).



*Examples of factsheets produced in 2017.*

Furthermore, the Directorate-General for Communication supported the European Commission's communication on the ten Political Priorities through **multichannel visual campaigns** accompanying important policy proposals. To mention one of many examples, in the two clean mobility packages presented in 2017, policy papers were accompanied by printed communication pieces (factsheets, folders, booklets), online visual content (web banners, infographics) and social media pieces (visual quotes, animated content, key data visualisation etc.).

By the same token, the Directorate-General for Communication provided visual content supporting major events, such as the One Planet Summit in Paris, the Tallinn Digital Summit and the Social Summit in Gothenburg.

<sup>24</sup> See chapter 2.2.

**Visual communication** was the main method used for EU values-centred communication on social media. The #ThisIsTheEU campaign, launched in 2017 on Instagram and Facebook is an example of highly effective communication using clear messages and powerful visuals, in a variety of styles.

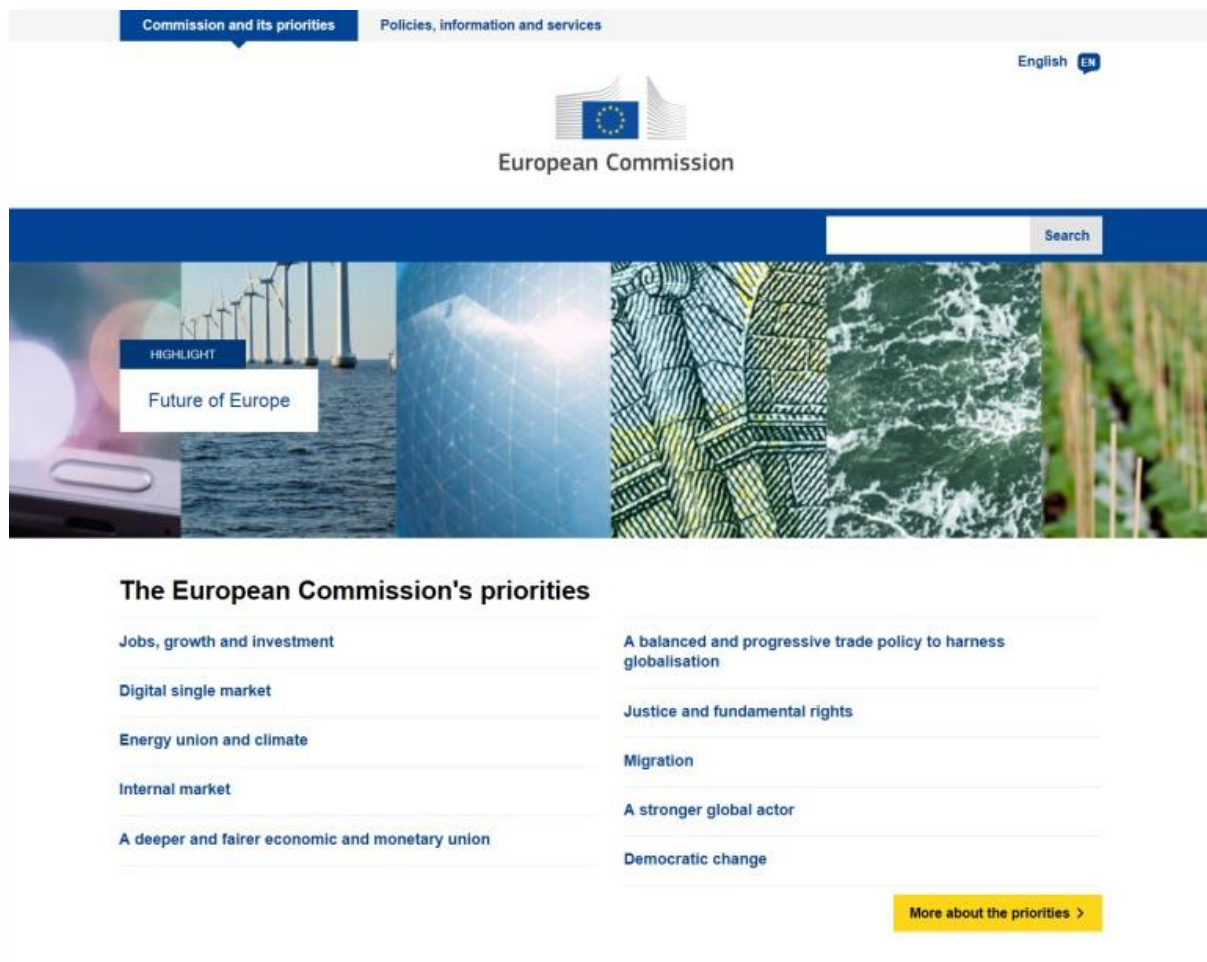


*Visuals used for the #ThisIsTheEU campaign.*

Important steps were taken in 2017 regarding the online presence of the European Commission and the **digital transformation** programme, to ensure that the Commission keeps pace with the quickly evolving communications industry. Following a decision by the Corporate Communication Steering Committee, the **strategy for the new web presence** was adapted so that each of the 15 themes would be built up to at least the first three levels of the information architecture.

In addition, all existing websites should be assigned to an individual theme. This completed the challenging building phase of the **digital transformation programme** in 2017. In addition, a new improvement track for some of these existing websites was launched. This aims to help Directorates-General reduce their sites' content and create a closer visual coherence with the new web presence. A total of 23 sites were thus improved in 2017.

Progress was also made on improving the technical platform that websites are built on and in making more features available to all services to reuse.



*Digital transformation and the new Europa "New Commission web presence getting better all the time".*

At an **interinstitutional level**, the Directorate-General for Communication continued to work closely with the other European Institutions to **promote the political priorities in order 'to build a more united, stronger and more democratic Europe'**. In view of the 2019 European Elections, the Director-General for Communication signed the 'Joint Statement between the Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament and the Directorate-General for Communication of the European Commission on communicating together ahead of the 2019 European Elections'. Its goal is to create effective and targeted communication which can help citizens to form their own opinions about European matters and encourage them to take part in the elections with a view to a more democratic, stronger and united Europe.

Finally, the Directorate-General for Communication continued in 2017 to **inform, communicate and engage directly with citizens through a variety of corporate tools and services**. For example, the well-established initiative **Back to school** exceeded targets set for 2017 with around 500 officials from 10 European institutions and members of national governments taking part and addressing more than 60 000 pupils.

The political communications environment constantly being challenged by 'fake news', Representations also broke new ground in 2017, engaging with new audiences through the development of **myth busting and rebuttals**. Ahead of the French elections, the Representation in Paris teamed up with a known cartoonist to debunk the most prevailing Euromyths with the series 'Les Décodeurs de l'Europe' (first digitally, and then in printed

format). In a different vein, the Representation in Berlin launched the initiative '60 reasons to love Europe'. Both initiatives were enthusiastically welcomed by internet users.



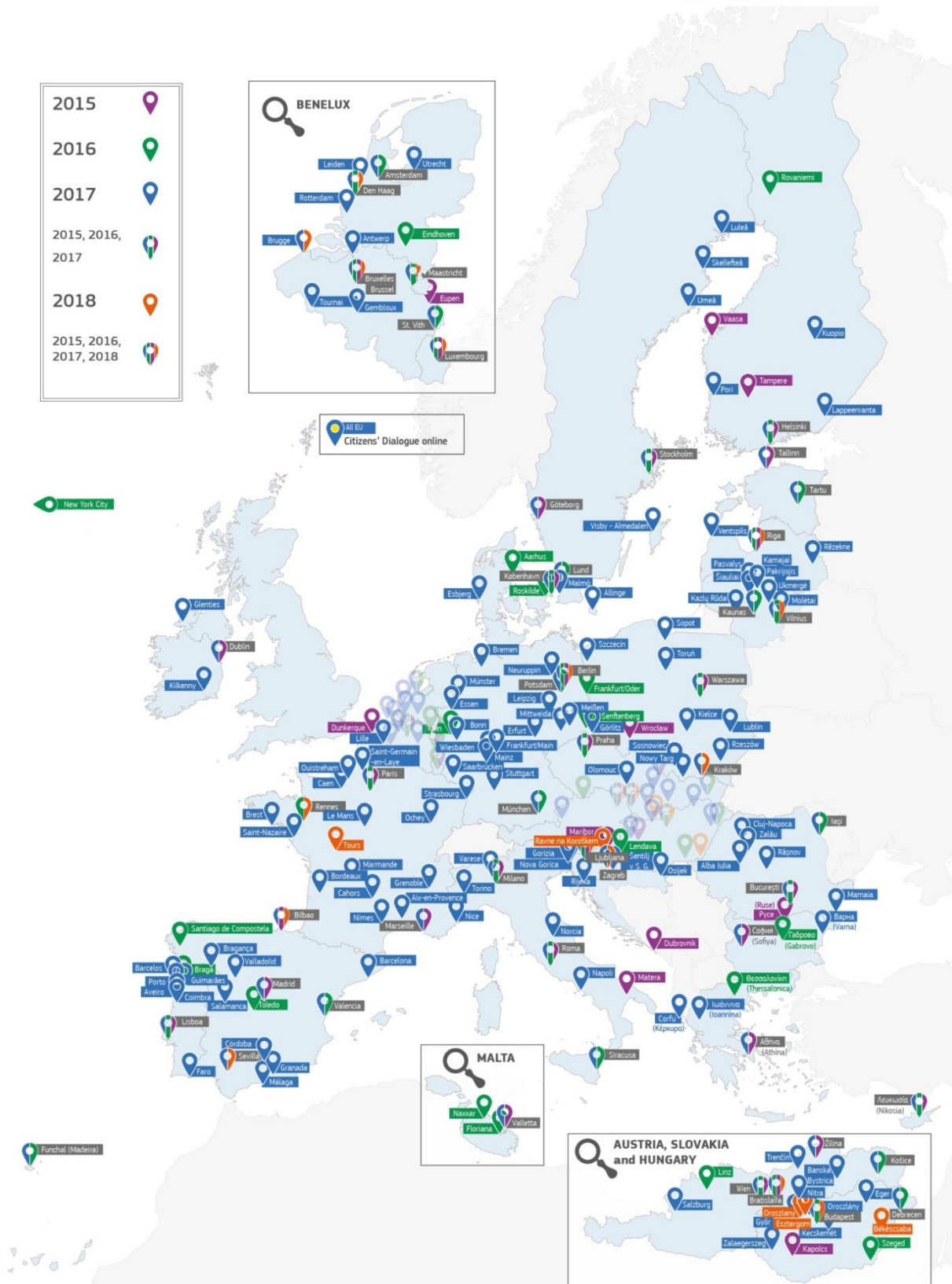
*Example of localised myth-busting cartoon.*

The Directorate-General for Communication met individually 36 Directorates-General in 2017 in order to address all the communication topics. The Directorate-General for Communication in close collaboration with Spokesperson's Service had strengthened work in policy, tools and communication on rebuttals, fake news and myth busting. Beside the work of the Representations mentioned above, the Directorate-General for Communication also worked as a back office and produced background material. The intention was to identify persistent myths about the European Union and create, together with lead Directorates-General and in close collaboration with the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology and with the Joint Research Centre, factsheets that will be put at the disposal of Representations and used on Commission social media. In order to get an overview of all the related issues, the Directorate-General for Communication also took the initiative to organise an interinstitutional seminar to launch a future interinstitutional working team dealing with the issue. Furthermore via the governance communication networks<sup>25</sup> the Directorate-General for Communication worked in 2017 to ensure coherence, cooperation and coordination to fight disinformation.

When compared to the previous year, **Citizens' Dialogues** in 2017 increased by 330 % (see overleaf), providing the European Commission with a stronger platform for engaging with citizens in Member States, particularly in European regions. The introduction of shorter dialogues based on Facebook live events opened the door to new audiences (in particular young people). Feedback gathered from the Citizens' Dialogues was fed into the drafting process of the 2017 State of the Union address and led to the publication of a separate booklet which accompanied the State of the Union brochure. The Commission could, thus, show how participating in a Citizens' Dialogue could help shape future policy of the Union.

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<sup>25</sup> The Corporate Communication Steering Committee at Director-General level or the Communication Network at the communicator's network level.

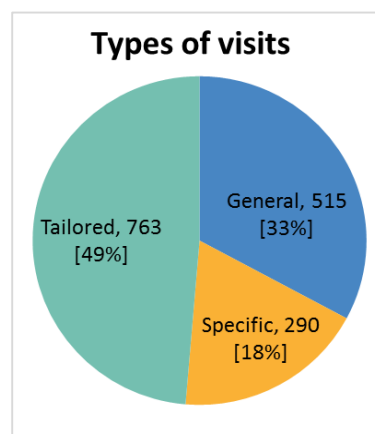


Map of Citizens Dialogues 2015 - 2018.

The **Europe Direct Information Centres** further enhanced their outreach towards citizens through activities on the European Commission's political priorities and by engaging citizens in the debate on the future of Europe. Training sessions for the Europe Direct Information Centres, organised in Brussels, provided good opportunities to discuss expectations, share knowledge and exchange best practices. The involvement of senior management added value to the trainings, further strengthening the capacity of the network. The procedure for launching on 1 January 2018 the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of Europe Direct Information Centres was successfully concluded in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2017, the specifications for the new generation taking duly into account the findings of the 2016 / 2017 evaluation<sup>26</sup> of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Europe Direct Information Centres.

In order to allow the **Europe Direct Contact Centres** to provide a better service in answering citizens' concerns, two new formal cooperation agreements were concluded in 2017 with the Directorate-General for Agriculture and the Directorate-General for Budget, bringing the total of cooperation agreements to 26. The satisfaction rate of users of Europe Direct Contact Centre service reached 87 % in 2017.

Moreover, in 2017, the **Commission's Visitors' Centre**, in close cooperation with the Representations, further developed a politically-driven approach based on the insights of the 2015 - 2017 evaluation and aiming at increasing visitors' knowledge of the Commission and its ten political priorities. The Visitors' Centre continued improving the quality of visits, in particular the tailored ones for specialised groups, in order to maximise the impact. Out of 763 tailored information visits, 207 were jointly organised with the Representations in the Member States. The target groups of these visits were mainly journalists (73), followed by political representatives at national, regional and local levels (27), representatives of the public sector (19) and teachers.



Throughout 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication continued to produce and promote **publications** for citizens. A new publication, entitled 'The EU – what it is and what it does' was developed and five **new factsheets** on the ten political priorities were published. As a first step in implementing a new strategy to reach out to youth, a new publication for 15 - 18 year olds, entitled 'The EU & Me'. Over four million copies of publications were distributed or downloaded throughout the year, including over 800 000 copies of a range of corporate publications that were distributed to key information multipliers throughout Europe, such as the White Paper on the Future of Europe, the five reflection papers, and the



<sup>26</sup> This mid-term evaluation of the Europe Direct Information Centres concluded that inter-institutional cooperation could be further enhanced while Europe Direct Information Centres visibility, relevance and impact could be further improved. The Europe Direct Information Centres' 2018 communication priorities take into account: (i) communicating on a Europe that protects, empowers and defends and (ii) the elections for the European Parliament in 2019.

State of the Union brochure. Feedback and testing mechanisms were developed throughout 2017, including a Testing Panel comprising primary and secondary school teachers, and online feedback surveys for new publications. The General Report on the activities of the European Union – 'The EU in 2016' – was published in March 2017 and gives a comprehensive insight into the major events, initiatives, decisions and deliverables of the European Union during the previous year.

### *Directorate-General for Communication as corporate service*

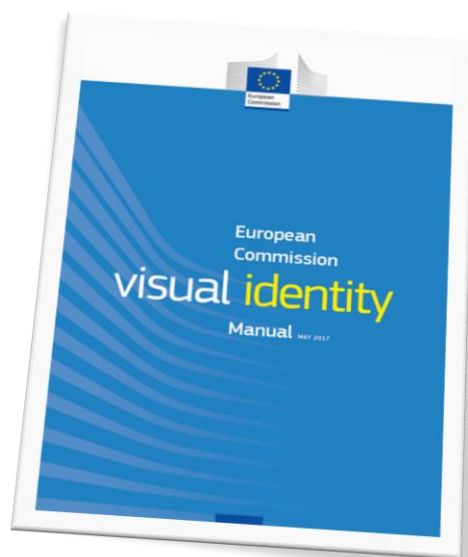
The Directorate-General for Communication pursued its mandate as domain leader on two main dimensions: the centralisation of framework contracts and the portal europa.eu.

In the domain of **framework contracts centralisation**, the Directorate-General for Communication continued the roll-out of its procurement timeline, working simultaneously on several procedures (Graphic assistance, Audiovisual, Eurobarometer, small-scale campaigns, and evaluation/measurement).

In the field of **graphic design**, the Corporate Communication Steering Committee endorsed in May 2017 the Directorate-General for Communication's proposal for the creation of a mechanism for the temporary pooling of graphic designers, activated in situations of high-priority demands of corporate importance. This mechanism was activated with excellent results for the 2017 State of the Union address, when 16 designers from 7 Directorates-General worked together to deliver the 108-pages booklet, a dozen factsheets and over 30 social media visuals in all 24 European languages. For the Tallinn Digital Summit, the Directorate-General for Communication, the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology and the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers pooled their graphic designers to deliver all material on time. For the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, the Directorate-General for Communication, the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the Joint Research Centre collaborated to deliver the numerous factsheets covering Social Europe, Education and Culture.



The Commission's Single Visual Identity, created in 2011, is an important achievement of the past years and has brought significant benefits over the years: it enhanced the visibility of the College's political work and strengthened the effectiveness of our communication; it also saved time and money by simplifying visual identity rules and reducing the number of manuals that were produced and maintained. Even though **important progress has been made since 2011 and more than 400 logos and 23 graphic charters were phased out**, challenges remain. Therefore, in October 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication, in its role of domain leader for external communication and guardian of the Commission's Visual Identity, proposed to address these challenges by reconfirming the existing rules and reinforcing their implementation through several measures<sup>27</sup>. Throughout this process, the Directorate-General for Communication kept assisting other Directorates-General in finding the best possible visual solutions.



On the other hand, in 2017 the **Directorate-General for Communication, as domain leader** for external communication, steered, coordinated and supported corporate communication activities and the implementation of the **Synergies and Efficiencies** communication through the Corporate Communication Steering Committee and the Communication Network.

The Directorate-General for Communication led the communication strategy of the European Solidarity Corps and of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Treaty (see below) and coordinated the Union's communication efforts for the Tallinn Digital Summit, the Social Summit in Gothenburg, the Web Summit in Lisbon and the One Planet Summit in Paris. The Directorate-General for Communication also provided the full spectrum of corporate communication material accompanying the White Paper on the Future of Europe and the State of the Union Address. Throughout 2017, its continued focus was on further alignment and professionalisation of the external communication to support the political priorities of the College.



*The examples of corporate communication material, the European Solidarity Corps and the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome treaty.*

<sup>27</sup> Awareness-raising, reviewing exceptions to eliminate those which are obsolete, limiting future exceptions to a maximum, adapting the logo exception procedure to the new governance in the area of communication, and asking the Directorates-General to report and act on non-authorised logos.

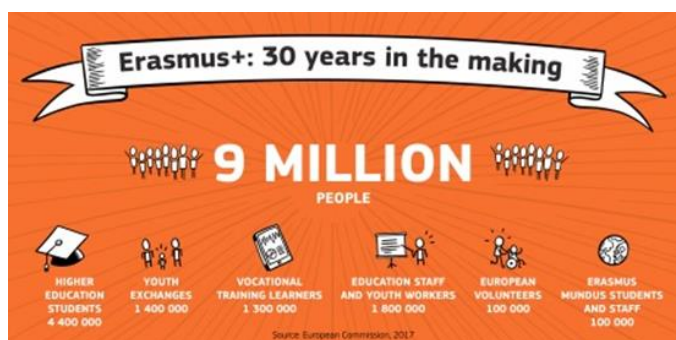
The Directorate-General for Communication led the EU60 Task Force that coordinated the communication activities of all European Institutions linked to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. In this framework, the different services (audio-visual, graphic design and social media, in particular) produced different communication materials that were widely used by the Commission and other European institutions: common visual identity, EU60 stories (video testimonials by European citizens), a 60 second clip and a 4 minute documentary about the history of the Union.

The main event organised by the Directorate-General for Communication was the Citizens' Dialogue in Rome with the High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini. The dialogue attracted a huge online audience and was widely covered on social media. The social media activity was particularly successful – the official hashtag #EU60 was a worldwide trending topic on Twitter for more than 8 hours, including 4 hours as the world's most trending. More than 22 million people were reached by the Commission's audio-visual products on Facebook and Twitter with more than 2.6 million views in total.



*60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome – Citizen's Dialogue with Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the European Commission (24/03/2017).*

The Directorate-General for Communication collaborated closely with the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture in the rolling-out of the successful **Erasmus 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign**. Deliverables included a wide variety of resources, from infographics and factsheets to the Erasmus+ toolkit and a number of big-scale events.



*Visual of Erasmus+ campaign.*

### **A three strand narrative for corporate communication**

1) **InvestEU (EU Delivers)**, the main corporate communication campaign running throughout 2017, #investEU, communicated the results of investment of the Union, highlighting how the European Union responds to key socio-economic challenges and acts as a catalyst boosting the economy and creating jobs, new business prospects, improved services, modernised infrastructure and new opportunities. The campaign was rolled out

in all Member States, with a particular emphasis on 16 'zoom-in' countries<sup>28</sup> where proactive communication had the highest chances of generating most impact.

The campaign, based on real stories, real people and real impact, tells +/- 80 compelling stories of investment of the Union in strategic sectors / regions across the European Union. A combination of earned and paid media (with a strong focus on digital media) and third party endorsements are core components of the dissemination strategy.

Under #InvestEU, the Directorate-General for Communication coordinated the Commission presence in high-level events such as the Web Summit in November 2017 in Lisbon, where four Commissioners and six Commission services were present.



*Visual of the #investEU campaign.*

2) The development of the **#EUandMe** campaign, targeting young people, began in September. The campaign will be launched in May 2018 across the European Union.

3) Work on the **EUProtects** campaign also started in 2017, with the launch scheduled for mid-2018.

The three corporate campaigns will be running in parallel until the end of the current Commission mandate.

### ***Directorate-General for Communication as executive service***

The Directorate-General for Communication provides the College, Cabinets and services with intelligence and reporting allowing for better understanding and more evidence-based decision-making. Political and economic reporting is increasingly important in helping shape the policies and communication messages of the President and the College it is a key tool for the Directorate-General for Communication as an executive service. Media advice offered throughout the year to the College and the Cabinets increases the visibility of Commission policies and the activities of the Union.

A total of **352 political reports** and **332** high-level political **briefings were drafted**, tailor-made, for individual Commissioners in 2017. In the course of the year, the Representations also contributed to special weekly reports and specific horizontal policy reports.

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<sup>28</sup> The #InvestEU campaign started in April 2017 with 14 zoom-in countries – Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland and Portugal, two countries joined later during summer 2017 – Sweden and Romania.

In 2017, **Commissioners visited the Member State with higher frequency** and whilst they usually combined their visit with a Citizens' Dialogue, their contacts most typically included government counterparts, relevant national parliamentarians, committees or Members of Parliament, and leading stakeholders. Representations



*Visit by Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President of the European Commission, to Finland (EU Representation office, Helsinki, 01/06/2017).*

prepare these visits to ensure that they not only meet the expectations of the Commissioner but also so that they enhance the visibility of the Commission.

Representations typically shape the programme, organise protocol, supply local political intelligence and briefings, work with the national interlocutors and engage in follow-up to ensure that both sides communicate effectively.

Commissioners visited Member States more than 800 times throughout 2017.

With its **media monitoring and analysis services**, the Directorate-General for Communication monitored daily the main media outlets (written press, online media, television and radio) in all Member States, selecting the most relevant information for decision-makers and communicators, and ensuring they are constantly informed on topics of interest for citizens across Europe.

Analysis of media coverage related to top political priorities and on the debate on the Future of Europe provided data on how actions and activities were reported in the media and how these might have been perceived by European citizens. The satisfaction rate of users of media monitoring products reached 80 % in 2017.

**Eurobarometer**, another executive service offered by the Directorate-General for Communication, continued delivering data and intelligence on the state of public opinion in all the Member States. Its main instrument, the Standard Eurobarometer, published twice a year (Spring / Autumn), provided data on the image of the European Union and on issues related to the Commission's Political Priorities. Standard Eurobarometers also covered public opinion in candidate countries.

These Eurobarometers were complemented in 2017 by the '**Future of Europe**' survey focusing on the place of the European Union in the world and other forward-looking issues. In addition, Directorates-General requested to carry out specific surveys according to an annual programming exercise.



*Citizens Dialogue, La Valetta, Malta (29/03/2017).*

The main outputs of the year 2017 as described above, as well as the other outputs' defined in the performance tables (see Annex 2 and Annex 12) contributed to the achievement of the horizontal services' general objective and the overarching objective for external communication, as well as to the Directorate-General for Communication's specific objectives defined in Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020 and the inputs and actions managed to achieve the defined outputs in the 2017 Management Plan).



# ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL





## 2. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

This section answers to the question **how** the achievements described in the previous section were delivered by the Directorate-General. This section is divided in two subsections.

The first subsection reports the control results and all other relevant information that support management's assurance on the achievement of the financial management and internal control objectives. It includes any additional information necessary to establish that the available evidence is reliable, complete and comprehensive; appropriately covering all activities, programmes and management modes relevant for the Directorate-General.

The second subsection deals with the other components of organisational management: human resources, better regulation principles, information management and external communication.

### 2.1 Financial management and internal control

#### Elements of Assurance

Assurance is an objective examination of evidence for the purpose of providing an assessment of the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. This examination is carried out by the management of the Directorate-General for Communication, who monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis, and by internal and external auditors. Its results are explicitly documented and reported to the Director-General. The reports produced are:

- Authorising Officer by Sub-delegation reports in the context of the Annual Activity Report exercise: each of 117 Authorising Officer by Sub-delegation within Directorate-General for Communication signed the Authorising Officer by Sub-delegation Statement on the implementation of programmes, operations or actions in respect of the powers which have been sub-delegated to her / him<sup>29</sup>;
- Reports from Directors-General of other Directorates-General who manage as authorising officers the budget appropriations of the Directorate-General for Communication via cross-subdelegation<sup>30</sup>. The complete list of these reports is included under Annex 15;
- Contribution of the Internal Control Coordinator including the results of the internal control monitoring at Directorate-General level<sup>31</sup>;

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<sup>29</sup> Ares(2018)1570966 – 21/03/2018.

<sup>30</sup> Ares(2018)1436953 – 15/03/2018.

<sup>31</sup> The internal survey on Directorate-General for Communication effectiveness of internal control systems (iCAT) was launched among Directorate-General for Communication managers in December 2016 the third consecutive year. The participation rate was of 55 % (5 points higher than in 2016) and the overall satisfaction by the participants was of 85.7 %. The results are used to assess control

- Reports of ex-post supervision;
- Recommendations reported by the Internal Audit Service and the European Court of Auditors.

These reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in a complete coverage of the budget implementation delegated to the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Communication.

This part of the 2017 Annual Activity Report presents the control results and other relevant elements that support management's assurance. It is structured into 2.1.1 Control results, 2.1.2 Audit observations and recommendations, 2.1.3 Effectiveness of the internal control system, and resulting in (d) Conclusions as regards assurance.

### 2.1.1 Control results

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management that support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives<sup>32</sup>. The directorate-general's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in the Annex 4 of this report. Annex 5 outlines the main risks together with the control processes aimed to mitigate them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the control systems.

#### ***Coverage of the Internal Control Objectives and their related main indicators***

- ***Control effectiveness as regards legality and regularity***

The Directorate-General for Communication has set up internal control processes aimed at ensuring the adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the nature of the payments concerned and the fact that it is a multi-site Directorate-General spread across 37 locations.

The control objective of the Directorate-General for Communication is to ensure that the residual error rate is as low as possible and does not exceed 2 % of annual budget implementation. Amounts are calculated in terms of payments made.

The control system of the Directorate-General for Communication is designed to detect and correct irregularities and fraud by ex-ante and ex-post controls covering all types of financial operations and procurement and grant procedure.

The 2017 results in terms of residual error rate in the Directorate's-General for Communication are displayed in Annex 10 table 4 and provide the conclusion that the

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effectiveness at Directorate-General for Communication. The survey is conducted on an annual basis since 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; reliability of reporting; safeguarding of assets and information; prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments (Financial Regulation, Article 32).

**overall impact of errors and weaknesses detected in 2017 by the control system is 0.9 % of the payments made.** Residual error rates are below 2 % for all budget lines and for all types of expenditures.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Procurements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Ex-ante control on procurement and grants</b></p> <p>Covering ex-ante review<sup>33</sup> and ex-ante control<sup>34</sup> as well as a helpdesk function<sup>35</sup> for the Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 procurement files were submitted for ex-ante review in 2017 for a total amount of EUR 176 000 000<sup>36</sup>. Six of these files (representing EUR 131 920 000) were still under ex-ante review at the end of the year.</li> <li>Ex-ante control was performed on 52 calls for tenders for a total amount of EUR 121 000 000. Six files were still in the ex-ante control process at the end of 2017 for a total of EUR 6 770 000.</li> </ul> <p><b>As the control covers all calls for tenders over the directive threshold (EUR 135 000 until 31/12/2017)<sup>37</sup>, the residual level of errors at the procurement level for large contracts is considered zero.</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 calls for proposals were subject to ex-ante review in 2017 for a total amount of EUR 12 480 000.</li> <li>Ex-ante control was performed on 28 calls for proposals with a total value of EUR 12 200 000.</li> <li>One grant file was still in the ex-ante control process at the end of 2017 for a total of EUR 280 000.</li> </ul> <p><b>As the control covers all call for proposal files, the residual level of errors is considered zero.</b></p> |

<sup>33</sup> **Ex-ante review:** Consists of a mandatory check for consistency and compliance with financial rules prior to the publication of all calls for proposals above the EUR 60 000 threshold and all procurement files over EUR 135 000 including reopening of competition under framework contracts. Advice is also provided to the Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation on an ad-hoc basis during the initial preparatory phase on the way to ensure this consistency and coherence.

<sup>34</sup> **Ex-ante control:** Consists of mandatory checks for consistency and coherence with the Financial Regulations, the rules of application and the procedures defined in the vademecum throughout the entire call for proposal or procurement process. If any discrepancies are detected, advice is given to the Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation on corrective action. Following the ex-ante control an opinion is addressed to the Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation and is taken into account by the Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation when signing the award decision.

<sup>35</sup> A **helpdesk function** is also provided to Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation to respond to queries about calls for proposal, procurement procedures and on-going contract management as well as ad-hoc assistance with procedures regardless of the value of the contract.

<sup>36</sup> The value of each procedure checked covers the entire duration foreseen for the resulting contract (generally 4 years), which in many cases is used by other services of the Commission or other European Institutions and entities. Therefore, the total value of the procedures checked is not linked to the annual budget of the Directorate-General for Communication.

<sup>37</sup> This does not include reopening of competition under existing framework contracts, not subject to publication in the Official Journal. According to the Directorate-General for Communication internal financial rules, the control for transaction below the Directive threshold is performed ex-post by sampling (see Annex 5).

|                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ex-ante second level verification on financial transactions<sup>38</sup></b> | From January to December 2017, 25 624 transactions initiated in the Representations were validated via the MUS DICE control system <sup>39</sup> , of which 892 were selected for ex-ante second-level financial control, for a total value of EUR 24 801 009. This control covered 3.5 % of the total number of transactions implemented by all Representations and represents 20.5 % of the value of the transactions.                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                 | Three non-quantitative substantial errors linked to non-correct procedures applied were detected in three transactions. <sup>40</sup> No quantitative errors were detected in payments.<br><br>(See Annex 10, table 1 for value of error). All 3 transactions were corrected.                                                                                                                                                                       | There were no errors detected in payments (amounts), nor were there any procedural errors detected for grants.                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Ex-post on-the-spot review of financial transactions</b>                     | In 2017, 10 on-the-spot controls were carried out <sup>41</sup> :<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 8 Commission Representations<sup>42</sup> ;</li> <li>• In 2 Units in Headquarters<sup>43</sup>.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                 | 438 procurement files were checked for a total value of EUR 39 859 865. Six final <sup>44</sup> reports and two <sup>45</sup> draft reports were established for the Representations. For the units, two final <sup>46</sup> reports were produced.<br><br><b>There were 13 errors detected, of which 8 non-quantitative substantial errors linked to non-correct procedures applied (for which action plans are being drawn up for follow up).</b> | 51 grant files <sup>47</sup> were checked for a total value of EUR 1 047 075. Six final reports and two draft reports were established for Representations.<br><br><b>No quantitative (on payments) or procedural errors were detected.</b> |
| <b>Ex-post on-the-spot on grant beneficiaries</b>                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No control was performed                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

<sup>38</sup> Performed by Headquarters on Representations' transactions.

<sup>39</sup> MUS-DICE control system: Monetary Unit Sampling-Decentralised Integrated Control Environment, a corporate tool directly linked to ABAC.

<sup>40</sup> Representation in London, Representation in Madrid and Representation in Rome (non-correct procedures applied).

<sup>41</sup> Controls in Representations and Directorate-General for Communication Units in Headquarters follow a risk-based, multi-annual approach. In principle, all Representations and Units are controlled within the period of 3-4 years, but some can be checked more than once within the same period.

<sup>42</sup> Slovenia, United Kingdom, Luxemburg, Spain, Greece, Croatia, The Netherlands and Belgium.

<sup>43</sup> Headquarters Units COMM.A.1 and COMM.C.1.

<sup>44</sup> Slovenia, United Kingdom, Luxemburg, Spain, Greece and Croatia.

<sup>45</sup> The Netherlands and Belgium.

<sup>46</sup> Headquarters' Units COMM.A.1 and COMM.C.1.

<sup>47</sup> 50 Europe Direct Information Centres grant files and 1 grant for Erasmus promotion in the United Kingdom.

## **General conclusion**

Materiality of the amount at risk is obtained by dividing the total of the amounts at risk<sup>48</sup> by the total value of payments made for a given operational activity and the administrative budget. The Commission threshold for materiality is set at below 2 %.

In the Directorate-General for Communication, the controls carried out on procurement related to both the operational activity and administrative expenditure produced eleven (11) errors. Most errors were substantial, non-quantitative and related to procedures. Three (3) errors were detected by ex-ante second-level control and were corrected. Eight (8) errors were detected by on-the-spot ex-post controls, generating a residual error rate of 0.3 %. Overall, the residual error rate of relevant expenditure implemented through procurement was 0.3 %. No error was detected on grants at ex-ante or ex-post level through the controls carried out on transactions. Beneficiaries were not subject to financial control in 2017 due to the use of lump sums for most of the grants<sup>49</sup>.

For the Directorate-General for Communication, the materiality of the amount at risk on procurement and grants for both the operational activity and administrative expenditure combined was 1.1 % (average weighted error rate), which is lower than the 2 % threshold. Therefore, no reserve is required (see Annex 10 Financial control results, table 4).

This leads to the conclusion that the Directorate-General for Communication has set up internal control processes which guarantee an adequate management of the risks and a reasonable assurance relating to the legality and regularity of transactions, as well as the nature of the payments concerned. This system operates effectively, finding, correcting and preventing errors. Furthermore, the resources assigned have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management.

The objectives, indicators and assessments presented in this section are reliable and cover all relevant expenditure, as summarised in the Overall Conclusion Table (at the end of section 2.1.1). The information in this report provides a fair and true view. In the context of the protection of the budget of the European Union, at the Commission's corporate level, the Directorates-General estimated overall amounts at risk and their estimated future corrections are consolidated.

For the Directorate-General for Communication, the estimated overall amount at risk at relevant expenditure<sup>50</sup> for the 2017 payments made is EUR 1 264 572. This is the

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<sup>48</sup> The Directorate-General for Communication assessed the overall risk relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions by calculating the weighted average error rate for the annual expenditure and the resulting amount at risk. Where a specific error rate is not available for certain expenditure categories (i.e. no errors were detected during controls carried out in 2017) the average risk of error and amount at risk is presented as a best estimate with reference to a relevant budget line (see Annex 10, table 3).

<sup>49</sup> Since 2015, most of the grants managed by DG Communication are low value and take the form of lump sums. Apart from the Europe Direct Information Centres, there were only 3 calls for proposals for low-value grants managed by Representations in 2015 and 2016, and only one in 2017. Other programmes and actions were, in 2015, transferred (Europe for Citizens, Media networks) or discontinued (Management Partnerships). On-the-spot control of beneficiaries should be carried out in the next years (for grants based on the reimbursement of actual costs incurred).

<sup>50</sup> In order to calculate the weighted average error rate (AER) for the total relevant expenditure in the reporting year, the detected, estimated or other equivalent error rates have been used.

Authorising Officer's by Delegation best, conservative estimation of the amount of *relevant expenditure*<sup>51</sup> not in conformity with the applicable contractual and regulatory provisions at the time the payment is made.

This expenditure will be subsequently subject to ex-post controls and a proportion of the underlying error will be detected and corrected in successive years. The conservatively estimated future corrections<sup>52</sup> for those 2017 payments made are EUR 129 487. This is the amount of errors that the Directorate-General conservatively estimates to identify and correct from controls that it will carry out in successive years.

The difference between those two amounts leads to the **estimated overall amount at risk at closure of EUR 1 135 086** (see also table 5 in Annex 10).

### Overall conclusion table

| Activity                                                       | Procurement                   | Grants     | Revenues, assets, OBS                                                     | ICO indicators (RER) | Availability of independent information from auditors (IAS, ECA) | Reservation    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 16.01 Administrative expenditure - Communication - policy area | 38,212,011                    | 0.00       | Revenue: 5,044,048<br>Assets: 49,278,431.47<br>Liabilities: 15,726,785.44 | 0.8 %                | No overdue critical recommendation                               | No             |
| 16.03 Fostering European Citizenship                           | 57,534,410                    | 12,132,440 | Not applicable                                                            | 1.4 %                | No overdue critical recommendation                               | No             |
| Other budget lines                                             | 14,351,042                    | 433,315    | Not applicable                                                            | 0.2 %                | No overdue critical recommendation                               | No             |
| Total                                                          | 110,097,463                   | 12,565,755 | Not applicable                                                            | 1.1 %                | Not applicable                                                   | No             |
| ICO* indicators (RER)                                          | 1.0 %                         | 1.1 %      | Not applicable                                                            | 1.1 %                | Not applicable                                                   | Not applicable |
| Links to Annex 3                                               | 122,663,217.50<br>See Table 2 |            | See tables 4 (Assets) and 7 (Revenue)                                     | Not applicable       | Not applicable                                                   | Not applicable |

\*ICO: Internal Control objectives; RER: residual error rate

<sup>51</sup> 'Relevant expenditure' during the year equals payments made, minus new pre-financing paid out, plus previous pre-financing cleared.

<sup>52</sup> Even though based on the 7 years historic average of recoveries and financial corrections (ARC), which is the best available indication of the corrective capacity of the ex-post control systems implemented by the Directorate-General over the past years, the Authorising Officer by Delegation has adjusted this historic average to the rate of 0.11 %, based on the net amount of recovery orders only.

**Table 5 - Estimated overall amount at risk at closure**

| DG<br>COMM | Payments<br>made | Minus new<br>prefinancing | Plus cleared<br>prefinancing | Relevant<br>expenditure | Average<br>Error Rate<br>(weighted<br>AER; %) | Estimated<br>overall<br>amount at<br>risk at<br>relevant<br>expenditure<br>(€) | Average<br>Recoveries and<br>Corrections<br>(adjusted ARC;<br>%) | Estimated<br>future<br>corrections<br>(€) | Estimated<br>overall amount<br>at risk at<br>closure (€) |
|------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1          | 2                | 3                         | 4                            | 5 = 2-3+4               | 6                                             | 7 = 5*6                                                                        | 8                                                                | 9 = 5*8                                   | 10 = 7-9                                                 |
| Total      | 122 663 218      | 11 958 125                | 9 291 437                    | 119 996 529             | 1.1 %                                         | 1 264 572                                                                      | 0.1 %                                                            | 129 487                                   | 1 135 086                                                |

## ***Cost-effectiveness and efficiency***

Based on an assessment of the most relevant key indicators and control results, the Directorate-General for Communication has assessed for 2017 the cost-effectiveness and the efficiency of the control system and reached a positive conclusion.

An analysis has been made for 2017 of the costs of controls and related benefits, taking into account the multisite nature of the Directorate-General for Communication and its activities, and the combination of two different types of financial circuits - centralised and decentralised – in the Headquarters and the Representations respectively. The results of the analysis show that the controls carried out in 2017 for the management of the budget appropriations were cost effective and the percentage of costs in terms of authorised payments were lower than in 2016, partly due to the increase in the number of procedures and transactions controlled at constant resources, and a more realistic estimate of the full-time equivalents effectively working in the different stages of control in the Representations.<sup>53</sup>

- **For procurements**, an estimated EUR 978 535 were invested in the ex-ante control of all procedures including the 52 procurement procedures subject to mandatory controls in 2017, and an estimated 1 608 other procurement procedures (low and middle value), with a total value of EUR 141 242 252. Thus 0.7 % of the total contract value was dedicated to ex-ante control and each high-value procurement procedure concluded in 2017 had an estimated cost of EUR 589 (EUR 511 in 2016, EUR 757 in 2015 and EUR 743 in 2014)<sup>54</sup>.
- **For grants**, an estimated EUR 89 877 were invested in controlling 28 calls for proposal for grants subject to mandatory controls in 2017 and 458 annual grants mainly to the Europe Direct Information Centres in the Member States with a total value of EUR with a total value of EUR 12 658 080. Thus 0.7 % of the total contract value was dedicated to control and each grant procedure had an estimated cost of EUR 185 (EUR 918 in 2016, EUR 882 in 2015 and EUR 1 081 in 2014).
- **For financial circuits** an estimated EUR 1 817 940 were invested in controlling 26 677 financial transactions. Thus 1.5 % of the total payment amounting to EUR 122 663 218 was dedicated to control, which translates into each financial transaction costing an estimated EUR 68 (EUR 221 in 2016, EUR 183 in 2015 and EUR 191 in 2014). The benefits of controls of the financial circuits can be quantified in terms of the amount of recovery orders issued, credit notes received due to calculation errors, and ineligible costs rejected. In the Directorate-General for Communication this amounts to EUR 664 361 in 2017 putting the net cost of control of financial circuits at 0.9 % of all payments made.

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<sup>53</sup> The Directorate-General for Communication manages 28 Representations and 9 Regional offices in 28 Member States. A new estimate of the Full Time Equivalents working on controls has been carried out for 2017 based on the latest staff 'screening' of the financial community conducted by the Directorate-General for Human Resources in June 2017. A share of each Full Time Equivalent is allocated to each control stage, according to the control systems described in Annex 4. For Representations, the analysis takes account of the fact that financial staff is also involved in a variety of administrative areas, from archives to human resources and logistics. An estimate of the associated indirect costs of staff and overheads has been included in the overall calculation. Results are displayed in Annex 14.

<sup>54</sup> Specific contracts and order forms also subject to precontractual checks are no longer included in the calculation of the number of procedures.

- **For supervisory measures** an estimated EUR 344 775 were invested in controlling 489 complete transaction files worth EUR 40 906 940. Thus 0.8 % of the total value of transactions checked ex-post on-the-spot was dedicated to control. Each transaction or procedure checked costs an estimated EUR 705 (EUR 955 in 2016, EUR 1 418 in 2015 and EUR 2 166 in 2014).

In addition to the quantifiable elements, a number of non-quantifiable benefits results from the controls operated during the various control stages - such as the programming phase which aims at ensuring that the financed actions contribute to the achievement of policy objectives - and from the preventative effects of ex-ante and ex-post controls all of which also contribute to better value for money, efficiency gains and system improvements as well as being necessary elements of the regulatory environment. Since these benefits are non-quantifiable they are not reflected in the quantified conclusions on cost-effectiveness (ratio benefits / costs) provided in Annex 14.

For this reason it is also necessary to consider efficiency indicators, which show that the Directorate-General for Communication allocated the appropriate quantity and quality of resources to ensure a smooth operation of the controls.

Annex 13 displays the results of the analysis of **time-to-inform** and **time-to-grant** as efficiency indicators. In 2017 the average **time-to-inform** was 67 days (Commission benchmark 180 days), the average **time-to-grant** was 56 days, (Commission benchmark 90 days). Both indicators are well below the Commission benchmarks. The average **time-to-pay** invoices was 18.29 days and 97.34 % of all payments were made within time limits, slightly over the Commission average of 97 % for 2017<sup>55</sup> (see Annex 3).

In the light of the progressive evolution of these efficiency indicators over time, and taking into account its specificity as a multi-site service as well as the Commission-wide synergies and efficiencies exercise launched in 2016, the Directorate-General for Communication will launch in 2018 an in-depth analysis of the current control strategies with the aim of increasing cost-effectiveness while respecting the regulatory framework and requirements. The results will be used to design an integrated control strategy, aiming at procedural simplification and alignment of the control frequency and intensity with the level of the risks, and possibly including re-allocation of resources. The strategy has been included as a follow-up action in the new register of internal control deficiencies, under the new Internal Control Framework (see section 2.1.3.).

### ***Fraud prevention and detection***

**The Directorate-General for Communication has** adopted its new Anti-Fraud Strategy 2017-2019 in January 2017, **elaborated on the basis of the methodology provided by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)**<sup>56</sup>. The associated Action Plan has been tailored to the specific context and needs of the Directorate-General for Communication, which deals with a comparatively small budget, managed by a relative large number of entities, Units and Representations, both in Brussels and in the 28 Member States.

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<sup>55</sup> Monitoring of payment deadlines year 2017 by the Directorate-General for the Budget. Ares(2018)1066094.

<sup>56</sup> Ares(2017)254198 - 17/01/2017.

The updated assessment on fraud risks identified three main risks related to ethics and organisational behaviours that were included in the new Anti-Fraud Strategy and two risks related to organisation and procedures. Based on that, Anti-Fraud Strategy 2017 - 2019 of the Directorate-General for Communication proposed an Action Plan including 17 actions to be performed over this three-years period focused on awareness raising activities and training related to fraud prevention, detection and mitigation.

A number of actions foreseen in the Action Plans were carried out in 2017, with a particular focus on awareness-raising in the following areas: conflict of interest and fraud prevention (with a special focus on managers in Representations in the Member States), document management compliance (with a particular attention to Document Management Officers and Heads of Administrations in Representations) and copyright compliance.

The 2018 Management Plan of the Directorate-General for Communication defines an acceleration in the implementation of the anti-fraud strategy in 2018. Regular follow-up and reporting on progress will be as part of the Internal Control review to take place twice a year.

### ***Negotiated Procedures***

As per of the Directorate-General for Budget report on negotiated procedures in 2017 (rules of application, Article 53), the Commission-average of negotiated procedures was 19.3 % and the average of the Directorate-general for Communication was 11 %, below the Commission-average and below its average of 2016 (30 %).

The use of the negotiated procedures in the Directorate-General for Communication is limited to the necessary core activities and strictly managed by Authorising Officers. Nine procedures are reported for 2017:

- 3 procedures are related to subscriptions to news agencies and online information services in the context of the Commission's media monitoring activity. Here, the monopoly situations derive from the exclusivity of the operators and the uniqueness of the information sources;
- 1 procedure covered new services consisting in the repetition of similar services entrusted to the contractor under the framework contract for the organisation of information and communication campaigns;
- 3 procedures are related to advertising campaigns carried out in the airports of Rome and Naples, and were concluded with the exclusive operators having the monopoly position on this specific market;
- 1 procedure is related to an advertising campaign in the regional written press in 6 Spanish regions and was concluded with the press group owning the 6 main outlets in those regions;<sup>57</sup>
- 1 procedure was to bridge the transition period needed to finalise an open procedure

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<sup>57</sup> Another 7 negotiated procedures below EUR 60 000 were concluded with 7 press groups owning the rest of regional outlets in order to cover the full spectrum of regional written press in the selected regions.

for security services in Copenhagen and was concluded with the same operator in order to ensure continuity of the service.

### ***Safeguarding of assets***

The **buildings** of the Representations are considered to be one of **the main assets of the Directorate-General for Communication**. Headquarters provides a full range of infrastructure support to the Representations and Regional Offices in the Member States<sup>58</sup>, from identifying adequate premises and defining negotiating terms, to providing architectural, logistic and procedural support for the procurement of supplies, services and renovation works.

The Directorate-General for Communication is also responsible for maintaining the **Security infrastructure in Representations** and provides specialised advice concerning security installations and measures for new locations or renovation works<sup>59</sup>. A rolling programme of control missions from Headquarters monitors the inventory of physical assets in all locations and ensures that records are kept up-to-date.<sup>60</sup>

**In conclusion**, the current accounting and control arrangements for safeguarding of assets present a fair and true view and work in practice as intended.

### **Other control objectives: Use of resources for their intended purpose: corporate communication under Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 - 2020<sup>61</sup>**

Commission Decision SEC(2013)486 operationalised for the first time the corporate communication clause noted in the 2011 Multiannual Financial Framework texts. A corporate pilot campaign was successfully completed in 2015. Based on its positive result, a new corporate communication action was rolled out in 2015 / 2016 with the focus on the political priority 'A new Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment'. The action aimed at raising awareness of the Investment Plan among Stakeholders.

Commission Decision C(2015)7346 set up a **new corporate communication action in 2016** (EUR 21 million<sup>62</sup>), which continued to focus on priority 'A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment', and in particular on the Investment Plan for Europe. The Corporate Communication budget 2016 was mainly used to finance a central contract for an integrated communication campaign, running in 2016 and 2017, to raise awareness about the Investment Plan for Europe and other jobs and growth initiatives. Building on the stakeholder communication on the Investment Plan, these resources were used **to shift gradually communication for stakeholders to towards citizens**, providing

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<sup>58</sup> 28 Representations in the 28 Member States as well as 9 Regional offices, for a total of 37 offices; this includes the Representations in Brussels (CHAR) and Luxembourg (MAEU). Of these 37 offices some are rented or owned jointly with the European Parliament while others are rented or owned separately.

<sup>59</sup> In close cooperation with the competent services of the European Parliament and under the supervision of the Directorate-General for Human Resources, Directorate Security.

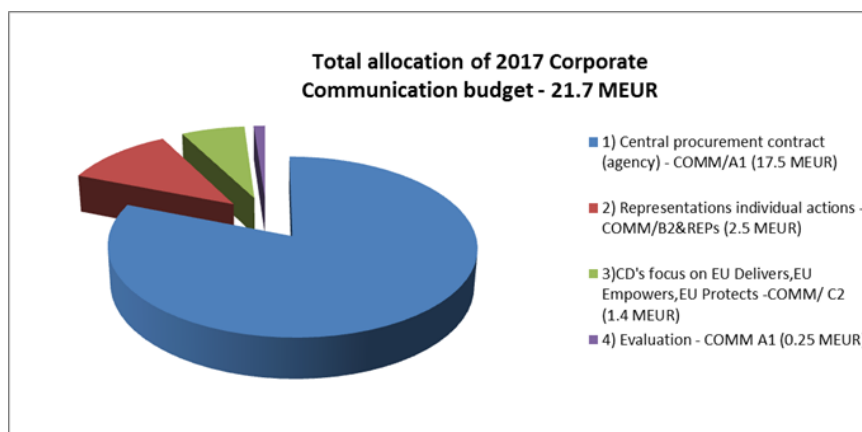
<sup>60</sup> The following control missions were carried out in 2017 (based on a 3-year cycle): Tallinn, Belfast, Bratislava, Munich, Zagreb, The Hague, Rome, Madrid, Helsinki, Paris, Vienna, and Prague.

<sup>61</sup> SEC(2013)486 - 23/09/2013.

<sup>62</sup> The total co-delegated budget of EUR 13.45 million was implemented via three contracts on the pilot communication campaign (EUR 13 090 075), the evaluation of the campaign (EUR 310 400) and a specific Twitter campaign in Germany and Spain (EUR 49 525).

them an opportunity to reach a more informed view of the European Union and how the European Union contributes to jobs and growth creation by providing them with real-life examples of European projects in their regions (strand 'EU delivers'). This campaign was co-designed together with the Representations – many of them implementing communication actions from this 'corporate' budget. In addition, decentralized actions – including Investment Dialogues – were implemented by both the Representations and the Europe Direct Information Centres.

On 25 October 2016 a new Decision was adopted (C(2016)6838) implementing **corporate communication actions in 2017 and 2018**. More than 20 different programmes contribute to the corporate communication budget for a total amount of EUR 21.72 million in 2017 and EUR 22.28 million in 2018.



*Total allocation of 2017 Corporate Communication budget*

The **2017 budget was used** to define and launch, together with the Representations, two new strands of corporate communication: 'EU empowers' and 'EU protects'. The main actions are two central contracts for two **information and communication campaigns** towards EU citizens: '**A Union that empowers**' and '**A Union that protects**'. Both campaigns started end 2017 and will be fully implemented during 2018.

The decision pooled a budget of EUR 21 720 000 financed from contributions from different Multiannual Financial Framework programmes, as shown in the following table:

| Corporate Communication Budget 2017 |             |                                |                              |                              |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| DG/programme                        | Budget line | Commitment Appropriations 2017 | Payments Appropriations 2017 | Payments Appropriations 2018 |
| <b>AGRI – EAGF</b>                  | 05 08 06    | 8.480.000                      | 3.085.281                    | 5.394.719                    |
| <b>CLIMA – LIFE 2016</b>            | 34 02 03    | 20.000                         | 0                            | 20.000                       |
| <b>DEVCO – DCI</b>                  | 21 08 02    | 520.000                        | 0                            | 520.000                      |
| <b>EAC – Erasmus</b>                | 15 02 01 01 | 360.000                        | 5.500                        | 354.500                      |
| <b>EAC – Creative Europe</b>        | 15 04 01    | 40.000                         | 0                            | 40.000                       |
| <b>EMPL – ESF</b>                   | 04 02 63 01 | 1.006.500                      | 0                            | 1.006.500                    |

|                              |             |                   |                  |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>ENER – CEF</b>            | 32 01 04 01 | 140.000           | 0                | 140.000           |
| <b>ENER – Nuclear Energy</b> | 32 03 02    | 20.000            | 0                | 20.000            |
| <b>ENV – LIFE 2016</b>       | 07 02 03    | 60.000            | 0                | 60.000            |
| <b>FPI – PI</b>              | 19 01 04 04 | 20.000            | 0                | 20.000            |
| <b>FPI - ICSP</b>            | 19 01 04 01 | 60.000            | 0                | 60.000            |
| <b>GROW - COSME</b>          | 02 02 01    | 60.000            | 0                | 60.000            |
| <b>GROW - Galileo</b>        | 02 01 04 03 | 160.000           | 0                | 160.000           |
| <b>HOME - ISF</b>            | 18 01 04 01 | 160.000           | 0                | 160.000           |
| <b>HOME - AMIF</b>           | 18 01 04 02 | 420.000           | 0                | 420.000           |
| <b>MARE-EMFF</b>             | 11 06 62 04 | 140.000           | 0                | 140.000           |
| <b>MOVE - CEF</b>            | 06 02 01 03 | 540.000           | 0                | 540.000           |
| <b>NEAR - IPA</b>            | 22 02 04 01 | 380.000           | 0                | 380.000           |
| <b>NEAR - ENI</b>            | 22 04 03 04 | 400.000           | 0                | 400.000           |
| <b>REGIO – ERDF</b>          | 13 03 65 01 | 4.671.450         | 678.132          | 3.993.318         |
| <b>REGIO – CF</b>            | 13 04 61 01 | 2.002.050         | 177.514          | 1.824.536         |
| <b>RTD – H 2020</b>          | 08 02 05 00 | 2.000.000         | 0                | 2.000.000         |
| <b>SANTE –F&amp;F</b>        | 17 04 03    | 60.000            | 0                | 60.000            |
| <b>Total</b>                 |             | <b>21.720.000</b> | <b>3.946.427</b> | <b>17.773.573</b> |

## 2.1.2 Audit observations and recommendations

This section reports and assesses the observations, opinions and conclusions reported by auditors in their reports as well as the opinion of the Internal Auditor on the state of control, which could have a material impact on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on assurance, together with any management measures taken in response to the audit recommendations.

The Directorate-General is audited by both internal and external independent auditors: the Commission Internal Audit Service and the European Court of Auditors.

### 1. Internal Audit Service

The Internal Auditor issued on 8 February 2017 his strategic plan on the state of internal control in the Directorate-General for Communication and concluded that the internal control systems audited are effective. There was one new audit and one follow-up engagement launched in 2017 by the Internal Audit Service in the Directorate-General for Communication:

- **Audit on Business Continuity**

This multi-site audit also covers Directorate-General for Informatics and was formally launched in July 2017. The audit works are ongoing and the Internal Audit Service has not issued its final report yet;

- **Audit on management of intramuros contractors: Follow-up engagement on Recommendation no 2 'Value for money in Time&Means contracts'**

Based on the results of the follow-up audit, the Internal Audit Service concluded this recommendation, categorised as very important, has been adequately and effectively implemented and will therefore be closed.

There are another two recommendations relative to the audit on the management of intramuros contractors (no 1 'Corporate framework for the use of intramuros contractors') and to the 2016 audit on procurement processes (no 3 'Ex-post controls on procurement procedures') still open and being implemented.

### 2. European Court of Auditors

In the context of the Declaration of Assurance 2016<sup>63</sup>, the European Court of Auditors checked the reliability of the annual accounts of the Directorate-General for Communication. In this framework, the accounting team of the Directorate-General provided all the information and documents requested by the auditors. As a follow up to this audit, the accounting team was informed that no official fundamental observations will be raised from the European Court of Auditors.

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<sup>63</sup> European Court of Auditors' notification received on 18/05/2017.

### 2.1.3 Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems

The Commission has adopted in 2017 a new Internal Control Framework<sup>64</sup> based on international good practice, aimed to ensure the achievement of policy and operational objectives. In addition, as regards financial management, compliance with the internal control framework is a compulsory requirement.

The Directorate-General for Communication has put in place the organisational structure and the internal control systems suited to the achievement of the policy and control objectives, in accordance with the standards and having due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

Management assessed the effectiveness of the internal control system and its results following the methodology established in the 'Implementation Guide of the Internal Control Framework of the Commission'.

- The primary source of information was a set of 20 Internal Control indicators, covering the 17 Internal Control Principles<sup>65</sup>. The key guiding principles used to define these indicators were: relevance, in line with the priorities of the Directorate-General for Communication; focus on effectiveness of Internal Controls; focus on risks, controls and governance; and preference for indicators that could be easily produced, understood and verified.
- Secondary sources of information were also used, in particular, the 'Internal Control Assessment Tool' (iCAT) annual survey<sup>66</sup>, the Risk Register and Internal Control Standard 8 Register<sup>67</sup>, ex-post controls performed in Units and Representations, audit report of the Internal Audit Service, and the staff survey. Where relevant, additional data specific to each Principle, were used<sup>68</sup>.

This approach thus brought together many useful sources to obtain a comprehensive overview of governance, potential risks and control systems in the Directorate-General for Communication. While this approach is considered very satisfactory, further refinement to Internal Control indicators could be envisaged in the future, in particular to further analyse the effectiveness of internal controls. Based on an assessment undertaken at services level, the Directorate-General for Communication has a generally satisfactory performance, with 15 Internal Control principles showing only minor or moderate deficiencies. Two specific areas covered by Internal Control principles 4 and 10<sup>69</sup> were identified as requiring major improvements in 2018, although no critical deficiency was detected.

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<sup>64</sup> C(2017)2373 final - 19/04/2017.

<sup>65</sup> The principles are set out in the 2018 Management Plan of the Directorate-General for Communication – Ares(2017)6346246.

<sup>66</sup> The survey was conducted in December 2017 among all managers of the Directorate-General for Communication. The response rate was 55 %, higher than in 2016 (50 %).

<sup>67</sup> The Internal Control Standard 8 (now Internal Control Principle 12) Register tracks of non-compliance and exception events related to financial procedures.

<sup>68</sup> For instance data on registration of documents.

<sup>69</sup> Staff mobility and talent management (principle 4) and business continuity (principle 10).

The Directorate-General for Communication has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective and that the components and principles are present and generally functioning as intended, despite some improvements needed, and adequately identifies deficiencies and manages them. It also concluded that continued attention is required on Internal Control principles 4 and 10.

### **Compliance with ex-Internal Control Standard 8**

The Directorate-General for Communication maintains a register of all non-compliance and exception events identified within the Directorate-General. Mitigating actions are taken by the responsible Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation in order to correct the weaknesses in the control system and to avoid the future recurrence of those errors. In 2017, one (1) exception request and twenty-four (24) non-compliance events, of which two also triggered an exception request, were recorded<sup>70</sup>. Mitigating and corrective measures have been taken to improve the Representations' staff back-up systems, the needs analysis and planning for procurement, and the internal workflows and processes.

### **Risk management in the Directorate-General for Communication**

Risk Management is one of the pillars of Internal Control in support to the achievement of the Directorate-General objectives. It includes identifying potential risks linked to the activities of the Directorate-General for Communication (risk assessment), and contributing to the definition of mitigations measures and monitoring their implementation.

A Risk Management exercise is conducted at least twice a year in the Headquarters and at least once a year in the Representations. The Risk Management Group, made of the Directors' policy assistants ensures the monitoring of the risks and the related mitigation measures at Directorate-General and Directorate level. Risks considered as most significant at the level of the Directorate-General are included in the Directorate-General Risk Register. The other risks (per Unit/Directorate) are duly documented and mitigated at Directorate and / or Unit level.

The Risk Register of the Directorate-General for Communication contains four active risks, one of which is considered as critical:

- Security in the Representations (critical risks);
- Dependence on external service providers for crucial business processes;
- Discontinuity of services in the applications hosted by the Directorate-General for Informatics;
- Lack of replacement of absent staff, notably in the Representations.

Following the adoption of the new Internal Control framework by the Commission, the Directorate-General for Communication has put in place an 'Internal Control and Risk Management Group', integrating the existing Risk Management Group, whose mandate was extended to include the assessment of internal controls and associated remediation measures.

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<sup>70</sup> Representations in Athens (2), Berlin (2) Brussels (1), Copenhagen (1), La Valletta (2), Ljubljana (1), London (3), Madrid (2), Paris (3), Riga (1) and The Hague (1), Zagreb (2) and units COMM.A.1 (1), COMM.A.5 (1) and COMM.C.4 (2).

## 2.1.4 Conclusions as regards assurance

### Assessment of the elements

The information reported in Section 2 is drawn from management reports and control reports. These reports are the result of a systematic analysis of the evidence available. They provide sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and cover the entire budget implementation delegated to the Director-General of the Directorate-General for Communication.

In particular the Directorate-General for Communication has shown that risks are appropriately monitored and mitigated. The budget and resources of the Directorate-General are used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the financial rules and principles of sound financial management. Assurance has been received from other Directorates-General with cross sub-delegations and from the Internal Auditor.

The Directorate-General for Communication has implemented all possible suitable ex-ante and ex-post controls, to the extent that they remain cost-effective and do not affect other policy objectives. Internal control standards are respected and two of them have been both prioritised and controlled in 2017 – Business Continuity (Internal Control Standard 10) and Document Management (Internal Control Standard 11), in addition to Processes and Procedures (Internal Control Standard 8). A register of exceptions and non-compliance events is in place and demonstrates that Internal Control Standard 8 is functioning correctly across the service, with the appropriate monitoring mechanisms in place to report exceptions and non-compliance. The Directorate-General for Communication has developed a strategy for fraud prevention and detection which is identifying potential cases and referring them appropriately.

The control results and efficiency indicators have been examined for all operational activities and the administrative budget. Following this assessment, controls are cost effective when only quantifiable costs and benefits are taken into account, with the exception<sup>71</sup> of the 'ex-ante financial and operational management' stage. However, certain non-quantifiable benefits are also determined and account is taken of the absolute need for the majority of the controls to be carried out in line with the regulatory framework.

### Conclusion

In order to arrive at a conclusion on assurance, the Directorate-General for Communication assessed the overall risk relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions by calculating the weighted average error rate<sup>72</sup> for the annual expenditure and the resulting amount at risk. Where a specific error rate is not available for certain expenditure categories the average risk of error and amount at risk is presented either as a best estimate with reference to a relevant budget line or within a range or on the basis of information provided by another entity (see Annex 10, table 3).

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<sup>71</sup> See details in Annex 14: Specific Annexes related to 'Cost benefit analysis'.

<sup>72</sup> This is the detected error rate, not the residual error rate i.e. without any adjustment for errors corrected after the payment was made, as it is intended to represent the amount of errors which could not be prevented before making the payment and which will be subject to ex post controls in successive financial years.

The resulting amount at risk is the best, conservative estimate of the amount of expenditure authorised not in conformity with the applicable contractual and regulatory provisions at the time the payment is made. The results in terms of weighted average error rate per all activities and expenditure type are displayed in Annex 10, table 4 and lead to the conclusion that the overall impact of errors and weaknesses found by the internal control system is 1.1 % of payments made (below the 2 % threshold established by the European Court of Auditors) and that the specific weighted average error rates are below 2 % for both operational activities, for the administrative budget and for all types of expenditure.

In view of the control results and all other relevant information available, the Authorising Officer's by Delegation best estimate of the value at risk in 2017 amounts to EUR 1 292 675<sup>73</sup> (see Annex 10, table 4).

Since expenditure is subject to ex-post controls, a proportion of the underlying error is subsequently corrected. This report uses data provided by the Directorate-General for Budget on average annual recoveries and financial corrections since 2011 to calculate expected recoveries and corrections since this is the best available indication of the corrective capacity of the ex-post control systems implemented by the Directorate-General for Communication both currently and for the future. During the period 2011-2017 the implementation of corrective controls has resulted on average in recoveries and financial corrections representing 1.2 %, but the Directorate-General for Communication adjusted this indicator to 0.1 % of the average payments made over the same period, using a conservative approach. This provides the best available indication of the corrective capacity of the ex-post controls systems implemented by the Directorate-General and amounts to EUR 134 930 for 2017 (see Annex 10, table 4).

**Taking into account the conclusions of the review of all elements supporting assurance and the expected corrective capacity of the controls already in place, it is possible to conclude that the control systems implemented by the Directorate-General for Communication provide sufficient assurance to adequately manage the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.**

**Furthermore, it is also possible to conclude that the internal control systems provide sufficient assurance with regards to the achievement of the other internal control objectives.**

#### **Overall Conclusion**

**In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director-General, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance.**

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<sup>73</sup> 1.1 % of relevant expenditure.

## 2.1.5 Declaration of Assurance

*I, the undersigned,*

*Director-General of the Directorate-General for Communication*

*In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation*

*Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view<sup>74</sup>.*

*State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.*

*This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-ante and ex-post controls and the conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control for years prior to the year of this declaration.*

*Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the Commission.*

*Brussels, 23 March 2018.*

*(Signed)*

*Timo Pesonen*

*(Director-General of Directorate-General for Communication)*

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<sup>74</sup> True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the Directorate-General.

## 2.2 Other organisational management dimensions

### 2.2.1 Human resource management

2017 was a year marked by continuing changes in the Commission's human resources community as **the pilot for the new Human Resources Delivery Model, which is part of the Commission's 'Synergies and Efficiencies' initiative, entered its second phase.** The Directorate-General for Communication, having been part of the first pilot phase in 2016, was able to implement the new processes rather smoothly in 2017. The placing of the Human Resources Business Correspondent's Team directly with the Director-General also confirmed its usefulness in terms of strategic advice and timing for Human Resources decisions, as well as providing support for the new function of the Directorate-General as domain leader in external communication (coordination, identification and professionalisation of the community).

**Gender-balance of the management in the Directorate-General improved again beyond the original target for 2019 of 40 %, reaching 43 % at the end of the year 2017.** Revised targets were introduced in 2017 for female first appointments into management<sup>75</sup> and taken into account in the subsequent appointments. Gender-balance is also present at senior management level with 50 % female senior managers. A continued and visible engagement on the part of senior management proved instrumental in these respects. **In 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication also introduced deputy head of Representation positions in all Representations in the Member States, and 52 % of these are women.**

### 2.2.2 Better regulation

Not applicable for Directorate-General for Communication.

### 2.2.3 Information management aspects

The Commission adopted a new corporate strategy for data, knowledge and information management in October 2016. This new strategy establishes a corporate framework while leaving room for Directorates-General to develop and implement their own approaches tailored to their unique needs.

In 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication kept the number of registered documents that are not filed to a strict minimum (0.09 %). To achieve this, monthly reports have been produced by the Documents Management Team of the Directorate-General and sent to the Document Management Officer correspondents in the units and in the Representations in the Member States. In addition, Ares reports are sent quarterly to Heads of Units and Heads of Representation for appropriate follow-up.

**The target for 2017 regarding files accessible by all units in the Directorate-General for Communication was set at 95 % (92.27 % in 2016).** At the end of December 2017, 98.04 % of files are open, thus the objective for 2017 has been fully

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<sup>75</sup> SEC(2017)359 final.

met. Finally, 9.61 % of HAN<sup>76</sup> files are readable by the whole Commission; thus the objective for 2017 which was set at 10 % has not been fully met.

## 2.2.4 External communication activities

The Directorate-General for Communication contributes to the Commission's organisational management as domain leader for external communication in line with the Synergies and Efficiencies decision<sup>77</sup>. In 2017, the Communication Network met regularly / monthly to align communication initiatives, plan ahead and foster partnerships between line Directorates-General. The high-level Corporate Communication Steering Committee, which was established in 2016, steered the corporate communication direction throughout the year.

Throughout 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication continued giving advice to Commission services on aligning communication actions with the political priorities of the Commission and monitored and advised on strategic plans and management plans. **For the second year running, the Directorate-General for Communication analysed the annual activity reports of all Directorates-General on the use of the resources (financial and human) for the communication actions in the reporting year.**

### Examples of economy and efficiency on financial and non-financial improving the activities in Directorate-General for Communication

Under the Synergies and Efficiencies exercise launched in spring 2016, the Directorate-General for Communication, as domain leader for external communication is proactively developing and implementing (jointly with Directorate-General Human Resources) synergies and efficiencies in the following workstreams:

- 1. Governance structure of the communication domain** - The governance structure of the communication domain (internal and external communication) has been merged and revamped. Together with the Directorate-General for Human Resources, the Directorate-General for Communication is co-leading this community through the management of the Communication Network (group of Heads of Unit for communication in the Directorates-General) and the Corporate Communication Steering Committee (group of core and other Directorates-General);
- 2. Inventory of resources deployed in the communication domain and temporary pooling solutions** – A mechanism for the **temporary pooling of graphic designers** was established, to be activated in situations of **high-priority demands of corporate importance**. The mechanism was already activated in 2017, with excellent results. Examples include the 2017 State of the Union address, the Tallinn Digital Summit, the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth;
- 3. Digital transformation of the Commission's online presence** – As regards the **new Europa website**, the Europa Component Library was released in 2017 allowing all Directorates-General and services reuse ready-made web components on different sites

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<sup>76</sup> Hermes-Ares-Nomcom - Set of tools designed to implement the e-Domec (Electronic Archiving and Document Management in the European Commission) policy rules.

<sup>77</sup> SEC(2016)170 – 04/04/2016.

and so eliminating the need to design and develop costly site-specific solutions. In addition, the first edition of the Europa Activity Report was prepared. Directorates-General were asked to declare their web activities and the associated resources in order to help the Directorate-General for Communication establish a baseline and serve as a basis for monitoring progress on increasing synergies and efficiencies;

**4. Framework contracts in the area of communication** – Throughout 2017, the Directorate-General for Communication **continued the centralisation of the Commission wide framework contracts for communication**. The implementation of the procurement timeline continued, while the net number of contracts<sup>78</sup> phased out since the beginning of the exercise reached 22. The conceptual layout of the account management centre for the contractual one-stop-shop (the Corporate Communication Contracts Team) was finalised, focusing on diversifying and reinforcing the consultancy and support offered to partner Directorates-Generals;

**5. Professionalisation of the communication domain across the Commission** - In parallel, a ten-point action plan for the professionalisation of the communication domain was endorsed by the Corporate Communication Steering Committee on 10 October 2017. This plan was developed in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Human Resources, which is joint domain leader for communication. In this context, significant progress was made in renewing and refreshing the central offer of learning and development actions for communication, such as classroom and online training courses. This was a key step in the professionalisation of the communication function.

For an extensive reporting on all components of this section, please refer to annex 2.

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<sup>78</sup> From an original total of 58 contracts.