



Annual Activity Report 2024

FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS SERVICE

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FOREWORD OF THE HEAD OF SERVICE

The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) turns EU foreign policy into action: it supports the EU's foreign and security policy objectives and helps the European Union to pursue its interests and to project its image in the world. In many instances, the Service acts as first responder to foreign policy needs and opportunities, delivering operations closely connected to the EU foreign policy agenda and in close cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS).

In 2024, FPI continued to underpin the EU's external political priorities and its role as a global peace actor, and to project EU interests abroad, thereby strengthening the EU's position as a credible partner that delivers and contributes to the rules-based multilateral global order.

FPI activities are diverse and often complex, frequently implemented in volatile, fast-evolving environments, with operations in high-risk and conflict-prone situations. The Service is specialised in responding rapidly and flexibly to changing policy priorities. An example of this is FPI's response to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and to the crisis in the Middle East.

Thanks to its global reach and specialisation in addressing transregional threats, FPI was able to adapt its planning and implementation based on fast changing contexts and political priorities. It was able to do so in highly volatile operational contexts and in synergies with other external action instruments and Member States' actions. This was done with a very lean structure, thanks to the high commitment of its staff. In that context, the network of 92 FPI staff across 19 EU Delegations have ensured an efficient management and visibility of FPI actions in countries.

As a growing number of acute crises unfold around the world and rules-based multilateralism is under pressure from more and more sides, building alliances, promoting human rights and other EU core values and working for conflict prevention, crisis response, security and peace building will remain high on the EU political agenda. Thus, it is paramount to ensure and further reinforce the effective and efficient management of operations and regulatory instruments in line with political priorities, aiming for consistently high standards also in the most difficult circumstances. This report gives an overview of the results the Service delivered in 2024. I thank all colleagues in Headquarters and abroad for their contribution to making this possible.

Peter M. Wagner

FPI Director, Head of Service

Brussels, 31 March 2025

FPI IN BRIEF

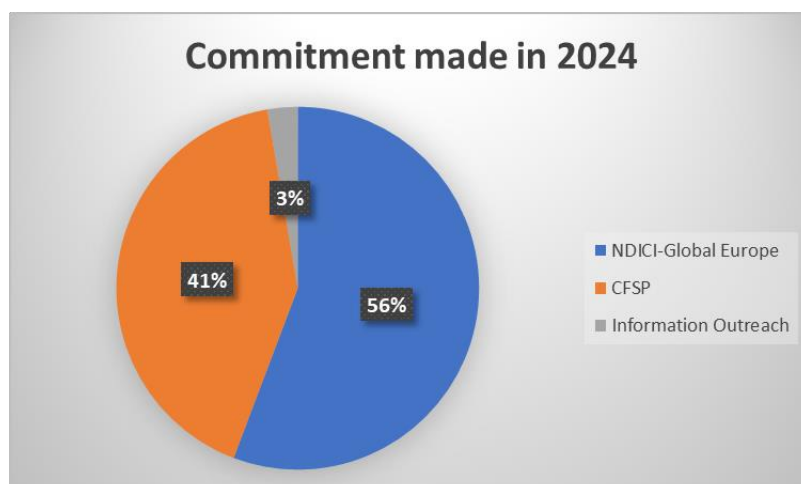
The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) is attached directly to the High Representative/Vice-President (HRVP) and works closely with all other Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS), delivering on the EU foreign policy agenda.

FPI plays a central part in delivering President von der Leyen's ambition of achieving a 'Geopolitical Commission', contributing to the political objective of 'A stronger Europe in the World'. In addition, it focuses on the external dimension of other EU objectives ⁽¹⁾ and supports the EU in projecting its interests abroad, linking internal and external policies and contributing to the rules-based global multilateral order.

The Service manages the implementation of financing instruments under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and under NDICI-Global Europe. The latter includes actions on Crisis response, peace building and conflict prevention as well as actions addressing global and trans-regional threats and challenges; EU Election Observation Missions (EOMs); cooperation with High Income Countries; and the Information and outreach work programme on EU external action. The Service is also in charge of two EU foreign policy regulatory instruments, i.e. the Kimberley Process (KP) Regulation and the Anti-torture' Regulation.

FPI Head of Service of acts also as administrator for assistance measures under the European Peace Facility (EPF), an instrument outside of the EU budget that provides funding for military aid to partner countries.

In terms of financial responsibility, the implementation of the operational budget for 2024 amounts to EUR 927 million in commitments and EUR 944 million in payments. As regards the off-budget EPF, in 2024 FPI committed EUR 3.119 million and paid EUR 2.312 million.



(1) Notably: 'A European Green Deal', 'An economy that works for people', 'A Europe fit for the digital age' and 'Promoting our European way of life'.

FPI Intervention logic



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This annual activity report is a management report of the FPI's Head of Service to the College of Commissioners. Annual activity reports are the main instrument of management accountability within the Commission and constitute the basis on which the College takes political responsibility for the decisions it takes as well as for the coordinating, executive and management functions it exercises, as laid down in the Treaties ⁽²⁾.

(2) Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union.

A. Key results and progress towards achieving the Commission's general objectives and department's specific objectives

In 2024, FPI operations contributed mainly to the Commission political objective “**A stronger Europe in the World**”. FPI worked to leverage the EU’s influence in the world, underpin multilateralism and support global stability and prosperity, support conflict prevention and peace, link the internal and external aspects of EU policies, promote EU values and standards abroad, build alliances.

In 2024, the major challenge continued to be the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The European Peace Facility (EPF) has been instrumental in providing support to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Under NDICI-Global Europe and the previous instruments ⁽³⁾, the Service continued to adapt its planning and implementation to the demands created by highly volatile operational contexts as well as maximise synergies with other external action instruments and Member States' actions.

The simplification and rationalisation actions undertaken as regards reporting are explained under 3.4, Examples of economy and efficiency.

Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)/Crisis Response, Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention under NDICI-Global Europe

Throughout 2024, FPI continued to **deploy flexible and timely support** via 85 new crisis response interventions. This included providing essential support for the response to the war of aggression against Ukraine in areas such as demining, energy, and accountability, but also actions in Palestine* and Israel, Lebanon and Syria addressing both the drivers and the consequences of instability and hostilities in the region, such as hate speech. Special attention was also paid to emerging crises, from Democratic Republic of Congo to Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sudan, the Caucasus, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region and Haiti, amongst others.

The thematic programme on **conflict prevention** and **peacebuilding** supported multilateral as well as civil society actors in conflict settings in their work to prevent conflicts, to promote dialogue and reconciliation, including via innovative approaches. Work in 2024 also focused on addressing **global and trans-regional threats** with a focus on those with the potential to have a direct impact on Europe’s security and well-being. This included actions to mitigate Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear risks, enhance maritime/cyber security and strengthen global efforts against terrorism and organised crime.

Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and EU electoral missions under NDICI-Global Europe

(3) Under multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2014-2020.

In 2024, FPI ensured that CFSP actions decided by the Council were implemented swiftly, committing a total of EUR 404 million and paying a total of 391 million. In addition, it implemented **26 election observation** missions and supported 22 electoral processes.

Partnership Instrument (PI)/ Support to Foreign Policy Needs (FPN) and Partnership with High Income Countries under NDICI-Global Europe

In 2024, the Partnership Instrument (PI)/Support to Foreign Policy Needs actions focused on **the external dimension of internal policies and on leveraging the EU's influence**. More than 120 interventions, including 19 launched in 2024 for a total of EUR 52.5 million, covered challenges of global concern such as climate change and environmental protection, digital transition, business and trade (including to improve EU companies' access to markets), fight against disinformation, Foreign Interference and Manipulation of Information (FIMI).

Nine additional actions for a budget of EUR 23.2 million, were adopted to strengthen partnerships with High Income Countries ⁽⁴⁾ in priority areas such as Critical Raw Material, circular economy, transport and intellectual property.

Regulatory instruments

In 2024, FPI involvement in the **Kimberley Process (KP)** ⁽⁵⁾, was again marked by its efforts to address the implications of the Russian aggression against Ukraine (as Russia is one of the largest global producers of diamonds), and by its advocacy for a substantive reform of the KP to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. As regards the 'Anti-Torture' Regulation, the Service engaged in extensive consultations with the Member States' experts on a draft proposal to amend the scope of the Regulation. FPI also continued to engage with UN, civil society and others to advance the Torture-free Trade process within the UN to end global trade in goods that could be used for torture or capital punishment.

European Peace Facility (EPF)

In its role of Administrator, the Service ensured **swift contracting and effective implementation of 17 assistance measures** established by Council decision in 2024, alongside continued implementation of those adopted in 2021-23 – for an overall value of EUR 3.1 billion in commitments and EUR 2.3 billion in payments ⁽⁶⁾.

(4) Such as Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan and the United States

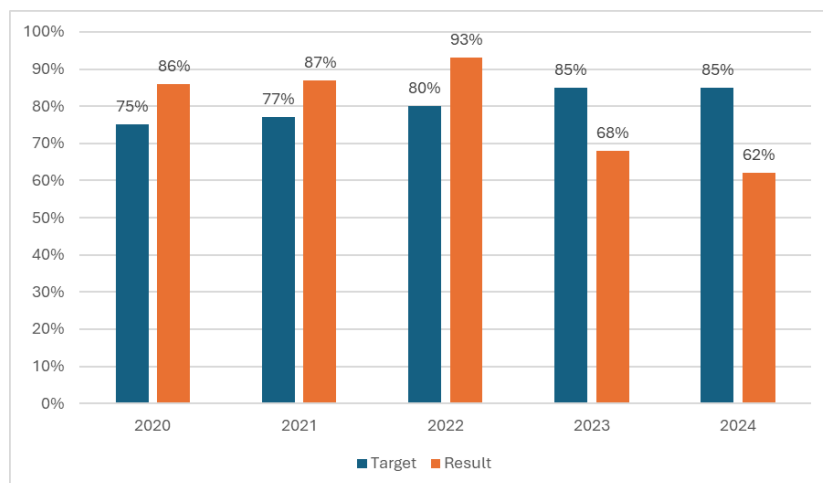
(5) The KP is a global tri-partite initiative of governments, civil society and industry to stop the trade in conflict diamonds.

(6) Three assistance measures in Niger were terminated, following a *coup d'Etat*.

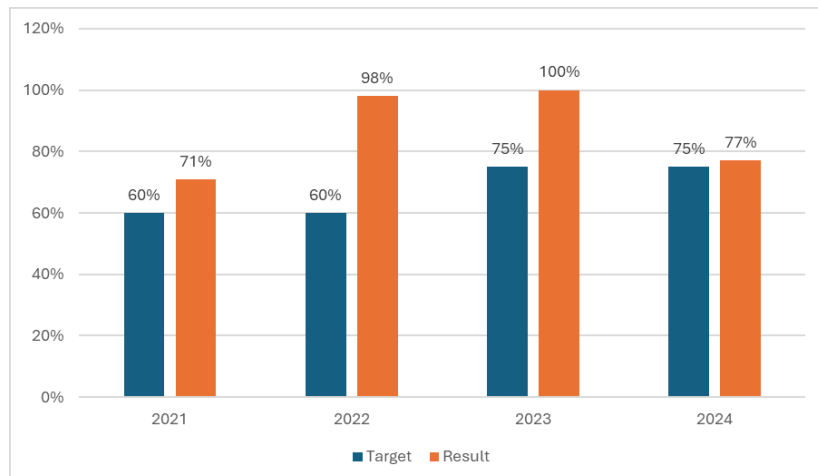
B. Key performance indicators

The most relevant FPI Key Performance Indicators – as per the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan:

KPI 1: Crisis response actions: Percentage of actions adopted within 3 months of a crisis context (period from date of presentation to PSC) ⁽⁷⁾



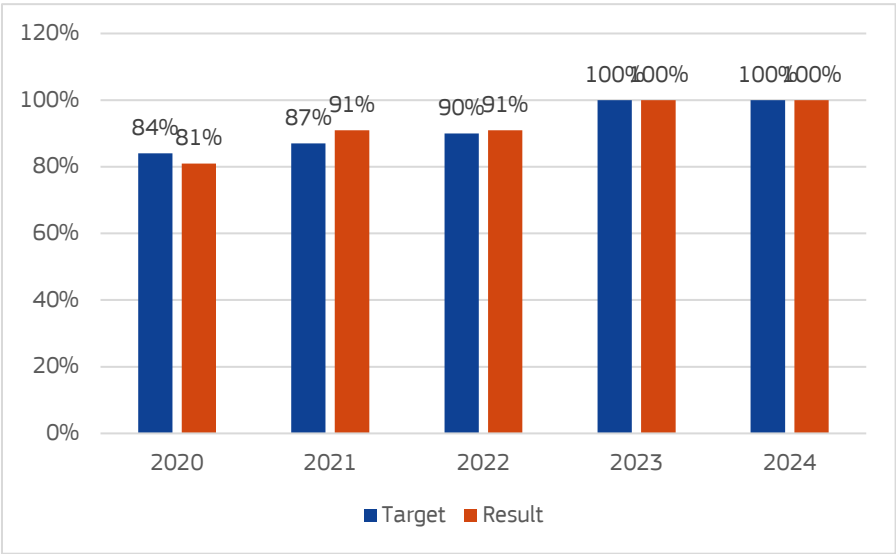
KPI 2: Percentage of actions (programmes/projects) that score 'High' or 'Medium' on the conflict-sensitivity index⁽⁸⁾



(7) The 2024 result (62,2%) did not meet internal targets. This was due to the deterioration of security and political conditions in a number of theatres (notably in the Middle East), which made it impossible to pursue the actions as they had been conceived and had a negative effect on the speed of processing the actions. This administrative delay did not reflect however in slower implementation on the ground (as most actions started with retroactive effect).

(8) As explained in the Strategic Plan 2020-24, this index cannot measure impact but the 'promise of impact' which facilitates discussions with implementing partners on important design elements of an action. Results not available in 2020.

KPI 3: Percentage of positively pillar assessed civilian CSDP Missions not requiring supervisory measures as per article 154.5 FR ⁽⁹⁾



KPI 5: Estimated risk at closure



⁽⁹⁾ By the end of 2024, 10 of the 14 civilian CSDP missions had been exempted from pillar assessment requirements. Moreover, the new Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of 23 September 2024 provides that the Commission shall not require the pillar assessment of CFSP bodies. Before the new Financial Regulation entered into force, the EU Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA) was positively pillar-assessed in October 2023. The pillar assessments of the EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) and the EU Partnership Mission in Moldova (EUPM Moldova) were on-going in 2024. None of the positively pillar assessed civilian CSDP missions required any supervisory measures in 2024.

C. Key conclusions on internal control and financial management

FPI has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, including those from supervised entities to which it has entrusted budget implementation tasks, as well as the observations and recommendations issued by the internal auditor and the European Court of Auditors. These elements have been assessed to determine their impact on management's assurance about the achievement of the control objectives. For further details, see Section 2.

In conclusion, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated. The Head of Service, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation, has signed the Declaration of Assurance

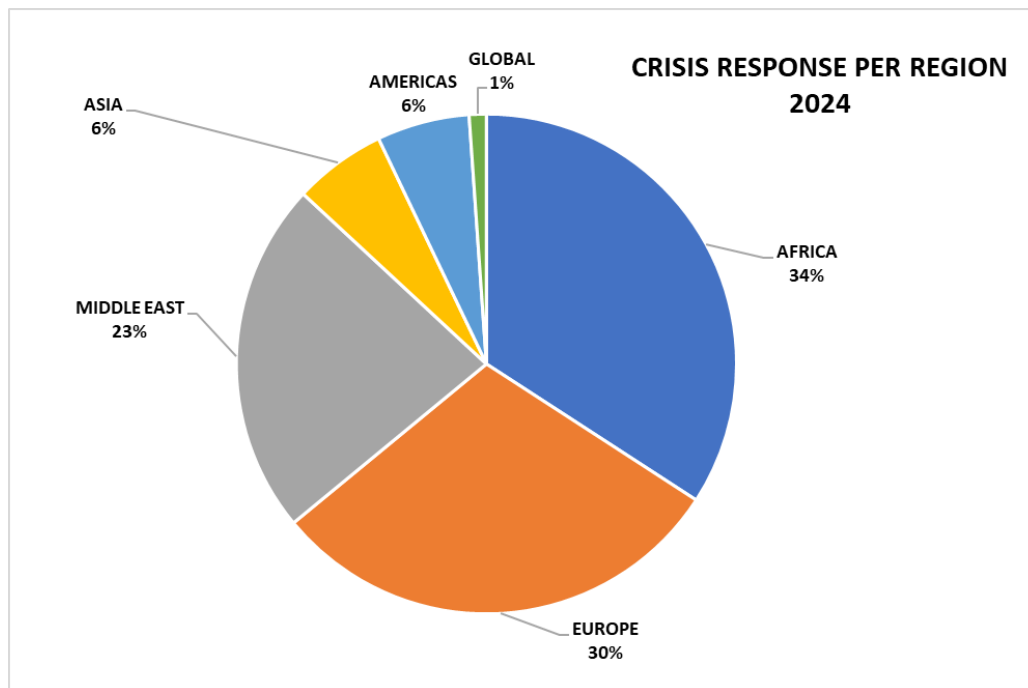
D. Provision of information to the Commissioner(s)

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the FPI and the Commissioners on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration, have been brought to the attention of HRVP Borell and HRVP Kallas, successively responsible for foreign affairs.

1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT

IcSP/Crisis Response, Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention under NDICI-Global Europe ⁽¹⁰⁾

Under NDICI-Global Europe and the previous Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), support was provided for actions focusing on crisis response, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and crisis preparedness, and on addressing global and trans-regional threats, in line with the Union's external policy priorities.



At the end of 2024, there were 241 ongoing crisis response interventions under NDICI-Global Europe, 67 thematic interventions responding to global threats and challenges, as well as 63 thematic interventions in conflict prevention, peace building and crisis preparedness. During 2024, 39 new crisis response actions and six increases to existing actions were adopted, alongside seven new conflict prevention and peacebuilding programmable actions and six actions responding to global threats. In addition to

(10) Further information on how operational expenditure contributed to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Union is available in the NDICI-Global Europe Programme and Performance Statement for Draft Budget 2026.

maintaining significant support for **Ukraine**, new actions were also swiftly mobilised to address new crises and conflicts, notably in the Middle East, including the spill-over into Lebanon. Actions were also deployed to prevent and reduce gender-based violence (Sudan, Chad) or to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism (Syria, Senegal, Uganda), to name but a few.

In parallel, focus on **protracted crises** continued, including support to reconciliation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and South Caucasus. Support was provided to civil society to de-escalate tensions (e.g. in Lebanon, Guinea, Somalia and Gabon).

Under the thematic programme for **peace, stability and conflict prevention**, special attention was granted to empowering youth in peace and security processes (e.g. Iraq, Myanmar, Chile, Lebanon and Ecuador) and to support mediation, social media and digital spaces and transitional justice, among others.

In 2024, thematic support was mobilised to help mitigate risks linked to **chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials**, 63 countries received specialised support for constituting CBRN inter-agency national teams, performing risk/threat assessments, drafting a CBRN National Action Plan, or monitor its execution. and a programme on protection of CBRN Critical Infrastructure that attracted additional funding from other donors (e.g. Norway). Key support was provided to Ukraine on CBRN detection, cybersecurity and demining efforts.

In the area of counter terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, FPI continued to support the EU's role as co-chair of the **Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)**, including adoption of the Brussels Memorandum on Oversight and Accountability of Counter-Terrorism. In Iraq, upgraded juvenile reformatories were handed over in Mosul and Baghdad in November. The EU Global Illicit Flows Programme underpinned the external dimension of the EU Strategy on Organised Crime, the EU Agenda on Drugs and the EU Agenda on Firearms by contributing to the disruption of the main trafficking routes of illicit commodities and of organised crime. In the new area of fight against environmental crime, a Global Monitoring System that uses artificial intelligence and open-source intelligence methodologies strengthened the global response to wildlife trafficking.

Specific objective 1a: Fast and effective EU action for crisis response, conflict prevention and peace in line with EU priorities and complementary to multilateral action

Crisis response actions under the Rapid Response Pillar of NDICI-GE enable the EU to swiftly contribute to stability in a situation of crisis or emerging crisis, by providing an effective response designed to help **preserve, establish or re-establish conditions of peace and respect for fundamental human rights in line with policy priorities and EU values**.

While the achievement of this specific objective is not fully under FPI's control but relies on the agreement and close cooperation with EU Delegations, EEAS and Commission services, during 2024, crisis response actions continued to address some of the main conflicts and

post-crisis contexts including **Ukraine, Moldova, Syria, Gaza, Sudan, Myanmar, Haiti, Nigeria or the Horn of Africa**. Significant actions were launched covering **human security, stabilisation, confidence building, cyber security, hybrid threats, disinformation** as well as **accountability** and **prevention of electoral violence**.

Actions continued to **support** and **complement multilateral actions** and **processes** such as the UN-led peace processes in **Yemen, Syria, Libya**, as well strategic support to the UN peace architecture, including the UN Peace Building Fund, the UN Mediation Stand-by Team as well as the Complex Risks Analytics Fund to strengthen crisis anticipation, prevention and response. The EU Global Facility on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorism Financing provided tailor-made bilateral technical assistance to 24 third countries to increase compliance with international and EU standards.

Specific objective 1.b: A further reinforced consistency and complementarity between actions under IcSP/NDICI Crisis Response and Stability and Peace and CFSP actions

The achievement of this specific objective is not fully under FPI's control as CFSP actions rely on both the Council and the EEAS.

NDICI-Global Europe was an effective tool for **EU diplomacy in crisis contexts** and in **supporting conflict prevention, stabilisation, conflict resolution** and **peacebuilding**. All the 87 new or reinforced crisis response actions, seven new conflict prevention and peacebuilding actions and the 6 new responses to global threats presented during 2024 responded directly to EU political priorities and were consistent with EU actions under the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Particular attention is given to ensure consistency between crisis response actions and CSDP missions in all countries where they are deployed. This includes actions in the **Central African Republic, the Sahel, Somalia, Libya, Iraq** and **Ukraine** ⁽¹¹⁾.

Specific objective 1.c: Enhanced conflict-sensitivity in EU action supporting conflict prevention, stabilisation and peace and addressing global and trans-regional threats to peace, international security and stability through holistic and inclusive approaches

The achievement of this specific objective is not fully under FPI's control. While the Service is responsible for the identification, development and preparation of actions, this is done in close cooperation with EU Delegations, EEAS and other Commission services.

Since 2021, the **FPI conflict-sensitivity indicator** has been used in conflict and stakeholder analyses to assess how far the former actions are conflict sensitive and take gender, age, diversity as well as climate responsiveness into account with a view to further improve future actions.

(11) For further information on the CSDP, please refer to the CFSP section below.

The positive impact of this new tool is clear. Indicators for 2024 show that 77% of the crisis response interventions scored medium or high on the conflict sensitivity index, above the benchmark of 75% set for 2024 (60% in 2022). In 2024, a holistic and inclusive approach to counterterrorism and prevention of violent extremism was continued. Regional events in Central Asia were organised ⁽¹²⁾. The **EU UN Global Terrorist Threat Facility** continued work in Africa, in Central Asia and Iraq. Additional support on the use of new technologies in the fight against terrorism was provided while a new intervention focusing on the use of artificial intelligence was launched to complement efforts in this area. Further focus on fighting cybercrime and hybrid threats in third countries ensured capacities and partnerships are built in new and rapid developing areas. Work on climate change, environment, peace and security has continued apace with the launch of the first regional grant programme under the EU-UNEP Climate Environment Security Partnership in Central America.

Those actions under NDICI-Global Europe contributed to the Commission priority “A stronger Europe in the World” and to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 “Peace, justice and strong institutions”.

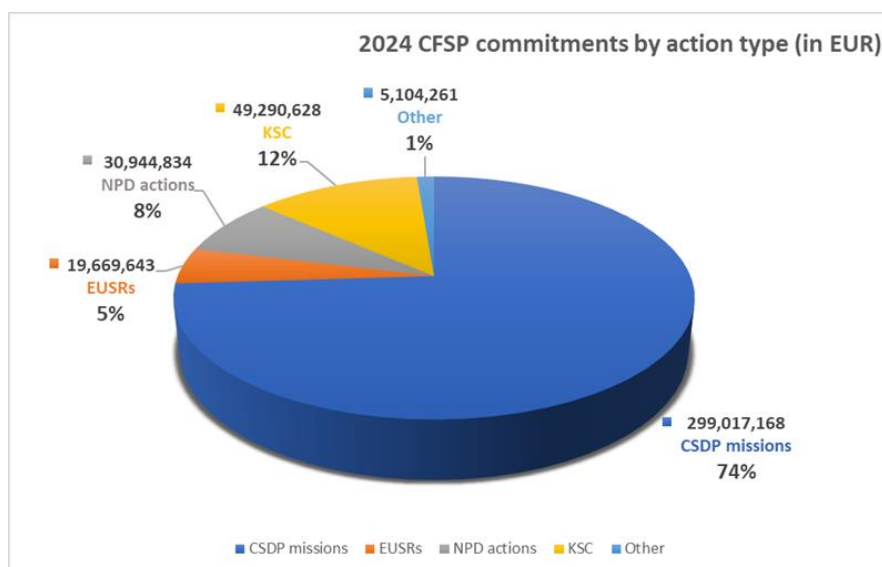
Common Foreign and Security Policy ⁽¹³⁾

Specific Objective 2: Fast action to enable resource effective CFSP intervention as part of the integrated approach

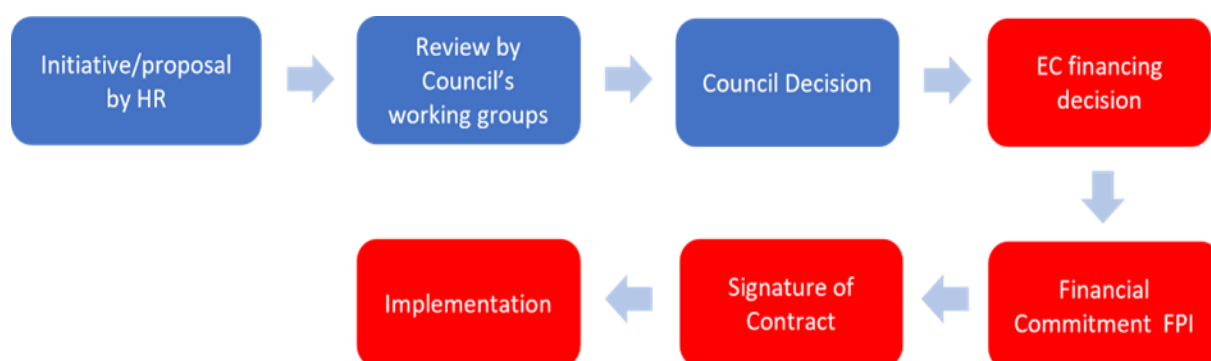
The achievement of this specific objective is not fully under the control of FPI which is responsible for the **financing** and **contracting of actions**, while the Council adopts specific decisions upon proposal by the High Representative. CFSP operations contribute to the **preservation of peace, the prevention of conflicts** and to **strengthening international security**.

(12) Events organised under the STRIVE Asia programme, an EU-UN joint partnership to prevent and counter violent extremism through a whole of society/multi-stakeholder approach.

(13) Further information on how operational expenditure contributed to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Union is available in the CFSP Programme and Performance Statement for Draft Budget 2026.



For CFSP operations, the Council adopts specific decisions under the CFSP provisions of the EU Treaty on which basis the Commission in turn adopts financing decisions to provide the necessary funding.



FPI supervises the **proper management** of the **expenditure** in accordance with sound financial management principles, keeps track of the absorption of the funds by implementing partners and updates the Council on the overall situation of the CFSP budget. In 2024, FPI committed 100% of the available CFSP budget of EUR 404 million.

CFSP actions covered the **Eastern Europe** and **the South-Caucasus region, Africa (including the Sahel region), the Middle East, the Western Balkans, and Central Asia**. In 2024, the mandates of seven civilian CSDP missions were renewed, including the mandates of the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine), the EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (EU BAM Rafah) or the EU Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia). The Council also appointed six new EU Special Representatives, including the EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes region.

For CFSP operations, FPI reports against three results indicators:

(i) Two of the results indicators measure the **rapidity with which FPI signs contribution agreements with CSDP missions and EUSRs**. In 2024, of the 14 contribution agreements, 10 (71.4%) were signed within four weeks of the adoption of the Council decisions. The reasons for the delayed signatures included complex negotiations on the contractual provisions with some of the new EU Special Representatives.

(ii) The **coordination of missions with other EU instruments**, including NDICI/IcSP ⁽¹⁴⁾, is another important indicator. The missions report on coordination with EU delegations or EUSRs active in the respective regions in their confidential reports to the EEAS.

(iii) The third indicator measures the **percentage of positively pillar assessed civilian CSDP missions** not requiring supervisory measures and thus their ability to achieve the required level of protection of the financial interests of the Union

Furthermore, one of the main tasks of FPI is to assist civilian missions, EUSRs and the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) in **achieving** their **operational objectives** and compliance with the principles of proportionality and sound financial management. This support is delivered by the staff of the **Mission Support Platform (MSP)**.

Non-proliferation and disarmament (NPD) actions

The EU continued to reinforce support to multilateral efforts to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the illicit trade in and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and conventional weapons.

In 2024, FPI committed EUR 30.9 million for eight new **NPD actions**, bringing the total number of ongoing NPD actions to 30 (total commitments: EUR 103.6 million by year end).

FPI continued to support efforts to **combat** the **proliferation of weapons of mass destruction** and their means of delivery by four new actions, including for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization of American States.

In order to counter the **illicit trade in** and **proliferation of small arms and light weapons**, four new actions targeting South-Eastern Europe, Ukraine and the Member States of the League of Arab States were adopted.

CFSP actions contributed to the Commission priority “A stronger Europe in the World” and to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 “Peace, justice and strong institutions”.

(14) For further information on IcSP/Crisis Response, Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention under NDICI-Global Europe missions actions, please refer to the section above.

European Peace Facility (EPF)

Specific Objective 3: Global conflict management capacity is further reinforced through the deployment of European Peace Facility funded peace support operations by international, regional and sub-regional organisations

The achievement of specific objective 3 is not fully under FPI's control, as the right of initiative for new assistance measures rests with the HRVP and/or Member States.

Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 established the European Peace Facility (EPF or "the Facility") and provided the EU with an **off-budget funding mechanism** to finance the CFSP **operational actions having military or defence implications** which cannot be financed under the Union budget as per Article 41(2) TEU. The Commission carries out the role of Administrator for assistance measures (AM), through FPI managing their financial and contractual implementation. Dedicated administrative resources (20 statutory staff) were created for this purpose. Expenditure linked to this statutory staff is financed by the administrative budget managed by the Service, free of charge to the EPF.

In its role of Administrator, the Service contributed to the achievement of this objective by ensuring **swift contracting** and **effective implementation of 17 new actions** established by Council decision in the course of 2024, besides continued implementation of the assistance measures adopted from 2021 to 2023, which overall represented commitment appropriations of EUR 3.1 billion and payment appropriations of EUR 2.3 billion.

FPI also contributed to ensure **coherence, consistency** and **complementarity between the EPF and the Union's external financing instruments** funded under the Union budget. It has pro-actively engaged in a joint effort with EEAS to ensure faster delivery and implementation of assistance measures.

FPI has been working closely with the EEAS and the EPF Committee to update and implement the reimbursement scheme and schedule for Member States' deliveries to Ukraine, which runs until 2027.

In 2024, the Council increased the overall financial ceiling of the facility for the period 2021-2027 leading to a total of EUR 17.04 billion (in current prices), of which EUR 5 billion dedicated to the provision of additional support to Ukraine. It also adopted the mid-term review of the legal base. The financial ceiling was topped up by the amount of EUR 1.392 million stemming from extraordinary revenues of the Russian immobilised assets in support to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Information and communication activities related to the EPF are the responsibility of the High Representative⁽¹⁵⁾. The Service has put in place an effective coordination mechanism between the Commission, the EEAS and the HRVP Cabinet to provide information on

(15) As per Article 72 of the EPF Council Decision.

equipment deliveries and its communication, including the provision of web and social media content.

EPF actions contributed to the Commission priority “A stronger Europe in the World” and to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 “Peace, justice and strong institutions”.

Partnership Instrument (PI) / Support to EU Foreign Policy Needs and Partnership with High Income Countries under NDICI-Global Europe (16)

Specific objective 4.a: EU interests, values and standards positively impact decision making processes in third countries.

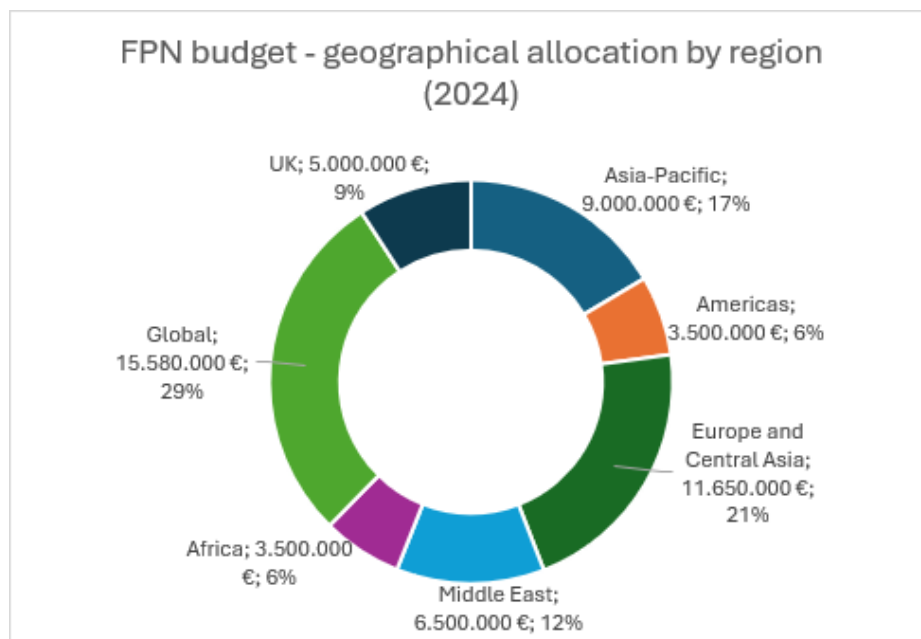
Specific objective 4.b: Reinforced political partnerships and new alliances contributing to strengthening the rules-based multilateral global order.

Specific objective 4.c: Strengthened knowledge and image of the EU abroad as an influential global player and reliable partner.

The achievement of these specific objectives is not fully under FPI's control. While the Service is responsible for preparing the financing decisions and contracting, other important factors such as the political situation in partner countries and the timely identification of actions by the EEAS and other Commission services could have an important impact on the successful implementation of actions especially under specific objective 4.c.

Foreign Policy Needs and Partnership Instrument actions contributed to the Commission priority objective ‘A stronger Europe in the World’. These actions also focused on the external dimension of the Commission priorities ‘A European Green Deal’, ‘An economy that works for people’, ‘A Europe fit for the digital age’ and ‘Promoting our European way of life’. In 2024, NDICI-Global Europe supported EU foreign policy priorities across policy, economic and security issues and was used to build partnerships and alliances with key countries of strategic interest. This included the **promotion of the external dimension of EU policies**, such as **climate and environment, digital transition, security, space diplomacy, trade** and **responsible business conduct**.

(16) Further information on how operational expenditure contributed to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Union is available in the NDICI-Global Europe Programme and Performance Statement for Draft Budget 2026.



In term of geographical distribution, the focus remained on the consequences of the full-scale war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine and its implications at regional level. In addition, considering the increasing geopolitical instability, special attention was given to the fight against foreign intervention and manipulation of information (FIMI) as well as to public diplomacy including international cultural relations at global level.

Under the NDICI-GE regional geographic programmes, FPI supported **policy dialogues on bilateral issues of mutual interest, on global and regional challenges** and on **multilateralism**. This work was based on existing or prospective framework agreements, with the most important and influential High-Income Countries with a view to reinforcing strategic political alliances that underpin the role of the EU as geopolitical actor.

In Asia, approved actions strengthened EU relations with Japan, Brunei, and Taiwan via cooperation in areas like trade, intellectual property and regulatory alignment. Key goals include enhancing strategic partnerships and addressing market access barriers for EU businesses. Another FPN action was adopted to strengthen EU engagement with Indonesia on the external impacts of EU Green Deal policies and regulatory frameworks, with a particular focus on deforestation and forest degradation.

In Latin America, FPN was mobilised to strengthen EU engagement with local governments in the Amazonian countries in **climate and environment related multilateral negotiations**. To enhance EU ability to **counter FIMI**, FPI also launched several interventions through exchanges with like-minded partners, for example in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In alignment with the EU Indo-Pacific strategy, FPI launched a new action to enhance the **EU security cooperation with partners in Asia** and **the Indo-Pacific region**. This initiative focuses on maritime security, counterterrorism, cybersecurity and hybrid threats, as well as FIMI. Similarly, cooperation on **security matters with Gulf countries** is addressed via a dedicated action to support inclusive dialogue and the development of

comprehensive and cooperative approach to security. A new action was also adopted to enhance the ability of the European Union to play its role of “convener” and “agenda influencer” in key policy areas within international and multilateral organisations.

Through actions on **Public** and **International Cultural Relations**, the EU pursued its long-term engagement to globally develop its soft power by building alliances and better-informed decision-making on EU priority themes such as the response to global challenges, the centrality of multilateralism, our shared values and principles or economic partnerships. Ultimately, these actions have enhanced the visibility, understanding and attractiveness of the EU and its global role. For instance, over 100 EU film festivals have been organised in 2024, in cooperation with EU Delegations worldwide with a well-spread global attendance of over 350 000 people.

A new action for a scaled-up Cultural Relations Platform was adopted to strengthen the EU’s ability to engage meaningfully with different audiences and stakeholders in its partner countries, through enhanced cultural relations and cooperation with cultural and creative sectors.

EU Electoral Missions under NDICI-Global Europe ⁽¹⁷⁾

Specific objective 5: Strengthened EU contribution to democratic electoral cycles and reliability of electoral processes in third countries

The achievement of this specific objective is not fully under FPI’s control: while the Service is responsible for the financing, contracting, logistics and security of electoral missions, the HRVP decides on the deployment of missions.

Election Observation is a key part of the EU’s foreign policy, supporting the **strengthening of democracy** and **respect for human rights**. Election Observation Missions bring added value to strengthen democratic institutions, build public confidence in electoral processes and to deter fraud, intimidation and violence. For Election Observation, FPI reports against two result indicators:

(i) **number of electoral processes and democratic cycles** supported, observed, and followed by means of election observation missions:

In 2024, FPI supported 22 electoral processes through the implementation of 26 missions as follows:

Four fully-fledged Election Observation Missions –EOMs (including assessments of the campaign, the legal and political context, and the overall electoral process), eleven

(17) Further information on how operational expenditure contributed to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Union is available in the NDICI-Global Europe Programme and Performance Statement for Draft Budget 2026.

Electoral Expert Missions (EEMs), four Follow-up missions (EFMs) and seven Election Exploratory Missions (ExMs) were conducted in 2024.

The general trend observed in 2024 indicates a **persistent backsliding** on the readiness to cooperate across the continents, posing increased **risks** and **challenges** for deployment of the missions. These challenges included **electoral calendar uncertainty** with elections being postponed for example in Senegal and in Guinea Conakry or with a change in political will with the EU being disinvited to observe Presidential election in **Venezuela**. Additionally, missions faced security concerns and disinformation campaigns, logistical issues arising from the difficult importation of telecommunication equipment as well as lengthy visa procedures. For instance, the **EU EOM** in **Mozambique** had to restrict its movements in Cabo Delgado due to volatile security situation. The post-electoral violence and ongoing civil unrest prevented the Return Visit from deploying to the country and has been put on hold for the time being.

Similarly, the **EU EOM Senegal** encountered several challenges due to the unforeseen and sudden postponement and then re-scheduling of the Presidential elections, which resulted in redeploying nearly all mission members and reestablishing the mission headquarters efficiently. The **EU EOM Jordan** was deployed for the Parliamentary elections of October 2024, which for the first time, included 36 political parties as well as a quota for the representation of women and youth. It faced serious complications linked to the temporary import of telecommunication equipment. The **EU EOM Sri Lanka** was deployed for the Presidential elections of September 2024 with very tight timelines as the elections were called less than two months in advance. The implementing partner nevertheless managed to arrange the headquarters and equipment for the timely deployment of core team and observers. Regarding EEM and EFM, an increasing number of missions were cancelled (two) or postponed (four) because of the unstable political situation of the host countries.

(ii) the **speed to setup the missions** is key to a successful deployment. Therefore, the second result indicator measures the time between the HRVP decision on the deployment of an EOM and the signature of the contract. Three out of five EOMs contracted in 2024 were signed less than five weeks after the HRVP decision (60%).

The EU Electoral Missions described above contributed to the Commission priority 'A stronger Europe in the World' and to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 'Peace, justice and strong institutions'.

Foreign Policy Regulatory Instruments

FPI serves as the Commission's lead service for the Kimberley Process (KP) Regulation on conflict diamonds and for the Regulation concerning trade in certain goods which could be used for torture or capital punishment ⁽¹⁸⁾.

(18) Regulation (EU) 2019/125

Kimberley Process

In 2024, FPI continued to represent the EU in the Kimberley Process, which is a global tripartite initiative of governments, industry and civil society to **stop the trade in conflict diamonds**.

FPI's role was instrumental in leading the coordination among like-minded partners to jointly trigger a debate and push for reform in order to address the critical challenges facing the Kimberley Process, from the Russian aggression against Ukraine, to the definition of 'conflict diamonds' or the Central African Republic's embargo.

Despite efforts and constructive engagement from the EU and other participants, the Russian Federation rejected any attempt to bring the implications for the Kimberley Process of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine to the KP agenda. While technical work continues, this has compromised the Kimberley Process' ability to stay fit for purpose and to address the unprecedented challenges that it is facing. Again, no consensus could be found underscoring the lack of political will to make progress. As Belarus could not secure its election as Vice-chair for 2024, in the absence of a consensus-based Chair, United Arab Emirates will continue chairing in 2025 in a custodian capacity. Thailand gathered the required support to become Vice-Chair in 2025 and hence Chair in 2026. FPI continued to follow very closely developments as regards the restrictions placed on the Central African Republic's (CAR) diamonds, with the 2024 KP Plenary ultimately agreeing to lift the embargo on exports of rough diamonds from CAR subject to enhanced vigilance involving reporting obligations and the possibility to reassess past 2025.

Uzbekistan was admitted as a new Participant bringing the KP membership to sixty members.

'Anti-Torture' Regulation

Specific objective 6: Increased global action through trade restrictions contributing to the prevention and eradication of torture and the abolition of the death penalty.

The achievement of this specific objective is not fully under FPI's control. While the Service is responsible for the implementation of the 'Anti-torture' Regulation and participates in the Global **Alliance for Torture-Free Trade** on behalf of the EU, progress depends on the States that are parties to the Alliance.

The Anti-torture Regulation reflects the EU's commitment to the **eradication of torture and the death penalty through measures to prevent the trade in certain goods**. It introduced unprecedented and binding trade restrictions on a range of goods used for capital punishment, torture, or other ill treatment. Since the launch of the Alliance in 2017, FPI has engaged in the process of bringing the high standards of the EU Anti Torture Regulation to a global level.

In 2024, FPI engaged in extensive consultations with the Member States' experts through the Anti-Torture Coordination Group on a draft proposal to amend the Regulation's scope. This underscores the Commission's lead role in regulating the trade in goods used for torture and the death penalty at a time when human rights are being severely challenged

The proposal largely builds on the UN **Special Report on Torture** issued on 24 August 2023 where the UN Special Rapporteur recommends an international legally binding instrument on Torture-Free Trade, on the Commission's review report ⁽¹⁹⁾ as well as on the work of the informal group of experts. The Service also continued to engage with UN, civil society and others to advance the Torture-free Trade process within the UN to end global trade in goods that could be used for torture or capital punishment.

The comprehensive report on exports authorisations ⁽²⁰⁾ and the report on the activities of the Anti-Torture Coordination Group ⁽²¹⁾ were completed.

The Regulatory Instruments managed by FPI therefore contributed to the Commission priority 'A stronger Europe in the World' and to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 'Peace, justice and strong institutions'.

Information outreach on the Union's external relations

In line with the FPI/EEAS service level agreement of December 2013 and based on the Work Programme on information outreach on EU external relations enabled by FPI, the **EEAS** continued to provide strategic **communication activities on EU external relations** as well as activities to **counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI)** carried out both by EEAS Headquarters and its 144 EU Delegations worldwide. Such activities notably helped improve capacity to monitor and analyse disinformation within and outside the EU amid the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Several actions also raised awareness on the effects of disinformation by developing communication products and training materials ⁽²²⁾.

Concerning its own information outreach activities, FPI ensured a user-friendly, relevant, and integrated **web presence** as part of the Commission web-architecture. FPI increased its own outreach activities, particularly through its corporate X (formerly known as Twitter) account (@EU_FPI). Due to the latest developments on X, people have been leaving this social media platform, which has also affected FPI's account. A slight decrease of followers has been witnessed in 2024 (-2.7%).

FPI also contributed to the Commission's corporate communication activities, *inter alia* when **communicating on the EU's support to Ukraine** and its **neighbouring countries** amid Russia's war of aggression by preparing a dedicated social media campaign on FPI's X account, preparing different social media materials on various international days for

(19) COM(2020) 343 final of 30.07.2020

(20) COM(2024) 529 final of 19.11.2024

(21) COM(2024) 530 final of 19.11.2024

(22) Priority 3.1 'The Security of our Union – Strategic Communications'

example on the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. On the Europe Day 2024, FPI has its stand at the EEAS building where FPI staff presented FPI's work to the public and promoted the event on the X account. Joining the **Orange the World and Stop Violence against Women** UN campaign was another example of FPI's contribution to the corporate communication activities. International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was marked also at Service level and promoted internally.

In 2024, FPI's website had over 100 000 visits (-9.22% compared to 2023) and 144 401 unique page views (-35% compared to 2023). The decrease in both visits and unique views is a consequence of changes in the X algorithm. X penalises posts that contain external links and this has reduced the organic reach of posts promoting new web content, and thus negatively impacting traffic to the FPI website. FPI continued to enrich the website with news and articles as well as updating the thematic sections dedicated to the Service's key actions and interventions, aimed at informing about the impact and the contribution of the EU for beneficiaries around the world.

The information outreach actions described above therefore contributed to the Commission priority 'A stronger Europe in the World'.

EU Visitors' Programme

In 2024, in close co-operation with the European Parliament, FPI continued its long-standing support of the European Union Visitors Programme (EUVP), which allows **young leaders from outside the EU** to participate in **tailor-made study visits** to the **European Institutions**. Through these visits, some of which took place in virtual format, visitors received first-hand information on the EU's values, functioning, activities, policies, and perspectives, with a view to making them 'ambassadors' for the EU at home.

Altogether, the EUVP organised 248 **visits** for **participants** from **86 countries**. It maintained engagement with EUVP alumni through webinars, events and a website, which includes several interviews with the most accomplished EUVP Alumni on its "Wall of Fame".

The EU visitors programme therefore contributed to the Commission priority 'A stronger Europe in the World'.

2. INTERNAL CONTROL AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Management monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis and carries out an objective assessment of their efficiency and effectiveness. Annex 7 provides a list and details of the reports that have been considered. The results of the above assessment are explicitly documented and reported to the Head of Service.

2.1. Control results

Management uses control results to support its assurance and reach a conclusion about the cost-effectiveness of those controls, meaning whether the right balance between the following elements is achieved:

- **Effectiveness** The level of error found, based on the controls carried out.
- **Efficiency** The average time taken to inform or pay.
- **Economy** The proportionality between the costs of controls and the funds managed.

FPI is building its assurance on Ex-post verification results and findings from audits performed by IAS and the Court of Auditors. The purpose of ex-post verifications is to establish whether the materiality threshold of 2% (see Annex 5) is respected. For further details on ex-post sampling and the FPI Control Strategy see Annex 7.

2.1.1. Overview of the budget and relevant control systems (RCS)

FPI has defined the Relevant Control systems (RCS) for which assurance are provided as listed in the table below. For a detailed description of each RCS see Annex 6. The overall performance, in terms of effectiveness, of the RCS is measured by the residual error rate identified by ex-post controls. This indicator is compared to the established materiality criteria (for full detail see Annex 5) when evaluating the RCS effectiveness. The efficiency of the RCS is measured as average cost of controls compared to historical data and other available statistics. In addition, performance in terms of economy is measured by the overall cost of the control systems compared to previous years, as well as benefits deriving from the controls in terms of financial findings. For a more detailed description of the RCS and the main indicators used to measure their performance see Annex 6.

Relevant control systems (RCS):

Relevant Control System (RCS)	Payments made 2024		Payments made 2023	
	EUR millions	%	EUR million	%
Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)	391,27	41,36%	408,07	42,40%
NDICI Crisis Response/NDICI Stability and Peace/IcSP/IFS	394,79	41,73%	366,69	38,10%
NDICI Foreign Policy Needs/PI	95,20	10,06%	113,93	11,84%
NDICI Election observation missions/Former EOM	30,85	3,26%	44,05	4,58%
Press & Info	25,28	2,67%	24,16	2,51%
Co-delegation	4,39	0,46%	1,77	0,18%
Cross subdelegation	1,05	0,11%	-	-
Administration	3,15	0,33%	3,76	0,39%
Total	945,97	100,00%	962,44	100,00%

Instrument	Payments made 2024		Payments made 2023	
	EUR millions	%	EUR million	%
Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)	391,27	41,41%	408,07	42,40%
NDICI Crisis Response/NDICI Stability and Peace/IcSP/IFS	394,79	41,78%	366,69	38,10%
NDICI Foreign Policy Needs/PI	95,20	10,07%	113,93	11,84%
NDICI Election observation missions/Former EOM	30,85	3,26%	44,05	4,58%
Press & Info	25,28	2,68%	24,16	2,51%
Co-delegation	4,39	0,46%	1,77	0,18%
Administration	3,15	0,33%	3,76	0,39%
Total	944,92	100,00%	962,44	100,00%

For a summary of the main sources of assurance see Annex 7.

Management concludes that the control results presented below cover all the internal control objectives relevant for FPI. They are based on reliable and robust information. Completeness is ensured by covering at least 90% of the budget by the analysis based on indicators. Therefore, the results presented below can be used as a source of assurance on the achievement of internal control objectives.

2.1.2. Effectiveness of controls

a) Assessment of control results per RCS for expenditure

Multiannual error rate (MER): FPI calculates an accumulated multi-annual error for the last 7 years. The results presented below are therefore based on the period 2018-2024 ⁽²³⁾.

As the relevant control systems already in place for the instruments under the previous MFF – IcSP, IFS, PI and EOM- are applied to the corresponding parts of NDICI, error rates are calculated by relevant control system combining the instrument phasing out with the corresponding NDICI segment.

The overall MER increased to 0.89% in 2024, compared to 0.82 % in 2023.

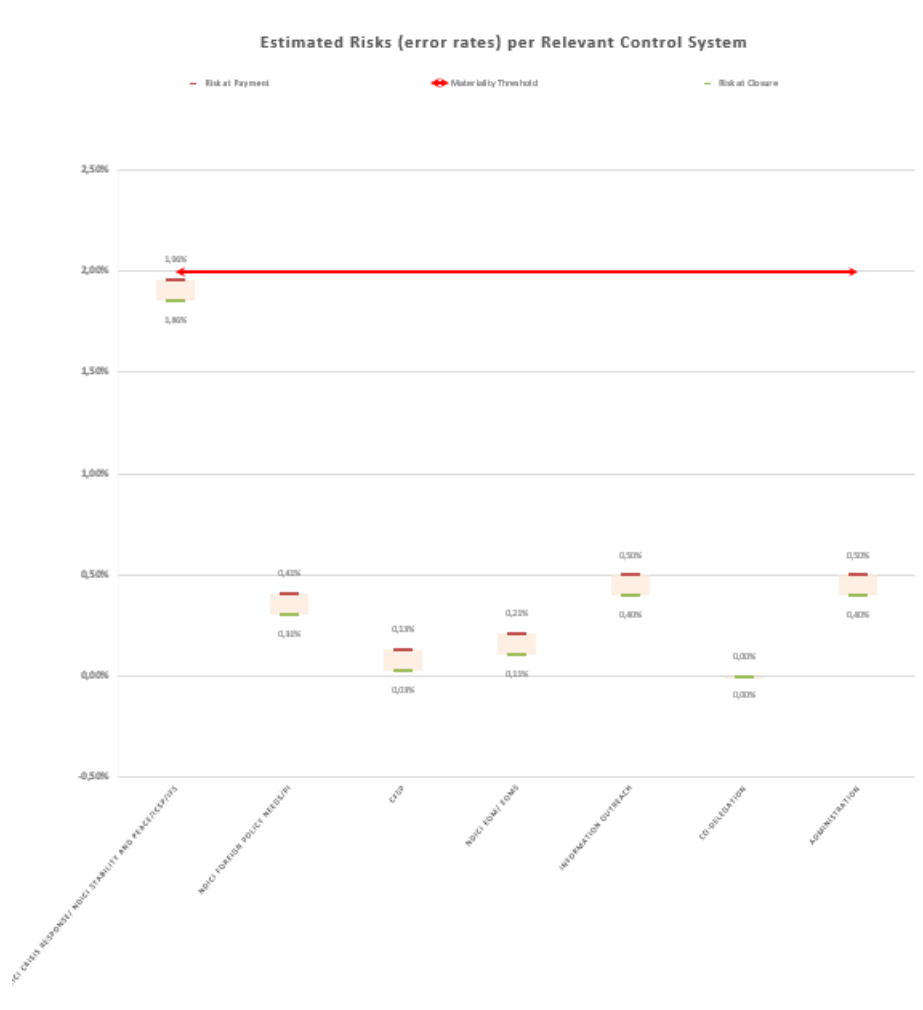
(23) The planning of ex-post controls is done on an annual basis.

Table – Multiannual Residual Error Rate (MRER)

a	b	c	d	e	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o
	Activity	Payments made in 2018 - 2024 (€)	Number of ex-post controls	Sampled amount verified (includes previous years)	Related total amounts paid (incl. pref)	Value audited = EC share of value claimed	Ineligible amount (€)	Amount to be recovered	Corrections made (i.e. debit note issued or amount registered for offsetting)	Detected error rate (=J/E)	Residual error rate of the sample = [(J-K) + (G-E)xL]/G	Amount at risk in the population (€) = (CxL) - K	Multiannual RER in the population (%) = N/C
19.02	NDICI Crisis response / NDICI Stability and Peace / ICSP / IFS	2.323.928.986	74	121.755.730	266.280.717	266.833.278	3.056.949	2.449.777	1.205.337	2,01%	1,56%	45.553.106	1,96%
19.03	Common foreign and security policy (CFSP)	2.636.431.137	29	193.503.952	336.595.035	325.232.142	327.703	267.828	90.230	0,14%	0,11%	3.558.841	0,13%
19.04	NDICI EOM/ EOMs	198.273.672	16	19.253.194	37.966.531	37.966.531	40.054	40.054	0	0,21%	0,21%	412.488	0,21%
19.05	NDICI Foreign Policy Needs / PI	721.016.548	56	61.641.484	102.120.416	102.120.416	496.534	289.111	456.261	0,47%	0,02%	2.925.449	0,41%
	FPI	5.879.650.343	175	396.154.360	742.962.698	732.152.366	3.921.241	3.046.770	1.751.828	0,77%	0,53%	52.449.885	0,89%

Notes to the MRER table:

- At the time of reporting, 3 expenditure verifications from IcSP/IFS were still in contradictory procedure with the respective beneficiaries over the findings. If sufficient justifying documents can be presented, it is possible that some of the cost items currently labelled as ineligible could be declared eligible at a later stage resulting in a lower detected error rate for IcSP.
- The detected error rate for IcSP/IFS includes an amount of € 89,678.31 currently declared ineligible due to a ransomware cyberattack at INIA (www.inia.fr), project partner for Institut Pasteur in service contract IFS/2018/402-247 (FPI.EPC.2024.11, formerly INTPA). At the time of reporting, INIA is trying to regain access to their internal network, which contains most of the project records. If successful, it is possible that some or all of this amount becomes eligible.



Control effectiveness: ex-post controls

FPI has quantified the cost of the resources required for carrying out the described controls and estimates, insofar as possible, their benefit in proportion to the amount of errors detected. Overall, during the reporting year the controls carried out by FPI in the framework of its annual ex-post control plan have a cost-effectiveness rate of 1.06 ⁽²⁴⁾ (1.02 in 2023).

In addition, there are several non-quantifiable benefits resulting from the controls such as deterrent effects, efficiency gains and better value for money, system improvements and compliance with regulatory provisions. These non-quantifiable benefits are not directly reflected in our conclusion on cost-effectiveness (ratio benefits/costs).

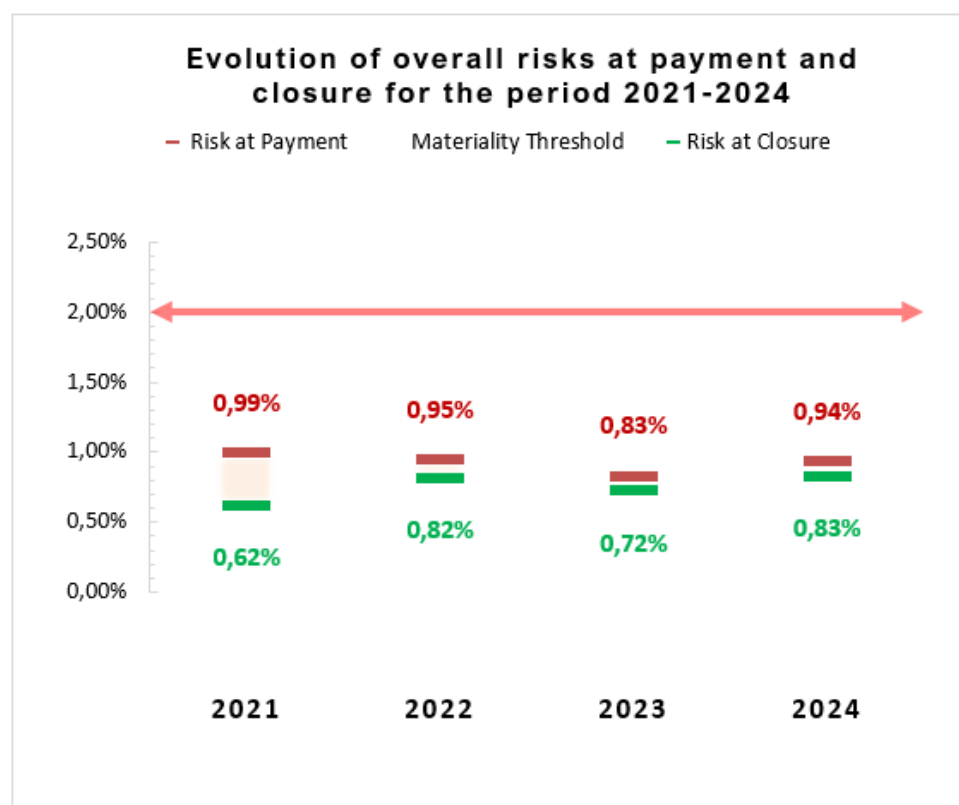
(24) EUR 1.06 of ineligible expenditure were detected for every EUR spent in ex-post control.

	NDICI Crisis response/ NDICI Stability and Peace/ICSP/IfS	Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)	NDICI Foreign Policy Needs/PI	NDICI EOM/ EOMs	TOTAL
(A) Ineligible expenditure detected by ex-post controls	465.728	11.108	0	0	476.836
(B) Total cost of audit	169.038	111.775	79.682	28.161	388.656
(C) Average cost of audit (total audit cost/number of audit assignments)	11.269	37.258	9.960	14.081	14.395
(D) Efficiency ratio ((A)/(B))	0.76	0.08	2.19	0.60	1.06

FPI undertook a detailed analysis of the types of errors encountered at beneficiary level following ex-post controls. Most errors were linked to the lack of adequate supporting documents, errors in the calculation of costs claimed, non-budgeted costs claimed and non-compliance with procurement rules.

The multi-annual residual error rate (RER) for 2018-2024 considers total ineligible expenditure detected and corrected compared to total payments made during that period. Based on the multi-annual RER, FPI is of the opinion that the control procedures in place give the necessary guarantees for the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

b) Estimation of the overall risk at payment and risk at closure



The estimated overall risk at payment for 2024 expenditure is the AOD's best conservative estimate of the amount of relevant expenditure during the year, not in conformity with the contractual and regulatory provisions applicable at the time the payment was made. This expenditure will subsequently be subject to ex-post controls and a proportion of the underlying errors will be detected and corrected in subsequent years, corresponding to the conservatively estimated future corrections for 2024 expenditure. The difference between those two results is the estimated overall risk at closure ⁽²⁵⁾.

There is a decreasing trend since 2018 mainly due to a decrease in detected errors for the 1) NDICI Crisis Response/NDICI Stability and Peace/IcSP/IfS and 2). NDICI Foreign Policy Needs/PI segments.

For an overview at Commission level, the departments' estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are consolidated in the AMPR.

c) Quantitative benefits of controls: Preventive and corrective measures

With its ex-ante and ex-post controls, FPI has an effective mechanism in place for detecting and correcting errors reaching in total EUR 1.57 million of corrections for 2024]. Ex-ante controls resulted in EUR 1.12 million and ex-post controls resulted in EUR 0.45 million. See details in Annex 3, table 8.

The result is similar to last year with EUR 3.02 million and EUR 0.20 million, respectively. The overall decrease compared to 2023, is mostly attributed to less findings during ex-ante controls.

d) Fraud: prevention, detection, and correction

FPI has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2014, based on the methodology provided by OLAF. It was last updated in June 2022. Its implementation is being monitored and reported annually to management in the context of the corporate reporting. All necessary actions have been implemented.

In 2024, FPI also participated in the Commission AFS via the FDPNet and the External Actions Subgroup. FPI notably contributed to the update of the Action Plan annexed to the CAFS. Specifically, FPI contributed to measures 10, 20, 21, 22 in the context of external actions. It provided important input to measure 24, which is still being finalised by OLAF.

FPI continued to work with OLAF and the Legal Service in the implementation of OLAF financial and administrative recommendations. From 2020 to 2024, FPI received two financial recommendations that have been partially implemented in the context of the most recent OLAF monitoring.

⁽²⁵⁾ This is the AOD's best, conservative estimation of the expenditure authorised during the year that would remain not in conformity of applicable regulatory and contractual provisions by the end of implementation of the programme.

The state of play and results achieved during the year thanks to the anti-fraud measures in place can be summarised as follows:

In December 2024, there were two ongoing EPPO investigations concerning projects managed by FPI and four cases under selection. FPI participated in one EDES Panel concerning another DG. FPI is also party to an EPPO criminal proceeding with another DG in a Member state.

All new FPI staff has followed a compulsory “OLAF for all” training and could also participate to a joint training FPI-NEAR-INTPA-OLAF (three sessions for a total of more than 150 participants, including 40 from FPI).

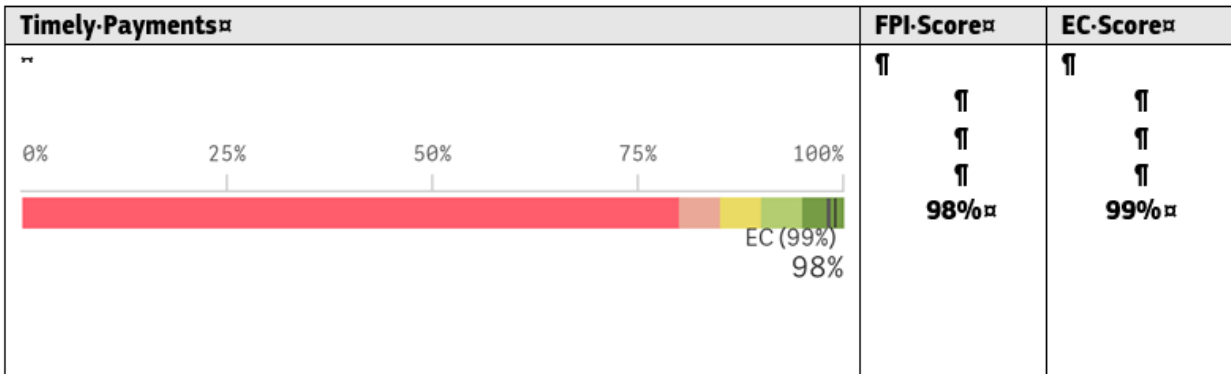
FPI reappointed in 2024 the anti-fraud contacts points (AFCP) in all the Units and Regional Teams, and updated the AFCPs in all CSDP Missions, EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) and the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC). In 2024, the new EU Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea (EUSDI GoG) and the new EUSR for the Great Lakes region also appointed their own AFCPs.

FPI, jointly with OLAF, conducted on 13 November 2024, an anti-fraud training session specifically addressed to the AFCPs of all CSDP missions, EUSRs and the KSC.

On the basis of the available information, FPI has reasonable assurance of effectiveness of its anti-fraud measures.

2.1.3 Efficiency of controls

Timely payments: In 2024, 98% of the amount managed by FPI was paid on time compared to 99% EC wide. This was achieved by a weekly monitoring of all payments, as well as balancing payment obligations with availability of payment appropriations. Because of the lack of technical solutions due to SUMMA-ABAC transition, it is expected that this score for 2025 will not be as high as in previous years.



Amounts to disburse (reste à liquider): The RAL at end of year increased by EUR 340 million, or 31% compared to the RAL at end 2023. This increase is linked mainly to the rapidly expanding portfolio under NDICI that was only partially compensated by the disbursement under the completion IcSP/PI and CFSP.

Note: Time to grant (Art. 114 (2)) FR: this requirement does not currently apply to FPI as the greater part of its activities is not implemented by open calls for proposals/ grants.

Time to Inform: the six-month deadline as per Art.197 (2)a FR is always respected

In 2024, FPI continued on-the-spot controls of contracts with a higher risk. This measure contributes to the increased efficiency of ex-ante controls and is considered as one of the preventive measures to avoid errors in financial statements.

Based on the results of the efficiency indicators described above and considering the contextual elements impacting the indicator of RAL, FPI considers that the controls put in place are efficient.

2.1.4 Economy of controls

FPI complies with Article 74(9) FR by quantifying as far as possible the costs of the resources and inputs required for carrying out its controls and their benefits in terms of the number of errors and irregularities prevented, detected and corrected.

The total cost of controls in 2024 for FPI is estimated at EUR 6.12 million, that is 0.65% of operational payments executed in 2024 (EUR 944.92 million), which is slight increase compared to the previous year (0.60% in 2023).

For FPI Headquarters, the approximate cost of ex-ante controls is EUR 4.62 million, whereas the cost of ex-post controls is EUR 1.50 million (with the total of EUR 6.12 million as presented in the table below):

		Cost of controls by management mode (EUR million)		
		2024	2023	2022
Direct	Grants	1.51	1.37	1.38
	Procurement	0,99	1.64	1.58
Indirect		3.62	2.80	2.85
Total		6.12	5.81	5.82

Based on the analysis of the total cost of controls for 2024 (26) and its trend over the last three years, FPI concludes that the controls put in place by FPI are cost effective.

For further details on the cost of controls per control segment, see Table Y in Annex 7.

FPI did not benefit from common shared/pooled control activities, provided by REA and hosted by RTD.

2.1.5 Conclusion on the effectiveness of controls

Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results reported above, FPI has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of its control system and reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of the controls for which it is responsible. The control environment and control strategy remained stable during the reporting year compared to the previous year.

2.2 Audit observations and recommendations

This section sets out briefly the state of play for all audit observations and recommendations reported by auditors related to internal control and financial management – including the limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control. Further details for IAS and ECA audits are provided in Annex 8.







Where an audit has detected weaknesses affecting any internal control principle or the department's assurance, a detailed analysis is provided further below in section 2.3 and 2.4, accordingly.





Internal Audit Service

In its contribution to the 2024 Annual Activity Report process, the Internal Audit Service concluded that the internal control systems in place for the audited processes are effective, except for the observations giving rise to the 'very important' recommendations (listed

(26) In case of indirect management – the estimated cost of controls are reported separately from those incurred by the Entrusted Entities.

below). These recommendations need to be addressed, in line with the agreed action plans or by the submission and implementation of an agreed action plan.

Reported	Audit Title	Accepted Recommendation	State of play in 2024	Impact on the assurance for 2024
2023	Audit on intervention-level evaluations	Very important : 12 and 16		
2024	Audit on allocation of human resources in EU Delegations	Very important : 3		
2024	Audit on controls over the financial management of the civilian Common Security and Defence Policy Missions (CSDP) implemented by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments	Very important: 3 and 5		

-  Action plan implemented and closed by IAS or ECA / No impact on the assurance
-  Action plan implementation is ongoing or awaiting review from IAS or ECA
-  Preparation of the action plan
-  Impact on the assurance

The open recommendations listed above can be summarised as follows:

Audit on intervention-level evaluations

Recommendation 12

FPI should,

- ensure that the weaknesses in the execution of evaluations identified by the IAS are addressed in ongoing and future evaluations to ascertain that evaluations are of a good quality, and
- that their results may be used for accountability purposes and/or to improve the management of ongoing and future interventions.

In relation to its action plan on Recommendation 12, FPI continued a proportionate use of spot checks to ensure delivery of good quality evaluations alongside focus on strengthening the role of its staff network on Monitoring and Evaluation.

Recommendation 16

FPI should,

- Put in place a mechanism to monitor implementation of the evaluation process to ensure that guidance is correctly applied and that the IT tool is used as intended across the Service.
- Ensure that the outcome of the evaluation activities is properly reported.

- Put in place and oversee the implementation of a system ensuring that the evaluation objectives of learning lessons and accountability are systematically monitored and achieved.

Audit on allocation of human resources in EU Delegations

Recommendation 3

FPI should,

- agree on a methodology that allows for comparisons of EUDs at global level
- select the subset of key indicators that will contribute to the workload assessment, to improve the efficiency of the data collection process (5).

Audit on controls over the financial management of CSDP.

Recommendation 3:

FPI should,

- Develop internal instructions to support its review of the progress and final reports by the Missions
- Revise the reporting requirements for the CSDP Missions.
- Clarify the reporting requirements and conditions for the items to be included in the statement of inventory in the progress and final reports, the reporting of donated equipment and purchased with previous Mandates' funds.
- Instruct the Missions to produce for the final report the required annexes on the fixed assets and transferred equipment and to request the external auditors to certify them.
- Request from the external auditors to describe and present the specific results of the performed physical inventory checks in the audit reports accompanying the final reports of the CSDP Missions.

Recommendation 5:

FPI should,

- Request from the auditors performing mandate audits to provide an audit opinion covering the functioning of the control systems and the assertions in the management declaration.
- Require from the external auditors to justify in the audit report the percentages of transactions that they decided to test and introduce a process of reliance on previous audit results for the ex-post audits.
- Take measures to address the delays encountered in the delivering of the mandate and ex-post audit reports (e.g. closer monitoring of deadlines).
- Present in a transparent manner the calculation and input figures used for the detected and residual error rate regarding the CFSP budget taking into account the treatment of the reported financial findings and the actual amounts to be recovered.

- Establish in the control strategy for the CSDP Mission a validation and approval mechanism for the cases when FPI does not implement (fully) financial audit findings and ensure that all such decisions are properly documented.

The IAS also finalised in 2024 an audit on the Antifraud strategy in FPI, which included neither very important nor critical recommendations.

For more information on IAS recommendations, see Annex 8.

European Court of Auditors

Reported	Audit Title	Accepted Recommendation	State of play in 2024	Impact on the assurance for 2024
2022	Statement of Assurance (DAS)	None	✓	✓
2023	Statement of Assurance (DAS)	None	✓	✓

European Court of Auditors (ECA)

The ECA 2023 Annual Report published in 2024 mentioned that the review of FPI's 2023 Annual Activity Report and the ECA checks on payments under FPI's responsibility in 2023 did not reveal any errors or shortcomings. Three transactions related to batches #1, 2, and 3 for the 2023 Statement of Assurance were audited in 2023 and 2024 resulting in no findings. In addition, a closure letter CL-74317 for the 2023 reliability of accounts audit was received on 16/07/2024 with no specific comments.

Nine transactions related to batches #1, 2, 3 and 4 for the 2024 Statement of Assurance were audited in 2024 and 2025. At the time of writing of this report (31/03/2025), only four transactions received a clearing letter, three resulted in no findings and one resulted in an intermediary clearing letter with two findings for which FPI disagrees with the ECA. The other five transactions were still being audited by the ECA. For more information, see Annex 8.

As regards Special Reports of the Court of Auditors, FPI was not involved in 2024 in any audit.

2.3 Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems

The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework based on the highest international standards. ⁽²⁷⁾

FPI has adapted the Internal Control Framework to its specific characteristics and organisational structure. The internal control systems are suited to achieving its policy and

⁽²⁷⁾ The Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission Internal Control Integrated Framework, the golden standard for internal control systems.

internal control objectives in accordance with the internal control principles, having due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

FPI has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that 'it is effective and the components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies were identified related to Internal control principle 12'.

FPI made significant progress in the implementation of the Internal Control Framework adopted by the Commission on 19 April 2017. To this end the following actions were undertaken:

- The updated internal control monitoring criteria, following an internal discussion and validation process with management were communicated to the HRVP and reported together with the Management Plan 2024.
- Risk analysis and updates of the FPI Risk Register were carried out in 2024. While remaining realistic, it took into account cost/benefit aspects to avoid disproportionate control measures, which may negatively impact the effectiveness, efficiency and smoothness of operations and thus budget execution.

Following the peer review held on 28 November 2024, FPI critical risk was updated in CENTRICS application under "Physical security".

Regarding the effectiveness of internal control and financial management, FPI considers that the control procedures put in place provide the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. This conclusion is supported by the results of ex-post controls presented in Section 2.1.1, above.

Concerning the overall state of the internal control system, FPI complies with the three assessment criteria for effectiveness, i.e. (a) staff having the required knowledge and skills, (b) systems and procedures designed and implemented to manage the key risks effectively and (c) no instances of ineffective controls that have exposed FPI to its key risks. In addition, further enhancing the effectiveness of FPI control arrangements in place, by considering any reported control weaknesses and exceptions, is an ongoing effort in line with the principle of continuous improvement of management procedures.

FPI performed a comprehensive assessment of effectiveness of internal control principles (ICP) for this report, using an Internal Control Assessment Tool (ICAT) survey re-designed in 2023. This facilitated addressing questions to both management and staff in a common survey more directed to participants and easier/faster to complete. Consequently, the survey had 43 questions. Overall, 64 staff and managers from Headquarters and Regional Teams were invited to complete the survey (compared to 64 last year); 42 persons replied (65%), compared to 41 last year (64%). Results indicate an overall effectiveness rate of 87%, which is quite stable compared to last year (85%). Further details are provided in Annex 8.

In addition, to further assess the effectiveness of the internal control systems, the 2024 AOSD reports of all 8 FPI Units, 76 EU Delegations and 5 Regional Teams managing FPI funds were analysed. No issues with potential impact on assurance were identified. The Statement of Assurance from the DG ECHO Director-General for a cross sub-delegation agreement was also received with no issues with potential impact on assurance.

Considering the results of the 2024 ICAT survey, the analysis of the implementation of action plans relative to the recommendations of the different audit bodies, the results of controls, the risk analysis performed in the context of the Management Plan and the management knowledge gained from daily operations, FPI concludes that its internal control system is effective and that the components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies were identified related to control activities through corporate policies and procedures (ICP#12).

2.4 Conclusions on the assurance

In conclusion, based on the elements reported above, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Head of Service, in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

2.5 Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned,

Head of Service for Foreign Policy Instruments

In my capacity as Authorising Officer by delegation

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view ⁽²⁸⁾.

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

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex-post controls, the work of the

(28) True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the DG/Executive Agency.

Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

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

Brussels, 31 March 2025

.....

(signature)

Peter M. WAGNER

3. MODERNISING THE ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Human resource management

During 2024, the Service received additional funds from EU Member States for the recruitment of five additional contract agents () to allow it to continue to fulfil its role of Administrator for the European Peace Facility assistance measures in the context of significantly increased funds allocated by the Member States to the Facility in response to global events since 2022. This led to the creation in March 2024 of a dedicated sector for financial and legal affairs linked to assistance measures within the EPF - Budget & Finance Unit (FPI.8).

As part of its efforts to continuously align the deployment of human resources with political priorities and related funding, the Service carried out a portfolio trend assessment. This involved consultation with the management, the Heads of Delegation concerned, and other inter-service interlocutors. As a result, a decision was made on a number of contract agents post movements, coming into effect during the year ⁽²⁹⁾, aligned with the overall mobility of staff in delegations. The exercise will be continued in 2025.

Further to the results of the 2023 staff survey, which were made public in April, the Service's internal communication in 2024 included increased communication with staff about major corporate initiatives, FPI-specific initiatives, and training opportunities. This was done via FPI intranet news, email messages to all staff and live online debriefs by the FPI Director.

A series of hybrid internal events were organised for staff in FPI HQ and Regional teams on a variety of subjects of general interest, in particular the General Assembly in April, focusing on the 2023 staff survey results, but also several brown bag lunches. In June, the spotlight was put on one aspect of the important work carried out by FPI staff in the form of a hybrid event on the European Peace Facility at mid-way. This served the dual purpose of raising awareness among Commission staff about the Service as an attractive workplace while also giving due visibility to this special instrument, whose importance grew significantly as a result of global conflicts, resulting in unforeseen levels of EU assistance measures.

In 2024, the Service continued to focus on staff wellbeing with the organisation of two dedicated well-being sessions for all FPI staff during the FPI days in March. In November, staff could again sign up for a presentation on ergonomics followed up by individual appointments for adjustment of office furniture. In terms of the physical wellbeing, additional office space was allocated to new HQ staff in the EEAS building and work continued to regroup staff to have teams working together, also sitting together on the same floor.

⁽²⁹⁾ Relocation of a total of four FG IV posts from China, India, Mexico and Pakistan to Australia, Thailand, Vienna and Ukraine, as well as creation of a new CA III post in Vienna and the suppression of a local agent (group 3) post in India."

A significant part of the learning and development budget was allocated to team events, in the form of unit events, joint team events or study visits aiming at strengthening team cohesion and cooperation.

The biggest staff event of the year was the 2024 “FPI Days” - a three-day in-person event, organised to allow all FPI staff at HQ and in Delegations to take time out from the daily work and come together in a series of reflection, knowledge-sharing, training and team-building events.

The FPI had set ambitious targets to keep staff engagement at the very high level reached in 2021 and to remain above the Commission average. However, the results of the 2023 staff survey, which were made public in April confirmed that FPI staff engagement had dropped back to a level largely on a par with the Commission average. The detailed results provided input for the discussions that were launched with staff at a General Assembly in April. The additional feedback received as well as from follow-up discussions at Unit level, together with the detailed staff survey results provided directions on where particular attention was needed. By October, an action plan was shared with staff, listing the actions – many of which already launched, and highlighting the top 5 priorities. In response to the staff survey results, the Service pursued its objective of offering continuous training and support for managers and developing the managers of the future via 360° evaluation for all managers, coaching for management duos and by encouraging and supporting participation of both managers and potential, future managers in the management development activities available to them in the Commission.

The Service remains committed to supporting the Commission’s objective of gender-balanced management. There were no vacancies for middle managers during 2024, which means that currently 5 out of 8 Heads of Unit are female as are 4 out of 8 Deputy Heads of Unit.

3.2 Digital transformation and information management

The main priority for FPI in 2024 was to provide for an effective hybrid working environment, as well as to offer support to staff to make the most of the digital tools available, especially in the context of the Welcome and M365 transition.

In terms of digital transformation, FPI is integrated into DG DIGIT's outreach to achieve the main objectives of the Digital Solutions Modernisation Plan (DSMP) and started the move towards alignment with the new Digital Strategy and its five strategic objectives.

A digital skills assessment conducted in the second half of 2024 indicated a high demand for collaborative digital workspaces and for better understanding of how to manage data, information, and content in such environments. This assessment ensures the provision of relevant training and reinforces FPI's digital culture—a cornerstone of successful digital transformation.

When it comes to IT and cybersecurity awareness, staff are encouraged to partake in online training to stay up to date on the latest trends and threats. In 2024, nearly 20% of staff in HQ participated in optional online cybersecurity training. Looking ahead to 2025, there are plans to organise an FPI-wide cybersecurity training for HQ staff and one at management level. At the technology infrastructure level, IT security plans are regularly updated and registered in GovIS.

The Service has been among the early adopters of M365, in particular Microsoft Teams and the staff uses it in daily workflows, thereby putting cloud-based collaboration into practice. The Service was also one of the earliest to migrate its local intranet to SharePoint Online, completing a full migration in Q2 2024.

Additionally, FPI streamlined the use of existing online cooperation and videoconferencing platforms to ensure the smooth communication flow within the Service, including with the Regional Teams, given the system differences that exist between the European Commission and the EEAS.

On FPI's external digital presence, FPI migrated its websites to the new version of the EWPP platform (Drupal 10) in 2023, which ensured an integrated web presence aligned to the corporate standards. In 2024, no new Drupal updates were required. In 2024, FPI continued to focus on aligning the platforms for which the Service is the owner to the accessibility standards of the European Commission in accordance with corporate guidelines.

FPI continued to implement data governance and data policies. In 2024, FPI organized internal awareness actions on data governance and updated its key data assets that are included in the Commission data catalogue, to achieve the 80% target by end 2024 for the implementation of corporate principles, as set out in the Rolling Action Plan from SG. FPI has one Local Data Correspondent who takes part in the LDC network and a Head of Unit who attends the Data Governance Board for the "RELEX family".

In terms of data protection, FPI, with its Data Protection Coordinator, continued to align its activities with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 (EU Data Protection Regulation) and the Commission's Data Protection Action Plan (C (2018) 7432), as reviewed by C (2020)7625. In 2024, FPI archived 3 records bringing the number of its published records to 12. To ensure that all staff embed data protection in their daily work, FPI continued to organise awareness raising activities, such as trainings, brown-bag discussions, publication of updated data protection related information on FPI intranet (EU data protection framework, templates, recommendations, prevention of data breaches and copyright policy). In 2024, FPI met the target of 100% awareness of all staff, as set out in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024. To meet this goal and in addition to the centralised data protection training offer, FPI organised 6 specific training sessions.

3.3 Sound environmental management

The FPI continually seeks to honour its pledge to reduce travel emissions by limiting missions and participants to the numbers strictly necessary and by supporting virtual and hybrid formats when possible.

Since the introduction of hybrid working methods, paperless workflows are the norm across the Service, resulting in a significant reduction in paper purchase since 2019³⁰. Being housed in the EEAS building, staff make use of the recycling facilities put at its disposal. Water fountains are available in the staff canteen and on each of the floors where FPI staff are located. In 2024 the installation of the water fountains was the subject of a dedicated intranet article.

The FPI prepared for moving to dynamic collaborative spaces in 2022. Since then no floor plans or concrete timeline have been presented by the EEAS who are in charge of the refitting of the building. Work is finished or ongoing in some floors housing EEAS staff.

30 For statistics relating to the EEAS building where FPI staff is housed, please refer to [Greening the EEAS | EEAS Intranet](#)

3.4 Examples of economy and efficiency

Rationalisation of reporting in FPI:

During 2024, the number of indicators for the Service's Results Framework have been reduced by 68% (from 512 to 166 indicators). This concrete work on simplification was inspired by Better Regulation, responding to an IAS audit of the FPI performance management framework of 2020. With this revised new performance framework, our implementing partners will have clearer, streamlined and more transparent means of reporting on results of EU investment in external action in the coming years.

In addition, further to a simplification of financial circuits, Heads of Delegations are no longer requested to prepare annual Authorising Officer by Sub-Delegation (AOSD) reports for contracts signed after 31 August 2024. Regional Teams prepared AOSD reports for Heads of Delegation as part of the 2024 reporting obligations, which resulted in a significant reduction of internal reporting burden for EU Delegations.

Centralised provision of expert advice on procurement, contractual, budgetary and financial matters, as well as provision of strategic equipment for CSDP missions:

To contribute to and assist the effective and efficient provision of administrative services common to civilian CSDP missions, the Mission Support Platform (MSP) was jointly established by FPI and the EEAS in 2016. In 2024, the MSP continues to support all CSDP missions, inter alia aiming to harmonise and simplify their operating procedures. In 2024, MSP continued managing three FPI framework contracts on strategic equipment (IT, medical and security equipment), rolling out the ambitious single IT solution Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) in two CSDP missions and giving daily advice, support, recommendations, checks and instructions on procurement, budgetary and financial matters, including via a dedicated Seminar on Finance and Procurement for CSDP missions.