



Annual Activity Report 2018

PUBLICATIONS OFFICE
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

March 2019

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Publications Office
of the European Union

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THE PUBLICATIONS OFFICE IN BRIEF

Mission: access to EU law and publications

The Publications Office of the European Union provides interinstitutional publishing services on behalf of all the EU institutions, agencies and other bodies. Its mission is to publish EU law and other information and to make it available for easy long-term access and reuse.

Activities

The Publications Office's activities comprise the production, the access to and the reuse, as well as the long-term preservation of public information produced by the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies established by or under the EU Treaties (hereinafter EU institutions). The organisation and operation of the Office are governed by Decision 2009/496/EC, Euratom ⁽¹⁾.

Under its mandate, the Office has competence, amongst others, for the following:

- publishing the *Official Journal of the European Union* and other mandatory publications;
- publishing non-mandatory publications in the context of the EU institutions' communication activities;
- referencing, preserving EU public data and making it available to the public.

In order to fulfil its mandate, the Office has implemented and manages the following online services:

- EUR-Lex — access to legal information and the authentic Official Journal;
- OP Portal — an access point progressively bringing together the different collections of official documents, publications and reference data managed by the Office (EU Law, EU Publications, EU Vocabularies and EU Whoiswho);
- TED (Tenders Electronic Daily) — access to public procurement notices (*Supplement to the Official Journal*);
- EU Open Data Portal — access to the EU institutions' structured data to facilitate reuse;
- CORDIS (the Community Research and Development Information Service) — the primary public repository and service for the dissemination and the reuse of EU-funded research projects and their results;
- *Interinstitutional style guide* — a reference tool for linguistic harmonisation across all official EU languages;

The Office is a horizontal and support service and its core customers are the EU institutions. At the same time, its activities are also society oriented: the free access to EU law and the legislative and decision-making process, together with the long-term preservation activity, play a key role to the transparency and openness of EU institutions, as well as to their accountability and better policy-making process. The reuse of data activity extends throughout a whole reuse community, formed of researchers, statisticians, IT developers, businesses, public administrations, interest groups, etc.

The Office operates in a changing environment and it must constantly adapt to technological improvements and innovations. Following a successful transition from a paper-based publishing model to a new paradigm of handling digital information, the Office continues to embrace and benefit of new technologies (e.g. linked open data, artificial intelligence, etc.) in order to improve service provision and develop synergies and efficiencies for the EU institutions.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 168, 30.6.2009, p. 41.

Governance and organisation

The Office is governed by an interinstitutional Management Committee, which, in the common interest of EU institutions, adopts the strategic objectives of the Office, sets the guidelines for the general policies and ensures that the Office contributes within its areas of competence to the formulation and implementation of the EU institutions' information and communication policies.

Based in Luxembourg, the Office is structured around four directorates and has 567 staff members.

Budget matters

Budget items delegated by the Commission to the Director-General of the Office concern expenditure for administrative purposes and/or contract management and are in direct management. Therefore, compared to shared or indirect budget management, the inherent risk is low.

Accountability and reporting

The Office uses infrastructure (mainly IT), outsourcing and human resources, therefore its main risks and risk-management activities (including internal control) are concentrated on these areas. The reporting of authorising officers by subdelegation contains the financial data, as well as the main points concerning controls and risks, and formally documents any significant problems.

Quarterly information reports on the Office's production, dissemination and administrative tasks are communicated by the Office's Director-General to the Management Committee. Each year the Management Committee adopts an Annual Management Report.

MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATION-RELATED EVENTS

REORGANISATION

In order to reflect the priorities of the Strategic objectives 2017-2025, adopted unanimously by the Management Committee in 2017, the Office underwent a significant reorganisation in April 2018 following intensive consultation with all concerned.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Decisions were taken by the Management Committee in order to achieve efficiency gains and interinstitutional synergies, such as the simplification of budget management for legal publications, to be implemented in 2020, measures to rationalise the functioning of interinstitutional committees and working groups, and the use of the Creative Commons licencing to facilitate reuse. The Management Committee also closely monitored the implementation of the Strategic objectives 2017-2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Annual Activity Report is a management report of the Director-General of the Publications Office 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⁾.

a) Key results and progress towards the achievement of general and specific objectives of the Publications Office (executive summary of section 1)

INTERINSTITUTIONAL SYNERGIES AND EFFICIENCIES IN THE PUBLICATIONS DOMAIN

In order to address the growing demand for new media publications, comprehensive services were offered to all EU institutions for products that were ever more interactive and complex – audiovisual, animated content, apps, web pages (HTML), with an upward trend in producing more infographics and data visualisations. The management of corporate EU app accounts and the update of apps remained a significant activity with 25 new app releases and 563 updates (all language versions).

The exercise to centralise printing tasks using the EU institutions' internal print assets progressed, in particular with the transfer at the beginning of 2018 of the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics' print assets.

Under the synergies and efficiencies exercise launched by the European Commission for external communication, the Corporate Management Board agreed on the need for increased oversight of the publication process, with the Office as domain leader for publications and in close cooperation with Commission's DG Communication, to raise awareness amongst the Commission directorates-general and ensure the added value of the publications. The Office's vision for Domain Leadership in the field of publications, providing for a centralised production of publications and a general decrease in the number of products in order to cut out message redundancy and raise the quality and impact of publications, will be presented to the Corporate Management Board in 2019. The Office's goals may be achieved by developing a series of interlinked activities such as editorial support, corporate planning and governance, translation request coordination, a feedback mechanism and community specific training. Based on the Office's interinstitutional mandate, synergies proposed to Commission directorates-general can be extended to all EU institutions.

A new editorial team completed a pilot project on the assessment of 15 selected publications, involving 13 author services. The assessment provided feedback on design, content, format and distribution plans, to help authors to readjust them and thus make a wider and more intentional impact through their publications. The decision on whether to scale the editorial assessment up to a fully available service will be taken during 2019.

New templates were designed and are currently being developed to provide authors with simple tools to structure documents at source, simplifying and speeding up the production process and provision of datasets, and to allow the production of accessible publications for visually impaired readers. Guidelines on accessibility for authors were updated and republished. Development also started on a set of accessibility videos and e-learning modules for decision makers and author services, with their delivery planned in the first half of 2019.

The Office set up a dashboard on web analytics providing information on the consultation of the publications in the OP Portal, such as visits, page views, downloads, geographical distribution, searched terms, etc. Different analytical parameters can be filtered, e.g.

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

global consultation, selection of publications of one/multiple institution(s), top consulted topics of interest, and top consulted publications based on the country of origin of the visits. The dashboard, which was presented to EU institutions in order to gather feedback, is expected to be operational and available to the EU institutions during 2019.

ENHANCED INTEROPERABILITY FOR THE EU INSTITUTIONS' DOCUMENTS

Interinstitutional cooperation for the development and maintenance of common standards for both the structuring of content and the exchange of information was strengthened by the merger of the Interinstitutional Metadata Maintenance Committee (IMMC) and Interinstitutional Formats Committee (IFC) into the Interinstitutional Metadata and Formats Committee (IMFC). Its current work is focused on EU legislative process support.

Almost all exchanges between the Office and the EU institutions of public documents related to the EU legislative process (ordinary legislative procedure) and for publication on EUR-Lex were implemented via IMMC-based workflows. Within the Office, all publishing chains are now based on IMMC-based workflows.

For the structuring of content, the Common Vocabulary, describing the structure and semantics of legal documents at business level, and the Common Exchange Model, describing the implementation of the concepts defined by the Common Vocabulary in XML, were further developed. A major new version of the Common Exchange Model was adopted by the IMFC.

ACCESS AND REUSE, AND LINKING OF DATA

The EUR-Lex website was given a new, simplified design which is also optimised for mobile devices. In addition, a new display of interinstitutional procedures facilitates the traceability of the different stages leading to the adoption of a legal act. The collections' coverage was enriched with new types of documents such as opinions from the European Parliament committees and from the European Central Bank on draft national legislation. Additionally, the text of national transposition measures from eight Member States are now directly accessible via EUR-Lex.

The performance and stability of the OP Portal platform and OP Portal Search service were enhanced. The EU Vocabularies, replacing two legacy websites, and EU Whoiswho content were integrated into the OP Portal allowing users to perform searches across more collections in a multilingual set-up.

In order to respond to the European Parliament's and European Court of Auditors' recommendations for increased transparency of public procurement, reports with information on the contracts awarded by the EU institutions were made available on TED website on a daily basis. These provide data on the entity awarding the contract, the winners, the subject matter and the values awarded. New features will also be added in eTendering, such as annual lists of contractors, ex-ante publicity of low value procedures, extended search, and email notifications about updates to calls for tender. Works in view of listing functional and technical requirements of a common electronic one-stop shop for the EU institutions' procurement activities are ongoing.

CORDIS launched its new user- and mobile-friendly website, along with a new design for its popular *Research*eu* magazine and thematic *Results Pack* brochures. The open data repository and multilingual articles for professionals continue to be a pillar of the Commission's strategy for the dissemination and exploitation of research results.

The Office organised the second EU Datathon competition on the reuse of data from the EU Open Data Portal in collaboration with the European Legislation Identifier (ELI) Taskforce, the European Food Safety Authority, and three Commission directorates-general. The competition challenged teams to create applications addressing specific policy or societal issues related to innovation, legal data, public procurement data, or food data. The outreach of the event was very successful with enterprises, start-ups, individuals and students from all over Europe, and the results provided invaluable insights on what can be achieved through the reuse of open data.

The management of the European Data Portal, with over 880 000 datasets from 78 data catalogues from European countries, was transferred from the Commission's DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology to the Office in order to align approaches and rationalise operations in the domain of open data.

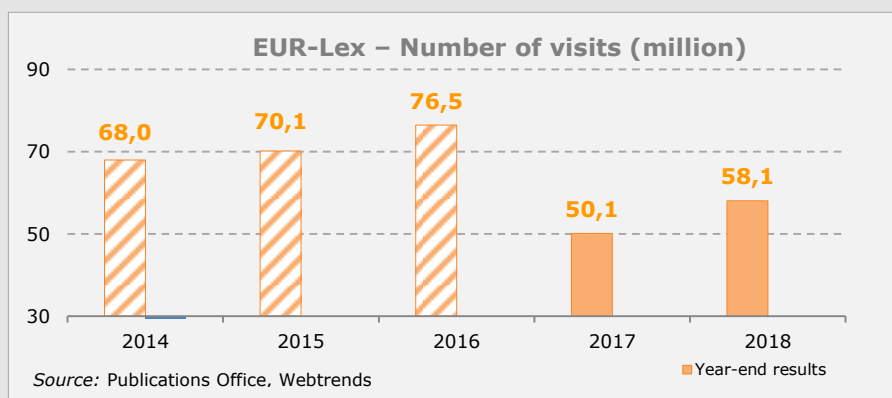
The Office developed the strategy and roadmap for achieving linked open data, with the aim of positioning the Office as a centre of expertise for linked open data. Within the scope of the preparatory action 'Linked Open Data in European public administration', the Office worked on identifying ways to improve user experience and publication findability on the OP Portal via the use of linked open data. The results will set out how the proof of concept of linked open data and data services could be applied to other open data generated by European public administrations.

LONG-TERM PRESERVATION

The Office drew up a digital preservation plan to set up its vision and strategy on long-term digital preservation. The plan was revised following input from EU institutions. The final version was presented to and adopted by the Management Committee.

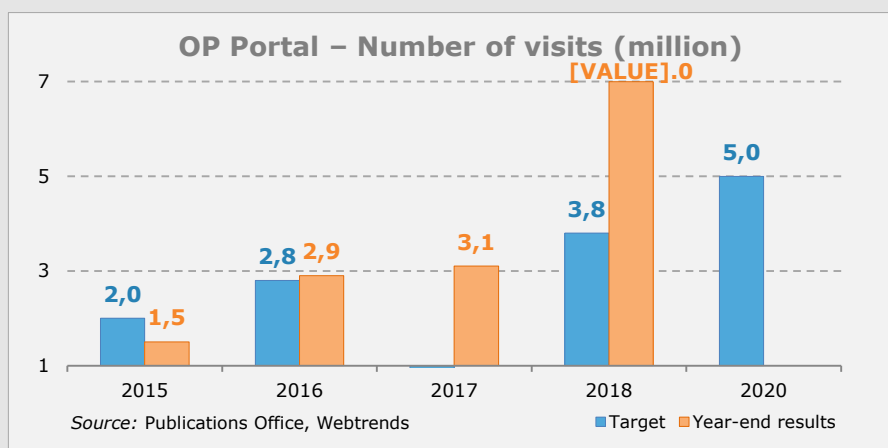
b) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

| Result/Impact indicator (description) | Target 2018 | Results 2018 |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| KPI 1 – Percentage of Official Journal issues produced without delay in 23 or 24 language versions | 100 % | 100 % |
| KPI 2 – Coverage (percentage of completeness of the archive regarding the entire collection of the Official Journal of the European Union and all other mandatory publications) | 99.9 % | 99.1 % |
| KPI 3 – Number of visits to EUR-Lex website | 72 million | 58.1 million |



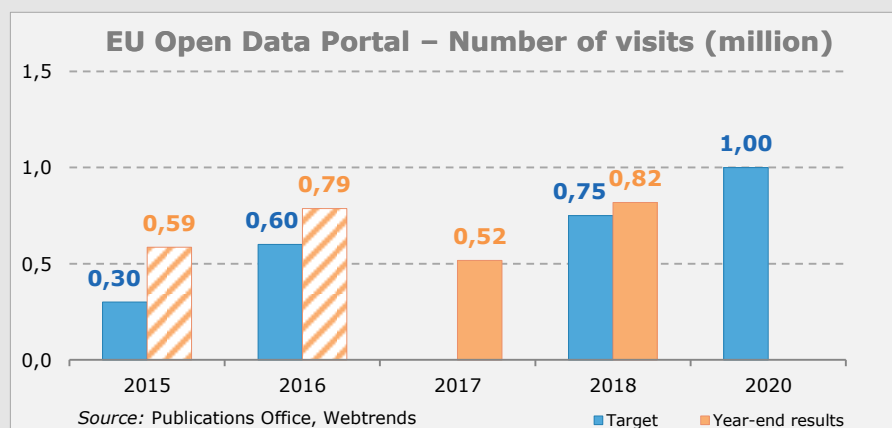
A different technology for collecting statistics was implemented. It measures traffic generated by the browsers, and not actions occurring at server level, and also eliminates from the statistics robots and machine accesses. Results as from 2017 are not comparable with the previous years.

| | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| KPI 4 – Number of visits to OP Portal (including EU Publications) | 3.8 million | 7.0 million |
|---|-------------|-------------|



The scope of the OP Portal statistics increased in 2018 with the integration of the subsites.

| | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| KPI 5 – Number of visits to the EU Open Data Portal | 0.75 million | 0.82 million |
|---|--------------|--------------|



A different technology for collecting statistics was implemented. It measures traffic generated by the browsers, and not actions occurring at server level, and also eliminates from the statistics robots and machine accesses. Results as from 2017 are not comparable with the previous years.

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 Publications Office conducts its operations in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, working in an open and transparent manner and meeting the expected high level of professional and ethical standards.

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

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

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 Publications Office and the Cabinet of the relevant Commissioner on management matters, also the main elements of this report and assurance declaration have been brought to the attention of the Cabinet of Commissioner Navracsics, responsible for relations with the Office.

1. KEY RESULTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE PUBLICATIONS OFFICE

In line with its horizontal role, the Publications Office brings its contribution to the following Commission general objective:

General objective 11: To help achieve the overall political objectives, the Commission will effectively and efficiently manage and safeguard assets and resources, and attract and develop the best talents

However, in accordance with its interinstitutional mandate, the Office's activities go beyond the Commission framework. Within its area of expertise, the Office is a support service for all EU institutions and consequently did not include in its strategic plan the Commission corporate impact indicators associated to general objective 11.

The Annual Activity Report 2018 reports with reference to the objectives and related indicators established in the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 together with the annual outputs set up in the Management Plan 2018. It also reports on the interinstitutional Strategic objectives 2017-2025, unanimously approved by the Office's Management Committee on 30 June 2017.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 11.1: AUTOMATED WORKFLOWS FOR MORE DYNAMIC WAYS OF PRODUCING AND PUBLISHING LEGAL CONTENT ARE OPTIMISED AND IMPLEMENTED

Official Journal of the European Union

Strategic objective 5 – The Official Journal act by act

Council Regulation (EU) 2018/2056 ⁽³⁾ was adopted at the end of the year, introducing the possibility to authenticate the Official Journal with an electronic seal. A new information system was developed to enable implementation and will be operational in 2019.

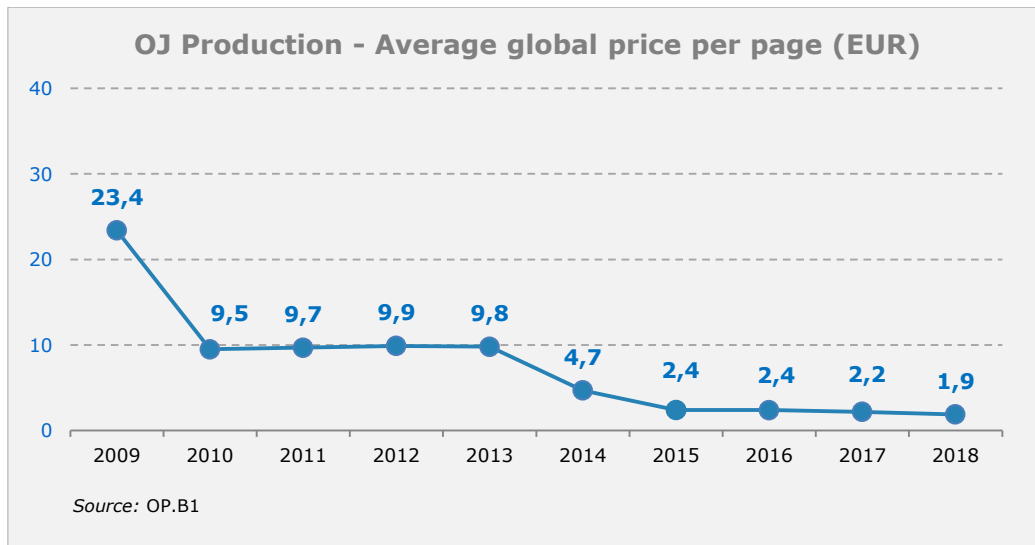
New contracts allowing for an act-by-act production of the Official Journal were signed in October 2018.

The daily production contract will be signed in April 2019. The business part of the act-by-act impact analysis was completed while the technical part will be finalised before the end of the first quarter of 2019. Work started for drafting the specifications of the new information system for the act-by-act production of the Official Journal.

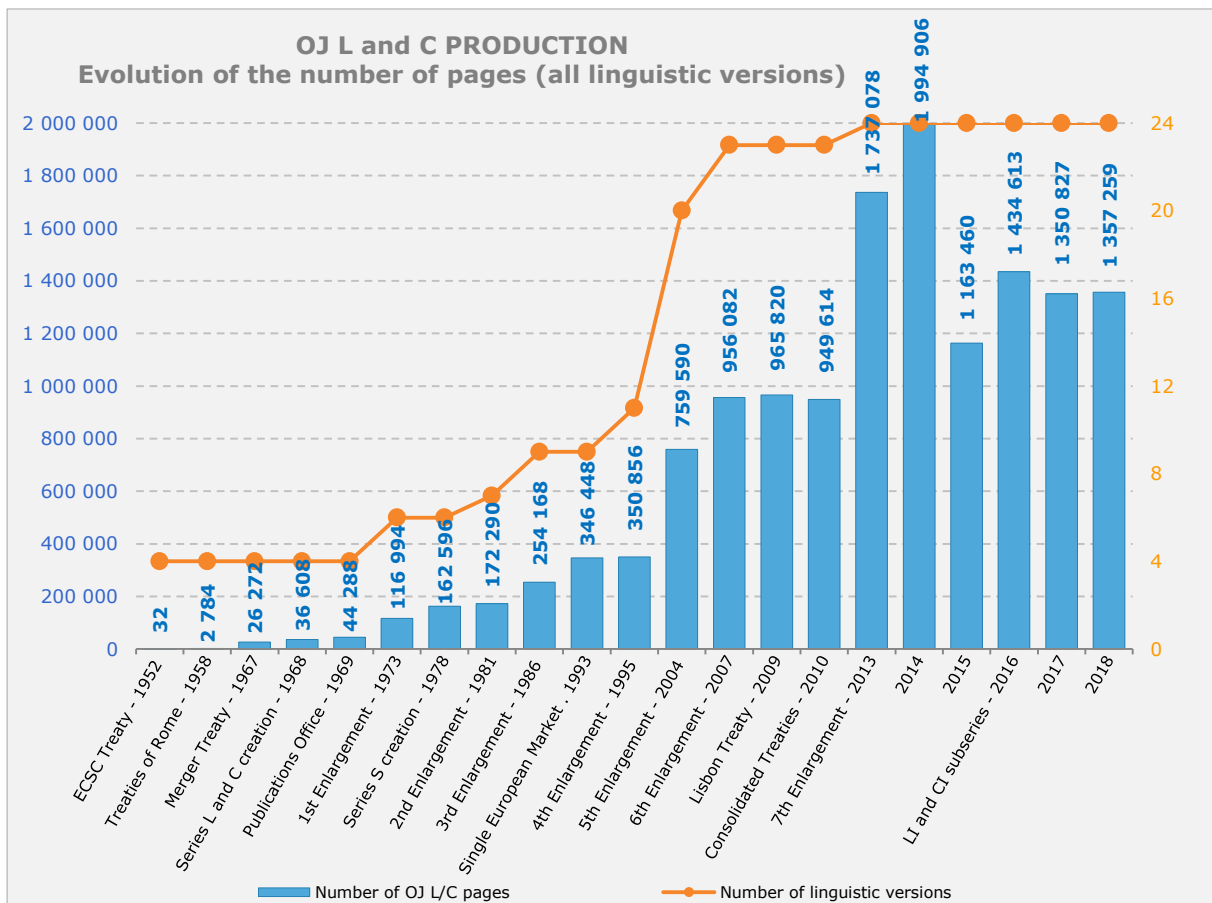
Official Journal: number of pages per series

| Series | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| OJ L | 496 515 | 583 354 | 568 114 | 801 813 | 709 289 | 779 470 | 726 753 | 717 899 |
| OJ C | 499 576 | 511 757 | 1 168 964 | 1 193 087 | 454 171 | 655 143 | 624 074 | 639 360 |
| Other budgetary documents | 69 334 | 103 782 | 76 018 | 108 165 | 82 715 | 86 285 | 84 894 | 120 934 |
| Total | 1 065 425 | 1 198 893 | 1 813 096 | 2 103 065 | 1 246 175 | 1 520 898 | 1 435 811 | 1 478 193 |

⁽³⁾ Council Regulation (EU) 2018/2056 of 6 December 2018 amending Regulation (EU) No 216/2013 on the electronic publication of the Official Journal of the European Union (OJ L 329, 27.12.2018, p. 1).



All legally binding Official Journal editions were published in an electronic format. The number of pages published for the OJ L series decreased by 1.2 % to 717 899 from 726 753 in 2017. The number of pages published in the C series increased by 2.4 % to 639 360 from 624 074.



Case-law of the European Court of Justice

Case-law was solely produced on a document-by-document basis according to the judicial calendar of the Court of Justice. More than 54 000 documents (- 6.8 % compared to 2017), corresponding to over 400 000 pages (- 21.4 % compared to 2017), were published.

Case-law: number of documents and pages produced

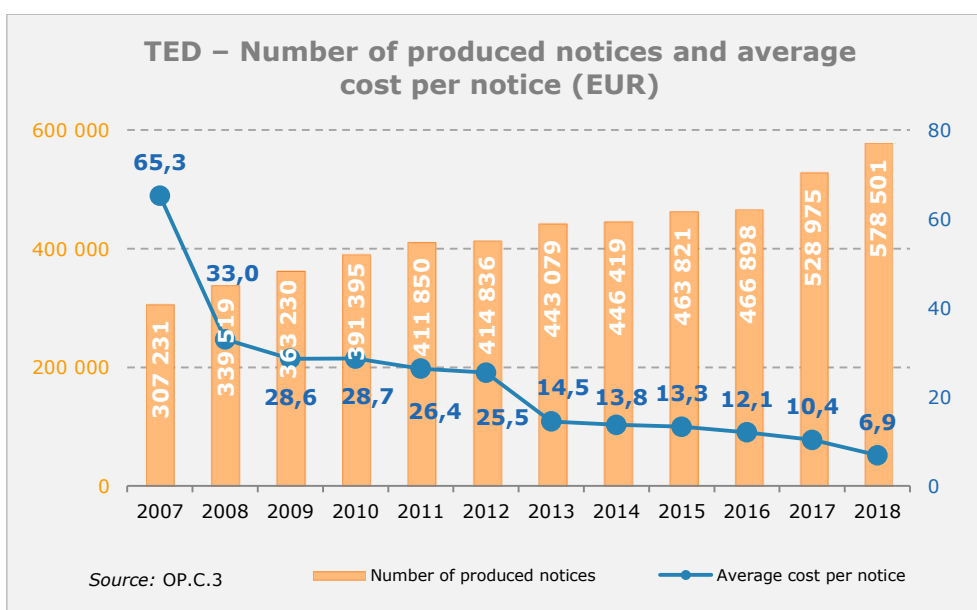
| | Number of documents | | Number of pages | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | 2017 | 2018 | 2017 | 2018 |
| Court of Justice | 43 609 | 33 702 | 416 111 | 292 039 |
| General Court | 12 688 | 20 810 | 89 780 | 110 540 |
| Civil Service Tribunal | 2 237 | 49 | 6 719 | 124 |
| Total | 58 534 | 54 561 | 512 610 | 402 703 |

Production tool for the European Union's budget

The Common Integrated Budget Application (CIBA), the interinstitutional tool used for the production of the EU budget, was adapted to ensure the exchange of translations of budgetary amendments by the European Parliament system.

Supplement to the Official Journal

A record 578 501 public procurement notices were published in the *Supplement to the Official Journal (OJ S)*, an increase of 9.4 % compared to 2017. Notices received in structured electronic format accounted for 99.4 % of the total. The Office adapted the OJ S publication schedule: as of 1 January 2019, the OJ S is published from Monday to Friday.



In close cooperation with the Commission's DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, the Office established a data model for procurement information which will be the basis for a new generation of electronic notification forms; the underlying exchange protocol for the new standard will be Universal Business Language. The Office became a member of the Organisation for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards in order to participate in the setting out of further standards if required.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 11.2: COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION SERVICES, OPTIMISED FOR MULTICHANNEL DISSEMINATION, ARE PROVIDED TO ALL EU INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES AND BODIES

General publications

Strategic objective 2 – Rationalisation of the production of publications

As regards the new production workflow management system, covering the process from the reception of requests to the delivery of final products for dissemination, partial results of the functional analysis were available in 2018. The technical analysis will be launched in March 2019 and development of the new production workflow will begin at the end of 2019.

The development of a generic template for the creation of well-structured manuscripts started at the end of 2018 and its release is expected mid-2019 together with the integration of templates in Eurolook⁽⁴⁾. Guidelines on accessibility for authors were updated and republished on PubliCare. Development started on a set of accessibility videos and e-learning modules for decision makers and author services, with their delivery planned in the first half of 2019.

Strategic objective 6 – Reference centre for the production of publications

On 27 November 2018 the Corporate Management Board of the Commission endorsed the proposals of the Office as Domain Leader in the field of publications. Interlinked actions were approved, based on a centralised production of publications and governance allowing for a more efficient use of resources through a general decrease in the number of low-impact publications and redundant messages. Deployment is planned as from 2019 onwards and closely linked with resource allocation, which is under discussion and needs to be approved by the Corporate Management Board.

A pilot project on the coordination of translation requests and their follow-up on behalf of author services was discussed and conceptually agreed with DG Translation. It will start in January 2019 for two main users of the Office's services.

A community specific extensive training programme was created, with its delivery linked to resource allocations, currently under evaluation by the Commission's central services.

The process to centralise printing tasks using the EU institutions' internal print assets progressed. Print assets of the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Luxembourg (OIL) were transferred to the Office. Integration of other institutions and/or services in order to extend the collaborative use of print assets will continue, notably with the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels (OIB).

The overall number of requests (projects) from author services for general publications was rather stable compared to the previous year (- 1 %) while the number of titles produced increased by 27 %, which reflects an increase in the number of language versions produced per project, notably by the Commission.

The regular update of apps and the management of corporate app accounts (relationship with the app stores) remained a significant area of activity with 25 new app releases and 563 updates (all language versions). Four existing mobile applications were transferred to the corporate app accounts. The service of providing interactive information visualisations progressed, with seven new projects. The Office started to work with virtual reality technology and launched two projects to develop virtual reality mobile applications.

⁽⁴⁾ Eurolook is a module which is fully integrated into Microsoft Word. It makes it possible to create letters, internal notes, reports, speeches, etc. easily and in all EU languages.

Publications: principal production indicators

| | 2017 | 2018 | Change 2018/2017 (%) |
|------------------------|--------|--------|-------------------------|
| Publications | 10 785 | 13 691 | 26.9 |
| Outputs ⁽¹⁾ | 29 780 | 37 507 | 25.9 |

⁽¹⁾ Outputs: number of electronic files produced. Each project/publication request generally covers several outputs, i.e. different linguistic versions (titles) or several media.

In-house print production increased to 11.2 million pages (A4 equivalent) from 10.8 million pages in 2017. A total of EUR 325 033 (compared to EUR 223 768 in 2017) was recovered for internally printed jobs carried out under the price schedule approved by the Management Committee at the end of 2016. A systematic comparison of price estimates based on external contracts and internal print shops allowed author services to choose the most competitive option for each print request.

Publications: production, by institution (titles)

| Institution/agency | 2017 | 2018 | Change 2018/2017 (%) |
|--|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| European Parliament | 656 | 661 | 0.8 |
| Council | 362 | 247 | - 31.8 |
| Commission | 6 512 | 9 322 | 43.2 |
| Court of Justice | 308 | 214 | - 30.5 |
| Court of Auditors | 810 | 947 | 16.9 |
| European Economic and Social Committee | 143 | 8 | - 94.4 |
| European Committee of the Regions | 26 | 5 | - 80.8 |
| European Central Bank | 0 | 93 | — |
| Decentralised agencies | 1 849 | 1 939 | 4.9 |
| Other | 119 | 255 | 114.3 |
| Total | 10 785 | 13 691 | 26.9 |

Language editing

Strategic objective 3 – Refocusing quality control

In the context of the Office's reorganisation, an editorial team was created and completed a pilot project on the assessment of 15 selected publications, involving 13 author services. The assessment provided feedback on design, content, format and distribution plans, to help authors to readjust them and thus make a wider and more intentional impact through their publications. The decision on whether to scale editorial assessment up to a fully available new service is expected to be taken during 2019.

An outsourcing strategy for language-editing services was set out in order to refocus resources on services that meet the requirements of author services, notably in terms of timeliness, and to allow for the implementation of new high-value services as proposed as part of the Domain Leadership Publications. A more extensive and systematic outsourcing of repetitive tasks, backed by solid quality requirements, should alleviate pressures on internal resources. A medium-value procedure for outsourced language editing services in English was launched, to be followed in 2019 by other languages.

The total number of standard pages processed and corrected amounted to 2 005 113 pages (2 568 553 pages in 2017) showing an overall decrease of 21 %. This drop is mainly due to the 38 % decrease in the number of standard pages corrected for case-law, reflecting the completion of the backlog of case-law files before the switch to document-by-document processing. In addition, the summaries and information on decisions were no longer corrected as from the second semester of 2018 as agreed with the Court of Justice.

The number of pages corrected for the Official Journal decreased by 14.5 %, and for general publications by 4.6 %. For the Official Journal the decrease is due to content not needing to undergo correction (e.g. long tables). For general publications the slight decrease is due to a shift towards more visual communication (i.e. less text).

Corrected pages: Official Journal, general publications and case-law

| Corrected pages | 2017 | 2018 | Change 2018/2017 (%) |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Official Journal | 1 214 550 | 1 038 884 | - 14.5 |
| General publications | 379 092 | 361 504 | - 4.6 |
| Case-law | 974 911 | 604 725 | - 38.0 |
| Total | 2 568 553 | 2 005 113 | - 21.9 |

Towards a new concept for the distribution policy

Strategic objective 7 – Zero stock

The Management Committee agreed on a more detailed interpretation of 'zero stock', e.g. the exclusion of stock waiting for distribution or the warehousing of expensive-to-produce and/or important publications — this means a 'zero surplus stock' policy. The Office started a campaign on the importance of avoiding excessive stocks: the objective is to improve the initial planning through appropriate print-run levels in conformity with targeted mailing lists.

Proposals for destocking outdated publications were sent regularly to stock owners, however most author services were hesitant to destock. Although only 1.95 million copies were destocked in 2018 compared to 3.78 million in 2017, the stock increase was limited to 61 082 copies (+ 0.5 %).

The number of paper copies distributed reached 8.28 million, compared to 9.26 million in 2017, marking a decrease of 10.6 %. The overall long-term trend towards the distribution of fewer printed copies of publications persisted, with 65.3 % fewer copies distributed when compared to 2010 (35.70 million).

| | Number of copies 2017 | Number of copies 2018 | Change 2018/2017 (%) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Stock on 1 January | 14 118 351 | 12 349 390 | - 12.5 |
| In-stock entries | 11 280 074 | 10 296 658 | - 8.7 |
| Distribution (via mailing lists and individual orders) | - 9 264 553 | - 8 283 367 | - 10.6 |
| Stock reduction | - 3 784 482 | - 1 952 209 | - 48.4 |
| Stock on 31 December | 12 349 390 | 12 410 472 | 0.5 |

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 11.3: STRUCTURING OF DATA [CONTENT AND METADATA (IMFC)] IS FACILITATED THROUGH SYNERGIES IN TOOLS AND FORMATS ON THE INTERINSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Interoperability of document formats

The Common Vocabulary version 2 was released. Its scope was extended to gather common structural and semantic concepts of example documents of the types 'regulation', 'directive', 'decision' as well as 'proposal for a regulation', 'proposal for a directive', 'proposal for a decision'. This extended version served as a baseline for the preparation of the Common Exchange Model version 2, adopted by the IMFC in November 2018, which will help the institutions to exchange documents as part of the legislative process. First transmissions based on the Common Exchange Model version 2 are expected for beginning of 2019.

Standardisation of metadata

Under the guidance of the IMFC, the IMMC exchange protocol (for automated transmission of metadata and documents between and within the EU institutions) was extended to cover use by all the remaining EU institutions involved in the interinstitutional decision-making process (European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions and the European Central Bank). New versions of the protocol and the associated authority tables were published on the new EU Vocabularies website. Within the Office, with the migration of the legacy publishing chain for consolidated acts to an IMMC-based publishing chain, all publishing chains are now based on IMMC-based workflows.

The Metadata Registry and EuroVoc websites were replaced by the new common EU Vocabularies website⁽⁵⁾. The Office published seven new authority tables on the EU Vocabularies website, bringing the total to 80.

Strategic objective 1 – Secured and automated exchange of legal data

Based on version 2 of the Common Vocabulary, the newly established IMFC adopted version 2 of the Common Exchange Model in November 2018. The Formex to Akoma Ntoso converter (FMX2AK) based on the Common Exchange Model was further developed.

The use of the IMMC exchange protocol was extended to all EU institutions. Thus nearly all legal data exchanges between the EU institutions and the Office are conducted through the IMMC exchange protocol.

As part of the ongoing Cloud migration project, the IMMCbuilder tool as a Cloud service was deployed in production at the end of 2018.

EuroVoc – the multilingual thesaurus of the EU

Two new versions of the multilingual thesaurus EuroVoc were published, bringing the total number of multilingual concepts covering EU policies and activities to 7 193⁽⁶⁾.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://publications.europa.eu/en/web/eu-vocabularies/>

⁽⁶⁾ <https://publications.europa.eu/en/web/eu-vocabularies/th-dataset/-/resource/dataset/eurovoc>

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 11.4: EU DIGITAL INFORMATION AND DATA ARE ARCHIVED, PRESERVED OVER TIME AND EXTENDED TO NEW CONTENT TYPES

Long-term preservation

A digital preservation plan was drawn up to define the Office's vision and strategy on long-term digital preservation, and it was revised following the input from the EU institutions. The final version was presented to and adopted by the Management Committee.

Strategic objective 9 – Legal deposit scheme

The EU legal deposit scheme is intended to establish a fully operational legal deposit for all the publications of the EU institutions. The Office is working on a draft of the scheme which is to be released for interinstitutional consultation during the first half of 2019.

The remaining collections to be migrated to the new long-term preservation repository EUDOR V3 ⁽⁷⁾ will be handled one by one in order of priority. The formal validation of the migration is ongoing.

Some 42 000 new resources (works) were archived. A work comprises all linguistics versions and all available digital formats. By the end of 2018, the electronic archive contained 762 368 works (corresponding to 96 529 811 individual files). The total volume of the archive amounts to 70 terabytes. The increase compared to 2017 is explained by the addition of new collections and the ever-expanding nature of the content.

Web preservation

The Office became fully responsible for the web preservation service offered to the EU institutions. This service ensures long-term preservation of, and continuous access to, the content of the EU institutions' main websites. The basic service consists of quarterly archiving of websites in the europa.eu domain and its subdomains. In addition to this, at the request of several institutions, tailor-made crawls were carried out of websites that were to be taken offline, or were going to change substantially.

The archived versions of the europa.eu websites were made available to the public. The first tests to store the material in EUDOR were performed successfully.

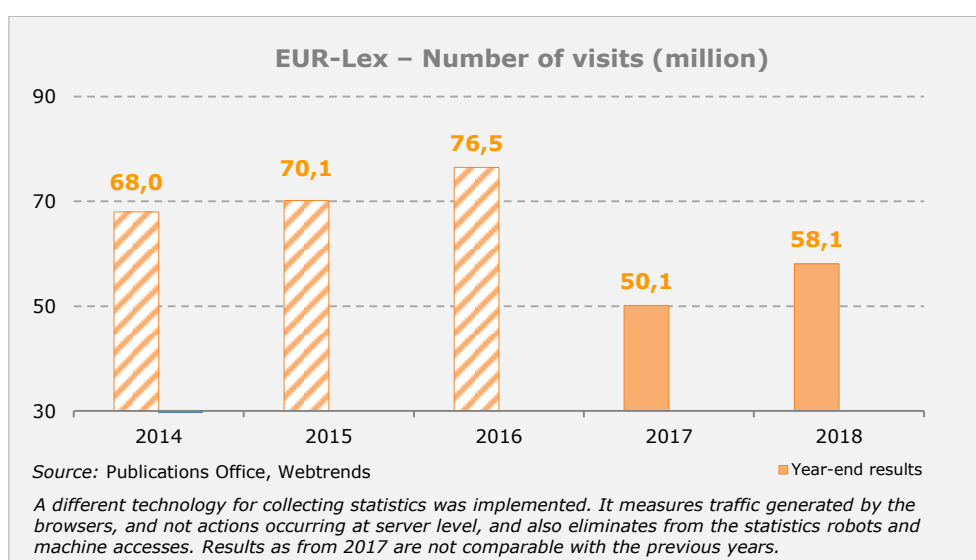
⁽⁷⁾ EUDOR: European Union Document Repository, the long-term digital archive of the EU institutions managed by the Office.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 11.5: EU AUTHENTIC INFORMATION IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE ONLINE AND ITS DISCOVERABILITY IS ENHANCED

EUR-Lex – access to EU law

The revamp of the EUR-Lex navigation was completed: it offers a simplified look, optimised for mobile devices, while features and functionalities remain unchanged. The display of interinstitutional procedures was also redesigned to facilitate the understanding and traceability of all the different stages leading to the adoption of a legal act ('Proposal', 'Opinions', 'First reading', 'Adoption', etc.), each enriched with more detailed information.

The text of national transposition measures from Greece, Cyprus and Austria was added making a total of eight countries for which it is possible to directly access the measures via EUR-Lex (Estonia, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Austria and Slovenia).



The Office contributed to the two meetings of the Council's Working Party on e-Law, presenting its projects related to the dissemination of legal information, standardisation activities, open data and reuse of information. It also participated in the meetings of the Council's e-Justice Working Party. Together with an ad-hoc expert group, the Working Party was responsible for negotiating and proposing a new strategy on European e-Justice and a new e-Justice action plan for 2019-2023. The Office proposed several actions and improvements which were included into the documents. In December 2018 these were approved by Coreper and subsequently by the Council.

Consolidation

The number of legal acts in force that were consolidated (in at least one linguistic version) reached 4 382. The number of newly produced consolidated versions of legal acts was 1 402. More than 2.4 million PDF pages of consolidated texts were produced (4.3 % more than in 2017). Their consistency was checked in order to ensure correct implementation of the amendments and corrigenda to the legal provisions.

Summaries of EU legislation

The total number of summaries of EU legislation reached 4 528, of which 1 810 reflect legislation in force and 2 718 are archived. In addition there are 253 up-to-date glossary entries. The percentage of summaries published in all official languages increased to 85 % compared to 66 % in 2017. A total of 197 summaries of EU legislation were produced or completely redrafted and a further 154 summaries were updated taking into account the most recent legislative changes.

The Office implemented a new optimised workflow in April 2018, which resulted in quicker publication of the summaries. Based on user feedback and internal analysis, further improvements were implemented as regards their display, interlinking and content.

TED – access to public procurement information

More than 43 million notices were viewed on the TED website ⁽⁸⁾ and approximately 11 000 new public procurement notices were published per week in five daily editions in the 24 official EU languages. The total value of the procurement published represents over EUR 460 billion a year.

Public procurement notices published

| | Core notices ⁽¹⁾ | Other notices ⁽²⁾ | Total |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| EU institutions and other bodies/International organisations | 4 524 | 869 | 5 393 |
| Member States | 468 453 | 83 511 | 551 964 |
| Candidate countries | 2 693 | 206 | 2 899 |
| European Economic Area countries | 9 000 | 854 | 9 854 |
| Government Procurement Agreement countries | 7 826 | 92 | 7 918 |
| Other | 407 | 66 | 473 |
| Total | 492 903 | 85 598 | 578 501 |

⁽¹⁾ Prior information notice, contract notice and contract award notice published on the basis of Directives 2009/81/EC, 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU, 2014/25/EU and Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007.
⁽²⁾ Number of supplementary information, corrigenda and miscellaneous information notices are added directly to totals of countries of origin.

Since December 2018, following a consultation with several Commission directorates-general and other EU institutions (European Parliament, Council, European Central Bank), reports with information on the contracts awarded by the EU institutions and bodies are available in TED on a daily basis. They provide useful data, including the entity awarding the contract, the winners, the subject matter and the values awarded, etc.

Strategic objective 8 – Single point of access for public procurement

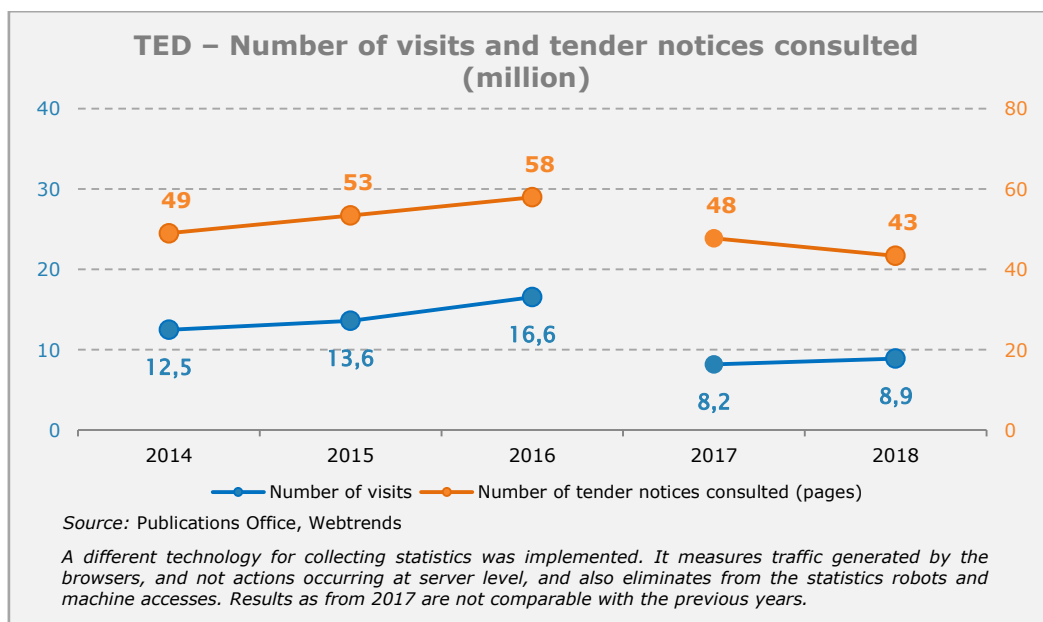
The Office drafted functional requirements for setting up a single point of access (one-stop shop) for public procurement information. In order to increase transparency, EU institutions contract-information reports are available in TED on a daily basis.

The Office worked with Commission's DG Informatics on a proof of concept regarding an application programming interface gateway to ensure machine-to-machine services management. Progress was achieved on the public procurement ontology following cooperation with a working group of national experts.

The Office gathered and analysed valuable information regarding the identification of contracting authorities and promoted the use and need for a common identifier.

To intensify the information exchange and cooperation, in May 2018 the Office organised a conference on 'Superpowers of procurement data' in Brussels to meet national procurement data publishers, policy decision-makers and other interested counterparts. The event celebrated the 20th anniversary of TED and was sponsored by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council.

⁽⁸⁾ TED: Tenders Electronic Daily (<http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do>).



The eTendering (eAccess) platform ⁽⁹⁾ underwent a major technical upgrade and was migrated to a new corporate operating system. The Office worked on a project to interface the Procurement Planning and Management Tool managed by the Joint Research Centre with eTendering in order to enable automatic data transfer between the two applications which are part of the Commission's corporate eProcurement platform.

The Office also engaged with the owners and developers of the Commission's corporate Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal in delivering new services for the better integration between the two systems.

A usability study of eTendering provided valuable input for the continued development of new and better functionalities in the system. Moreover, a number of features will be added in eTendering, such as annual lists of contractors, ex-ante publicity of low value procedures, extended search, email notifications about updates to calls for tenders, etc.

⁽⁹⁾ <https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/general/page.html?name=home>

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 11.6: THE VARIOUS COLLECTIONS OF EU CONTENT ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH A SINGLE POINT OF ACCESS BASED ON COMMONLY AGREED STANDARDS

The OP Portal – access to the collections managed by the Office

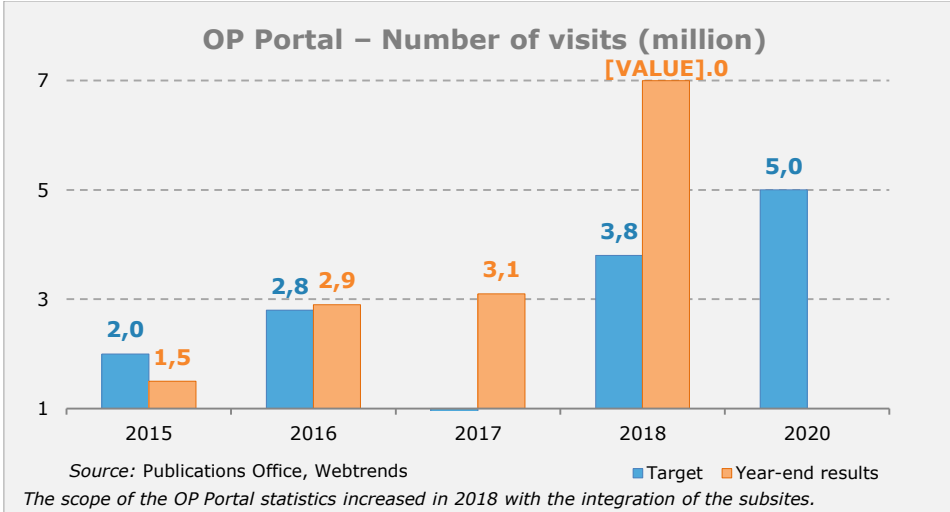
Strategic objective 4 – Linked EU information, increased interoperability and federated search

A landscaping exercise of the EU institutions repositories and websites was carried out for the cross-institutional search project and the identification of their current links with the Office’s content. Additionally, the suitability of the OP Portal’s search engine for a federated search solution was confirmed; subsequently, specifications and a roadmap for implementation were defined. The preliminary analysis as well as the setting out of the user requirements for the access to TED content through the OP Portal were finalised. Further improvements were implemented in terms of providing seamless integration of the Office’s content on external sites by means of widgets.

The EU Vocabularies website was deployed on the OP Portal platform in December 2018, thus providing access to reference data managed by the Office, such as the EuroVoc multilingual thesaurus, authority tables, etc., and replacing two legacy websites (EuroVoc and the Metadata Registry). Interoperability between key controlled vocabularies used at the Commission and other institutions was evaluated.

The Office worked on the strategy and roadmap for achieving linked open data, with the aim of positioning the Office as a centre of expertise for linked open data and to align the efforts in terms of unique and persistent URIs ⁽¹⁰⁾, data models and data quality.

The performance and stability of the OP Portal platform and OP Portal Search service were enhanced. The integration of the EU Vocabularies and EU Whoiswho content into the OP Portal allows users to perform searches across more collections in a multilingual set-up.



The ‘EU Bookshop’ brand name was phased-out; therefore the ‘EU Bookshop’ tab in the portal was renamed ‘EU Publications’. Following a user survey, the e-commerce module and ordering of printed publications as well as the sign-in and registration module were reviewed and updated in order to improve their usability and render the ordering process seamless from a user perspective.

The number of publications downloaded increased by nearly 50 %, which can be attributed to the increase in the number of visitors to the OP Portal – EU Publications from 2 million in the previous year to 2.5 million. The portal’s ‘privileged user’ facility, enhanced following the implementation of a usability study recommendations, accounted

⁽¹⁰⁾ URI: Uniform resource identifier.

for more than 81 % of all copies ordered. The Office produced monthly and ad-hoc statistical reports on the publications requested online and the feedback received from users, and these were forwarded to the author services.

With a view to a potential outsourcing of the OP Portal's operations to a Managed Services Provider, a call for tender was launched. This transition will support the OP Portal activities by ensuring smooth access to content and metadata while implementing new features and functionalities needed by users and stakeholders.

Improved discoverability of documents and publications

The number of enriched notices uploaded into EUR-Lex totalled 24 191. The Office also created 26 225 records enabling their corresponding publications to be made available online. These records contained standardised descriptive metadata as well as EuroVoc indexation terms and a DOI-based persistent link to the publication content, contributing to the improved discoverability of the publications on the web.

| Series | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| EUR-Lex documentary units | 41 995 | 26 229 | 27 095 | 33 166 | 25 314 | 24 191 |
| Publications notices (general publications) | 13 825 | 16 179 | 18 497 | 21 877 | 22 249 | 26 225 |
| Total | 55 820 | 42 408 | 45 592 | 55 043 | 47 563 | 49 291 |

A wider visibility of EU general publications was promoted through the dissemination of the Office's bibliographic records to external audiences, in particular through its Online Public Access Catalogue (OPac), which provides advanced search functionalities and permits the download of records into local catalogues. The service was especially appreciated by librarians and other information professionals as it facilitated the inclusion of EU publications within established collections.

Feedback mechanism: web analytics services

The Office set up a service to provide web analytics information related to the consultation of the publications in the OP Portal, i.e. the dashboard on web analytics. The tool proposes easy access to the main indicators related to the consultation of the publications and the consultation context (visits, page views, languages used, downloads, geography, searched terms, etc.). The data can be filtered easily and accommodate different analytical needs: global consultation, selection of publications of one/multiple institution(s), top consulted topics of interest and related publications, and top consulted publications based on the country of origin of the visits.

The proof of concept of the tool was presented to EU institutions in order to gather feedback. The dashboard is expected to be operational and gradually opened to the EU institutions during 2019.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 11.7: THE OFFICE IS THE INFORMATION HUB FOR POLICY MAKERS, MARKET ACTORS AND CIVIL SOCIETY AS REGARDS THE DISSEMINATION AND REUSE OF PUBLIC EU DATA. CONTENT-LINKING FROM VARIOUS SOURCES IS ENABLED THROUGH SYNERGIES AND INTEROPERABILITY WITH OTHER EU INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES AND BODIES

The Cellar – a single repository for all digital content managed by the Office

By the end of 2018, the Cellar contained more than 133 million files, an increase of 0.2 % compared to the end of 2017. The predominant file formats are XML (Formex), HTML and PDF. The metadata itself is represented in the standard format of the semantic web (i.e. RDF – resource description framework) as triples ⁽¹¹⁾. The metadata part of the Cellar contains more than 1 714 million triples.

There was a further increase in requests for data from the Cellar. On average there were 11.6 million requests per day, corresponding to more than 134 queries per second. About 3.4 % of all requests came directly from the web, while the remainder passed through one of the Office’s public websites, in particular EUR-Lex.

The migration of the Cellar to the Cloud started in 2017 and should be finalised in 2019.

EU Open Data Portal – access to EU institutions’ reusable data

Strategic objective 10 – Central point of access and reuse

Through the EU Open Data Portal the Office promoted the reuse policy as specified in Commission Decision 2011/833/EU ⁽¹²⁾. The Office contributed to the Commission inter-service group on reuse instruments, which proposed that the Creative Commons licence be adopted in order to facilitate reuse by citizens and businesses.

Landscaping exercises were carried out among Commission services and agencies in order to identify new datasets suitable for publishing on the EU Open Data Portal as well as ways to automate the exchange of metadata. The process with the other EU institutions is ongoing. The landscaping action contributes to the new Commission data strategy, data@EC.

The Office developed a new Digital Object Identifier (DOI) data service in the EU Open Data Portal for the EU data providers; it allows for automatic or manual assignment of DOIs to datasets and data catalogue, and the availability of dataset-related metadata in DataCite ⁽¹³⁾. The Office also launched a study on the EU citation styles in order to find harmonised and consistent methods and tools to promote and ensure a standardised approach to cite EU contents across all EU institutions.

The metadata standard recommended for data portals in Europe (DCAT-AP) was implemented on EU Open Data Portal. This will increase interoperability with other data portals in Europe.

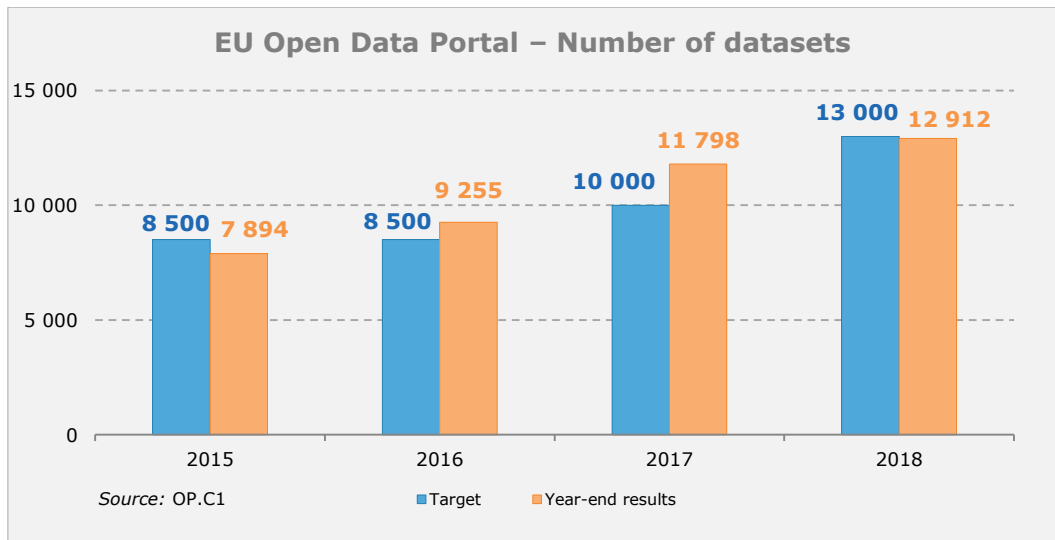
The EU Open Data Portal enriched the collection of reuse examples, with 95 web and mobile apps described on the ‘Applications’ tab.

The publishing of datasets on the EU Open Data Portal continued to grow and the portal provided access to 12 912 datasets stemming from 72 data providers: the European Parliament, Council, European External Action Service, European Economic and Social Committee, European Committee of the Regions, European Central Bank, European Court of Auditors, European Investment Bank, European Ombudsman, European Data Protection Supervisor, 33 Commission services, with DG Statistics as the most significant data provider, and 31 EU agencies and other bodies. The Court of Justice also expressed its interest in publishing datasets.

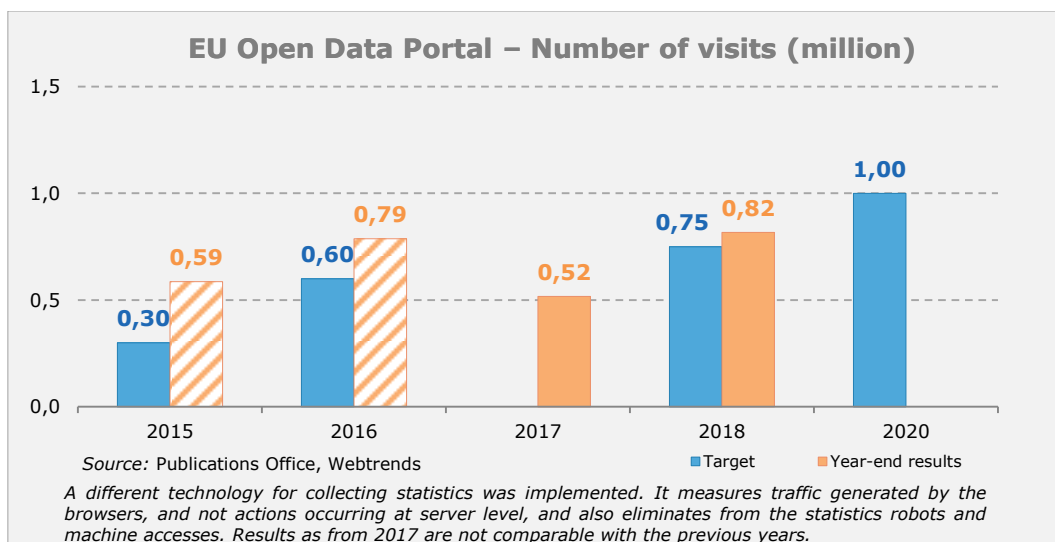
⁽¹¹⁾ A triple is a data entity composed of subject-predicate-object.

⁽¹²⁾ OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39.

⁽¹³⁾ DataCite is a global organisation that provides persistent identifiers (DOIs) for data and digital objects (primarily research data), to help locate, identify and cite data.



The Office organised the second EU Datathon competition on the reuse of data from the EU Open Data Portal in collaboration with the ELI Taskforce, the European Food Safety Authority and three Commission directorates-general (DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs; DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology; and DG Informatics). The competition challenged teams to create applications addressing specific policy or societal issues related to innovation, legal data, public procurement data, or food data. The outreach of the event was very successful, with enterprises, start-ups, individuals and students from all over Europe, and the results provided invaluable insights on what can be achieved through the reuse of open data.

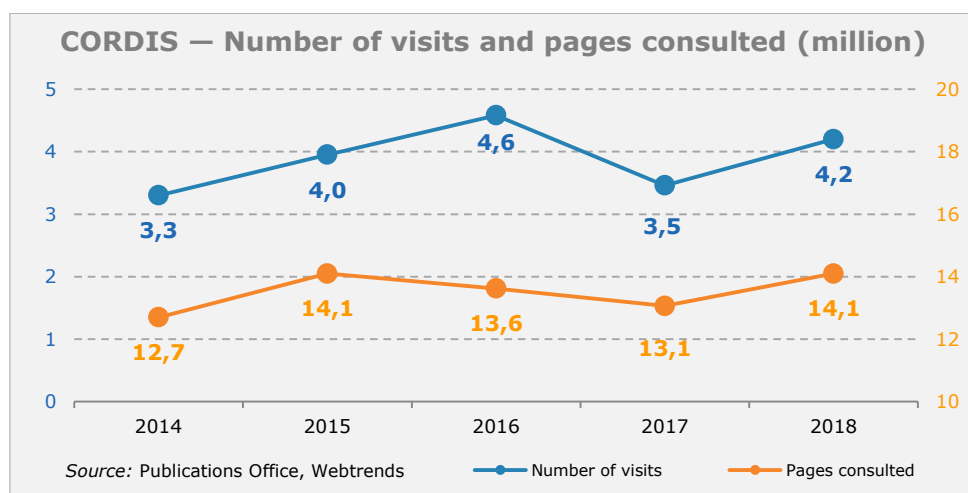


The management of the European Data Portal⁽¹⁴⁾, publishing 880 000 datasets from 78 data catalogues from European countries, was transferred from the Commission’s DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology to the Office on 1 August 2018. Bringing the two portals together allows for operational synergies and a more comprehensive and contextualised offer of data and data services to (re)users. This is also in line with the need for further web rationalisation within the Commission and the other EU institutions, and builds on the Office’s interinstitutional role.

(14) <https://data.europa.eu/europeandataportal>

CORDIS – access to research results information

A new CORDIS ⁽¹⁵⁾ website was launched. Based on an annual survey that showed a further rise in overall user satisfaction to 93 %, the new website makes it easier to view, browse and search for relevant information using a modern and mobile-responsive user interface.



In parallel, the CORDIS print/PDF publications were revamped for the regular *Research*eu* magazine, posted 10 times per year to over 4 400 subscribers worldwide. CORDIS launched or updated 12 *Results Packs*, covering topics such as cybersecurity, precision farming, food systems, building renovation, water technologies, cultural heritage, organoids, nanomedicine, antibiotic resistance and bio-based innovation. CORDIS science writers and journalists published over 1 700 articles online highlighting the results of EU-funded research and innovation projects, aimed at professionals in the field and available in Spanish, German, English, French, Italian and Polish.

The new CORDIS framework contract started in early 2018. This proved reliable with an overall website availability above the target of 99 % and the implementation of comprehensive test management and monitoring systems. Improved search engine optimisation techniques supported an increase in website visits.

Preparatory action 'Linked open data in European public administration'

The Office started a study on the data integration potential via linked open data on a cloud environment. It should provide a basis on which European and national public administrations can build their cloud-ready linked open data strategies as well as scenarios for how the EU institutions can improve their services or create new innovative services via linked open data.

The Office also worked on identifying ways to improve user experience and publication findability on the OP Portal via the use of linked open data and setting out how the proof of concept of linked open data and data services could be extended and applied to other open data generated by European public administrations, expanding potential exploitation.

The EU Open Data Portal integrated the DOI, which allows users to cite the datasets they use and also enables the data providers to see who used their datasets.

⁽¹⁵⁾ CORDIS: the Community Research and Development Information Service. Under the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020, CORDIS is financed within Horizon 2020 on a budget line co-delegated by the DG Research and Innovation (<http://cordis.europa.eu>).

2. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL

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

The first subsection reports the control results and all other relevant information that support management's assurance on the achievement of the financial management and internal control objectives⁽¹⁶⁾. It includes any additional information necessary to establish that the available evidence is reliable, complete and comprehensive; appropriately covering all activities, programmes and management modes relevant for the Office.

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

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. Its results are explicitly documented and reported to the Director-General. The reports produced are:

- the reports by the authorising officers by subdelegation (including reports on the financial data and the main points concerning controls and risks, follow-up of actions on audit recommendations, and significant problems);
- the quarterly reports to the Office's Management Committee;
- the reports of the ex-post and second level ex-ante financial controls;
- specific analyses performed by the Strategy, Governance and Internal Control Unit and review of important processes and procedures and their documentation, including the reports on recorded exceptions and non-compliance events;
- the monitoring of the implementation of the Anti-Fraud Strategy;
- the contribution by the Head of Unit in charge of risk management and internal control, including the results of internal control monitoring at the Office level;
- the limited conclusion of the internal auditor on the state of control, and the observations and recommendations of the Internal Audit Service (IAS);
- observations and recommendations reported by the European Court of Auditors (ECA).

This section reports the control results and other relevant elements that support management's assurance. It is structured into (a) Control results, (b) Audit observations and recommendations, (c) Effectiveness of the internal control system, and resulting in (d) Conclusions on the impact as regards assurance.

2.1.1 Control results

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management that support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives⁽¹⁷⁾. The Publications

⁽¹⁶⁾ Article 36(2) of the Financial Regulation: 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.

⁽¹⁷⁾ 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 (Article 36(2) of the Financial Regulation).

Office's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in the AAR Annex 4. Annex 5 outlines the main risks together with the control processes aimed to mitigate them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the relevant control systems.

Financial resources managed by the Office fall into four types:

- administrative expenditure (salaries, buildings and financing the Office's activities such as the production of publications, access and reuse, and long-term preservation) managed through the Office's own budget, which is annexed to that of the Commission;
- operational expenditure financed through budget lines delegated or co-delegated to the Director-General of the Office (financing TED, CORDIS and services related to the production, storage and dissemination of publications);
- internal assigned revenue under Article 21(3)(c) of the Financial Regulation (administrative or operational expenditure financing the publication of the *Official Journal of the European Union* and services related to the production, storage and dissemination of publications);
- revenue received from the sale of publications. This revenue is transferred to the EU institutions and Commission directorates-general concerned. Sales revenue has constantly decreased and has become insignificant. In 2018 it amounted to EUR 39 989.

In 2018, the Director-General of the Office also managed cross subdelegated budget appropriations received for the following main activities:

- ISA² programme, financed on a cross subdelegation received from DG Informatics;
- The management of OIL's print assets as part of the Commission's synergies and efficiencies exercise, financed on a cross subdelegation received from OIL.

No cross subdelegations were given in 2018 by the Office to Commission directorates-general.

Within the Office, a partly decentralised financial circuit is applied and a simplified payment workflow was introduced for low-risk items. The budget cells are integrated in the Finance Unit.

Overall conclusion table

| Risk-type/ Activities | Grants (e.g. actual costs based, or lump sums, or entitlements) | Procurement (e.g. minor or major values) | Shared management (MS's OPs, PAs, etc.) + EAC (for NAs) | Cross-delegations to other DGs (other AOXDs) | Subsidies and/or funds to EE (EU Agency, EA, JU) | Delegation agreements with EE (EIB, Int. Org, etc.) | NEI, e.g. Revenues, Assets, OBS [(in) tangible or financial assets & liabilities] | ICO indicators available at this level? (cf. L&R, SFM, AFS, SAI, TFV) | Independent info from auditors (IAS, ECA) on assurance or on new/overdue critical recommendations available? | Any reservation? |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|------------------|
| Direct management Procurement (Publications) | NA | € 47 781 199.73 | NA | NA | NA | NA | Internal assigned revenue = 6 212 365.76 Assets = 7 223 076.21 | RER < 2 % | Y | NO |
| Totals (coverage) | NA | € 47 781 199.73 | NA | NA | NA | NA | Assigned revenue = 6 212 365.76 Assets = 7 223 076.21 | RER < 2 % | Y | NA |
| ICO-related indicators available at this level? (cf. L&R, SFM, AFS, SAI, TFV) | NA | RER estimated: 0.197 % CEC = YES AFS = OK | NA | NA | NA | NA | Clean management declaration SAI = OK TFV = YES | RER estimated: 0.197 % AFS = OK SAI = OK TFV = YES | No critical issue No new critical recommendation No critical or very important recommendation overdue | NA |
| Links to AAR Annex 3 | Overall total = 47 781 199.73 €. This amount represents the total of payments on credits C1, C4, C5 and C8, including credits co-delegated from other directorates-general to the Office (as per Table 2 – payments made). | | | | | | Assigned revenue = 6 212 365.76 (as per Table 7) Assets = 7 223 076.21 (as per Table 4) | NA | NA | NA |
| <p>Legend for the abbreviations: OP = operational programme, PA = paying agency, NA = national Agency, AOXDs = Authorising Officer by cross-delegation, EA = executive agency, JU = joint undertaking, NEI = non-expenditure item(s), OBS= off-balance sheet, ICO = internal control objective, L&R = legality and regularity, SFM = sound financial management, AFS = anti-fraud strategy measures, SAI = safeguarding assets and information, TFV = true and fair view, RER = residual error rate, CEC = cost-effectiveness of controls, Mngt = Management.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |

1. Effectiveness = the control results and benefits

• Legality and regularity of the transactions

The Publications Office has set up internal control processes aimed to ensure the 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 concerned.

In order to ensure that procurement procedures do not lead to incorrect attribution of contracts, the Office maintains a *Comité des achats et marchés* (CAM) to give an opinion to the Authorising Officers by Subdelegation about the attribution decision and its basis. The committee delivered 12 opinions. Following one negative opinion, the Authorising Officer by Subdelegation provided further clarifications and took appropriate action. The responses to the CAM remarks were followed up by the Strategy, Governance and Internal Control Unit and were found satisfactory.

In order to mitigate the risk of improper implementation of contracts, in 9 cases, liquidated damages in the value of EUR 37 506.26, concerning 7 contracts, were applied by the operational services.

To ensure that commitments and payments are legal and regular, the Financial Control section of the Strategy, Governance and Internal Control Unit carries out two types of control of specific financial transactions: controls that are made before signature of the transaction, only on commitments and recovery orders (ex-ante), and controls on all types of completed transactions (ex-post). Both verifications are organised on a sample basis.

Regarding ex-ante controls, the sampling used is a mixture of random, monetary unit and risk-based methods. The target sampling rate is 40 % or 25 % depending on the type of transaction. Ex-ante controls are provided from the moment the anticipated credits are made available until the end of April when Financial Control, based on the ratio qualifying the quality and the regularity level, decides for each unit on the exemption until the end of year n . In addition, one ex-post control exercise takes place during year $n+1$ for verifying the quality and regularity of files produced by the exempted units. Regarding quarterly ex-post controls on payments, since the beginning of 2017, a stratified sampling methodology is applied with a target of 15 %. The target sampling rates were complied with in 2018. All transactions with errors were examined in detail and recommendations were formulated.

The financial control results are extrapolated to determine the amount at risk. This is carried out in accordance with the Commission Guidance on sampling methods for audit authorities.

Controls carried out in the Office and the indicators cover the management of all types of financial resources, including revenue.

In the context of the protection of the EU budget, at the Commission's corporate level, the DGs' estimated overall amounts at risk and their estimated future corrections are consolidated.

For the Publications Office, the estimated overall amount at risk at payment ⁽¹⁸⁾ for the 2018 payments made is EUR 0.094 million. This is the Authorising Officer by Delegation's best, conservative estimation of the amount of relevant expenditure ⁽¹⁹⁾ during the year (EUR 47.78 million) not in conformity with the applicable contractual and regulatory provisions at the time the payment is made.

This expenditure will be subsequently subject to ex-post controls and a sizeable proportion of the underlying error will be detected and corrected in successive years. However, the Office does not implement programmes where the performance of ex-post controls of external entities would give rise to recoveries in subsequent years. Furthermore, the Office's error rate is low and thus the corrective capacity is

⁽¹⁸⁾ In order to calculate the weighted average error rate (AER) for the total *relevant expenditure* in the reporting year, the *detected* or equivalent error rates have been used. See note 6 to the table.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Relevant expenditure during the year; see note 2 to the table.

insignificant. The conservatively estimated future corrections ⁽²⁰⁾ for the 2018 expenditure are EUR 0 million. This is the amount of errors that the DG conservatively estimates to identify and correct from controls that it will implement in successive years.

The difference between those two amounts leads to the estimated overall amount at risk at closure of EUR 0.094 million.

Estimated overall amount at risk at closure

| Publications Office | Payments made (FY; m€) | Minus new prefinancing [plus retentions made] (in FY; m€) | Plus cleared prefinancing [minus retentions (partially) released and deductions of expenditure made by MS] (in FY; m€) | = Relevant expenditure (for the FY; m€) | Average error rate (%) (weighted AER; %) | Estimated overall amount at risk at payment (FY; m€) | Average recoveries and corrections (adjusted ARC; %) | Estimated future corrections [and deductions] (for FY; m€) | Estimated overall amount at risk at closure (m€) |
|--|-----------------------------|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
| Programme Budget line, 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) | Based on 7Y-avg historic H-ARC (as per ABAC DWH BO report on corrective capacity): (0.3 %), but adjusted to become the best but conservative estimate for the current MFF | = (5) x (8) | = (7) – (9) |
| Publications | 47.78 mEUR | 0 mEUR | 0 mEUR | 47.78 mEUR | 0.197 % | 0.094 mEUR | 0 % | 0 mEUR | = 0.094 mEUR; and 0.197 % of (5) |
| Overall, total | 47.78 mEUR | 0 mEUR | 0 mEUR | 47.78 mEUR | 0.197 % | = 0.094 mEUR; and 0.197 % of (5) | 0 % | = 0 mEUR; and 0 % of (5) | = 0.094 mEUR; and 0.197 % of (5) |

- (1) If possible, differentiated for the relevant portfolio segments at a level which is lower than the DG total.
- (2) Payments made or equivalent, such as after the expenditure is registered in the Commission's accounting system, after the expenditure is accepted or after the prefinancing is cleared. 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), the payments made are covered by the delegated DGs. In the case of cross subdelegations (Internal Rules, Article 12), they remain with the delegating DGs.
- (3) New prefinancing actually paid by the department itself during the financial year (i.e. excluding any prefinancing received as transfer from another department). The 'prefinancing' is covered as in the context of note 2.5.1 to the Commission (provisional) annual accounts (i.e. excluding the 'Other advances to Member States' (note 2.5.2) which is covered on a pure payment-made basis). 'Pre-financings paid/cleared' are always covered by the delegated DGs, even in the case of cross subdelegations.
- (4) Prefinancing actually having been cleared during the financial year (i.e. their 'delta' in FY 'actuals', not their 'cut-off' based estimated 'consumption').
- (5) For the purpose of equivalence with the ECA's scope of the EC funds with potential exposure to L&R errors (see the ECA's 2017 AR methodological Annex 1.1 point 15), also our concept of 'relevant expenditure' includes the payments made, subtracts the new pre-financing paid out, and adds the previous pre-financing actually cleared. This is a separate and 'hybrid' concept, intentionally combining elements from the budgetary accounting and from the general ledger accounting.
- (6) In order to calculate the weighted average error rate (AER) for the total relevant expenditure in the reporting year, the detected error rates have been used — or equivalent. For types of low-risk expenditure with indications that the equivalent error rate might be close to 'zero' (e.g. administrative expenditure, operating subsidies to agencies), it is recommended to use 0.5 % nevertheless as a conservative estimate. The Office uses a detected error rate.
- (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 0.3 % to 0 %). Any ex-ante elements, one-off events, (partially) cancelled or waived recovery orders, and other factors from the past years that would no longer be relevant for current programmes (e.g. higher ex-post corrections of previously higher errors in earlier generations of grant programmes, current programmes with entirely ex-ante control systems) have been adjusted in order to come to the best but conservative estimate of the ex-post future corrections to be applied to the reporting year's relevant expenditure for the current programmes. However, the Office does not implement programmes where the performance of ex-post controls of external entities would give rise to recoveries in subsequent years. Furthermore, the Office's error rate is low and thus the corrective capacity is insignificant.
- (10) For some programmes with no set closure point and for some multiannual programmes for which corrections are still possible afterwards, all corrections that remain possible are considered for this estimate.

⁽²⁰⁾ 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. Any coding errors, ex-ante elements, one-off events, (partially) cancelled or waived ROs, and other factors from the past years that would no longer be relevant for current programmes (e.g. higher ex-post corrections of previously higher errors in earlier generations of grant programmes) have been adjusted in order to come to the best but conservative estimate of the expected corrective capacity average to be applied to the reporting year's relevant expenditure for the current programmes in order to get the related estimated future corrections. However, the Office does not implement programmes where the performance of ex-post controls of external entities would give rise to recoveries in subsequent years. Furthermore, the Office's error rate is low and thus the corrective capacity is insignificant.

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

The Publications Office has developed and implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2014, elaborated on the basis of the methodology provided by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). It has been updated in 2016.

The Office continued to raise awareness of all the Office's staff on the anti-fraud strategy, by regular communications on the Office's intranet and targeted reminders to heads of units.

The Strategy, Governance and Internal Control Unit monitors the anti-fraud strategy through the follow-up of the action plan linked to it, including the performance indicators defined in the Annual Activity Report.

The controls aimed at preventing and detecting fraud are essentially similar to those intended to ensure the legality and regularity of transactions.

In order to identify risk of fraud the Office screens the Register of exceptions and the transactions where errors have a financial consequence (as identified by Financial Control). These transactions are subject to a more in-depth analysis.

From the control exercises reported upon, 10 cases identified by Financial Control, representing a total value of EUR 0.19 million, with a final financial consequence of EUR 22 263.23, were controlled in depth. No indication of risk of fraud was found.

During the reporting year, five entries in the Register of exceptions concerning taking over of costs by the Office and five concerning a contractual override, categorised as fraud prevention indicators, were identified. This represented 0.19 % of the total number and 0.14 % of the total value of the transactions of the Office during the period analysed. This is lower than both the materiality limit and the target. The analysis of these cases did not lead to any suspicion of fraud.

The conclusion is that the anti-fraud strategy of the Office is comprehensive and reliable. Its next periodical review is foreseen for 2019.

- ***Other control objectives: safeguarding of assets and information***

The main assets of the Office are:

- in the IT domain. Information is mainly stored electronically. Thus, controls for safeguarding of assets and information complement each other. They comprise mainly control of access to IT equipment. Since 1 January 2018, both resources and operational responsibility were transferred to DG Informatics, however the system owners remain at the Office. Access to applications is protected by user IDs and passwords. Access to the computing centre is managed by DG Informatics and it is protected; access to the rooms of the telecommunications network is only permitted to staff duly authorised according to the needs. Daily backups and a secondary site ensure high availability, synchronic data replication, safeguarding and business continuity;
- the stock of publications. This is stored and managed in a secure location by an external contractor who maintains a perpetual inventory.

Unused material, equipment and archives are stored in secure locations. A procedure for missing assets is in force to handle discrepancies. All write-offs of assets have to be endorsed by a committee consisting of delegates of the Directorates-General in Luxembourg which manage assets, and a president independent from asset management.

Since October 2018 tangible and intangible assets in the IT domain (computer software, computer hardware) have been transferred to DG Informatics.

There were no cases of security breach and all write-off requests to the write-off committee have been authorised.

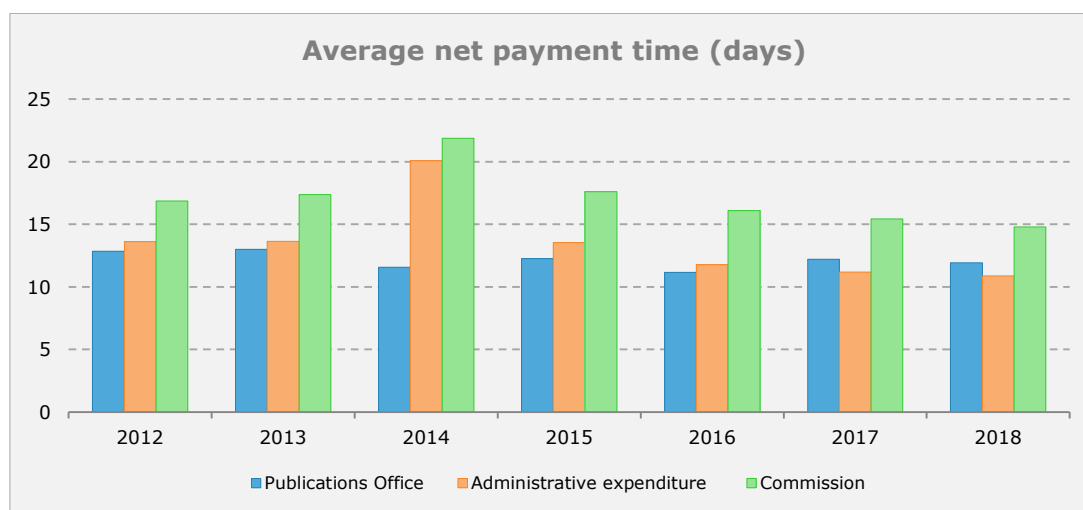
The Office uses the secure transfer from the Commission and the Council for legislative documents to be published in the Official Journal. In 2018 the secure transfer was extended also to documents from the European Economic and Social Committee and from the European Committee of Regions.

Following the audit observations of IAS (see section 2.1.2), the reporting on testing operations on business continuity is in the course of being streamlined.

Based on the control of write-off files and of inventory procedures as well as the assessment of risks and of the compliance with internal control principles, it can be concluded that assets and information managed by the Office are properly protected.

2. Efficiency = the time-to-pay

In 2018 the Office made 3 575 payments out of which 99.58 % were within time limit. The average net payment time was 11.92 days. Results show that the controls in place ensured the timely execution of payments and therefore are adapted to the Office's environment and efficient.



3. Economy = the cost of controls

The Strategy, Governance and Internal Control Unit estimates the costs of controls in place by reviewing every year, in cooperation with each unit in the Office, the number of Full Time Equivalent staff members and their activity-ratio dedicated to control tasks, and by monitoring the total number of transactions carried out by types. For 2018, the new corporate methodology for the estimation, assessment and reporting on the cost-effectiveness of controls was applied and the costs of controls were separated by relevant control system in ex-ante and ex-post controls.

Public procurement control procedures

For public procurement, an estimated EUR 1.2 million were invested in controlling 30 procurement procedures with a total value of EUR 29.02 million which resulted in 36 contracts or amendments signed. Thus 4.2 % of the total contract value was dedicated to control. As most of these controls are performed before the launch of the procurement procedures, the costs correspond mainly to ex-ante controls.

Control of commitments and payments

- Financial circuits procedures

For financial circuits, an estimated EUR 1.53 million were invested in controlling 4 583 financial transactions worth EUR 151.1 million, out of which EUR 47.78 million represented payments. These costs mostly refer to the effort invested by the operational units and the budget cells in the verification of the transactions (operational and financial control) and mainly correspond to ex-ante controls. Thus 3.22 % of the total payment amount was dedicated to control. Each financial transaction controlled cost an estimated EUR 336. In 2017, the values were 2.69 % and EUR 296 respectively.

- Financial control procedures

For ex-post and second level ex-ante financial control, an estimated EUR 0.28 million were invested in controlling 802 financial transactions worth an estimated

EUR 159.3 million. Thus 0.18 % of the total value of transactions (commitments and payments) checked by the financial control was dedicated to control. Control of each transaction or procedure checked cost an estimated EUR 360. In 2017, the costs included also the controls of recovery orders, and the values were 0.39 % and EUR 472 respectively.

Out of this, the estimated costs of ex-ante controls (ex-ante level 2 on commitments) were EUR 68 770, and the estimated costs of ex-post controls (on payments and commitments) were EUR 219 992.

In total, the estimated costs of controlling commitments and payments were of EUR 1.8 million.

Recovery orders

A total of EUR 140 129 were invested in controlling recovery orders worth EUR 6.21 million.

Other financial transactions

The controls of transfers, write-offs and protection of assets and information cost EUR 181 446.21, stemming mostly from controls dedicated to IT security.

Overall controls

Overall controls (including control of procurement, control of financial circuits, financial control, control related to budget and accounting, coordination and internal control, control related to IT security) cost EUR 3.36 million, which is 7.05 % of the payment volume. In 2017, the proportion was 4.65 %, and the costs of controls were EUR 3.3 million.

Given that no changes were performed in 2018 in the control strategy, the slight increase in absolute terms and the increase of the ratio are due to the update of the corporate methodology for the estimation of costs of controls and to the decrease of the funds managed. Thus the Office concludes that the controls are cost-effective.

4. Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls

Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results, the Office has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the control system and reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls.

In non-financial terms, the benefits of control include better value for money, deterrent and preventive effects, efficiency gains, system improvements and compliance with regulatory provisions.

To reach a conclusion on the relative efficiency of controls, it is necessary to analyse the evolution of these efficiency indicators over time and/or compare them to relevant benchmarks. Comparison of financial control results and the proportion of exceptions to materiality criteria, as well as of the time to pay to legal requirements, indicates that controls are effective.

Taking into account the historical error rate shortly after having started the second level ex-ante and the ex-post controls, which was between 5 and 7 %, it can be assumed that the costs of controls are lower than the benefits derived from avoiding errors. The changes between the years in percentages and costs per transaction originate from the difference in number and value of the transactions.

The procurement, commitment and payment procedures are, to a large extent, a regulatory requirement which cannot be curtailed. Therefore, the Office considers that the necessity of these controls is undeniable as shown by the risks outlined in Annex 5, as a significant proportion of the appropriations would be at risk, should they not be in place. Controls are made on a sampling basis, applying as of the beginning of 2017 a stratified methodology. Furthermore, second level ex-ante controls are focused on the most relevant period. However, when the result of these controls is not satisfactory, ex-ante controls are extended to cover other periods.

The Publications Office has been reviewing its control strategy on a regular basis to the needs and risks involved. In 2017 the Financial Control reviewed the sampling process

and aligned the extrapolation method to determine the estimated amount at risk with the Commission Guidance on sampling methods for audit authorities.

The Office is reviewing its processes to update the risk assessment and to identify further efficiencies including in terms of control.

2.1.2 Audit observations and recommendations

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

The Office is audited by both internal and external independent auditors: the Commission's Internal Audit Service (IAS) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA).

During the period of reference, the IAS conducted the audit on intellectual property rights supporting activities in the Commission. The Office was audited on this subject together with other four directorates-general. The audit focused in particular on the effectiveness and the efficiency of the controls put in place to prevent and detect infringement of intellectual property rights of third parties by publications of the Commission. One important recommendation, concerning the intellectual property rights management for EU publications, was formulated for the Office in the draft audit report and this was accepted. The final report will be available in 2019. The action plan was prepared and transmitted to IAS, and the Office has already started to work on the implementation of the recommendation.

Another audit, on IT governance and project management, was started by the IAS with the opening meeting in December 2018. It is planned to be finalised by mid-2019.

One important recommendation of the 2016 IAS audit on business continuity concerning testing of business continuity is in the course of being implemented. The Office is in a transitional period as regards the migration of its IT activities to the Commission data centre managed by DG Informatics. As regards the open recommendation, the Office is in negotiation with DG Informatics in order to receive the formal report documenting the testing of the business continuity.

Based on all work undertaken by the IAS in the period 2016-2018 and taking into account that: (a) management has adopted action plans to implement all the accepted recommendations and the IAS considers that these action plans are adequate to address the residual risks identified by the auditors, except for the audit in intellectual property rights supporting activities where management has not yet adopted an action plan ⁽²¹⁾; and (b) the implementation of these plans is monitored through reports by management and follow-up audits by the IAS, the internal auditor concluded that the internal control systems in place for the audited processes are effective.

The Office is the lead service for two recommendations arising from the European Court of Auditors' performance audit on access to the EU institutions' public procurement ⁽²²⁾ as well as for two additional recommendations originating from the European Parliament's resolution on 2015 discharge. The recommendations refer to the creation of a one-stop shop for the EU institutions' procurement activities and to the establishment of a single public repository for information related to procurement contracts in order to increase transparency.

The Office progressed in the implementation of these recommendations. Following the survey held with contracting authorities using eTendering and discussions with several Commission directorates-general and other EU institutions (European Parliament, Council, European Central Bank), since December 2018 reports with information on the

⁽²¹⁾ It should be noted that the action plan for the implementation of the recommendation accepted following the audit on intellectual property rights was prepared and transmitted to IAS on 20 February 2019.

⁽²²⁾ Special Report No 17/2016: *The EU institutions can do more to facilitate access to their public procurement.*

contracts awarded by the EU institutions and bodies are available in TED on a daily basis. They provide useful data, including the entity awarding the contract, the winners, the subject matter and the values awarded, etc. The next steps include assigning identifiers to EU institutions and Commission directorates-general and creating dynamic pages to visualise the reports online. Additionally, a number of features will be added in eTendering, such as annual lists of contractors, ex-ante publicity of low value procedures, extended search, email notifications about updates to calls for tenders, etc.). Work on the listing functional and technical requirements for a common electronic one-stop shop is ongoing.

Furthermore, the European Court of Auditors examined the reliability of the internal control systems of the Office. The ECA observations did not include significant issues related to transactions, control systems or the management representations in the Annual Activity Report.

In conclusion there were no audit recommendations which would shed doubt on the achievement of objectives or the quality of financial management of the Office.

No critical or very important audit recommendations were significantly overdue at the end of the year. Consequently, the current state-of-play does not lead to assurance-related concerns.

2.1.3 Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems

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

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

The Publications Office fully implemented the new Internal Control Principles. Individual meetings were held with the heads of units on internal control matters, and the elements of the new framework were discussed. Following these meetings and after a dedicated desk-review exercise the internal control plan was reviewed and the internal control monitoring criteria were defined.

Assessment of the internal control systems

The internal control systems of the Office are assessed on a continuous basis.

Financial control results show that there are no material risks in financial operations and that first level operational and financial controls are satisfactory.

The analysis of the Register of exceptions shows that the number of exceptions is insignificant and there is no specific risk.

The Evaluation Section of the Strategy, Governance and Internal Control Unit carries out evaluations, assists in the evaluations and analyses of contracts carried out by other units, and monitors the completion of evaluations and analyses of contracts where the section is not involved. The result of this monitoring shows that the evaluations and analyses of contracts are conducted according to the procedure defined by the Director-General. The evaluations and analyses contributed to the quality of preparation of renewed contracts and showed that objectives of the actions evaluated were attained.

An annual review of the effectiveness of the internal control systems is conducted based on discussions with all heads of unit in the Office and internal control results (financial control, audit and evaluation).

Additionally, a specific assessment of the internal control system was carried out for the year 2018 in accordance with the methodology established in the 'Implementation guide of the internal control framework of the Commission'. The presence and functioning of

the components and principles of the internal control system was done based on the strengths and weaknesses identified during the year and the measurement of the monitoring criteria. The report is presented to and validated by the Director-General.

The IAS has concluded that the internal control system in place provides reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of the business objectives set up for processes audited.

The Publications Office has assessed the internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that they are effective and that the components and principles are present and functioning as intended.

2.1.4 Conclusions on the impact as regards assurance

This section reviews the assessment of the elements reported above (in sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3), the sub-conclusions above, and draws the overall conclusions supporting the declaration of assurance and whether it should be qualified with reservations.

The information reported in section 2 stems from the monitoring results by management and auditors contained in the reports listed in section 2.1. 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 comprehensive coverage of the budget delegated to the Director-General of the Publications Office.

Results of controls of procurement, financial control and the analysis of exceptions support the conclusion that resources are used for the intended purpose and operations of the Publications Office are legal and regular.

Analysis of the control results, ex-ante analysis of contracts and evaluation activities ensure sound financial management; the measures taken to protect information and assets also give assurance concerning safeguarding of assets and information.

The follow-up of audit recommendations, the assessment of the internal control systems and the implementation of the anti-fraud strategy provide reasonable assurance that the control systems work as intended and fraud is prevented and detected.

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,

Director-General of the Publications Office,

In my capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation,

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view ⁽²³⁾.

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 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.

Luxembourg, 31 March 2019

(signed)

Rudolf STROHMEIER

⁽²³⁾ True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the service.

2.2 Other organisational management dimensions

2.2.1 Human resource management

Staff engagement and well-being, and gender-balanced management

According to the 2018 Commission staff survey, staff engagement at the Office is at 67 % (– 1.5 % compared to 2016), which remains very close to the 2020 target (70 %). The Office also approaches the 50 % target set for staff well-being with a result of 43 % (+ 3 % compared to 2016). The findings will be analysed, communicated and followed-up by an action plan.

An important reorganisation of the Office took effect in 2018, and a special effort was made to inform and consult all staff about this initiative. A call for expression of interest and a *chambre d'écoute* were launched in order to foster internal mobility and accompany the necessary changes in posting. Moreover, the Director-General organised regular open doors throughout the year, where any member of staff could meet him about any topic without a prior appointment.

Internal communication relied on YourOP, the Office's intranet, which is the pivotal instrument for informing staff about corporate and managerial matters. Important events and news items were published on a daily basis, and the staff also used the platform to inform others about recent developments in their work. Some 168 news articles and five videos were published. Information from DG Human Resources and Security and other directorates-general was posted regularly. Following the Office's reorganisation, YourOP was restructured to reflect the changes and to introduce new interaction methods with the Staff Matters portal of DG Human Resources and Security.

In the framework of a Commission renewed approach to reach at least 40 % female managers by 2019 ⁽²⁴⁾, a sub-target of 4 female appointments at middle management level was set for 2019, out of which three first female appointment to a head of unit position had been done by the end of 2018 (one in 2017 and two in 2018). The fourth appointment took place on 1 January 2019. Two senior management positions were published in 2018 and will be filled in 2019.

SPECIFIC EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY

SIMPLIFICATION OF BUDGET MANAGEMENT FOR THE *OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION*

As from 2018 onwards, following a landmark decision of the EU institutions represented in the Office's Management Committee, the Official Journal L and C indirect costs no longer formed part of the respective budgets of the EU institutions but became part of Office's administrative budget. This change enhances transparency, improves understanding of the Office's budget, and represents a considerable simplification in terms of administrative burden with savings in human resources for all institutions. In 2018, this allowed for the redeployment of 2 Full Time Equivalentents from the Office's Finance Unit.

⁽²⁴⁾ SEC(2017)359 of 19 July 2017.

2.2.2 Information management aspects

Data, information and knowledge management

Data, information and knowledge are strategic assets. In accordance with the communication on 'Data, information and knowledge management at the European Commission' ⁽²⁵⁾, the Office promoted better gathering, sharing and use of information and knowledge among staff and with other Commission directorates-general.

The Director-General of the Office, as a member of the Commission's Information Management Steering Board (IMSB), contributed to the definition of the Commission Data Strategy @EC and is associated in the implementation of the related action plan, aimed at transforming the Commission in a data-driven organisation. The Office contributed to the IMSB bi-annual work programme 2018-2019 on actions related to data publishing on the EU Open Data Portal, data landscaping and inventory, the development of data visualisation capabilities, semantic interoperability, and services based upon unique and persistent identification. Following the call to set up an inventory for controlled vocabularies used in the Commission in the context of 2018-2019 IMSB work programme, the Office organised a workshop with 40 vocabulary managers in the Commission and produced an updated report with the outcomes of the workshop and overall action progress.

Data protection

In response to the Data Protection Action Plan adopted by the Commission in the context of the entry into force of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, the data protection coordinator (DPC) of the Office carried out a comprehensive examination of all data protection processing operations carried out at the Office.

The DPC converted the annex to the Data Protection Action Plan into a checklist for each controller and carried out detailed interviews with all controllers at the Office. Controllers were reminded of their increased responsibilities under Regulation (EU) 2018/1725; the DPC and the controllers also discussed in depth the technicalities of each data processing operation in the light of the new rules and jointly collected the required information.

For each notified data processing operation, the examination specifically covered the compliance with the general principles in Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 as well as aspects provided for in the Data Protection Action Plan, such as transfers to EU Member States, international data transfers, privacy by design and by default, data breaches, transparency and data subjects' rights, restrictions of data subjects' rights, etc.

Thus the DPC gained a complete picture of processing operations involving personal data. This information will help the DPC and controllers when notifications will be converted into records in DPMS.

As a result of the examination, the Office concluded that its processing operations involving personal data have already reached a very high degree of compliance with the applicable data protection rules. Wherever this level of compliance is not yet at 100 %, a full level of compliance with the regulation will be sought at the earliest date.

Document management

Document management was monitored through regular reports on non-filed documents, non-closed tasks, NomCom ⁽²⁶⁾ files not used for one year etc.; awareness was raised and information was shared through a dedicated network and other means of communication (e.g. guidance on the Office's intranet).

The Office explored the possibility of opening more files to improve sharing of information; a campaign was started to review the Office's files and to define the activities for which the newly created files could either have a limited visibility or be visible to the whole Commission. Additionally, the campaign to increase the take-up of e-signatures for external transmissions started and will continue in 2019.

⁽²⁵⁾ C(2016) 6626 final.

⁽²⁶⁾ NomCom: *Nomenclature commune*. It is the application for the centralised management of the Commission's documents filing plan.

Reporting

As an interinstitutional office and service provider, the Office fulfils reporting obligations towards the EU institutions represented in the Management Committee, to the Commission, whose administrative and financial procedures are applicable to the Office, as well as to all EU institutions using the Office's services. The reports were transmitted in due time and in accordance with the legal requirements.

Following the adoption of the Strategic objectives 2017-2025 and as requested by the Management Committee's members, the follow-up of the implementation of the strategic objectives has become a regular item on the agenda of the Management Committee meetings. Based on a monthly follow-up and internal reporting, the Office provides the Management Committee with quarterly reports on various aspects of the tasks related to the strategy implementation.

2.2.3 External communication activities

Not applicable. The Office does not carry out external communication activities but ensures the promotion of EU information and publications of the EU institutions, and manages websites for their dissemination.