



European
Commission

Management Plan 2021

SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

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INTRODUCTION

Under the direct authority of the President, the Secretariat-General serves the College, oversees the implementation of the Commission's political priorities, and ensures the collegiality, consistency, efficiency and regularity of the Commission's action. To this end, the Secretariat-General steers and coordinates the work of Commission services across all policy areas to ensure the coherence, quality and timely delivery of policy, legislation and operations, promoting a 'whole of government' approach to policy-making. It does this from the early stages of policy development, through the internal decision-making process, to interinstitutional negotiations and policy implementation.

The Secretariat-General is the guardian of good governance within the Commission, fostering a modern, transparent and sustainable administration. It acts, together with the Cabinet of the President, as the guardian of fairness, objectivity, transparency and efficiency in the relationship between all members of the College and supports the Vice-Presidents in their coordination tasks, including the management of the Groups of Commissioners and Project Teams. It also acts as the interface between the Commission and the other European institutions, bodies, national Parliaments, non-governmental and international organisations.

The Commission's priorities for 2021 are set out in the [Commission Work Programme](#). This management plan describes how the the Secretariat-General will coordinate work in all areas of this work programme. It sets out the most important outputs planned for 2021 and explains how they will contribute to the specific objectives set out in the Secretariat-General's 2020-2024 strategic plan. This work will contribute to the achievement of the Commission's six headline ambitions and an additional horizontal objective covering the modernisation of the Commission administration.

The priority for 2021 will be the implementation of the Commission's comprehensive response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular through the new 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework and NextGenerationEU. The Secretariat-General's work will be focused on building a more sustainable, digital and fair Europe, both through coordinating work on policy development within the Commission and coordinating interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament and Council.

In addition to steering and coordinating policy work, the Secretariat-General will play a leading role in the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility through the new RECOVER Task Force. The Secretariat-General, in close coordination with the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, will lead work on the assessment of national recovery and resilience plans and ensure that the investments and reforms identified are fully aligned with the recommendations made under the European Semester.

The Secretariat-General will also be at the forefront of work to strengthen the Union's crisis management framework, and will lead work on managing the consequences of the crisis for the Commission's institutional policies and for the efficient functioning of the Commission administration. The Secretariat-General leads on the development and implementation of corporate policies in areas such as strategic planning and programming,

corporate IT governance and security, ethics, equality, business continuity, data protection, and data, information and knowledge management, including document management. In these areas, the Secretariat-General will continue working closely with other central services of the Commission to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively, in line with legal obligations and aiming at the highest standards of public administration.

Relations with the United Kingdom

The 'Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom' was established in 2019 as part of the Secretariat-General. Following the conclusion of a EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, 2021 will be an important year for the Union's relations with the United Kingdom.

Coordinating Commission work on the implementation of the agreement on the UK's withdrawal from the EU

The implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement requires strong cooperation within the Commission at political level and between Commission services. Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič co-chairs the Joint Committee, established by the Withdrawal Agreement, supported by the Secretariat-General in this role. As regards the Specialised Committees set up for the purpose of following implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement in specific areas, the Secretariat-General provides the secretariat and performs the function of EU co-chair. In this context, the Secretariat-General also coordinates and participates in the regular contacts at technical / expert level between the Parties. The Joint Committee and Specialised Committees will continue functioning and meeting in 2021.

As of 2021, an Arbitration Panel will also be in place under the Withdrawal Agreement to settle possible disputes. This Panel may need to be activated, depending on the monitoring and implementation activities that the Union pursues in the context of the Joint Committee and its Specialised Committees, or based on general information.

Decisions may need to be taken in case the Withdrawal Agreement is not implemented correctly by Member States or the United Kingdom (citizens' rights), or by the United Kingdom (Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland), most notably on customs, health checks and state aids. Strong liaison will be needed with the Union presence in Northern Ireland organised by the European External Action Service, which will supervise United Kingdom implementation of the rules under the Withdrawal Agreement between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Coordination of future EU-UK relations

One of the main coordination tasks will be the implementation and application of the agreement with the United Kingdom. This will primarily be the responsibility of the relevant Directorates-General but will also require strong coordination by the Secretariat-General given the specific challenge of starting a new trade and security relationship with a former Member State, which will want to embark on divergence from the EU. There will also be the need to operationalise very quickly the institutional setup foreseen by the new agreement.. A number of decisions will have to be taken as part of the application. Interaction with the

European Parliament, stakeholders and businesses to explain the contents of the agreement will be crucial, and information tools will need to be made available. Meetings under the umbrella of the Partnership Council will need to be organised.

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission’s priorities: main outputs for the year

General objective 1 ‘European Green Deal’

Coordinating the European Green Deal


In December 2019, the European Commission adopted the European Green Deal Communication - Europe’s new growth strategy. It sets out how to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, boosting the economy, improving people’s health and quality of life and protecting nature and the services it provides to society. The Green Deal represents a major transformation of the EU’s economy. The Communication presents a roadmap with 47 initiatives to deliver the Green Deal that will be presented by the Commission during the mandate of President von der Leyen. Four sets of priority proposals are envisaged in 2021. First, following the Commission’s proposal for a more ambitious target to reduce net emissions of greenhouse gas emissions in 2030, the Commission will present proposals in 2021 to overhaul the key legislative climate and energy-related instruments. Second, important initiatives are planned to implement the circular economy action plan and to improve the sustainability of products in particular. A third priority will be on tackling pollution and improving biodiversity where proposals are envisaged to tackle air pollution from vehicles, restore ecosystems, reduce the risks from deforestation and promote organic food production. Fourth, actions will be presented to implement the strategy for smart and sustainable transport. The Secretariat-General will continue coordinating work on all policy development aspects of the European Green Deal within the Commission, as well as coordinating interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament and Council on pending proposals.

General objective 1: European Green Deal

<i>Specific objective 1.1: The initiatives presented in the roadmap annexed to the Communication on A European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640 final) are delivered during the mandate of President von der Leyen</i>	<i>Related to spending programme(s)</i> NO
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Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Coordination of all major initiatives on the European Green Deal as in CWP 2021	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2021

General objective 2 ‘Europe fit for the digital age’

Shaping Europe’s digital future

Together with the transition to climate neutrality, digitalisation will require a profound transformation of Europe’s society and economy. For Europe to seize the opportunities of the digital transformation, it has to step up its efforts, including the necessary investments, in supporting the research, development and deployment of strategic digital technologies as well as strategic digital technologies infrastructure. These investments should be complemented by a regulatory framework that supports the development and uptake of digital solutions in line with EU rules and values. In addition, it will be important to equip people with the necessary education and skills, including digital skills, so that they can take part in the digital transformation.

The first deliverables for 2021 will include the horizontal act on artificial intelligence which is the first follow-up initiative to the White Paper on Artificial Intelligence. In line with the 2020 State of the Union address, the Commission will also present a Communication on digital decade, setting out the digital objectives for 2030 as well as possible monitoring framework. Other initiatives will include the Data Package, which will consist of the Data Act and the review of the Database Directive, as well as the proposal for a trusted and secure European e-ID. The Secretariat-General coordinates the preparation of these and other initiatives contributing to the objective of a Europe fit for the digital age. The Secretariat-General chairs the interservice steering groups to facilitate all stages of the preparatory process within the Commission, from planning and better regulation requirements to the finalisation of the legislative and/or non-legislative drafts. It will also continue coordinating all pending interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament and Council on pending proposals.


General objective 2: Europe fit for the digital age

Specific objective 2.1: *The initiatives specified under the Europe fit for the digital age priority are delivered during the mandate of President von der Leyen*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Coordination of all major initiatives on “Europe fit for digital age” headline ambition in CWP 2021	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2021

General objective 3 ‘An economy that works for people’

Steering the European Semester and integrating sustainability

The Secretariat-General coordinates the work of the Commission services on the European Semester of economic policy coordination. The implementation of the European Semester in 2021 will be intrinsically linked to the new Recovery and Resilience Facility (see also below). The assessment of national recovery and resilience plans will be checked against country-specific recommendations. Given that the deadlines within the European Semester and the Recovery and Resilience Facility overlap, the European Semester will be temporarily adapted to the launch of the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

For Member States submitting their recovery and resilience plan in 2021, the Commission will accompany the proposals for the Council implementing decisions with analytical documents assessing the substance of the recovery and resilience plans. These documents will replace the European Semester country reports in 2021. Given the comprehensive and forward-looking nature of the recovery and resilience plans, the Commission will not propose country-specific recommendations in 2021 for those Member States that submit such a plan. The Commission will nevertheless propose recommendations on the budgetary situation of the Member States in 2021 as envisaged under the Stability and Growth Pact.

The European Semester will remain one of the key vehicles through which the Commission monitors Member States’ progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretariat-General will in addition continue coordinating work on all policy development aspects of the European Pillar of Social Rights within the Commission, as well as coordinating interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament and Council on pending proposals. The European Semester already integrates the European Pillar of Social Rights with its 20 principles and accompanying Social Scoreboard indicators, which reflect the high ambition of the EU with regard to social outcomes.

General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.1: Sound public finances are ensured, excessive macroeconomic imbalances are prevented, structural reforms in line with country-specific recommendations are pursued

*Related to spending programme(s):
Recovery and Resilience Facility*

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
Annual Sustainable Growth Strategy	Adoption by the Commission	Approximately September- November
See also outputs under specific objectives 3.2 and 3.3 below.		

General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.2: *The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are integrated into the European Semester*

Related to spending programme(s): Recovery and Resilience Facility

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
27 staff working documents accompanying the proposals for Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the recovery and resilience plans.	Publication by the Commission	Approximately between April-June

Coordinating Commission work on the national Recovery and Resilience Plans

The Recovery and Resilience Facility will be the most important vehicle to deliver on the European recovery agenda and to achieve its major policy goals through investments and reforms. The implementation of the Facility will require strong cooperation within the Commission at political level and between all Commission services involved. For that purpose, the President chairs a Steering Board to provide the political steer on the implementation of the Facility and to oversee all implementation steps, from the early engagement with Member States on draft plans until the implementation and monitoring of the plans. The Secretariat-General provides the secretariat for the Steering Board.

Interactions with the Member States will be managed by negotiating teams composed of selected members of the country teams from policy Directorates-General and the (Deputy) Heads of Unit of the relevant country unit in the Recovery and Resilience Task Force or the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs. The 27 negotiating teams are responsible for analysing the (draft) recovery and resilience plans, preparing the assessments and implementing acts related to the plans, accepting the payment requests and monitoring progress in implementing the plans.

The Recovery and Resilience Task Force and the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs will regularly engage with other Directorates-General through country team meetings. The country team includes experts from all relevant Directorates-General. It is important in providing the required expertise in the sectorial policies covered by the recovery and resilience plans and also in ensuring the coordination between other EU funds, especially the structural funds, and the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.3: *National Recovery and Resilience Plans are fully aligned with the challenges faced by the Member States and the green and digital transitions*

Related to spending programme(s): Recovery and Resilience Facility

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives		
Output	Indicator	Target
27 Commission proposals for a Council Implementing Decision adopting the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Member States	Adoption by the Commission	Q1-Q2 2021
27 Staff working documents accompanying the proposal for Council Implementing Decision	Publication by the Commission	Q1-Q2 2021
27 operational arrangements	Adoption by the Commission	Q1-Q2 2021
Recovery and Resilience Facility monitoring report	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2021
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Commission guidance to Member States for the development of national communication plans	Guidance provided	Q1 2021

Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and NextGenerationEU

The agreement reached on the overarching framework for the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 and NextGenerationEU will allow all sectoral acts for programmes and funds to be finalised early in 2021. The Secretariat-General, together with the Directorate-General for Budget, will continue to ensure the coordination of these negotiations, providing guidance to all services involved, maintaining coherence with the overall political ambitions and consistency across sectoral policies.

2021 will also see the implementation of the new programmes and funds with the adoption of programming documents, calls and first actions on the ground. Coordination will remain essential on issues such as the possible participation of third countries in certain programmes and the definition of reporting methodologies for crosscutting themes such as climate change. Finally and in line with the interinstitutional agreement that is part of the overall multiannual financial framework agreement, work will continue on the introduction of new own resources during the next period. The Commission has committed to presenting proposals for new own resources based on a carbon border adjustment mechanism, a digital levy, and the Emissions Trading Scheme in 2021.

In early 2021 and subject to the agreement on the new financial framework and sectoral programmes, the delegation of the management of the new programmes to Executive Agencies will be finalised. Together with other central services, the Secretariat-General will coordinate work on this package, through which the future portfolios, levels of staffing and governance framework of the future agencies will be defined. Based on the previous evaluations of the current agencies and on a cost-benefit analysis, this package will prepare the ground for the implementation of the future programmes to be swiftly operational and deliver quick results on the ground.

General objective 3: An economy that works for people

Specific objective 3.4: The multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027 is finalised and efficiently implemented

Related to spending programme(s)
YES

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
Coordination of sectoral negotiations	Delivery	Q1 2021
Communication and decisions on the delegation of the 2021-2027 EU programmes to executive agencies	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2021

General objective 4 'A stronger Europe in the world'

Strengthening coordination on strategic external policy issues

The Secretariat-General plays an important role in policy coordination across the Commission in the areas of external relations including development, trade, neighbourhood and enlargement. In 2021 it will continue to steer the upstream process with the aim to have Commission Work Programme 2021 initiatives under "A Stronger Europe in the World" adopted in a timely manner. It will ensure coherence of initiatives and actions related to external action and alignment with the Political Guidelines, while also providing comprehensive support to the President of the Commission, including the preparation of briefings, for all Summits, contacts with international partners and participation in international fora, notably the G7 and G20. The Secretariat-General will also set the agenda for, and provide the secretariat to, the weekly Group for External Coordination (EXCO) at Cabinet level and its preparatory meeting at services level, and holds the co-secretariat of the Commissioners' Group for a Stronger Europe. Finally, the Secretariat-General will lead the preparatory work in 2021 to programme EU cooperation worldwide, which will help tackling the global consequences of COVID-19 and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Political agreement on the new external instrument - Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) - was achieved at the end of 2020. The Italian G20 Presidency and the European Commission will jointly host the Global Health Summit, to be held in Rome on 21 May.

General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world



Specific objective 4.1: Commission services are well coordinated to ensure a coherent EU position on strategic external policy issues and at G7/G20 summits

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
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 Coordination of all major strategic external policy initiatives in CWP 2021	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2021
 Joint communication on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism (non-legislative, Q2 2021)	Adoption by the Commission	Q1 2021

Boosting the Foreign, Security and Defence Policy

The Secretariat-General plays a strong coordination role for the implementation of the foreign policy instruments, sanctions and all aspects of space and defence policy, including notably defence industrial aspects. It represents the Commission in the Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Committee, the Politico-Military Group and the Nicolaidis Group. It coordinates and prepares the Commission's input to the Foreign Affairs Council, also in its Defence configuration. The Secretariat-General co-chairs, together with the European External Action Service, the preparatory meetings for the Project Group on Defence Union which covers all aspects of the EU defence policy (e.g. the European Defence Fund, the Permanent Structured Cooperation, the EU-North Atlantic Treaty Organisation cooperation, military mobility, cyber defence). It chairs the Interservice group 'Defence and Security Technologies' whose goal is to maintain an overview, ensure consistency and facilitate cross-fertilisation among all related Commission industrial and technological initiatives, programmes, instruments and activities.

In the field of security and defence, for example, in 2021 the focus will remain on ensuring the continuous successful implementation of EU defence initiatives, including the European Defence Fund, Military Mobility Action Plan, countering hybrid threats and EU-NATO cooperation. The Secretariat-General will also ensure appropriate steering and timely adoption of security and defence related initiatives foreseen in the 2021 Commission Work Programme. On one such initiative – an Action plan on synergies between civil, defence and space industries – the Secretariat General will act as lead service.



General objective 4: A stronger Europe in the world

Specific objective 4.2: *The policy-making and implementation process is efficiently steered and coordinated in order to ensure that the priorities of the President in the field of foreign, security and defence policy are delivered on time and in a collegial way*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Coordination of all major foreign, security and defence policy initiatives in CWP 2021	Steering of up-stream process including interservice consultation and timely adoption	Q4 2021
 Action plan on synergies between civil, defence and space	Drafting of the Action Plan while ensuring appropriate services'	Q1 2021

industries	involvement and up-stream process incl. interservice consultation and timely adoption	
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General objective 5 'Promoting our European way of life'

The Secretariat-General will steer and coordinate work on many aspects of this general objective, including in particular on the deepening of the Security Union and on crisis management. In addition, the Secretariat-General will continue to coordinate internal and interinstitutional work on the new Pact on Migration and Asylum, proposed in 2020 and providing a comprehensive European approach to migration.

Deepening the Security Union

Building on the progress made under the European Agenda on Security, the new EU Security Union Strategy adopted on 24 July 2020 addresses EU security challenges through a comprehensive approach, bringing together all relevant policy and legislative initiatives under the single Security Union umbrella. This includes addressing digital and physical risks in an integrated manner, including a reflection on the security impacts and lessons learnt from Covid-19, and aims to build capabilities for preparedness, response and resilience to these threats. The Security Union Strategy for the period 2020-2025 is grounded in European common values and also addresses the external dimension of security, as the stability and security of the EU's neighbourhood is critical to the EU's own security.

The Secretariat-General coordinates this work and oversees implementation. In 2021, the Secretariat-General will help to drive forward the Security Union Strategy by regular reporting on progress and supporting the development of new initiatives in areas including organised crime, hybrid threats, law enforcement cooperation, the freezing and confiscation of illegal assets and improving the detection, removal and reporting of child sexual abuse online. In parallel to coordination work on policy development aspects of the Security Union within the Commission, it will also continue coordinating interinstitutional negotiations with the European Parliament and Council on pending proposals.


General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life

Specific objective 5.1: *The Security Union is consolidated with a view to ensuring a coordinated EU response to existing and emerging threats*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
 Coordination of all major initiatives giving effect to the Security Union as in CWP 2021	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2021

Stepping up European cooperation on crisis management – the coronavirus challenge

The Secretariat-General plays a central coordinating role to ensure that the Commission is able to respond, in an effective and coherent way, to crises that require action at EU level. Following the call of the European Council of 26 March 2020, the Secretariat-General will coordinate the proposal for an ambitious reform of the wide-ranging EU crisis management system. Reflections have already started and Commission services are assessing different areas of the EU's response covering aspects such as communication, borders, civil protection and health, among others. The European Commission is also coordinating the common European response to the coronavirus crisis.

Early on during the coronavirus outbreak, the Commission established a dedicated website to better communicate on Europe's crisis response. This website has since become a central reference point to citizens, receiving 9 million visitors so far. As part of the vaccines communication taskforce and through a dedicated vaccines section on the corona response website, the Secretariat-General contributes to the corporate efforts to provide transparent communication to citizens on vaccines and vaccination, thereby improving vaccines acceptance. In addition, the Re-Open EU platform and mobile application, provide a "one-stop shop" for information about safety measures and travel restrictions across Europe and in some dedicated partner countries. As the situation develops rapidly, the platform and the application must be maintained and improved.

General objective 5: Promoting our European way of life		
<i>Specific objective 5.2: An effective and efficient crisis mechanism system is in place that allows the EU to respond effectively to major crises and emerging threats</i>		<i>Related to spending programme(s)</i> NO
Main outputs in 2021:		
New policy initiatives		
Output	Indicator	Target
Communication on the future EU Crisis Management	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2021
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Continuous updates and improvements to the Commission's coronavirus response website	Number of visitors and positive feedback	5 million additional visits for 2021 and 70% positive feedback
Turning Re-open EU into a one-stop-shop for practical information on the health and travel situation	Number of visitors and positive feedback	13 million visitors
Re-Open EU smartphone app	Number of downloads	1 million
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
Covid-related initiatives, including Advance Purchase Agreements for	Steering of up-stream process including interservice	Ongoing

Covid vaccines and the EU Vaccines Strategy	consultation and timely adoption	
Revised ARGUS Decision based on lessons learned, notably in the context of Covid-19 crisis	Adoption by the Commission	Q4 2021
Maintenance and development of the Argus IT tool to allow timely information-sharing during crises	Completion of the ARGUS Market Study in search for a more advanced IT tool.	Q2 2021
	Completion of potential proofs of concept with short list of potential candidates.	Q4 2021

General objective 6 ‘A new push for European democracy’

Building a European Rule of Law Mechanism

The rule of law is central to the Commission’s priority “A new push for European democracy”. The Commission has set up a comprehensive European Rule of Law Mechanism, with an EU-wide scope and objective annual reporting by the European Commission. The monitoring approach is applied in the same way in every Member State.

The Commission’s work is brought together in an annual report and involves ongoing cooperation and analysis with the national authorities and other key stakeholders. This is being done in close cooperation with the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers and other Commission services, under the overall steer and coordination of the Secretariat-General. The first edition of this report was produced in 2020.

In 2021 the rule of law mechanism will need to be brought up to cruising speed and options developed to gradually increase the level of ambition as well as the complementarity with other policy areas such as the recovery and resilience plans as well as the rule of law conditionality under the multiannual financial framework. The Commission’s target will be that this work and the consolidation of a fully-fledged rule of law cycle are achieved by the end of this college’s mandate. The Secretariat-General will have a central role in steering and coordinating these developments throughout 2021, which will involve many Commission services, and be a source of ideas and expertise. In addition to this, the Secretariat-General will also prepare the 2021 report on the situation of the rule of law in the EU, in cooperation with other Commission services.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.1: A preventive approach on the rule of law is developed in the EU through a dedicated cycle

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
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2021 report on the situation of the rule of law in the EU	Adoption by the Commission	Q3-Q4 2021
Training on Rule of Law mechanism	Number of trainings	2

Implementing the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism

Since 2007, the Commission has produced regular reports under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM), with particular regard to judicial reform and the fight against corruption in Romania, and also against organised crime with respect to Bulgaria. Through the reports, the Secretariat-General brings together the Commission's work on its ongoing cooperation and analysis with national authorities and other key stakeholders.

In its report on Bulgaria of October 2019 the Commission concluded that Bulgaria had fulfilled its commitments under the CVM as established in 2006. After delays from the Bulgarian side and events in Bulgaria over the summer 2020 no formal decision ending the CVM for Bulgaria has yet been taken. The situation will have to be reviewed in 2021. For Romania a progress report on the progress towards the objective of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism will have to be adopted.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

<i>Specific objective 6.2: The rule of law is consolidated in Bulgaria and Romania through achieving the goals of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanisms</i>	<i>Related to spending programme(s)</i> NO
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Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
CVM report for Romania	Adoption by the Commission	Q3-Q4 2021
Formal Commission Decision ending the CVM for Bulgaria	Adoption by the Commission	Q3-Q4 2021
Review of concluding the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism for Bulgaria	Adoption by the Commission	Q3-Q4 2021
Report on the progress of Romania	Adoption by the Commission	Q2-Q3 2021

The Conference on the Future of Europe

The Conference on the Future of Europe is one of President von der Leyen's priorities under general objective "A new push for European democracy". The Conference's goal is to allow citizens to have their say on the future of EU policies. Panels and debates will be organised at European and national level, reaching far beyond capital cities, organised by and for citizens and civil society. The work of the Conference on the Future of Europe will be supported by a multilingual digital platform which the Commission is developing and will help to manage. It will allow citizens to post and exchange ideas, organise and participate in events (virtual, hybrid or physical if the pandemic allows).

The President has pledged that citizens' proposals will feed into future EU policy actions after the Conference ends in 2022. The Secretariat-General, in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Communication, is working on a feedback mechanism to ensure timely and regular reporting of the proposals made by citizens, and is assisting on creating a communication strategy to promote maximal participation in Conference events, both from the digital platform, Conference plenaries and European Citizens' Panels. Given that the Conference is an interinstitutional project, it will have its own governance and administrative support structures, including staff delegated from the the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. All aspects of the feedback mechanism will need to be agreed on an interinstitutional basis. The Conference will be complemented by other efforts to support a vibrant civil society and to promote and enhance democratic participation as announced in the European Democracy Action Plan, in which the Secretariat-General plays an important coordinating role.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.3: <i>The Conference on the Future of Europe is successfully launched and followed-up and a high level of citizen engagement is ensured¹</i>	<i>Related to spending programme(s)</i> NO
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Main outputs in 2021:

External communication actions

Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Outreach to citizens via Conference events (digital, hybrid or physical if the pandemic allows), web streaming and media.	Number of Conference on the Future of Europe events organised (digital, hybrid or physical)	300 (Joint target for Common Secretariat and Digital Platform of the Conference, DG COMM, SG & DIGIT)
	Number of citizens reached via web-streaming and the media	10 million (Joint target secretariat; digital platform management; DG COMM media monitoring)
	Number of participants in Conference events (digital, hybrid or physical if the pandemic allows)	10 000
Citizen engagement on the digital platform	Number of visits on the online platform	15 million
	Number of interactions (contributions, reactions likes, shares...) on the online platform.	500 000
Communication campaign on the CoFE, including awareness-raising and incentives to engage in CoFE-related activities and put forward	Agreement on a joint interinstitutional communication strategy	Q1 2021 ²

¹ To be jointly agreed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

² Specific targets to be specified in the joint communication strategy agreed by the 3 institutions.

ideas		
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
Progress reports published by the interinstitutional governance and administrative structures of the Conference (source: Common Secretariat)	Number of progress reports	At least one by Q4 2021
Establish the Conference's governance / supporting structures and ensure that they run smoothly, in cooperation with the European Parliament and the Council	Delivery	Q1 2021
Assist the Conference's governance structures in setting up European Citizens' Panels	Number of panels that have been set up by the end of 2021	5
	Number of meetings for each panel by the end of 2021	1

Supporting the Commission's work on demography

In June 2020 the Commission adopted a report on the impact of demographic change, presenting evidence and data on key challenges of Europe's demographic change. The report paves the way for further initiatives, including a Green Paper on Ageing to be adopted early in 2021 and a long-term vision for rural areas in the first half of 2021. The Green Paper on Ageing will be followed by a public consultation in the first half of 2021.

Where relevant, overarching challenges such as those linked to demographic change will also be addressed in Member States' recovery and resilience plans, in line with the guidance provided to Member States in September 2020.

Strengthening the Commission's better regulation policy

The Commission is strengthening its commitment to better regulation, to inform political choices so that they are evidence-based and fit for the future. The Secretariat-General has a key role to guide and oversee the further development and coherent application of better regulation practices across the Commission. The Regulatory Scrutiny Board ensures the independent quality review of the Commission's work on impact assessments and major selected evaluations. The Secretariat-General provides functional support to the Board.

The Commission's Communication on better regulation will provide the vision and direction for the future development of better regulation over the coming years, in particular considering the vital role that better regulation will have in the Covid-19 crisis recovery and transparent EU decision-making. The updated better regulation guidelines and toolbox will provide the methodological means for the implementation of this vision. The Communication will focus on optimising the better regulation framework to improve transparency, the engagement and outreach of citizens and stakeholders in policymaking. The Commission will optimise consultation of citizens and stakeholders, improve questionnaires and endeavour to consult only once when revising a piece of EU legislation.

Better regulation tools will be improved to ensure that regulation is targeted, easy to comply with, does not add unnecessary regulatory burdens and is future proof.

In 2021, the Commission will continue to develop and progressively apply the ‘One In – One Out’ approach, by which any new burden from new legislation will be offset by equivalent burden reduction in the same policy area. It will report on its implementation and on its major simplification work under REFIT in the annual burden survey. To increase transparency, the interinstitutional study database will also be fully deployed, providing the rolling list of evaluations and studies, with links to proposals and accompanying evidence.

As Europe moves from crisis management to recovery, the European Commission will step up its interactions with citizens, businesses and stakeholders and engage them in preparation of its initiatives to build a more resilient, green and digital future. A new communication strategy for better regulation has been prepared to help streamline the Commission’s outreach activities related to the Better regulation agenda. A revamped web presence, press releases and social media will remain important channels of communication. The Commission will also step up its cooperation with the consultative Committees and the Representations, and develop new partnerships.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy		
<i>Specific objective 6.4: Regulatory tools are applied systematically throughout the legislative cycle to improve policy-making</i>		<i>Related to spending programme(s)</i> NO
Main outputs in 2021:		
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Increase awareness on public consultations	Number of visitors on the Have Your Say Portal in 2021	2 500 000
	Number of people reached with promotional social media posts on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook	2 000 000
	Satisfactory number and balanced profiles of contributors (sector, geographic) to the promoted initiatives (targets regarding number of contributions and targeted audience defined case by case for each promoted initiative).	100 000 per video
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
Better regulation communication	Adoption	Q1 2021
Better regulation guidelines and toolbox	Adoption by the Commission	Q2 2021
Opinions on impact assessments and	Delivery	Ongoing

evaluations issued in 2020 – support to Regulatory Scrutiny Board		
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General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.5: *The EU legislation is 'fit for purpose', delivering its benefits by least cost*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Fit for Future Platform Decision	Adoption of the 2021 Annual Work Programme and Platform's opinions	Q1 to Q4 2021
One In – One Out approach implementation	Roll out to Commission Work Programme 2021 initiatives	Q4 2021
Annual burden survey	Publication	Q4 2021

Promoting transparency and stakeholder involvement

Contacts with stakeholders and civil society are an integral part of the work of the EU institutions. Transparency, accountability and integrity are essential to maintain the trust of European citizens in the legitimacy of the political, legislative and administrative processes in the Union. Transparency of interest representation is especially important in view of allowing citizens to follow the activities and be aware of potential influence of stakeholders on the EU law-making process. To maintain trust in Europe, the Commission has to be more transparent about the way it works.

Since 2014, Commissioners and their closest advisors have published proactively on Europa information on meetings held with lobbyists. The rule 'not on the Transparency Register, no meeting' applies as well. Furthermore, the Commission has presented a Proposal for an Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory Transparency Register covering the European Parliament, the Commission, and, for the first time, the Council of the European Union. Following the negotiations, the final political agreement on the mandatory Transparency Register was reached on 15 December 2020, with no outstanding issues, and was approved by the College, the European Parliament Conference of Presidents and Coreper. The new Interinstitutional Agreement is pending the completion of internal procedures in the three institutions. Its formal signature is expected in the course of 2021.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.6: *The public has easy access to high-quality information on contacts with stakeholders through the Transparency Register*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Negotiations of Interinstitutional Agreement (IIA) on mandatory Transparency Register	Completion of internal procedures in the three institutions and formal adoption of the IIA	End 2021

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.7: The Commission's policy-making cycle is open to participation from public and stakeholders

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Interinstitutional studies database	Database accessible to other European Institutions with links to legislative proposals and underpinning evidence	Q1 2021
A new consultation approach to optimise consultation opportunities from public and stakeholders	Launch	Q2 2021

Promoting the highest ethical standards

The Commission is committed to the highest levels of ethics for the Commission as a whole. The Secretariat-General contributes at corporate level to the promotion and application of the highest ethical standards in the EU civil service. This includes ethical conduct, accountability and an anti-fraud environment at all levels of the organisation, including prevention, guidance and sanctioning. It liaises with the Directorate-General for Human Resources and the European Anti-Fraud Office in this regard.

With regard to Members of the Commission, the Commission's Code of Conduct for the Members of the European Commission details how the general Treaty obligations of independence, integrity and discretion should be applied in practice. Through the network of Cabinets' ethics and transparency contact points, the Secretariat-General will contribute to maintaining the high level of awareness of Cabinets of the ethical rules applicable to Members of the Commission and to ensuring a regular flow of information. The Secretariat-General also provides advice on the acceptance of requests for 'patronage' by Members of the Commission.

2021 will mark the beginning of the negotiations with the European Parliament and the Council (and possibly other EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies) with a goal to establish an independent ethics body common to all EU institutions. The Commission will define its position during the negotiations taking into account the European Parliament's own initiative report which is scheduled to be adopted during the third quarter of 2021. After the adoption of the Parliament's own initiative report, the formal discussions and negotiations between the three institutions will commence.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.8: *An independent ethics body common to all EU institutions is established to ensure the application of the highest ethical standards by all EU institutions*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Implementation/application of the New Code of Conduct for Commissioners	Handling of post term of office professional activities of former Commissioners	Ongoing
	Adoption of Annual Report on the application of the Code	Q1 2021
Review of the 1979 Commission rules for patronage and relevant procedures	Delivery	Q1 2021

Giving citizens a say in policy-making: the European Citizens' initiative

On 1 January 2020, new rules entered into application for the European Citizens' Initiative that make it easier to organise and support citizens' initiatives. However, the implementation of these new rules was hampered by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. In response, the European Parliament and the Council adopted temporary rules proposed by the Commission to adjust certain deadlines for the collection, verification and examination of citizens' initiatives. These measures are temporary and aim at addressing the challenges faced by the organisers during the coronavirus outbreak, where public campaigning and paper collection of statements of support have become nearly impossible. In 2021, work will focus on responding to the valid initiatives already submitted to the Commission for examination in 2020, as well as any upcoming successful initiatives. Looking ahead, the goal remains to achieve a structural increase in both the number of registered initiatives, as well as the number of successful initiatives, to meet the objective set in the context of the recent reform of the European citizens' initiative. To that end, the dedicated communication and guidance activities will be continued to raise awareness of the European Citizens' Initiative as an instrument for participatory democracy in the EU, including the extension of the network of multipliers in the Member States.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.9: *The European Citizens' initiative is successfully implemented and a high level of citizen engagement in policy-making is ensured*

Related to spending programme(s)
YES

Main outputs in 2021:

External communication actions

Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
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Awareness raising through communication activities (social media campaigns, online promotion and events)	Number of average monthly visits to the ECI website	30% increase in number of average monthly visits compared to 2020, by end of 2021
	Number of registrations on the ECI forum	30% increase in number of registrations compared to 2020, by end of 2021

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
User-friendliness of IT tools	Feedback of signatories on their experiences with the Commission's online collection system	80% satisfaction rate for signatories
	Feedback of organisers on their experiences with the Commission's online collection system	70% satisfaction rate for organisers

Coordinating the equality Task Force

Equality for all and equality in all respects, in relation to gender, racial or ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief, is a major priority of this Commission, as reiterated by President von der Leyen in her State of the Union address in 2020.

The Task Force on Equality, established in the Secretariat-General at the end of 2019 to support the first ever Commissioner for equality, works to ensure that equality is mainstreamed in all EU policies, as set out in Articles 8 and 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Following the Covid-19 crisis and its impact on women and disadvantaged groups, particular attention will be given to the recovery process.

The Task Force and its secretariat also have a key role to play to ensure smooth and high quality delivery of key initiatives of the Commission in the field of equality and non-discrimination included in the Commission Work Programme. It will also ensure proper follow-up of key equality strategies adopted by the Commission in 2020, including the gender equality strategy 2020-2025, the EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025, the strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation and the LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020-2025. The Secretariat-General will ensure that all Directorates-General develop a mainstreaming equality work plan.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.10: *The equality dimension is mainstreamed in all stages of policy design in all EU policy areas*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Commission internal equality	Second edition of the toolbox	Q3-Q4 2021

mainstreaming toolbox	finalised and made available via communication channels and Equality Coordinators	
Training on equality and equality mainstreaming	Availability in training catalogue for all Number of training sessions held Number of staff trained	Ongoing
Survey on diversity and inclusion of staff (with DG HR)	Launch of the survey	Q1 2021

Embedding strategic foresight in the policy process

President von der Leyen has mandated Vice-President Šefčovič to lead the Commission's efforts to strengthen the culture of anticipatory, strategic and evidence-based policymaking. The first ever Strategic Foresight Report of 9 September 2020 set the Commission's ambitions of embedding strategic foresight into EU policymaking. It announced a series of key deliverables, which include:

- The 2021 Strategic Foresight Report, the Commission's main foresight deliverable, will be based on a full foresight cycle;
- Work on developing resilience dashboards through co-creation with Member States and other key stakeholders;
- The development of reference scenarios focusing on the EU position in the world by 2040 will support the preparation of the 2021 Strategic Foresight Report.
- Linking strategic foresight to the Better Regulation agenda, as an overarching tool to design future-proof policies, stress-test them and check if they remain 'fit for future';
- An EU-wide Foresight Network will be launched, to engage Member States in the foresight process, regularly share foresight best practices with the Member States' administrations, and strengthen a culture of preparedness; and
- Other foresight deliverables will include ad-hoc foresight newsletters and other initiatives in support of key strategic initiatives in the Commission Work Programme.

General objective 6: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.11: Foresight is embedded into the Commission's work

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

New policy initiatives

Output	Indicator	Target
Annual Strategic Foresight Report on Open Strategic Autonomy	Adoption by the Commission	June/July 2021
"Foresight pulses" (horizon scanning)	Presentation by Vice-President Šefčovič to the College	1 every 2-3 months

Resilience Dashboards	Presentation to Member States Report with the final product	End 2021
Initiatives linked to regulatory simplification and burden reduction		
Output	Indicator	Target
Integration of strategic foresight in better regulation	Adoption of specific guidance on foresight in the Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox	Q2 2021
External communication actions		
Output/ Result	Indicator	Target
Update Commission website on Strategic Foresight	Number of unique visitors	40 000 unique visitors by the end of 2021
Commission presentation of the 2021 Strategic Foresight Report	Delivery	July 2021
Other important outputs		
Output	Indicator	Target
EU-wide Strategic Foresight Network: launch, mandate and objectives agreed; action plan 2021-2024 agreed	Delivery	Q1 2021

General objective 7 ‘A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission’

The Commission Work Programme and coordinating the policy-making process


The Secretariat-General’s role is to ensure coherent and effective policy coordination for the delivery of all items in the Commission Work Programme. Work starts at the very early stages of policy development and planning, continues through the adoption of decisions and initiatives by the College, and culminates with the negotiation with the co-legislators, adoption and implementation of Commission initiatives.

The Secretariat-General coordinates in a variety of ways: by organising and chairing interservice groups; preparing meetings of the Commissioners’ Groups led by (Executive) Vice-Presidents; assisting Directorates-General during trilogues; and drafting and “co”-drafting documents and preparing detailed replies to interservice consultations. The Secretariat-General also coordinates the preparation of the President’s State of the Union speech. Through the State of the Union address, the Commission announces its new priorities and initiatives for the future, ahead of the publication of the Commission Work Programme, which is prepared in close consultation with the other institutions.

In its preparation for the Commission Work Programme for 2022, the Commission will continue to focus on recovery action related to the Covid-19 crisis as outlined in the recovery plan for Europe³ as well as on legislative and non-legislative actions across all six

³ COM/2020/456 final.

headline ambitions that contribute to delivery of the Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen.

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission		
Specific objective 7.1: <i>The policy-making process is efficiently steered and coordinated in order to ensure that the six headline ambitions of the Commission are delivered on time in a collegial way</i>		<i>Related to spending programme(s)</i> NO
Main outputs in 2021:		
New policy initiatives		
Output	Indicator	Target
 Commission Work Programme for 2022	Adoption by the Commission	Week of 18 October 2021

Providing briefings and political intelligence

Briefings prepared for the President, the (Executive) Vice-Presidents, the Commissioners and the Commission’s senior management, support their discussion and negotiations with interlocutors from outside the institution and enable them to deliver on the President’s headline ambitions.

In this context, the Secretariat-General produces a great number of briefings and flash reports and ensures that the institution’s political leadership is adequately informed in good time on meetings and political and institutional developments. In particular, the Secretariat-General prepares the participation of the President in the European Parliament meetings and the European Council and supports the Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight in his coordination role by preparing his participation in the General Affairs Council. The Secretariat-General also coordinates the participation of the College members in plenary meetings of the European Parliament. The Secretariat-General reports from meetings in the European Parliament and the Council through concise flash reports available as soon as possible after the meeting. It also ensures that timely information is available on political and policy developments in the European Parliament, in the Member States and the national Parliaments.

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission		
Specific objective 7.2: <i>High-quality and timely political intelligence is provided regularly to senior hierarchy and the political level</i>		<i>Related to spending programme(s)</i> NO
Main outputs in 2021:		
Output	Indicator	Target
Briefing files and reports for meetings with interlocutors from outside the institution; with other Institutions and bodies	Delivery	Ongoing

Briefing files and reports for the participation of the President in the European Council and of the Vice-President for Interinstitutional Relations and Foresight in the General Affairs Council	Delivery	Ongoing
Coaching and training sessions to improve effectiveness and quality of briefing contributions, including with specific focus e.g. infringements	Number of people trained	10 participants per training, 6 sessions
Active BriefingNetWork with DGs briefing correspondents and SG units	Number of newsletter/meetings per year	3
Structuring the network of EP coordinators in DGs and SG policy coordination units.	Delivery	Ongoing
Coordination of briefings for Coreper II and I and the relevant Council meetings and reporting:	Delivery	Ongoing

Leading the Commission's strategic planning and programming

A new strategic planning and programming cycle started last year with the preparation of a strategic plan for period 2020-2024 for each Commission service. These strategic plans translate the headline ambitions of the von der Leyen Commission into concrete objectives at the level of each Directorate-General.

In 2021, the Secretariat-General will coordinate the preparation of the annual management plans of DGs and annual work programmes for executive agencies. Drafted in line with the multiannual strategic plans, the 2022 Commission Work Programme and the President's State of the Union speech, the management plans are essential to demonstrate the Commission's commitment towards good governance and management by objectives. At the end of the year, the preparations for the 2021 Annual Activity Reports will be launched, with a strong focus on balanced reporting on performance issues.

The Secretariat-General will also prepare, together with the Directorate-General for Budget, the Annual Management and Performance Report for the EU Budget for 2020, combining information on the performance of the EU budget and on budgetary management. The report is the Commission's main contribution to the annual budgetary discharge process.

Finally, the Secretariat-General will support the corporate oversight of critical risks by providing guidance to the services, organising peer reviews, preparing discussions at the Corporate Management Board, and ensuring that the College is fully informed.

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

Specific objective 7.3: A strong performance management framework is implemented in order to deliver efficiently on the Commission's political ambitions

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Instructions for the preparation of the 2022 management plans and 2022 annual work programmes of executive agencies	Instructions signed and communicated to Commission services	Q4 2021
Instructions for the 2021 annual activity reports	Instructions signed and communicated to Commission services	Q4 2021
Organisation of corporate oversight on the identification and management of critical risks	Peer reviews on critical risks organised as part of 2022 management plan process.	Q4 2021
2021 Annual Management and Performance Report for the EU budget	Adoption by the Commission	June 2021

Overseeing the implementation of strengthened data protection rules

The Data Protection Officer⁴ (DPO) of the Commission ensures that the European Commission applies correctly Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of personal data. To this end, the Commission's Data Protection Action Plan⁵ sets out a number of specific actions to be completed by the Directorates-General and services in view of attaining compliance with the regulation. Progress in meeting the targets in the plan will be monitored by the DPO to allow managing bodies to assess the degree of implementation and to identify possible weaknesses. The source of data will be surveys organised via the Data Protection Coordinators in each Directorate-General. The DPO will use the results to prepare an annual report, including recommendations, to the management bodies.

Awareness of rules and obligations is essential in the area of data protection. To support the task of raising awareness of staff across the Commission in 2021, the DPO will:

- coordinate work among Data Protection Coordinators to ensure the availability of harmonised material for easy use by DPCs in their DGs/Services;
- provide general introduction courses on data protection conducted by external trainers;
- organise targeted workshops on specialised topics and communication events;
- provide relevant e-learning material with the help of internal and external providers;
- produce guidelines and communication material.

Additionally, the DPO will continue to support management throughout the Commission with their complex responsibilities related to data protection. In 2021 this work will include coordination of templates for the exercise of data subject rights and improvements of the Data Protection Record Management System register.

⁴ The Data Protection Officer of the Commission is independent in his functions and is attached for administrative purposes to the Secretariat-General.

⁵ C(2018) 7432 final).

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

Specific objective 7.4: *Commission services respect the right to protection of personal data*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Surveys to monitor the implementation of the Commission's Data Protection Action Plan	1-2 survey(s)	End 2021
Report, including DPO recommendations, on survey results to Management Bodies	Delivery	End 2021
Introductory courses to the new data protection Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 by external provider	10 courses	End 2021
Specialised data protection trainings	3 trainings organised by DPO	End 2021
Support and advice to Commission services ensuring compliance with data protection rules	Production of 2-3 new guidelines	End 2021

Ensuring a high level of business continuity

The Secretariat-General steers business continuity in the Commission and provides the framework allowing all departments and executive agencies to put efficient business continuity arrangements in place. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the need for the Commission to take account of the many changes in technology and working practices, experienced over the last years, and in particular over the last months. Therefore, in 2021, the Secretariat-General will focus on reviewing the Commission's business continuity framework and selecting a modern and efficient business continuity tool that will enhance the Commission's resilience to business disruptions.

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

Specific objective 7.5: *Digitally transformed and simplified business continuity procedures make the Commission resilient to business disruptions*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Proposal for an improved IT solution for business continuity to increase the Commission's resilience	Presentation of the business case to the Information Technology and Cybersecurity Board	Q4 2021
Review of the Corporate Framework for Business Continuity Management	Presentation of the new approach to the Corporate	Q3 2021

in the Commission			Management Board	
Corporate exercise	business	continuity	Exercise conducted	Q4 2021

Managing the Commission’s IT, cyber-security, information and data management policies

The Secretariat-General chairs the Information Technology and Cybersecurity Board which ensures that investments in IT are efficient and that business needs are supported by performant, secure and resilient communication and information systems. To this end, in 2021, the Secretariat-General will:

- steer and contribute to the establishment of the annual IT implementation plan for 2022, favouring shared and interoperable IT solutions;
- oversee the implementation of the European Commission Digital Strategy through the implementation of the digital solutions modernisation plan and other approved strategies;
- approve and monitor the implementation of the rolling IT security strategy;
- monitor the overall IT security risk landscape and decide upon corrective actions if needed.

The Secretariat-General chairs the Information Management Steering Board which coordinates and monitors the implementation of the Commission’s data, information and knowledge management policy. The policy aims to enhance the sharing of data, information and knowledge management in the Commission, enforcing where necessary data protection and information security rules, and to establish collaborative working practices as the preferred working method. The Secretariat-General is also responsible for coordinating the definition and implementation of data governance and data policies at the Commission⁶.

To this end, in 2021, the Secretariat-General will:

- coordinate the development and implementation of data and information management policies, guidance and tools for serving the needs of the Commission, focusing on key policy initiatives, such as the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and on data quality;
- steer and contribute to activities that aim at increasing the Commission’s data management and analysis capabilities, including a corporate data catalogue and an internal advisory service for supporting data management and use;
- steer and contribute to the delivery of an integrated, user-centric collaborative toolset for the Commission that will help digital work and teleworking;
- promote activities that aim at enhancing the digital and data literacy of Commission staff.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/data-governance-and-data-policies-european-commission_en

As regards document management, the competence framework for recruitment and career development will be adopted and the training offer will be renewed accordingly. The Secretariat-General will start the implementation of the digital preservation strategy with a pilot inventory of legacy systems. The Secretariat-General will strengthen Hermes/Ares/NomCom security and will continue guiding the integration of IT systems with Hermes. In cooperation with the Directorate-General for Informatics, the Secretariat-General will improve the use of the qualified electronic signature in the records management system Ares and will continue work on offering its records management functionalities to other IT systems in a more flexible way.

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

Specific objective 7.6: *The Commission has strong governance arrangements and policies, ensuring its full digitalisation, allowing wide use of information while preserving high security*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Corporate reference data policy: operational guidance and analysis of the IT landscape	Endorsement by the Information Management Steering Board	Q2 2021
Multiannual Financial Framework performance data management framework	Endorsement by the Information Management Steering Board	Q2 2021
IT implementation plan 2022	Adoption by the Information Technology and Cybersecurity Board	Q2 2021
IT security strategy 2021-2022	Adoption by the Information Technology and Cybersecurity Board	Q1 2021
Implementation of the Digital preservation strategy	Pilot inventory of legacy systems	Q3 2021
Improvements of the qualified electronic signature in Ares	Implementation of changes in Ares	Q2 2021
Hermes/Ares/NomCom IT security measures	Implementation in Hermes/Ares/NomCom systems	Q2 2021
Competence framework for recruitment and professional development of the document management community	Revision and adoption	Q1 2021
Development of a new IT tool EASE for handling access to documents application including a dedicated portal	Development and roll-out	Q2 2021
Development of new and improved Register of Commission Documents with improved user interface, search functionality and IT architecture as well as new type of documents to be publish.	Development and roll-out	Q1 & Q4 for successive releases

Managing the decision-making procedures

Efficient decision-making is key for delivering on the President's headline ambitions. The Secretariat-General ensures that collegiality and quality prevails in the preparation and adoption of acts. It provides for flexibility in crisis situations, in order to ensure that decision-making is smooth, efficient and fit for purpose even when urgency prevails (e.g. in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic).

The streamlining of procedures together with the digitalisation of tasks currently done manually or in separate tools progressively optimises the decision-making process, in line with the digital transformation objective of the von der Leyen Commission. It improves the quality and security of the process while providing for efficiency gains in services.

Several integrated tools contribute to the increased quality and efficiency of the decision-making process:

- e-College allows for a fully digitalised management of the College weekly meetings. All documents related to the agendas of the College meetings are available to Commissioners in electronic format. In the next steps of development of the project, the integration with RUE-X will allow to also handle EU-Restricted documents. The extension of the scope to the preparatory cycle of cabinets' meetings will be envisaged in order to cover the full lifecycle of the oral procedure.
- Streamlining procedures and integrating all documents linked to the decision-making process in Decide creates further efficiency gains in all Commission services. Decide progressively evolves into a knowledge management system, gathering all relevant information linked to the decision-making process in a single modular application for the benefit of all actors of the process. The lifecycle of proposals is progressively extended to all interinstitutional stages and the steps handled by the Registry for the adoption and post-adoptions requirements are further rationalised.
- The introduction of the e-Signature/e-Seal for the e-authentication of acts adopted by the Commission and for the e-notification to the Member States contributes to develop a fully digital decision-making process.
- The further development of the new legislative drafting tool, Edit, and its progressive integration in Decide, facilitates the preparation of proposals. Its collaborative features help handle the interservice consultation step. Pilot exercises are continued in 2021 with volunteering Directorates-General in order to further adapt to users' needs.

The rationalisation of decision-making procedures also continues in 2021 with the ongoing revision and consolidation of the Commission Rules of Procedure and the rules giving effect to them. To ensure the effectiveness of the decision-making process, it is essential that Commission services are well informed: in 2021, trainings that have been suspended during the Covid-19 outbreak will be relaunched and updated as necessary.

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

Specific objective 7.7: *The decision-making process is further streamlined, improved and digitalised*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Timely and regular adoption, and post-adoption handling of Commission decisions according to the highest quality standards and in line with legal and political requirements	Delivery	Ongoing
Procedural arrangements introduced in the context of Covid-19 for the adoption and post-adoption actions to function effectively and efficiently	Delivery	Ongoing
Reinforced monitoring, early warning, and information framework of politically sensitive or important files	Delivery	Ongoing
Further development of e-College tool to improve satisfaction of users and complete revamp of the application towards the digitalisation of the entire oral procedure	Introduction of agreed new functionalities to improve users' satisfaction	End 2021
	Inclusion of EU-Restricted documents via a link to RUE-X	
Introduction of qualified electronic signature and qualified electronic seal in Decide for authentication of adopted acts	Delivery of the analysis on the use of the qualified electronic signature and qualified electronic seal for the authentication and notification of acts to Member States	End 2021
	Launching and implementation of IT developments according to the analysis outcomes	
Further development of Decide and Edit,	Delivery	End 2021

General objective 7: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission

Specific objective 7.8: *Procedures are well-designed, information and guidance are provided to Commission staff and collaboration is enhanced*

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Other important outputs

Output	Indicator	Target
Recast and revision of the 2000 Commission Rules of Procedure	Adoption by the Commission	End 2021
Update of conferred powers	Revision of existing empowerments	Ongoing

	and delegations	
Trainings to newcomers, Cabinets and staff	Delivery	Ongoing
Quality advice to services by the procedural helpdesk	Delivery	Ongoing
Clear and updated information on procedures for services and Cabinets	Accuracy and clarity of information	Ongoing
Community of practice for Decide coordinators	Setting up and constant collaboration	Ongoing

Managing the Commission's relations with the other institutions

The Secretariat-General is responsible for the overall coordination of interinstitutional relations and institutional matters. Its position is pivotal, as it coordinates preparations of the Commission's participation in the meetings of the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, and Coreper, and ensures proper follow-up. The Secretariat-General prepares the President's participation in the European Council and in European Parliament plenaries. It is also directly responsible for the preparation of Coreper meetings and ensures in particular that the Commission's position is solid in legal, institutional and procedural terms and has been coordinated with the Commission departments concerned. The Secretariat-General represents the Commission in the meetings of Antici/Mertens groups preparing the work of Coreper.

Developments in the legislative process for all Commission pending legislative proposals are monitored by the Secretariat-General on behalf of the President of the Commission to provide a basis for a weekly discussion between the Cabinets of Commissioners in the Interinstitutional Relations Group (GRI). The Secretariat-General also liaises with the services of the European Parliament and the Council to facilitate an agreement on interinstitutional legislative priorities set out in an annual Joint Declaration and for the monitoring of progress of those priority files, notably via the monthly meeting of the Interinstitutional Coordination Group and in preparing the meetings of the three Presidents provided for in the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-making.

The Secretariat-General is also responsible for overseeing the Commission's dialogue with national Parliaments, informing the hierarchy about the political positions communicated through their (reasoned) opinions, coordinating the Commission's replies, and facilitating the Commission's participation in interparliamentary meetings. In 2021, particular focus will be on the revision of Regulation No. 1141/2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and foundations. If relevant, the Secretariat-General will provide institutional support for work in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe

The Secretariat-General coordinates the Commission's relations with the European Ombudsman. In 2021, in view of the potential entry into force of a new Statute of the European Ombudsman (pending legislative proposal of the European Parliament), the Commission and the European Ombudsman will examine the possibility of changes in their mutual working arrangements.

PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year

This section of the management plan describes the efforts of the Secretariat-General to modernise its way of working and to make the most efficient and effective use of its resources. The Commission has developed corporate strategies in the main areas of good administration. Based on these corporate strategies, the Secretariat-General will develop its own local strategies and take decisive measures to contribute to the achievement of the institution's objectives. The corresponding section in the Secretariat-General's strategic plan 2020-2024 describes the long-term vision of the Secretariat-General for those objectives while the management plan focuses mainly on the measures to be taken in 2021.

The Secretariat-General will draw on the lessons learnt from the management of the Covid-19 crisis and its impact on the staff and the internal working methods. Internal communication will play a major role in promoting teamwork with a goal to improving even further its strong staff engagement. Regular management debriefs and a recently created "SG Newsflash" newsletter will ensure that critical information is reaching Secretariat-General staff. Highly motivated and engaged staff will be the key to achieving the Commission's objectives. The Secretariat-General will also strive to become an even more diverse and inclusive workplace and by early 2021 it is expected to reach its target of appointing first time female middle managers. As regards financial and anti-fraud management, the Secretariat-General will draw up a risk analysis to better align the financial workflows and actors with the associated risks while at the same time maximising its use of corporate financial and procurement IT tools. The local anti-fraud strategy will be updated in 2021, with the main goals for the year to enhance detective controls and to develop an anti-fraud culture in the Secretariat-General.

The internal control framework supports sound management and decision-making. It notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are taken into account and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls. The Secretariat-General has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of the Secretariat-General's internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and be subject to a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

Being part of the Commission's efforts to lead by example as a fully digital, agile, flexible and transparent institution, the Secretariat-General will step up its efforts in 2021 to improve the way data, information and knowledge are managed, deploying numerous digital solutions, always in full compliance with its data protection obligations. With 40 personal data processing operations, the Secretariat-General is one of the most important data controllers of the Commission. It is the Secretariat-General's commitment to lead by example on the protection of personal data and the respect of this fundamental right of individuals.

Finally, the Secretariat-General will also focus on a number of actions in 2021 regarding the institution's collective efforts to reduce its environmental impact. The respective sections below provide more details on the Secretariat-General's actions for 2021.

A. Human resource management

The Secretariat-General will continue relying on the high commitment and strong teamwork of its staff members when efficiently coordinating the work of the Commission for the delivery of political priorities. It will continue the best practices developed in 2020 to boost staff engagement in the challenging circumstances posed by the Covid-19 crisis. Regular debriefs by SG senior management, staff meetings with top management and other events open for all staff will help to ensure strong two-way communication and team cohesion in the Secretariat-General.

In parallel with the development of a corporate HR strategy, the Secretariat-General will outline its priorities and actions for the years to come in a local HR strategy. To ensure efficient use of human resources, the Secretariat-General will be constantly reviewing that priority areas of work are staffed with people with the appropriate skills and that recruitments are made swiftly. The Secretariat-General will strive to keep its vacancy rate below the Commission's average. It will use the budget for external personnel to cover for temporary resource gaps in various teams.

The challenges brought by the “new normal” following the Covid-19 pandemic relate to working with remote teams and notably integrating the newcomers. But it also offers new opportunities, such as more flexible ways of working and wider use of digital tools for meetings and processes. It will be important to define the ways of working that cater for the business needs and take into account personal preferences of staff members. The Secretariat-General will support this change process through learning and development activities as well as awareness raising. Significant awareness raising efforts will be made for the prevention of psychosocial risks, both for managers and for staff members.

The Secretariat-General will continue striving towards gender parity at all levels of management. This is already been achieved among the Deputy Heads of Unit, where females account for 53%. At the level of middle and senior management, the female representation stands at around 40%. By early 2021, the Secretariat-General will reach its target of appointing one new first time female middle manager.

The remote working environment imposed by the Covid-19 crisis has created a new, specific and very urgent set of requirements for enhancing internal communication. The reduction in real-life staff interaction and exchanges made it all the more important to provide an environment rich in both information and interaction possibilities. The Secretariat-General has developed three main vectors of internal communication: an updated intranet website, a weekly live Management Debrief and a newsletter called the “SG Newsflash” to promote both new content on the Secretariat-General website and the debrief.

The Secretariat-General will continue enhancing communication through the internal website – My SGNet, revamped in 2020, ensuring that the news content corresponds to the political agenda and key developments at the Secretariat General. It will highlight not just subjects of potential interest to staff but equally, if not more, the “people behind the story” the units dealing with specific subjects and the people working on them. The aim is to

increase the visibility of staff working on specific files and thus help sustain staff engagement especially in these trying times.

Objective: The Secretariat-General employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission’s priorities and core business

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Continuation and further development of staff engagement activities	Staff engagement index In Commission staff survey	≥ 69%
SG local HR strategy	Delivery	January 2021
SG HR Report 2020	Delivery	February 2021

B. Sound financial management

The main financial management objective is for the Secretary-General to have reasonable assurance and the necessary guarantees concerning the internal control objectives laid down in the financial regulation. These objectives are further delineated through the use of outputs, indicators and targets.

To that effect, the Secretariat-General has set up an internal control strategy for financial management. This strategy provides detailed means to achieve each year the control objectives laid down in the financial regulation. Where necessary and based on the yearly control results, the strategy is subject to an update.

The internal control framework for financial management is built around the Three Lines Model. The first line is about day-to-day ownership and management of risk and control: internal control processes designed to identify and assess significant risks, execute activities as intended, highlight inadequate processes, address control breakdowns, and communicate to key stakeholders of the activity. The second line includes various risk management and compliance functions put in place by management to help ensure controls and risk management processes implemented by the first line are designed appropriately and operating as intended. Internal auditors (IAS) and external auditors (ECA) serve as the third line with a high level of organisational independence and objectivity.

The Secretariat-General also conducts a yearly risk analysis to better align the financial workflows and actors with the associated risks. In parallel, the Secretariat-General relies extensively on corporate financial and procurement IT tools.

The Secretariat-General has opted for a mix of centralised and decentralised processes with respect to the various financial transactions. Bearing in mind that the vast majority of transactions are contracts under framework contracts from horizontal directorates-general, the contractual part is under the responsibility of the authorising officer in the operational units, while the payment part is centralised. Furthermore, all requests are channeled

through dedicated back offices from DG DIGIT in order to achieve a tight and effective monitoring and follow-up.

Objective: The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Effective controls: Legal and regular transactions	Risk at payment	Remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
	Estimated risk at closure	Remains < 2 % of relevant expenditure
Efficient controls	Time-to-pay	Remains within the various limits set by the financial regulation
Economical controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	Maintain 13% of funds managed

C. Fraud risk management

The Secretariat-General has developed and implemented a multi-year action plan aligned with the anti-fraud objectives included in the Commission Anti-fraud Strategy. Dedicated anti-fraud sessions for financial officers and project managers will be set up jointly with the Commission's Antifraud Office (OLAF) in 2021.

The Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy provides objectives, guidelines and actions to be implemented by the Directorates-General to achieve a consistent approach towards fraud. The Secretariat-General Local Anti-Fraud Strategy was designed to be aligned with the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy including at the level of the multi-annual action plan. This local strategy will be again updated in 2021 and will hinge on three main strategic objectives:

Objective 1: Enhance detective controls to mitigate fraud risks with financial implications

The Secretariat-General has at its disposal a limited budget. Furthermore, procurement procedures are rare and the Secretariat-General mostly makes use of other Directorates-General's framework contracts. A strict segregation exists between operational units and the finance and human resources unit that verifies each financial transaction systematically.

Objective 2: Develop an anti-fraud culture in the Secretariat-General

Training and awareness-raising activities, related to professional ethics, are carried out on a regular basis in order to develop a sound ethical culture within the Secretariat-General. A dedicated webpage on anti-fraud was developed by the unit responsible for the Secretariat-General's anti-fraud strategy, following OLAF's recommendations. The website

provides guidance on dealing with fraud and useful contact points on reporting fraud.

Objective 3: Enhance the governance of anti-fraud policy

The Secretariat-General contributes to one of the two main axes of the Corporate Anti-Fraud Strategy, which is to enhance the governance of anti-fraud policy. Specifically, the Secretariat-General supports the oversight, by the Corporate Management Board, of the follow-up given to OLAF recommendations addressed to the Commission..

To this end, the Secretariat-General has, since 2019 been organising regular monitoring meetings, with all relevant horizontal services, to assess to what extent services have given effect to OLAF’s financial recommendations. The priority has so far been on financial recommendations, based on comparisons between the amounts recommended for recovery, the amounts established for recovery and those effectively recovered. Administrative recommendations shall also be covered as from early 2021.

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS)⁷ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction⁸ of fraud

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Ex post control at the European University Institute (grant for the historical archives)	Completion	2021
Updated local anti-fraud strategy with corporate actions	Adoption	2021
Anti-fraud awareness raising sessions for newcomers	Percentage of newcomers trained	>75%
Monitoring meetings with directorates-general on OLAF’s financial and administrative recommendations	Number of meetings	A minimum of two per year

D. Digital transformation and information management

To foster the transformation to a digital, agile, flexible and transparent institution, the Secretariat-General will continue improving the way data, information and knowledge are managed, harnessing the opportunities brought by digital solutions and achieving progressively compliance with data protection obligations.

⁷ Communication from the Commission ‘Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget’, COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019 – ‘the CAFS Communication’ – and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 – ‘the CAFS Action Plan’.

⁸ Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

Digital transformation

Building on the principles identified by the European Commission Digital Strategy, in 2021 the Secretariat-General will continue optimising and digitising corporate processes in the domains of:

- ☑ **Decision making:** implement an electronic workflow for the validation of the steps of the written procedures. Implement innovative solutions such as the qualified electronic signature to move quickly to a fully paperless decision making process in Decide: the first stage of the implementation of the qualified electronic signature will cover the process of adoption and authentication of acts adopted via written procedure; in a second stage, the qualified electronic signature will cover the empowerment and delegation procedures. Rationalise the handling of replies in Decide Replies. Further integrate EdiT – the legislative drafting tool – in Decide. Further integrate Decide with the new Register of Commission Documents. Implement the Decide interinstitutional module. Improve *e-College* to visualise classified documents up to “RESTREINT UE/EU RESTRICTED” level.
- ☑ **Records management:** Continue the development of the new Archives Management System to provide a single integrated solution to manage the paper and digital archives of the Commission, and exchange data with the system at the EU Historical Archives in Florence. Improve the functionality and related features of the qualified electronic signatures in records management processes, making them more widely available. Reinforce the security and privacy. Start redesigning the Hermes/Ares/NomCom into a modular system with reusable records management components. Foster the ‘digital by default’ principle within the Secretariat-General, by promoting the use of the e-signatory for internal and external documents when they do not require a handwritten signature, as well as the use of the qualified electronic signature when required.
- ☑ **EU Law monitoring:** Develop THEMIS/Complaints, the last module which will complete the new set of applications managing the full life-cycle of infringements of EU Law from the receipt of complaints to the implementation of Court of Justice rulings. Further develop the existing THEMIS/Infringements and THEMIS/EU Pilot applications in order to provide users with statistical and reporting tools, ensure the integration with e-Translation, Poetry and BriefingNet, as well as implement the new benchmarks stemming from the single market enforcement action plan. Implement new functionalities in CHAP, the current application used for the handling of complaints, in order to achieve compliance with the data protection requirements.

Decide, EdiT (Decide drafting tool), *e-College* and the Better Regulation Portal are key systems for the digital transformation of the Commission’s decision making process. In 2021, the Secretariat-General will continue investing in developments and the further integration of these systems to achieve efficiency gains and resource savings. At the same time, the Secretariat-General will continue implementing innovative solutions such as the qualified electronic signature to move quickly to a fully paperless decision making process, thus replacing a ‘blue-ink’ signature with a digital one. The first stage of the implementation of the qualified electronic signature will cover the process of adoption and

authentication of acts adopted via written procedure. In a second stage, the qualified electronic signature will cover the empowerment and delegation procedures.

Moreover, the Secretariat-General will improve in 2021 the functionality and related features of the qualified electronic signatures in records management processes, making them more widely available. At the same time, the Secretariat-General will reinforce the security and privacy, and start redesigning the Hermes/Ares/NomCom into a modular system with reusable records management components. This will contribute to the Commission's overall digital transformation and sustainability. Finally, the Secretariat-General will continue fostering the 'digital by default' principle, by promoting the use of the e-signatory for internal and external documents when they do not require a handwritten signature, as well as the use of the qualified electronic signature when required.

In addition to the priorities in the domain of EU Law monitoring, the Secretariat-General will implement in 2021 new functionalities in CHAP, the current application used for the handling of complaints, in order to achieve compliance with the data protection requirements, introduce necessary changes related to Brexit and other functionalities which cannot wait for the new THEMIS/Complaints application to be released.

Data, information and knowledge management

The Secretariat-General will continue implementing actions in 2021 aiming to improve the governance and use of data for better policy-making and enhanced internal operations. These actions will help the Secretariat-General succeed in its coordination role by ensuring timely access to quality data and embedding user-centric and adaptive reporting tools and dashboards in its core business processes.

In that context, the Secretariat-General will implement the [data governance and data policies at the Commission](#) for its own information systems, with a focus on:

- enabling the owners and stewards of its data assets to apply modern data management practices, prioritising data quality;
- addressing the recommendations of the study on compliance with data policies in the key information systems conducted in 2020;
- continuing the work of the (informal) local data governance board to provide a space where staff with data related roles (e.g. the local data correspondent, the data protection coordinator, the document management officer, the local security officer, the information resource manager and the intellectual property rights correspondent) can coordinate related activities, and share knowledge and experience.

The Secretariat-General aspires to increase data awareness of its management and staff, along with their data and digital skills, focusing on policy staff, and to embed modern knowledge management and collaboration in its processes and ways of working, with a focus on digital collaborative solutions. To this end, in 2021 it will continue:

- organising participatory workshops with management and staff to explain the potential of modern data and AI technologies and to identify use cases;

- investing in the development of hybrid policy/data profiles who can bridge between policy needs and data capabilities, hence accelerating adoption;
- piloting modern digital collaborative solutions for improving its processes, enabling at the same time flexible ways of working and teleworking;
- promoting peer-learning, train staff and managers on data capabilities, knowledge management and collaborative work practices.

Data protection

With over 40 personal data processing operations, the Secretariat-General is one of the most important controllers of the Commission. It is the Secretariat-General's commitment to lead by example on the protection of personal data and the respect of this fundamental right of individuals.

The Secretariat-General will ensure that data, information and knowledge management is compliant with data protection rules and principles. Better access to, and use of, data and information by the Commission must not come at a cost to the privacy of natural persons and the protection of their personal data. A data-driven administration should guarantee the security of the personal data it processes, both of its own staff and of external stakeholders. To that end, the Secretariat-General will maintain its effort to lead by example and ensure full respect of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 with a focus on:

- awareness-raising and training activities, both among units in charge of specific processing operations and other staff of the Secretariat-General;
- an annual review of published records of processing activities and privacy notices to ensure up-to-date and transparent information of data subjects amid changing business processes and needs;
- putting in place internal arrangements with other Directorates-General and services for processing operations that are carried out at a corporate level to ensure clear and efficient procedures for the handling of data subject requests and the management of personal data breaches.

Data protection is not a one-off exercise, but requires a continuous effort to ensure compliance. Evolving jurisprudence by the EU courts and decisions by the data protection supervisory authorities provide more nuanced interpretations of data protection law to which the Commission needs to adapt. Therefore, the Secretariat-General has to continue its awareness-raising activities and conduct regular reviews of its processing operations.

Several of the Secretariat-General's processing operations are carried out jointly by many or all Directorates-General and services. They account for a significant share of the Commission's overall processing of personal data and are therefore crucial in the Commission's efforts to achieve overall data protection compliance.

Objective: The Secretariat-General is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Improvements of the qualified electronic signature in Ares	Implementation of changes in Ares	Q2 2021
Optimisation and digitisation of corporate processes in the domains of decision making, document management and EU Law monitoring ⁹	Degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solutions of the Secretariat-General: Decide, Hermes/Ares/NomCom and Themis	<u>Decide</u> 67% <u>Hermes/Ares/NomCom</u> 67% <u>Themis</u> 66%
IT security risk assessment of Secretariat-General's active information systems	Percentage of active SG information systems for which an IT security risk assessment has been performed and maintained	75%
Paperless e-signatory	Percentage of registered documents with a fully approved e-signatory (no paper circulation in parallel)	58%
Promotion of collaborative working, knowledge and information sharing	Number of new Microsoft 365, MyIntraComm, Wiki and CIRCABC collaborative sites created	More than 10 new collaborative sites or solutions
Implementation of corporate principles for data governance for SG key data assets	Percentage of SG key data assets implementing corporate principles	48%
Awareness raising activities on data protection compliance	Percentage of Secretariat-General staff attending	20%
Major compliance findings following targeted inspections and audits	Continuous assessment between (a) the number of personal data breaches occurred and (b) the number of personal data breaches notified to the EDPS in time (if necessary) and whose management has been accepted by the DPO or the EDPS ¹⁰	No objection by EDPS and DPO: 100%

⁹ In line with the European Commission Digital Strategy and the Secretariat-General Digital Solutions Modernisation Plan.

¹⁰ In practice this is equivalent to the absence of an objection by the DPO or EDPS to the conclusive risk assessment (personal data breach notification) provided to them.

E. Sound environmental management

The Secretariat-General takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work. It will promote the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) corporate campaigns at local level and identify local environmental actions in order to support the Commission's commitment to implement the objectives of the Green Deal for its own administration, including becoming climate neutral by 2030.

In 2021, the Secretariat-General will enhance its efforts to reduce the use of paper. In the field of waste management and reduction, the Secretariat-General will continue its efforts to improve waste sorting. In collaboration with the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels, it will monitor waste generation in the Berlaymont building and communicate the findings to staff. Awareness raising activities will seek to engage staff in pro-environmental behaviour. In addition to a greater efficiency in working methods, electronic signature contributes at the same time to a significant decrease in the use of paper. Even if it cannot now be precisely quantified, it is clear that such new working method will be reflected in the Secretariat-General's annual paper consumption. To limit travel and commuting, the Secretariat-General will continue making good use of teleworking and videoconferencing tools and in collaboration with the Directorate-General for Interpretation, meeting rooms will continue being equipped with videoconferencing facilities. Moreover, it is expected that staff will continue using diverse digital tools for online meetings and training, and learning from the experience of confinement and teleworking during the Covid-19 crisis.

Objective: The Secretariat-General takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work

Main results and outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Promotion of paperless working methods	% of all documents - internal and external - with a 100% electronic signatory	+7% yearly 2021: 58%
Monitoring the Secretariat-General's waste generation in collaboration with OIB/OIL; and communicating observed trends to staff, based on verified data from Commission's Environmental Statement. (2019 data – per building).	Waste generation	Negative trend
	Waste sorting	Positive trend
Awareness-raising actions about environmental responsibility and training offered by the European Commission	Number of actions/trainings communicated to staff	At least five actions /trainings yearly
Gradual increase of meeting rooms with videoconferencing	Number of new meeting rooms	>2

equipment in SG

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

☑ Implement the strategy for the Secretariat-General's Registers

The Secretariat-General owns several information systems that can broadly be categorised as Registers (e.g. Register of Commission Documents, Register of Expert Groups, Transparency Register, Register of Delegated and Implementing Acts etc).

In 2021, the Secretariat-General will finalise the first phase of its project 'New Register of Commission Documents' (2019-2023). As part of the first phase, the new Register of Commission Documents will have a new user interface and improved search functionalities, in addition to new document types being proactively published. Thus we expect an increase by 80% of the users' satisfaction and by 10% of the number of documents published in the new Register. Importantly, as part of the first phase, the Register of Commission Documents will have a new IT architecture, which will lay the ground for its gradual transformation into the main and centralized publication tool for Commission documents. In other words, in future, the citizens will be able to search via the Register of Commission Documents the documents published on other registers managed by the Secretariat-General. First such integration is planned with the Register of Delegated and Implementing Acts and the Register of Expert Groups in 2021. Integration with other registers managed by the Secretariat General will happen after 2021.

Thanks to the first and subsequent phases of the project, the Commission will enlarge the scope of published document types, improve user experience as well as increase the visibility and 'discoverability' of its documents. This will increase its transparency, and reduce the number of requests for access to documents.

Concerning the other registers managed by the Secretariat-General, their synergies between registers will lead to a further rationalisation of the Secretariat-General's system portfolio and help reduce its maintenance costs. The renewal of the registers' user interfaces on Europa will result in a high-quality user experience, a stronger and more coherent digital presence of the Commission.

☑ New digital solution for handling request for access to documents

The current set of tools used for submitting and handling requests for access to Commission documents under Regulation 1049/2001 (GestDem and related tools) is fragmented and outdated. Based on the results of the study on electronic access to Commission documents conducted in 2018, the project team is developing a **new IT system for the electronic treatment of access-to-documents requests ('EASE')**. The system will be ready to use in Q2 2021, and will consist of two parts:

- a **new online portal** through which citizens will be able to submit access-to-

documents requests (including the appeals¹¹), have an overview of their previous requests, communicate electronically with the Commission, search for the previously disclosed documents etc.;

- a **case-management back-end system** to be used by the Commission staff. Among other things, this back-end system will automatise and improve the handling of requests, offer improved search, statistics and reporting functionalities, allow better deadline management, all while complying with the necessary personal data protection requirements.

The new system will bring efficiency gains. The Commission handles more than 7000 initial and 300 confirmatory requests for access to documents per year. The new system will enable easier and electronic communication with the applicants thanks to integrated multi-lingual templates and guidelines, electronic notification of the initial replies and easier management of deadlines and reminders. It will also simplify and automatize certain tasks currently done manually.

By proactively publishing previously disclosed documents on the future portal, the Commission will increase its transparency and reduce the number of requests for access to documents. The new portal will guide the applicants throughout the entire lifecycle of submitting the requests for access to documents, receiving the replies and submitting appeals. This will not only reinforce the image of the Commission as a modern and digital public administration but also bring the EU decision-making process closer to its citizens.

e-College and Edit

e-College was introduced at the beginning of the mandate of the von der Leyen Commission, allowing for a fully digitalised management of the College weekly meetings. In the next steps of development of the project, the integration with RUE-X will allow to also handle EU-Restricted documents, and the extension of the scope to preparatory meetings (Hebdo and Special chefs) will be envisaged.

Finally, the current drafting tool, LegisWrite, will be replaced by **Edit**, which will improve the quality of the drafting of acts inside the Commission and the interoperability of exchanges with the other institutions.

¹¹ The appeals against replies to the initial requests are called confirmatory requests.

ANNEX 1: European Fiscal Board

The European Fiscal Board is mandated to carry out an independent assessment of fiscal policy-making in the EU and of the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact. Since its inception at the end of 2016, the Board has become an integral part of the EU fiscal surveillance framework. The findings and conclusions of its assessments are regularly presented to the College of Commissioners, the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) committees, the European Parliament and the network of independent fiscal institutions. The quality of its reports has been acknowledged by all stakeholders.

Sound public finances are a precondition for stable, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. They strongly contribute towards the achievement of General Objective 3: An economy that works for people. In the EU, fiscal policy remains a prerogative of national governments. However, due to the high level of economic and financial integration of EU Member States, economic policies, including fiscal policy, are to be considered a matter of common concern. As a result, Member States have agreed to and established an EU fiscal framework that is meant to guide national fiscal policy-making. There is ample evidence showing that an impartial assessment of fiscal frameworks is linked to better fiscal outcomes.

The importance of sound public finances has unmistakably been revealed by the economic crisis ensuing from the Covid-19 pandemic. Member States that had taken advantage of the economic good times preceding the economic shock had the leeway to react, others had to rely on and benefitted from EU initiatives. Therefore, an independent and sober assessment of government finances in the EU is gaining significance in 2021 when Member States will have to decide how to best adjust their budgetary policies on the back of a hopefully sound economic recovery so as to redress the existing fiscal imbalances and create new buffers for the future.

Against this background, the work of the European Fiscal Board contributes to a better understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses of the current EU fiscal framework are. As part of its mandate it will continue to put forward ideas on how to reform the current system of commonly agreed fiscal rules. Like in the previous years, these ideas will have an important impact on the ongoing economic policy debate among EU institutions and Member States about the future of EU economic governance.

General objective: An economy that works for people

Specific objective: Sound public finances are supported by independent assessments and advice on the implementation and future evolution of the EU fiscal framework

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:**New policy initiatives**

Output	Indicator	Target
Statement by the European Fiscal Board on the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact	Publication	March 2021
Report to the Commission on the prospective fiscal stance appropriate for the euro area	Publication	June 2021
Assessment report on the implementation of the EU fiscal framework	Publication of report to the Commission	October 2021
Cooperation with national independent fiscal councils: questionnaires as input to the reports of the European Fiscal Board	Delivery	January 2021
Report on the assessment of the prospective fiscal stance appropriate for the euro area	Publication of the report.	June/July 2021

External communication actions

Output	Indicator	Target
Presentation of the report on the assessment of the prospective fiscal stance appropriate for the euro area to the relevant Council committees, the committees of the European Parliament, the European Central Bank and the network of EU independent fiscal institutions.	Delivery	June/July 2021
Conference with national independent fiscal councils	Organisation	February 2021

ANNEX 2: Regulatory Scrutiny Board

As in the first five years since its creation, in 2021, the Regulatory Scrutiny Board will continue to provide quality control on impact assessments and evaluations and support the implementation of Better Regulation.

In 2021, the Board will have a large number of impact assessments to scrutinise, as indicated in the Commission Work Programme. The Board will also continue to provide upstream guidance to Directorates-General, at early stages of the elaboration of evaluations and impact assessments.

The Regulatory Scrutiny Board will continue to support the evolving Better Regulation Agenda and its application. On the basis of the new better regulation Communication (currently foreseen for Q4/2020), the Board will provide methodological and procedural advice on the Commission's revision of the better regulation guidelines and toolbox (currently foreseen for Q1/2021). Once finalised, the Board will adapt its scrutiny to integrate the new priorities and guidelines. These are likely to include one in-one out, foresight, green impacts and the green oath, and the sustainable development goals.

In 2021, the Board will pursue and strengthen its collaboration with the European Parliament and the Council, as well as with external stakeholders engaged in regulatory impact analysis and evaluation, especially concerning its role in the wider EU regulatory process. In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Board will review the possibility to organise its fourth annual conference, which was postponed in 2020. The Board will organise a networking event with scrutiniser bodies in the Member States, either virtually or in person.

General objective: A new push for European democracy

Specific objective 6.4: Regulatory tools are applied systematically throughout the legislative cycle to improve policy-making

Related to spending programme(s)
NO

Main outputs in 2021:

Output	Indicator	Target
Opinions on impact assessments issued in 2021 ¹²	Number of impact assessments, fitness checks and evaluations reviewed each year	45
Opinions on fitness checks and major evaluations issued in 2021 ¹³	On time delivery of the opinions on impact assessments, fitness checks and evaluations	In accordance with article 9.1 of RSB Rules of Procedure
	Improvement of the quality of impact assessments, fitness checks and evaluations prepared by Commission services after interaction with the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, based on a set of 13 standard quality criteria established by the Board	Ongoing
Provision of advice to Directorates-General ¹⁴	Number of upstream contacts with Directorates-General	20
Business Plan 2021	Publication of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board Business Plan 2019	Q1 2021
Annual report on the activities of the RSB in 2020	Publication of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board 2020 annual report	Q2 2021
Expert workshop at technical level on regulatory scrutiny	Workshop organised	Q3 2021

¹² For the successful accomplishment of these outputs, the Regulatory Scrutiny Board will benefit from the assistance of unit SG.A2 as the secretariat to the Board.

¹³ For the successful accomplishment of these outputs, the Regulatory Scrutiny Board will benefit from the assistance of unit SG.A2 as the secretariat to the Board.

¹⁴ For the successful accomplishment of these outputs, the Regulatory Scrutiny Board will benefit from the assistance of unit SG.A2 as the secretariat to the Board.