



Strategic Plan 2016-2020*

European Political Strategy Centre
(EPSC)

*The current Commission's term of office runs until 31 October 2019. New political orientations provided by the incoming Commission for the subsequent period will be appropriately reflected in the strategic planning process.

Contents

PART 1. Strategic vision for 2016-2020.....	3
A. Mission statement.....	3
B. Operating context.....	3
C. Strategy	4
D. Key performance indicators (KPIs).....	5
PART 2. Organisational management.....	6
A. Human Resource Management.....	6
B. Financial Management: Internal control and Risk management.....	7
C. Better Regulation (only for DGs managing regulatory acquis)	8
D. Information management aspects.....	8
E. External communication activities.....	9

PART 1. Strategic vision for 2016-2020

A. Mission statement

The European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC) reports directly to the President the European Commission and operates under his authority. It is composed of a professional staff of advisers, policy analysts and support staff with appropriate experience and track record, in order to provide professional and targeted policy advice to the President and the College.

EPSC's core tasks are strategic analysis and policy advice for the President on matters related to the policy priorities as defined by the President in his political guidelines presented to the European Parliament on July 15 2014, and outreach to decision-makers, think tanks and civil society at large.

The EPSC provides support to the President also on concrete initiatives, as well as policy advice of more long-term nature (ref C(2014) 9001/2).

B. Operating context

The core purpose of the EPSC is to provide the President and the College with strategic analysis and forward-looking advice on the Commission's Ten Priorities¹ and its policy initiatives. Working across the spectrum of the President's Political Priorities, EPSC activities are or may be relevant for any Treaty obligations.

Institutionally, the President and his cabinet are the main interlocutors for the EPSC. Given its mandate to bridge silos and add value to and at the intersection of a number of priorities, and its agile and collaborative management structure, the EPSC engages in ad hoc cooperation with members of the College as well as other services. As part of the European Policy and Strategy Analysis System (ESPAS), the EPSC regularly engages with other EU Institutional partners: the European Parliament, the European Council, the European External Action Service, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee. Externally, think tanks, research institutes, and academia as well as analysts, thought leaders and policy practitioners are the key and regular counterparts to the EPSC, as the in-house think tank of the European Commission.

The EPSC actively supports the Commission's outreach by leading on engagement with think tanks, thought-leaders, decision-makers, and civil society at large. Representing the European Commission at the European Policy and Strategy Analysis – an EU inter-institutional collaboration with the European Parliament, the European External Action Service, and the European Council – the EPSC pursues a vision of management by foresight and anticipation, to make present policy choices resilient to future challenges and opportunities.

Among the EPSC's key advantages are:

- an explicit emphasis on creativity, innovation and out-of-the box thinking, true to the belief that a think tank has to push intellectual boundaries;*
- an interdisciplinary, cross-cutting approach, aiming to overcome policy silos and internal fragmentation;*
- a mandate to work in a collaborative spirit, both with internal and external actors, seeking to engage the best talents and solicit the most outstanding ideas.*

¹ As defined by President Jean-Claude Juncker in the political guidelines presented to the European Parliament on 15 July, 2014)

C. Strategy

The EPSC, given its direct link to the President and the College, is set to contribute and intellectually accompany virtually all Commission initiatives, across priorities and objectives.

The EPSC will contribute to the accomplishment of the above objective by striving to provide the President and the college with:

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

EPSC's "Intervention Logic"

The EPSC provides support to the ten priorities of the Commission President's Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change

The EPSC's "intervention logic" and unique value added to the European Commission's policymaking process are its "bird-eye" view on initiatives, its interdisciplinary and forward-looking nature and the intellectual freedom it is mandated with. The combination of these elements help the EPSC inject novel perspectives into policy processes; stress-test existing initiatives against future trends – with the aim of making them more sustainable and resilient; and strategically connect institutional and intellectual perspectives across Commission initiatives. The result is reduced duplication and increased coordination; a more comprehensive and innovative understanding of issues and formulation of responses; enhanced ability to anticipate future opportunities and align them with the Commission's strategic objectives.

In practice, the EPSC's intervention logic translates into written analytical output (such as the 'Strategic Notes' or its thematic newsletter) as well as regular outreach activities – internal and external – in the form of conferences, open discussions, seminars and debates.

The scope and direction of EPSC operations are of course closely related to the challenges that the President and the Commission are faced with, and the opportunities they wish to seize in the European interest.

Guided by its key advantages – creativity, innovation, inter-disciplinarity and collaboration – and with the support of a world-class team, the EPSC will endeavour to engage in initiatives through the entire policy cycle, from idea conception and first deliberations to implementation and follow-up. Meanwhile, the EPSC strives to clearly identify its competitive advantage vis-à-vis other in-house services and directorates, in an effort to add real value and unique insights, while avoiding duplication of -- or competition with -- other European Commission initiatives.

General objective 1 : To help achieve its overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard its assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents.	
Impact indicator: Trust in the European Commission	
Source of the data: Eurobarometer on Public Opinion in the European Union	
Baseline 2015	Target 2020
40% tend to trust	Increase
Impact indicator: Staff engagement index in the Commission	
Source of the data: European Commission	
Baseline 2014	Target 2020
65.3%	Increase
Specific objective 1.1 (definition): To provide the President with strategic analysis and policy advice related to the ten policy priorities set by the Commission	
Result indicator: Policy relevance of EPSC advice	
Source of data: system of immediate feedback from President or his cabinet and/or other Members of the College or their cabinets	
Baseline NA	Target 2020
NA	100%
Planned evaluations: yearly	
Result indicator: Timeliness and relevance of outreach activities (conferences, seminars, publications)	
Source of data: system of immediate feedback from President or his cabinet and/or other Members of the College or their cabinets / satisfaction surveys	
Baseline NA	Target 2020
NA	100%
Result indicator: Timeliness and relevance of papers and briefings sent to the President's Cabinet	
Source of data: system of immediate feedback from President or his cabinet	
Baseline NA	Target 2020
NA	100%

D. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

The EPSC will adopt a combination of quantitative and qualitative **key performance indicators (KPIs)**

- Policy relevance of EPSC advice, confirmed by the President, Vice-Presidents and their Cabinets
This indicator is related to specific objective 1.1 of the Strategic Plan and Management Plan
- The timeliness and relevance of successfully delivered outreach activities (events and seminars, papers published)
This indicator is related to specific objective 1.1. of the Management Plan
- The timeliness and relevance of papers and briefings sent to the President's cabinet
This indicator is related to specific objective 1.1. of the Management Plan

PART 2. Organisational management

A. Human Resource Management

To fulfil its mission, the EPSC requires a highly competent and motivated team within supportive working conditions. As the core business of the EPSC are of such nature that changes in political priorities have a huge impact, we must ensure the best possible match between staff competencies and service needs in order to have the right expertise at the right time.

While no target for percentage of female representation in middle management has been adopted for the EPSC, the management of the EPSC is committed to ensure gender balance across the service.

In the 2014 staff survey, 46,7% of staff (an higher score than the Commission's average) felt that the Commission cared about well-being and scored an impressive 77,9% on Staff Engagement index (the highest score in the Commission). Management of the EPSC strives to maintain this level with a hope for further improvements, notably on the first indicator.

Objective (mandatory): The DG deploys effectively its resources in support of the delivery of the Commission's priorities and core business, has a competent and engaged workforce, which is driven by an effective and gender-balanced management and which can deploy its full potential within supportive and healthy working conditions.	
Indicator 1: Percentage of female representation in middle management Source of data: DG HR	
Baseline NA	Target : The Commission has not adopted any target for the EPSC SEC(2015)336
Indicator 2: Percentage of staff who feel that the Commission cares about their well-being² Source of data: Commission staff survey	
Baseline (please indicate the year) > 46,7% (2014)	Target: Positive trend compared to baseline through 2016-2020 The EPSC will implement the "fit@work" Commission programme, notably by promoting a flexible, inclusive and engaging workplace through innovative co-working spaces and advanced digital solutions.
Indicator 3: Staff engagement index Source of data: Commission staff survey	
Baseline 77,9% (2014)	Target:80% through 2016-2020 To maintain the high level of the EPSC Staff Engagement Index

² This indicator may be replaced by a fit@work index on which DG HR is currently working.

B. Financial Management: Internal control and Risk management

Overarching objective: The Authorising Officer by Delegation should have reasonable assurance that resources have been used 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 including prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities.

The EPSC does not have a spending program and policy expenditure. The budget is only an administrative one covering conferences' organisation, missions, studies and communication costs. The annually authorised budget is generally around 800.000 €.

The control system is centralised in the Management and Resource Unit and the operational and financial verification functions are performed by the Finance team (staff with experience and know-how). The ex-ante control coverage is 100%, before the award of contract or authorisation of payment, which is preventing errors and non-compliance with the requirements of Financial Regulation. The overall cost of control is estimated to 50 % of a full time post, taking into account the segregation of tasks and the implementation of "four eyes principle".

There are no supervisory ex-post controls, but the Internal Control Coordinator is reviewing the exceptions or non-compliance events to ICS 8, in order to detect potential weakness of internal control.

In total the costs of control represents approximately 12 % of the expenditure, but the quantifiable benefits are very difficult to evaluate and are mainly of qualitative nature due to the risk of reputational damage to be underlined in the particular case of EPSC.

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

Indicator 1 (mandatory): Estimated residual error rate³

Where necessary specific residual error rates would be calculated for each programme managed or for expenditure with a common risk profile.

Source of data: 2015

Baseline	Target
2,00 %	Error rate in payments to be equal or less than 2,00 %

Indicator 2 (mandatory): Estimated overall amount at risk for the year for the entire budget under the DGs responsibility.

Source of data: 2015

Baseline	Target
9.345 €	none

Indicator 3 (mandatory): Estimated future corrections

Source of data: 2015

Baseline	Target
514 €	none

³ For the definition, see the first annex to the AAR instructions 2014 "Key definitions for determining amounts at risk" at <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/budgweb/EN/rep/aar/Documents/aar-standing-instructions.pdf>.

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

DGs are requested to reach a conclusion on cost effectiveness of controls. *The indicator n°1 below is a mandatory indicator, which needs to be supported by additional reliable indicators. DG's have the choice between either a) comparing costs and benefits or b) calculating the cost of controls over expenditure that could be compared with a reference, (overall cost of control per distinct control system). One of the two methods can be followed.*

Indicator 1 (mandatory): conclusion reached on cost effectiveness of controls

Source of data: 2015

Baseline (2014-2015)	Target
Yes	Yes

Indicator 2: Total cost of controls/all expenditure executed during the year (payments made)

Objective 3 (mandatory): Minimisation of the risk of fraud through application of effective anti-fraud measures, integrated in all activities of the DG, based on the DG's anti-fraud strategy (AFS) aimed at the prevention, detection and reparation of fraud.

Indicator 1 (mandatory – information available in DG's AFS): Updated anti-fraud strategy of EPSC, elaborated on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF⁴

Source of data:

Baseline	Interim Milestone	Target
Updated in 2015	NA	May be revised on the basis of the results of the risk assessment exercise

C. Better Regulation (only for DGs managing regulatory acquis)

N/A

D. Information management aspects

Objective (mandatory): Information and knowledge in your DG is shared and reusable by other DGs. Important documents are registered, filed and retrievable

Indicator 1 (mandatory – data to be provided by DG DIGIT): Percentage of registered documents that are not filed⁵ (ratio)

Source of data: *Hermes-Ares-Nomcom (HAN)⁶ statistics*

This result is quite positive, considering that EPSC colleagues are almost all newcomers, with no knowledge at all of Ares and document management in the Commission in general. Initiatives (document management strategy, individualised trainings, technical memos available on the common drive, etc.) will be put in place to try to reach the target set by the Commission rules in this matter.

Baseline: 2015	Target:2020
3,91%	0%

⁴The methodology can be found on the FPDNet website: <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/serv/en/fraud-prevention/ToolBox/Documents/Methodology%20and%20guidance%20for%20DGs%20anti-fraud%20strategies.pdf>. In particular paragraph 3 of the methodology is relevant.

⁵ Each registered document must be filed in at least one official file of the *Chef de file*, as required by the [e-Domec policy rules](#) (and by ICS 11 requirements). The indicator is to be measured via reporting tools available in Ares.

⁶ Suite of tools designed to implement the [e-Domec policy rules](#).

Indicator 2 (mandatory - data to be provided by DG DIGIT): Percentage of HAN files readable/accessible by all units in the DG

Source of data: *HAN statistics*

The filing plan of EPSC is composed of a majority of sensitive administrative files (HR, financial management, audit, etc.), that cannot be opened to the rest of the service. The "thematic" files (i.e. the files with policy content) are open to the whole service, but their proportion is quite small, compared to the number of administrative files (156 files in total for EPSC, 46 thematic files => 29.5%). As the creation of the files are centralised at the DMO level, a systematic check will be performed as to the content of the files, to see whether it should be open to the whole service or restricted to a number of users.

Baseline: 2015	Target: 2020
38.85%	30%

Indicator 3 (mandatory data to be provided by DG DIGIT): Number of HAN files shared with other DGs

Source of data: *HAN statistics*

The number of files open to other services is quite limited (7 out of 156, i.e. 4.48%). In the future, EPSC could consider to share the "thematic" files (i.e. with policy content) with other services involved in the issues tackled by EPSC, for instance, the Cabinet of the President and / or services and / or Cabinets involved (SG, ECFIN, HOME, EMPL, CLIMA, etc.). A regular check of the content of the files will be performed, in order to analyse the possibility to open the file to other services of the Commission sharing the same interest in the matter.

Baseline: 2015	Target: 2020
4.48%	30%

E. External communication activities

Objective (mandatory): Citizens perceive that the EU is working to improve their lives and engage with the EU. They feel that their concerns are taken into consideration in European decision making and they know about their rights in the EU.

Indicator 1 (mandatory): Percentage of EU citizens having a positive image of the EU

EPSC will engage in outreach efforts to communicate and promote the policy initiatives of the Commission during its mandate, especially in the academia and think tank environment.

Definition: Eurobarometer measures the state of public opinion in the EU Member States. This global indicator is influenced by many factors, including the work of other EU institutions and national governments, as well as political and economic factors, not just the communication actions of the Commission. It is relevant as a proxy for the overall perception of the EU citizens. Positive visibility for the EU is the desirable corporate outcome of Commission communication, even if individual DGs' actions may only make a small contribution.

Source of data: Standard Eurobarometer (DG COMM budget) [*monitored by DG COMM [here](#)*].

Baseline: November 2014	Target: 2020
Total "Positive": 39% Neutral: 37 % Total "Negative": 22%	Positive image of the EU ≥ 50%