



2019

Annual Activity Report

**I.D.E.A. - Inspire,
Debate, Engage and
Accelerate Action
(this AAR refers to
the activities of the
former EPSC)**



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THE DG IN BRIEF

On 1 of December 2019, the European Political Strategy Centre was renamed I.D.E.A. (Inspire, Debate, Engage and Accelerate Action), with a new mission, tasks and structure (P(2019)5 – Communication from the President to the Commission). This Annual Activity Report refers to the activities of the former EPSC.

The **European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC)** was the European Commission's **in-house think tank**, established in November 2014 by European Commission's President Jean-Claude Juncker. The EPSC operated directly under his authority in accordance with the Communication C(2014) 9001 final of 6 November 2014 on "the European Political Strategy Centre: Mission, Tasks and Organisation Chart".

Tasked with a mission to innovate and disrupt, the EPSC provided the President and the College of Commissioners with strategic, evidence-based analysis and forward-looking policy advice on matters related to the policy priorities as defined by the President in his political guidelines presented to the European Parliament on 15 July 2014.

Powered by its highly versatile and experienced team, the EPSC provided a unique space within the European Commission for conducting **interdisciplinary analysis, collaborative projects** and organising **thought-provoking seminars and events**. The EPSC staff combined a unique set of perspectives and skills: public and private sector experience, data visualisation and design, financial expertise and legal advice, social media savviness and political acumen.

2019 was a particularly challenging year for the European Political Strategy Centre. Being in the last year of its mandate, the Commission's in-house think tank pro-actively assisted in the delivery of the political agenda as outlined by the President in his 2018 State of the Union address.

DG EPSC supported the work of the Commission by bringing its know-how through:

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

DG EPSC focused on the delivery of strategic policy advice and outreach activities, which was accompanying the on-going reflection and policy-making for the Europe of tomorrow.

The innovative way of functioning in DG EPSC has proved its efficiency. The "management by projects" is indeed one of the key of its success. The interdisciplinary approach proved particularly useful in the development of the new initiative "EPSC Leadership Academy" with the objective of building up a dynamic network of young think tankers. The first workshop took place in October 2018 and a second one was organised in February 2019. The EPSC produced a report submitted to the President of the European Commission and to all the Commission's Directors-General as a contribution to prepare the Informal meeting of Heads of State or Government in Sibiu on 9 May 2019.

The theme of European Sovereignty put forward in President Juncker's 2018 State of the Union speech was the guiding logic to all EPSC projects in 2019, which were designed to respond to the EU important challenges. At the same time, a large part of our research in 2019 was anchored on the concept of the European Public Goods and Strategic Autonomy.

While building on the work of the EPSC, I.D.E.A. will support President von der Leyen as an Advisory Hub, with a more inward way of working. The new structure has been organised around matters related to the policy priorities as defined by the President in her Political Guidelines "A Union that strives for more":

- Geopolitics and Europe in the Global Order,
- Green Deal,
- Digital, Technology, and Innovation,
- Social Market Economy,
- The Future of Europe and the EU's institutions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Activity Report is a management report of the Head of DG I.D.E.A. (former EPSC) 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 Treaties¹.

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

a) Key results and progress towards the achievement of the Commission's general objectives and DG's specific objectives (executive summary of section 1)

Throughout 2019, DG EPSC continued to be very closely involved in the strategy development and policy design within the European Commission, underpinned by sound, evidence-based and non-conventional analysis and foresight. We delivered the big majority of outputs as set in the 2019 Management Plan, while adding many additional deliverables not foreseen at the beginning of the year under EPSC's specific objectives.

As planned, DG EPSC also steered and supported the development of inter-institutional foresight and anticipation capabilities culminating with the 2019 ESPAS (European Strategy and Policy Analysis System) report "**Global Trends to 2030 - Challenges and Choices for Europe**" and the annual High-Level Conference devoted to "Global Trends to 2030 – Challenges and Choices for Europe" (14-15 October 2019).

The following activities also deserve a special mention:

- The second edition of the **EPSC Leadership Academy**, which was a flagship workshop with the aim of building up a dynamic network of young think tankers, researchers, community leaders and other change-makers coming from the 27 Member States around the topics of Future of Europe (19-22 February 2019);

- The High-Level Conference "**Reviving Long-Term Growth in the European Union**" (4 July 2019);

- The High-Level Conference "**Connecting Europe and Asia: Building blocks for an EU strategy. Europa Connectivity Forum**" (27 September 2019);

The variety of EPSC contributions continued to show the unique added value of the Commission's think tank to the policy process but also its agility and responsiveness to the on-demand nature of President's Cabinet's way of working, thanks to its inter-disciplinary nature and close links to the political priorities. Even though this way of working meant a difficulty to plan comprehensively on all the outputs EPSC would be called to deliver on, the set targets were completed with full satisfaction from the Commissioners and Cabinets involved.

b) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Policy relevance of EPSC advice confirmed by the President, Vice-Presidents and their Cabinets	No quantitative target defined		Full satisfaction of the President and his Cabinet (very positive regular feedback expressed orally during regular meetings and in e-mails).
Timeliness and relevance of successfully delivered outreach activities (events, seminars, papers published)	No quantitative target defined		Alignment of outreach activities with the timeline/calendar defined in the Commission Work Programme – ex ante activities to prepare for an adoption of a strategy/package of proposals/consultation etc.
Timeliness and relevance of papers and briefings sent to the President's Cabinet	No quantitative target defined		Alignment of substantial outputs with the timeline/calendar of high-level events or College agenda (e.g. Summits).
Sound Financial Management	Baseline (2014-2015)	Target	Latest value
1) Execution rate of the administrative budget	64% in commitments 55 % in payments	75% in both commitment and payments	34.58%* in commitment appropriations and 32.73%** in payment appropriations
2) Number of days for payments' execution per year	9 days	≤ 15 days	9.6 days
3) Conclusion on efficiency and reliability	Yes	Yes	Yes (see comments on the latest known results in the part 2 Organisational Management and Internal Control)

**Following the changes made in the Annex 3 (financial reporting) in 2020, committed appropriations for the missions and experts are not part of the EPSC commitment execution, but are part of the PMO committed appropriations, which does not allow a comparison with the baseline and target defined in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020. For further explanation, please refer to part 2 point 2.1.1*

***Following the changes made in the Annex 3 (financial reporting) since 2018, consumed payment appropriations for the missions are not part of the EPSC payment execution, but are part of the PMO payment execution, which does not allow a comparison with the baseline and target defined in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020. For further explanation, please refer to part 2 point 2.1.1*

c) Key conclusions on Financial management and Internal control (executive summary of section 2.1)

In accordance with the governance arrangements of the European Commission, the staff of DG EPSC conducted its operations in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, working in an open and transparent manner and meeting the expected high level of professional and ethical standards.

To ensure the achievement of policy and management objectives, the Commission has adopted a set of internal control principles, based on international good practice. The Financial Regulation requires that the organisational structure and the internal control systems used to implement the budget be set up in accordance with these principles. DG EPSC has assessed its internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that they are effective and the necessary components and principles are present and functioning as intended.

In addition, DG EPSC has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, including those for supervising 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. Please refer to Section 2.1 for further details.

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

d) Provision of information to the Commissioner

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the DG and the President's Cabinet on management matters, also the main elements of this report and assurance declaration have been brought to the attention of the President's Cabinet.

1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND DG'S SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

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

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

Related to spending programme(s): N/A

The presentation of DG EPSC's outputs is based on the definition of projects, which were designed to respond to its specific role of the internal Commission's think tank encouraging open, collaborative and inter-disciplinary ways of working. All projects are presented according to the European Commission's priorities, General Objective(s) and specific Objective(s) with the exception of those that have been classified as "horizontal" due to their impact on several Commission's priorities.

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

The non-exhaustive outputs presented below refer to the 2019 Management Plan based on the 10 priorities of President Juncker.

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

The EPSC teams have contributed to the discussion on the right climate for innovation and investment in Europe to help create industries and jobs to tackle societal and environmental challenges and improve people's well-being.

The Renewed Industrial Policy Strategy for Europe as well as the Circular Economy Action Plan served as a reference. DG EPSC has contributed extensively to the discussion on the sustainable European future (with a 2025 perspective).

Main outputs in 2019:

Policy-related outputs

Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
Europe as an Investment Destination			
- Written inputs to the Communication on the Investment Plan	Delivery	Q1 – Q2	Target dropped – changed external circumstances
- Outreach to relevant external experts			Target dropped – changed external circumstances
Innovation/Competitiveness			
- Productivity – follow-up to work launched in 2018: Outreach events with experts, strategic notes	Delivery	Q1 – Q2	“EU Industrial Policy after Siemens-Alstom: Finding a new balance between Openness and Protection” published on 18 March 2019
Events not foreseen in the MP 2019	Organisation	Q3	High-Level Conference “Reviving Long-Term Growth in the European Union: the Role of Productivity – Enhancing Policies” Date: 4 July 2019 Roundtable on “Addressing the Productivity Puzzle” Date: 5 July 2019

1.2 COMMISSION PRIORITY: A CONNECTED DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

DG EPSC supported the work of the Commission in completing the Digital Single Market by looking at the challenges and opportunities coming from innovation and technological developments, with a focus on artificial intelligence and digital platforms. A particular attention was given to social media and disinformation. Raising awareness about the cyber security threat as well as reflecting about ways to counter it were high on our agenda.

Main outputs in 2019:			
Policy-related outputs			
Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
Technological Developments			
- Policy briefs	Organisation	Q1 – Q2	<p>Policy Brief: “Cybersecurity Regulation and International Trade: A Policy Challenge” Date: 31 January 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: “5G and Digital Infrastructure: What drives the Geo-politisation of Technology?” Date: 31 January 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: “Fighting Financial Crime and Cyber Attacks: How to achieve a step change in Delivery” Date: 12 February 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: “Block Chain Technology: Opportunity or Hype?” Date: 14 March 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: “Disrupt the Disruptors: Challenging Advertising Business Model” Date: 27 March 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief :“Effective knowledge and technology transfer: Lessons from Stanford University” Date: 2 May 2019</p> <p>Expert Workshop: “Data Access for Research: addressing information gaps in the Digital Age” Date: 29 June 2019</p>
- Contribution to Commission policy initiative on the development of the AI in Europe	Delivery	Q1 – Q2	“The Future of Work? Work of the Future! On how artificial intelligence, robotics and automation are transforming jobs and the economy in Europe” published on 3 May 2019

Online Disinformation			
- Policy briefs	Organisation	Q1 – Q2	<p>Policy Brief “Using Digital Forensics to Combat Disinformation in the EP Elections” Date: 13 March 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: “Preventing a MEUller Report: The European Parliament Election and Foreign Interference” Date: 8 May 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: “Disinformation Campaigns in European Elections: the “New Normal in Democracies” Date: 11 July 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: “Foreign Interference in Europe and Russia’s Internet Research Agency: A first In-Depth Analysis” Date: 17 July 2019</p>
- Contribution to Commission policy initiative/Action Plan on disinformation	Delivery	Q1 – Q2	Target dropped – changed external circumstances
Competition in the digital field / Digital Strategic Autonomy			
- Policy papers	Delivery	Q1 – Q2	“Rethinking Strategic Autonomy in the Digital Age published on 18 July 2019
- Outreach activities – public speaking engagements	Active participation	Q1 – Q3	Throughout the year, by the EPSC staff, in Brussels and across the Member States
- Event not foreseen in the 2019 MP	Organisation		Event “China’s Long-Term Digital Strategy: What does it mean for Europe?” Date: 14 May 2019

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

DG EPSC played a crucial role in working towards the delivery of our commitments needed to make the modernisation of the European economy a reality while ensuring a socially fair transition.

Main outputs in 2019:			
Policy-related outputs			
Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
Energy Union and Modernisation of the Economy			
- Contribution to Commission's papers	Delivery	Q1- Q2	Support to the services and the political level in the preparation of the long-term strategy "Clean Planet for All"
- Policy paper not foreseen in the 2019 MP	Delivery		"Europe's Sustainability Puzzle – Broadening the Debate" published on 8 April 2019
- Ad-hoc events	Organisation	Q1- Q2	<p>High-Level Event "Clean Planet for all: Delivering Together" Date: 7 February 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: "Paris Peace Forum: Shaping Solutions for Global challenges with EU support" Date: 21 March 2019</p> <p>Workshop "Roadmap for Decarbonised Gas Grids and European Hybrid Energy Infrastructure" Date: 2 July 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: "Climate Action and Industrial Strategy: Opportunities for Europe's Economic Leadership" Date: 11 July 2019</p> <p>High-Level Workshop "From Words to Action: How Can EU Policy Drive Sustainability Transitions" Date: 10 September 2019</p>

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

EPSC projects continued to focus on competitiveness, innovation, digitalisation and industrial transformation. They contributed to the work leading to the completion of the Capital Market Union with a view to ensuring easier access to finance for business and to supporting investment in the real economy.

Main outputs in 2019:			
Policy-related outputs			
Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
Future-oriented Single Market			
- Ad-hoc policy briefs	Organisation	Q1 – Q2	High-Level Policy Roundtable: “Competitive Europe: Raising Economic Growth and Achieving Europe’s Potential in the Fourth Industrial Revolution” Date: 15 May 2019

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

DG EPSC continued its work on the EMU strengthening. Projects under this heading are obviously also linked with the preceding priority around the Single Market. Completing the Banking Union together with the Capital Market Union constituted a separate pillar of work. DG EPSC continued bringing its value added in the discussions about the structural reforms and convergence attracting the attention of policy-makers to the micro level of the economy. This work also took place with a 2025 perspective.

Main outputs in 2019:			
Policy-related outputs			
Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
Strengthening EMU			
- Ad-hoc policy briefs around the Communication on the internalisation of the euro	Organisation	Q1 – Q2	Expert Brainstorming “Secular Stagnation and Fiscal Policy Implications in the EU” Date: 8 July 2019
- Contribution to Commission internal reflection papers	Delivery	Q1 – Q2	Target dropped – due to changed external circumstances

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

DG EPSC has been involved in the discussion on preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union. The DG contributed to reach out to external expertise in the field of rule of law and on democracy.

Main outputs in 2019:			
Policy-related outputs			
Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
Security Union			
- Ad-hoc events	Organisation/ Availability of in-house expertise/ reach out to external expertise	Q1 – Q4	High-Level Hearing: “The Rule of Law within the Union” Date: 5 June 2019 High-Level Dinner: “The Rule of Law within the Union” Date: 5 June 2019

1.7. COMMISSION PRIORITY: TOWARDS A NEW POLICY ON MIGRATION

The EPSC continued being involved in the discussion on a more effective and sustainable migration management. The DG contributed to monitoring and identifying trends, including in the field of demographic changes.

Main outputs in 2019:			
Policy-related outputs			
Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
European Agenda on Migration			
- Public speaking engagement and outreach	Active Participation	Q1 – Q2	Extensive outreach by the Adviser on Migration and Demography
- Policy notes	Availability of in-house expertise	Q1 – Q2	Target dropped – due to changed external circumstances
- Policy briefs on legal migration	Organisation	Q1 – Q2	Policy Brief: “At a crossroads: the State and Future of Immigration Policy in the EU and Beyond” Date: 26 June 2019

1.8. COMMISSION PRIORITY: EUROPE AS A STRONGER GLOBAL ACTOR

DG EPSC continued playing a central role in all work streams towards a stronger Europe in defence. This included: the advancement of the European Defence Union, the implementation of the Europe Defence Action Plan in general, and more specifically the operationalization of the European Defence Industrial Development Programme and the development of the proposal for a European Defence Fund 2021-2027. It also contributed to the implementation of the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy, conceptual work streams on European Strategic Autonomy and the Commission's proposals on Qualified Majority Voting in Common Foreign and Security Policy. Outreach, along and in conjunction with relevant portfolio holders, to Member States, European Parliament and other key stakeholders for matters related to the European Defence initiatives, but also on key foreign policy priorities – e.g. transatlantic relations, EU-China, Western Balkans and Africa - constituted an important part of the EPSC activities in this field. In addition, the EPSC has taken on an additional focus area with the appointment of a Senior Adviser for Arctic Policy.

Main outputs in 2019:			
Policy-related outputs			
Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
European Defence			
- EPSC High-Level Speakers Series	Organisation	Q1 – Q2	<p>"Modern Deterrence: Building Societal Resilience Against Hybrid Warfare" Date: 29 January 2019</p> <p>"Intelligence Threat Assessment: China's Military Online Disinformation and the Biotech Revolution" Date: 21 March 2019</p>
- Policy papers and notes	Delivery	Q1 – Q2	"Joining Forces: the Way towards the European Defence Union" published on 14 February 2019
- Public speaking engagements and outreach	Active participation	Q1 – Q4	Extensive engagements throughout the year by the EPSC deputy Head and the entire Foreign Affairs team

Foreign policy priorities			
- Policy notes and papers	Delivery: EPSC policy-related contributions	Q1 – Q2	<p>“Strong Europe, Better World: Defending Global Cooperation, Multilateralism and Democracy in Turbulent Times” published on 22 January 2019</p> <p>“Walking on Thin Ice: A Balanced Arctic Strategy for the EU” published on 18 July 2019</p>
- EPSC speakers series on geopolitics and policy briefs	Organisation	Q1 – Q2	<p><u>Speakers Series on Africa:</u></p> <p>“Towards a New Relationship between Africa and Europe: What Role for food and farming?” Date: 15 January 2019</p> <p>“Africa and the EU: A new alliance or worlds apart” Date: 20 March 2019</p> <p><u>High-Level Speaker Series on Geopolitics:</u></p> <p>“China, the EU and the Liberal Order: what to expect?” Date: 16 January 2019</p> <p>“Europe, America First and World Order” Date: 14 February 2019</p> <p>“Ukraine, Russia and the Future of Europe: Managing a Geopolitical Thicket” Date: 27 June 2019</p> <p><u>Other events:</u></p> <p>High-Level <u>Seminar</u> on “An Ambitious EU Arctic Policy: Where Next ?” Date: 30 January" 2019</p> <p>High-Level Policy <u>Roundtable</u> “Influential Europe: Stepping up Europe’s Leadership and Upholding European Values in a Multipolar World” Date: 15 May 2019</p> <p><u>Policy briefs:</u></p> <p>“Revitalising Multilateral Governance at the WTO: How to Move Forward?” Date: 5 February 2019</p> <p>“US vs China – A New Front in the Trade War?” Date: 22 February 2019</p> <p>“Paris Peace Forum: Shaping Solutions for Global challenges with EU support” Date: 21 March 2019</p>

	Organisation	Q3	<p>"The EU and the Eastern Partnership: Taking Stock of Political Change in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova" Date: 18 October 2019</p> <p>"The Quest for European Strategic Sovereignty: Strengthening Member States' capacity to act in the 21st century" Date: 5 September 2019</p> <p>High-Level Conference: "EU-Asia Connectivity" 27 September 2019</p> <p>"A whole of society approach to development cooperation" Date: 5 April 2019</p>
- Public speaking engagements and outreach	Active participation	Q1 - Q2	Extensive engagement by the EPSC deputy Head and the entire Foreign Affairs team

1.9. HORIZONTAL PROJECTS

Main outputs in 2019:			
Policy-related outputs			
Description	Indicators	Target date	Current State of Play
EPSAS Global Trends and Strategic Foresight			
- ESPAS Young Talent Network training on strategic foresight	Organisation	Q1 – Q4	Target dropped – due to changing external developments
- Launch of the new ESPAS Global Trends to 2030 Report and roll-out events	Organisation	Q1 – Q4	Global Trends to 2030: Challenges and Choices for Europe published on 8 April 2019
- Ad-hoc (high-level) events	Organisation	Q1 – Q4	ESPAS High-Level Conference “Challenges and Choices for Europe” Date: 14 October 2019
- Events with ESPAS and international partners	Outreach Organisation	Q1 – Q4	ESPAS/Columbia University: joint seminar on “Global Trends to 2030: Challenges and choices confronting policy-makers”, 19-20 February 2019, New York City, USA Adviser on Strategic Foresight – Visiting Research Fellow on Foresight at Singapore Civil Service College, July 2019 ESPAS+ EU4Sight Workshop with Centre for Strategic Futures, Prime Minister’s Office, Singapore, 5 July 2019
- Public speaking and outreach engagements	Active participation	Q1 – Q4	Delivered by the EPSC Head, the two deputy Heads and the Adviser on Strategic Foresight
European Public Goods			
- Ad-hoc policy briefs	Organisation	Q1-Q2	Target dropped – due to changing external developments
- Contribution to notes	Delivery	Q1-Q2	Contribution to internal briefings and reflection notes
- Strategic notes	Delivery	Q1	“Delivering on European Common Goods – Strengthening Member States’ Capacity to act in the 21 st Century” published on 3 May 2019

Sustainable Development Goals			
-High-Level Conference	Organisation	March 2019	"Europe's Sustainability Puzzle: Broadening the Debate" Date: 8 April 2019
Future of the EU Budget			
-Outreach activities: public speaking engagements and missions to EU Member States	Active participation	On going	Extensive engagement throughout the year by the EPSC Adviser on the Multiannual Financial Framework
EU Enlargement			
High-Level event not foreseen in the 2019 MP	Organisation	Q2	Conference on the "15th Anniversary of the 2004 EU enlargement: Looking back, looking forward", co-organised with DG ECFIN. Date: 8-9 April 2019, Vienna and Bratislava
EPSC Leadership Academy			
-TT27 Leadership Academy	Organisation Delivery	Q1	Workshops' dates: 19-22 February 2019 Information Brochure: "Leadership Academy"

Revitalising Democracy in Europe				
-Ad-hoc policy briefs	Organisation	Q1-Q2	Democracy series: "Is the Crisis of Democracy an Invention?" Date: 25 January 2019 "The Geography of Discontent in Europe" Date: 21 February 2019 "Polarisation: What's dividing Europeans?" Date: 8 March 2019 "The role of Media in Democracy: Towards Sustainable Business Models in the Age of Online Platforms" Date: 2 April 2019 "Trend4EU: What is troubling Europe's Middle Class?" Date: 15 May 2019 "The Rise of the Extremes and Anti-System Parties: A Game Changer in the Next Policy Cycle?" Date: 21 May 2019 "What keeps people up at Night? Social and Economic Risks that matter" Date: 25 June 2019 "What did Europeans say at the ballot box? Connecting the Strategic Agenda with Citizens" Date: 15 July 2019	
-Notes and papers	Delivery	Q4	"10 Trends Shaping Democracy in a Volatile World" published on 31 October 2019	
Road to Sibiu: Delivering by 2025				
-Outreach activities on the Commission's work on the Union of 27: public speaking engagements and missions to EU Member States	Active participation	Q1 - Q2	Extensive outreach by the EPSC staff concentrated in the first half of the year	
-Publication not foreseen in the 2019 MP	Delivery		"A Union that delivers: Making Use of the Lisbon Treaty's Passerelle Clauses", published on 14 January 2019	

In addition to the deliverables foreseen in the 2019 Management Plan, the EPSC got also involved in a series of projects that were difficult to foresee last year. Many of them are the result of an assessment or a response to the political developments in Europe. They are also of horizontal and cross-policy nature and hence included in a separate table below.

Example of events and publications not foreseen in the 2019 Management Plan		
Events	Organisation	
		<p>Roundtable: "Islam in Europe next steps" Date: 4 March 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: "Where is Central Europe Heading? Five Scenarios for 2025" Date: 28 March 2019</p> <p>Informal Brainstorming: "Towards an Economy of Wellbeing: How the Finnish Presidency can Drive it Forwards" Date: 28 March 2019</p> <p>High-Level Dinner: "A new Manifesto for Europe: Shaping a More Innovative, Inclusive and Prosperous Future" Date: 15 May 2019</p> <p>High-Level Event: "Long Game or Long Gone? The Threat of Resurgent Terrorism in Europe" Date: 20 May 2019</p> <p>High-Level Policy Dinner: "Has the Juncker Commission Delivered?" Date: 22 May 2019</p> <p>Policy Brief: "Addressing the challenge Ahead: Ensuring Equity and Future Prosperity in Europe" Date: 28 May 2019</p> <p>Brainstorming session with Think Tanks: "The next Strategic Agenda for the EU: Challenges and Opportunities Ahead" Date: 11 June 2019</p>

2. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

This section explains *how* the DG delivered the achievements described in the previous section. It is divided into two subsections.

The first subsection reports the control results and other relevant information that supports management's assurance on the achievement of the financial management and internal control objectives². It includes any additional information necessary to establish that the available evidence is reliable, complete and comprehensive. It covers all activities, programmes and management modes relevant to the DG.

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

² Art 36.2 FR: a) effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; b) reliability of reporting; c) safeguarding of assets and information; d) prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and e) adequate management of risks relating to the legality and regularity of underlying transactions

2.1 Financial management and internal control

Assurance is an objective examination of evidence for the purpose of providing an assessment of the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

This examination is carried out by management, who monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis, and by internal and external auditors. The results are explicitly documented and reported to the Director-General. These are:

- The monthly financial reports from the Authorising Officers by Sub-Delegation;
- The contribution by the Director in charge of Risk Management and Internal Control, including the results of internal monitoring at DG level;
- The reports on recorded exceptions, non-compliance events;
- The limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control, and the observations and recommendations reported by the Internal Audit Service (IAS).

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

This section is for reporting the control results and other relevant elements that support management's assurance. It is divided among the following sections: (a) Control results, (b) Audit observations and recommendations, (c) Effectiveness of internal control systems, and (d) Conclusions on the assurance.

2.1.1 Control results

This section is for reporting and assessing the elements identified by management which support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives³. The DG's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in AAR Annex 4. Annex 5 outlines the main risks together with the control processes to mitigate them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the relevant control systems.

DG EPSC had a portfolio of activities that represented low risk in financial management. Nevertheless, the reputational risk had to be taken into consideration as it operated directly under the President's authority. The budget consisted only of administrative credits (global envelop) covering outreach activities such as conferences' organisation, reflection papers and missions.

The authorised budget for 2019 was **745,116 EUR**, with an increase compared to 2018 reflecting the activities of an hors-class adviser for Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Labour working with President Juncker as well as a high-level event on EU-Asia connectivity with an initially large expected number of non-EU guests.

³ 1) Effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; 2) *reliability of reporting*; 3) *safeguarding of assets and information*; 4) prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and 5) adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments (FR Art 36.2). The 2nd and/or 3rd Internal Control Objective(s) (ICO) only when applicable, given the DG's activities.

The Management and Resources Unit has centralised the entire financial management with a fully centralised financial workflow model.

The summary table below details the different types of expenditure split into 2 main categories: (i) expenses related to public procurement procedures and (ii) other expenses such as mission's costs sub-delegated to PMO, which are not part of the EPSC payment execution. The public procurement procedures are mainly linked to the use of framework contracts, which facilitate the events' organisation, or to the preparation of low value negotiated procedures (below 15,000 EUR) for reflection papers on specific topics.

Expenditure type linked to Procurement	Consumed Payments Appropriations
Admin Budget	237,644
Subtotal Procurement	237,644
Expenditure type non Procurement	Consumed Payments Appropriations
Representation costs	133
Missions costs (subdelegation PMO)	218,708.66*
Ad-hoc Experts (subdelegation PMO)	4457.21*
Subtotal non Procurement	133
GRAND TOTAL	237,777
C8 Payment Appropriations carried forward	69,145
C4 Internal assigned revenue	0
TOTAL BUDGET 2019	306,922

* Consumed payment appropriations for the missions and Ad-hoc Experts are not part of the EPSC payment execution but are part of the PMO execution.

The total amount of payment appropriations made in 2019 - as reflected in Annex 3 - is equal to **306,922 EUR**, covering mainly conferences' expenses and events as no reflection paper was requested in the last year of the President's mandate. It is important to emphasize the fact that this amount does not take into account the payment of 218,708.66 EUR for missions sub-delegated to PMO but fully managed and controlled by

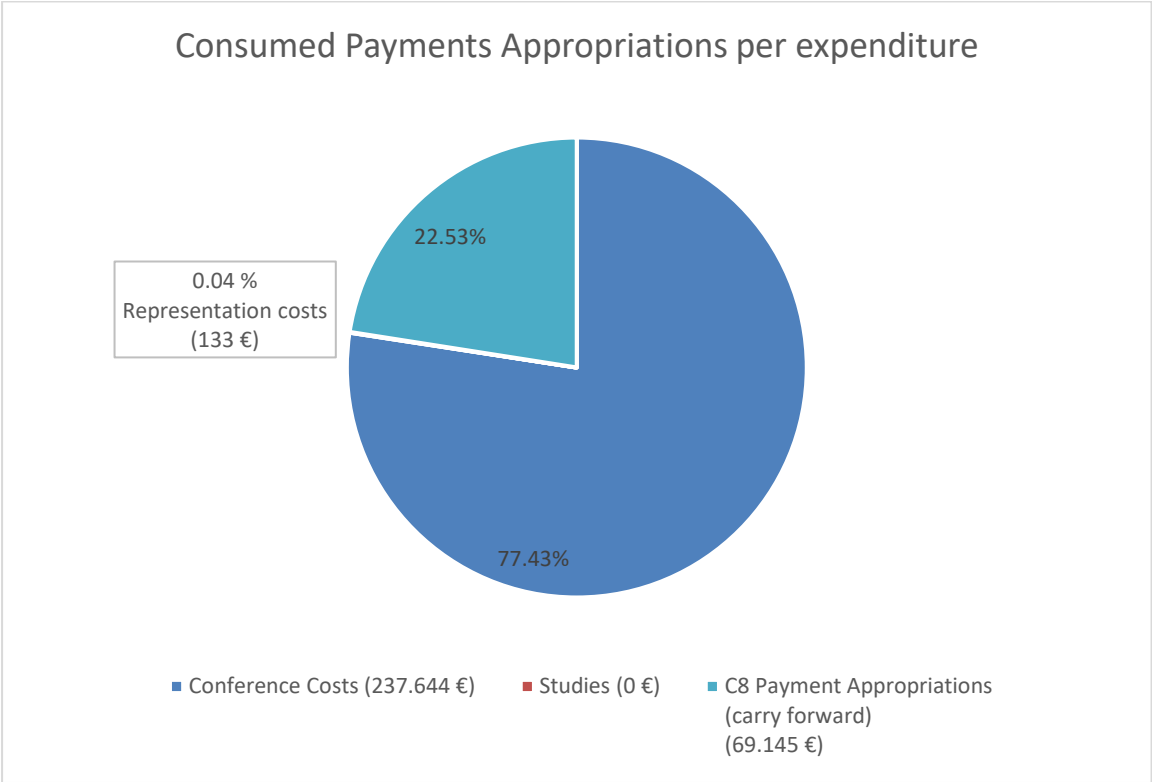
the EPSC generating a high cost of control for a very small team with very limited administrative resources.

The execution of the budget in commitment appropriations - as reflected in Annex 3 - is equal to **34.58 %**, which is clearly below the target of 75 % described in our financial management objective for 2019. The decrease of our commitment execution rate in 2019, compared to the previous years, is due to **a major change** in the presentation of the commitment appropriations sub-delegated to PMO in Annex 3. The amount of commitment appropriations for the missions is part of the EPSC total budget, while the committed appropriations (228,000 EUR) are taken out of the calculation for the execution of the budget in commitment appropriations.

If the calculation was based on the methodology from the AARs drafted over the last years, the execution in commitment appropriations would be **65.98 %**, which reflects the reality more accurately. The decrease of this committed rate in 2019 as compared to 2018 (92.50%) is the result of the slowdown of EPSC activities during the last quarter of the year marking the end of the mandate.

The execution of the budget in payment appropriations is equal to **32.73 %**, which is below the target of 75 % described in the EPSC’s financial management objective for 2019. This rate does not allow, however, a comparison with the previous years based on the target defined in the KPIs, due to the major change in the presentation of Annex 3. If the rate was calculated using the methodology from the AARs before 2017, the execution in payment appropriations would be **59.98 %** which is a more realistic figure. The decrease of the execution payment appropriations compared to 2018 (63.76 %) reflects the slowdown of EPSC activities during the last quarter marking the end of the mandate.

The chart below shows the share of EPSC payments made by type of expenditure:



77.43 % of the 2019 consumed payment appropriations are linked to the use of procurement procedures in the field of events’ organisation, which is the main expenditure in 2019. The procurement procedures are based on framework contracts and low value negotiated procures (below 15,000 EUR) managed by the Management and Resources Unit. As in last years, the figure of 22.53 % of carried forward payment

appropriations is due to the delay in invoicing by the contractors in the second half of the year.

The 2018 Financial Regulation introduced some additional AAR reporting requirements, but they are not applicable for DG EPSC.

No (reputational) event or unmitigated risk has been identified by the management, which could have a significant impact on assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives.

The management has supported the assurance on the achievement of the relevant internal control objectives and can conclude that there is no reservation to be listed in section 2.1.1.

1. Effectiveness = the control results and benefits

- **Legality and regularity of the transactions**

DG EPSC had set up internal control processes to ensure the adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions taking into account the nature of the payments concerned.

The main objective is to maintain a good overall balance between the cost of control relating to the legality and regularity of financial transactions and to ensure that the residual error does not exceed 2% of the total payment budget, as foreseen in the annex 4 (materiality criteria).

The Management and Resources Unit is playing a key role performing the ex-ante controls for the public procurement procedures while safeguarding the cost-effectiveness of control. The staff of the unit with relevant expertise coordinates each step of the low-value negotiated procedures in cooperation with the Project Manager. It is also in charge of the operational and financial verification.

The **100% ex-ante control** of financial transactions by staff with relevant financial skills was feasible because of the limited number of transactions (90 payments in 2019), which guarantees a low risk of error.

Due to the nature of the activities implemented through framework contracts or low value negotiated procedures, there is no additional value in ex-post control. Nevertheless, the register of exceptions and non-compliance events is analysed regularly to detect any weaknesses, which could occur in particular in the public procurement domain. The benefits of the control mechanism are difficult to quantify in the case of DG EPSC, which has a low risk profile in financial management, but a high risk of reputational damage due to its daily work with the President's Cabinet.

DG EPSC is, therefore, able to conclude that there are no indications that the procurement procedures and payment transactions were illegal and irregular (minimum mandatory error rate of 0.5 % for low-risk transactions is applicable here).

In the context of the protection of the EU budget, the DGs' estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are consolidated at Commission level.

DG EPSC data is shown in Table X and its accompanying notes below. The estimated overall risk at payment for 2019 expenditure is 1,534.61 EUR. This is the Authorising Office by Delegation's best, conservative estimation of the amount of *relevant expenditure* during the year (306,922 EUR) 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 successive years. The conservatively estimated future corrections for 2019 expenditure are 0 EUR. This is the amount of errors that the DG conservatively estimates will be identified and corrected by controls planned to be carried out in succeeding years by DG I.D.E.A. – the successor of EPSC.

The difference between those two amounts leads to the estimated overall risk at closure for the 2019 expenditure of 1,534.61 EUR.

In conclusion the risk at payment/closure remains stable compared to 2018 (*1,599.43 EUR for an overall amount of payment made of 319,886 EUR*) confirming the effectiveness of the system put in place.

Table X - Estimated overall risk at closure

DG EPSC	"payments made" (FY; m€)	<i>minus</i> new prefinancing [<i>plus</i> retentions made*] (in FY; m€)	<i>plus</i> cleared prefinancing [<i>minus</i> retentions released* and deductions of expenditure made by MS] (in FY; m€)	= "relevant expenditure" (for the FY; m€)	Average Error Rate (<i>weighted</i> AER; %)	estimated overall risk at payment (FY; m€)	Average Recoveries and Corrections (adjusted ARC; %)	estimated future corrections [and deductions] (for FY; m€)	estimated overall risk at closure (m€)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Programme, Budget Line(s), or other relevant level	as per AAR annex 3, table 2	as per ABAC DWH BO report on prefinancing	as per ABAC DWH BO report on prefinancing	= (2) -/+ (3) +/- (4)	Detected error rates, or equivalent estimates	= (5) x (6)	H-ARC (as per ABAC DWH BO report on corrective capacity), <u>but adjusted</u>	= (5) x (8)	= (7) - (9)
Overall, total	306,922 EUR	0 EUR	0 EUR	306,922 EUR	0.5 %	= 1,534.61 EUR	0%	= 0 EUR	= 1,534.61 EUR

(2) Payments made or equivalent, e.g. expenditure registered in the Commission's accounting system, accepted expenditure. In any case, this means after the preventive (ex-ante) control measures have already been implemented earlier in the cycle. In all cases of Co-Delegations (Internal Rules Article 3), "payments made" are covered by the Delegated DGs. For Cross-SubDelegations (Internal Rules Article 12), they remain with the Delegating DGs.

(5) For the purpose of equivalence with the ECA's scope of the EC funds with potential exposure to legality & regularity errors (see the ECA's Annual Report *methodological Annex 1.1*), our concept of "relevant expenditure" includes the payments made during the FY. This is a separate and 'hybrid' concept, intentionally combining elements from the budgetary accounting and from the general ledger accounting.

(6) For low-risk types of expenditure, where there are indications that the equivalent error rate might be close to 'zero' (e.g. *administrative expenditure, operating subsidies to agencies*), it is nevertheless recommended that 0.5% be used as a conservative estimate.

(8) Even though to some extent based on the 7 years historic Average of Recoveries and financial Corrections (ARC), which is the best available indication of the corrective capacity of the ex-post control systems implemented by the DG over the past years, the AOD has adjusted this historic average from 8.48 % to 0 %, because this figure takes into account the results of ex-ante control by means of received credit notes sent before the payment execution and cannot be considered as a correction action. Taking into account the absence of ex-post control, the adjusted recoveries and corrections rate is 0%

- ***Fraud prevention, detection and correction***

DG EPSC has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2013, on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF.

A review of the strategy was launched during 2018 in parallel with the annual assessment of the new Internal Control Framework – as described in the 2018 AAR. It was concluded that the EPSC Anti-fraud Strategy was still valid in terms of content and areas of vigilance until the end of the mandate, which were identified as the sound financial management and the observance of ethics provisions by the staff. The indicators show that the objectives of the strategy were successfully covered by the Action Plan. The actions taken are part of a continuous process.

No case was transmitted to OLAF or to the Investigation and Disciplinary Office (IDOC) in 2019. DG EPSC has therefore come to a positive conclusion on the effectiveness of its anti-fraud strategy.

- ***Other control objectives: safeguarding of assets and information, reliability of reporting (if applicable)***

Not applicable to I.D.E.A.

2. Efficiency = the Time-to-... indicators and other efficiency indicators

The 2019 average time to pay was 9.6 days, which is far below the target of 20 days, and lower than the one of 2018 (9.99 days) for a higher volume of transactions (90 payments instead of 81 payments in 2018). All payments were executed within the time limit (no late payment).

All procurement procedures launched during 2019 were successfully contracted and implemented. The absence of litigation procedures provides a positive indication of the quality.

As already mentioned previously, the centralisation of the financial circuit entirely managed by the experienced staff of the Management and Resources Unit explains the overall good result.

3. Economy = the cost of controls

DG EPSC was a non-spending service applying a cost of control indicator linked mainly to ex-ante verification and public procurement procedures as described in the Annexes 5 and 10. This indicator remains stable for all expenditure and is equal to 54,700 EUR (= 0.5 FTE). The 2019 overall cost of control calculated based on Annex 10 is equal to 17.82 %. This high number (slightly higher than in 2018: 16.96 %) is the result of the change made in the presentation of the consumed payment appropriations, as already explained in the point 2.1.1 (Control Results), which does not include the funds sub-delegated to PMO for the missions and experts' reimbursement. Nevertheless, very detailed controls are still performed by the Management and Resources Unit before and after the staff's return from missions.

Due to the time devoted by the Management and Resources Unit for the ex-ante control of the missions' budget, before the validation of the payments by PMO, the cost-effectiveness indicator that DG EPSC took realistically into account is calculated as described below:

- Amount of payments authorised (306,922 EUR) + consumed payment appropriations sub-delegated to PMO for the missions and experts (223,166 EUR)

This led to an actual overall cost of control equivalent to **10.32 %**, which is slightly higher compared to 9.25 % in 2018. The 2019 small increase is the result of the slowdown of EPSC activities in the last quarter of the year due to the end of the mandate.

4. Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls

Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results, DG EPSC 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 relatively high control costs in DG EPSC (17.82 % for an overall paid amount equal to 306,922 EUR), which remained stable in comparison with 2018 (16.96%), should be assessed in the particular context of an in-house Commission's think tank operating directly under the authority of the President of the European Commission. In such context, the quantifiable benefits of controls are very difficult to evaluate and are more of qualitative benefits due to the specificity of the DG EPSC's mandate and the high potential risk of reputational damage.

2.1.2 Audit observations and recommendations

This section sets out the observations, opinions and conclusions reported by auditors – including the limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control. Summaries of the management measures taken in response to the audit recommendations are also included, together with an assessment of the likely material impact of the findings on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on management's assurance.

The Internal Audit Service (IAS) did not perform any audit work in the entity over the last 3 years (i.e. period 2017-2019). There are consequently no elements to report for the 2019 AAR.

2.1.3 Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems

The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework based on international good practice, to ensure the achievement of its policy and management objectives. Compliance with the internal control framework is a compulsory requirement.

The organisational structure and the internal control systems put in place in DG EPSC were well suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives in accordance with the internal control principles, with due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operated.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the internal control systems in DG EPSC, an assessment was carried out following the methodology described in the "Implementation guide of the Internal Control Framework of the Commission". The evidence required to support the entire process has been gathered from management knowledge gained through daily operations, analysis of the register of exceptions/non-compliance events, risk register and data extracted from the ex-ante control put in place, in particular for the financial management.

The assessment was realised under the supervision of the appointed Director in charge of the Internal Control and Risk Management by assessing the tailor-made monitoring criteria specific to EPSC's environment identified in the new Internal Control Framework.

DG EPSC 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 as intended.

2.1.4 Conclusions on the assurance

This section reviews the assessment of the elements already reported above (in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3), and the sub-conclusions already reached. It draws an overall conclusion to support the declaration of assurance and whether it should be qualified with reservations.

All suitable ex-ante controls were successfully implemented in DG ESPC, to the extent that they were cost-effective and did not affect the policy objectives. The risk linked to administrative expenditure including procurement was low and the centralised management of the financial transactions was efficient to mitigate the risks.

Conclusion on the effectiveness of our anti-fraud strategy is positive.

Overall Conclusion

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

2.1.5 Declaration of Assurance

DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

I, the undersigned,

Deputy Head of I.D.E.A. (ex-EPSC)

In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view⁴.

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 Internal Audit Service for years prior to the year of this declaration.

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

Place: Brussels, date: 31.03.2020

Ares(2020)1849438

(e-signature)

Name of the AOD

Pawel Swieboda

⁴ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the DG/Executive Agency.

2.2 Other organisational management dimensions

2.2.1 Human resource management

The management of human resources in DG EPSC remained challenging in 2019 due to the last year of its mandate aligned with the one of the Juncker Commission. The departure of a certain number of colleagues put an additional pressure on some of the teams and required a change in the allocation of tasks across the organisation.

Against these challenges, the EPSC hierarchy was still committed to maintaining the high level of staff engagement until the last month of the EPSC activities. Business continuity was also ensured.

"Management by projects" continued to be relevant more than ever to ensure the flexibility needed to respond to unexpected requests at the end of the Juncker Commission, as well as to tackle files of great levels of complexity.

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

Being part of a very small Service, the EPSC staff benefitted from the well-being activities organised by the Secretariat-General and DG HR. The HR Business Correspondent disseminated the catalogue of activities on a regular basis. Internal communication was done by email as well as orally during the regular weekly staff meetings held every Monday afternoon.

The promotion of learning and development activities was another important driver of the EPSC's success. All staff members were encouraged to participate in events and training activities organised within the Commission and externally. Moreover, analysts meetings were often opened to all staff members to stimulate open, collaborative and inter-disciplinary ways of working.

The outcome of the 2018 staff survey, which showed the highest staff engagement in the Commission (78% compared to the average of 69%) generated a relatively minor follow-up by EPSC given the end of its mandate on 1 December 2019.

2.2.2 Better regulation (only for DGs managing regulatory acquis)

Not applicable

2.2.3 Information management aspects

The "management by projects" approach endorsed by EPSC since mid-2016 continued to echo the principles of collaborative working methods expressed in the Communication on "Data, Information and Knowledge Management at the European Commission".

One of the core activities of the EPSC was the production of Strategic Notes or policy briefs. Those were written through a series of collaborative processes bringing together all the colleagues that have a potential input to provide to the text, which then converged into "editorial boards". EPSC publications were available on our external website, and were consequently accessible not only to colleagues in the EPSC but also across the Commission and beyond. They were systematically identified with inter-institutional identifiers, anchoring them in the broader scheme of access of EU Bookshop. That also ensured their preservation beyond the EPSC current mandate (16 publications in 2019 – please see annex 2/Communication for more details).

The weekly meetings in the EPSC referred to above as well as electronic communication by email on management matters replaced in our small organisation more formal exchanges of data and information, such as an internal webpage.

The administrative signatories were exclusively used by the Management and Resources Unit, with the e-signatory taking more and more space. The project launched last year for e-signatory workflows for administrative records continued to be implemented this year. The scope of e-workflow was extended to public procurement procedures, in particular for invitation to tender, evaluation minutes and award decisions. Two categories of administrative documents continued to have a specific paper workflow: financial files (managed in ABAC workflow) and internal control. Annex 2 on Information management contains more details as regards filing and registration of documents.

Data protection

DG EPSC has taken adequate measures to ensure compliance with the new rules and the Commission's Data Protection Action Plan (C(2018)7432). The DG took stock of the data processing operations carried out across the organisation. They were all identified in the DP02 database and are currently updated as "legacy notifications", the new Data Protection database, DPMS.

Due to the very small size of the service and its specific mandate that ended in 2019, the EPSC handled few personal data. They were processed to disseminate publications or information linked to events organisation; collecting only what is necessary, with the full agreement of the concerned people, to perform these actions, namely: names, contact details, organisations and job titles.

Given its new mandate and its new working methods, the successor of EPSC - DG I.D.E.A. - will have to set a new framework for data protection and build relevant expertise that will allow the respect of the rules and the implementation of the Commission's Data Protection Action Plan.

2.2.4 External communication activities

The main objective of the communication activities for 2019 was to sustain the 'EPSC brand' both within the European institutions and among the community of think tanks, researchers and academics, opinion leaders and intellectuals in Europe and beyond.

The EPSC continued implementing its mandate to leverage the Commission's key political messages and helped obtain third-party endorsement of the President's priorities. While supporting the efforts of DG COMM, SPP and of the Vice-Presidents and Commissioners' teams, the EPSC also aimed to communicate differently both in substance and form – complementing institutional communications with out-of-the box, visually-compelling, citizen-friendly products.

The EPSC used a broad range of communication tools to carry out its work including:

- Policy briefs – internal documents, produced for the Cabinet of the President.
- Strategic notes – external documents, produced on demand or on own initiative. They are the results of interdisciplinary research and collaborative projects on EU policy priorities, and were published in relation to key events, policy developments, etc.
- Newsletters – These were generally biannual external publications gathering a series of editorials, articles, data projects, visuals and other digital inputs.
- Events and conferences – the EPSC created a unique space for thought-provoking seminars and events. These were organised on a regular basis (5-6 events per month). In 2019, around 55 events were organised. The EPSC also spearheaded the European Commission's involvement in the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) – the EU inter-institutional collaboration that aims to build preparedness for upcoming challenges and opportunities. In this role, it co-organised the annual ESPAS conferences, as well as a number of other events.
- The EPSC webpage and the social media, especially Twitter, were regularly updated and is managed by the EPSC communication and outreach team.
- The EPSC also regularly experimented with new publication formats and methods, in particular making full use of a range of digital channels to expand its outreach and communicate in a more timely and open manner for example through recorded videos explaining some of our publications.