



eusa

Annual Activity Report 2021

EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION

Table of Contents

- THE SCHOOL IN BRIEF 3
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 4
 - A. Key results and progress towards achieving the corporate general objectives and EuSA’s specific objectives (executive summary of section 1) 4
 - B. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 7
 - C. Key conclusions on Financial management and Internal control (executive summary of section 2.1) 8
 - D. Provision of information to the EPSO/EuSA Management Board and to the Commissioner 9
- 1. KEY RESULTS and progress towards achieving the corporate general objectives and EuSA’s specific objectives 10
- 2. MODERN AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL CONTROL 12

THE SCHOOL IN BRIEF

The mandate of the European School of Administration (EuSA) according to its Founding Decisions¹ is to provide high quality training and learning opportunities for management and leadership, key skills for newcomers and the certification programme that meet the needs of all EU institutions and their staff in order to:

- Contribute to the **efficiency of the work of the institutions** through the continuous development of the talents of their staff;
- Help **preserve and diffuse the values** that underpin the development of the EU and the work of the European Civil Service;
- Promote **cooperation among staff of the various institutions** by providing opportunities for networking and the exchange of ideas and good practice;
- **Share experience** and provide opportunities for mutual learning by cooperating with the Schools of public administration in Member States;
- Contribute to the **optimal use of resources in the field of learning and development through the synergies** it achieves with the training departments in the institutions and the resulting economies of scale.

The School is administratively attached to EPSO, and is therefore accountable to the same inter-institutional Management Board as EPSO and forms part of the portfolio of responsibilities of the Commissioner responsible for Budget and Human Resources.

Ever since its inception, the School has been working continuously to improve skills for a high performing civil service in a fast changing and complex environment, for staff and for managers, and to integrate promptly and effectively new staff into the public sector.

In order to do this, it works in close partnership with the learning and development services of all EU institutions in order to ensure that its offer is responsive to their expectations and needs and that the best possible synergies are achieved with their own activities in this field. To further promote these synergies, it also organises inter-institutional Calls for tender, to which the institutions, agencies and bodies have access. [The 20 colleagues working at EuSA are divided in different teams to implement these activities.](#)

¹ [DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE COMMISSION, THE COURT OF JUSTICE, THE COURT OF AUDITORS, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS AND THE OMBUDSMAN of 26 January 2005 setting up a European Administrative School \(2005/118/EC\)](#)

[DECISION OF THE SECRETARIES-GENERAL OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE COMMISSION, THE COURT OF JUSTICE, THE COURT OF AUDITORS, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS AND THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN OMBUDSMAN of 26 January 2005 on the organisation and running of the European Administrative School \(2005/119/EC\)](#)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Activity Report (AAR) is a management report of the Head of the European School of Administration to EPSO/EuSA's Management Board and to the College of Commissioners (by virtue of EuSA's administrative attachment via EPSO). 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 achieving the corporate general objectives and EuSA's specific objectives (executive summary of section 1)

2021 was another extraordinary year with significant challenges due to the pandemic and its impact on staff and the way of working, learning, leading and responding to the needs of staff. It was a transformative year for EuSA due to Covid.

The sanitary situation made it impossible to hold face-to-face courses and complicated course planning. In spite of increased uncertainty, the School managed to swiftly undertake a transformational process adapting its learning offer to the new needs of staff by offering training courses and conferences/talks in online format, and emerged at the end of the year in a stronger position than before.

Participant numbers increased significantly in 2021 for the training courses, notably in the case of the European Parliament and the European Court of Auditors. Participant numbers for the European Commission and the Council of the EU slightly decreased. The School improved the offer of the **virtual lunch conferences** ('Recovery and Resilience for Europe', 'Hybrid working', 'The Social Neuroscience', 'Speechwriting', etc), with more than 11,800 registrations from all EU institutions and agencies. These are short, hands-on 1.5 hour condensed packages of learning with inspiring speakers.



The School continues to face the problem of last-minute dropouts and no-shows, in particular for management courses, a pattern that many other institutional training bodies are also experiencing. The digital format lends itself even more to this issue as there seem to be many more last minute incidents and a certain screen fatigue.

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

As already noted in the 2020 AAR, the School's **induction offer** was renewed, as the characteristics of the target audience are changing and the institutions increasingly run internal induction programmes for their new staff.



Strategic discussions with the institutions about what they need and expect from the School in this area had been both useful and encouraging. The School's specific offer for newcomers is summarised in one single and easily accessible [brochure](#). The School also acts as a centre of excellence in learning, looking for the '**skills of the future**', and including them in its catalogue. The catalogue now features new highly valued skills such as: creativity, critical thinking and innovation. In terms of tendering, which the School does on behalf of all institutions for reasons of economy of scale, the new framework contracts for the Key skills training entered into force at the end of June.

The School's visibility has increased this year: a communication team was set up in charge of creating attractive [brochures](#) of its offer, which is widely distributed in internal and external collaborative platforms and social media. [EuSA's website](#) was revamped, creating a very important increase in traffic (21,351 visitors compared to 15,567 in 2020).

There were also several articles on the School's activities celebrating its Learning & Development awards, published in the newsletters and websites of various institutions to raise awareness about the School across services.

The **Newsletter for Managers** was launched last October, addressed to senior and middle managers in the EU institutions and agencies. Its aim is to create an interactive platform of rich exchanges among our managers as well as to communicate better on the management courses and events.

The organisation of the first **inter-institutional Learning & Development awards**, to share good practices and to further build the Learning community, was a success with 55 quality projects from several EU institutions and agencies submitted to an interinstitutional jury. All projects were presented in several Online Talks where the Learning community could benefit from direct exchanges with the project managers.

Certain structural changes at the level of EPSO had an impact for the team of the School: on 16 June 2021 the EPSO reorganisation entered into force. For reasons of organisational efficiency, several colleagues changed units and the finance team as well as the IT colleague were reallocated in EPSO. Three colleagues were also seconded from the institutions to EuSA in 2021. During the summer break, the School relocated to new premises in a modern setting of open space offices, with new training rooms.

Further achievements during the past year worth highlighting are:

- Developing the **new training offer online**. The catalogue was tailor-made to cover the new needs of the staff linked to the sanitary situation. This was particularly the case

for management courses and it was in the field of management that the most innovative courses were trialled to respond to the needs expressed by the institutions (for example, the new courses Advanced feedback and from Conflict to growth).

- Scaling up of the **leadership walks offer** including for senior managers' teams. At the centre of those walks in nature is an intention to deepen the listening capacity – to self, others, and the environment. These walks have also proven helpful to nurture resilience. This innovative learning practice won two awards in 2021 (for innovation and for greenest events);
- Organisation and delivery of the 16th annual **Certification exercise** for assistant-grade staff with the potential to become administrators. This, despite the technical challenge to organise the whole programme online for the second time: The School managed to deliver the training remotely so that the exercise could be successfully finished before the end of the year with a participant satisfaction level higher than 90%;
- Developing and prototyping new courses in the field of **digital transformation** (as for example Digital leadership circle for Senior Managers and Navigating Digital reality);
- Establishing an **inter-institutional coaching network** to share experience, good practices and provide opportunities for mutual learning;
- Designing and establishing a programme of more than 200 **Online Talks** with speakers on topics of general interest covering politics, economics, and societal and health topics. The video recordings are available at the School [e-library](#).

These achievements are directly aligned with the general objective of EuSA, to contribute to modern, high performing and sustainable Institutions, as well as the specific objectives on the School different activities

B. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

For 2021, the School identified the following five key performance indicators in its Strategic and Management Plans, four of them on core learning activities ('what we offer?') and one stemming from the horizontal activity ('how we deliver?'): Key Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target 2021	Situation at the end of 2021
The perceived usefulness of the School's training activities in the field of leadership and management skills S.O 1.1 result indicator 1	2021: 93%	93%	90% (source: EULearn evaluation reports report 2021)
The perceived usefulness of the School's training activities in the field of general skills development S.O.1.2 result indicator 1	2021: 94% of satisfied participants	94%	92% (source: EULearn evaluation report 2021)
The perceived usefulness of the School's training activities in the field of understanding and knowledge of the EU activities S.O. 1.3 result indicator 1	2021: 95% of courses containing blended learning elements	95%	98% (source: EULearn evaluation report 2021)
Inter-institutional attendance in learning activities of participants coming from other institutions than the Commission S.O. 1.4 result indicator 4	2021: 37%	37 %	39% (source: EULearn attendance report 2021)
The perceived usefulness of the School's training activities in the field of Certification S.O. 1.5 result indicator 1	2021: 96.5%	96,5%	95%

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

In line with the Commission's Internal Control Framework, the European School of Administration has assessed its internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective and the components and principles are present and functioning as intended. Please refer to section 2.1.3 in EPSO's Annual Activity Report 2021 for further details.

In addition, the European School of Administration has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, (including those for supervising entities to which it has entrusted budget implementation tasks), as well as the observations and recommendations issued by the internal auditor and the European Court of Auditors. These elements have been assessed to determine their impact on management's assurance about the achievement of the control objectives. Please refer to Section 2.1 for further details.

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

D. Provision of information to the EPSO/EuSA Management Board and to Commissioner³

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between EPSO and the Commissioner on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration, have been brought to the attention of the EPSO/EuSA Management Board and to Commissioner Johannes Hahn, responsible for Budget and Human Resources.

³ The Commission is a member of EPSO's Management Board. Since 23 February 2021, the Commission also chairs the Management Board.

1. KEY RESULTS and progress towards achieving the Corporate general objectives and EuSA's specific objectives

The global number of courses increased in all programmes during 2021, notably for senior and middle managers (from a total of 200 to 322 courses). All the lunch time events were organised in the format of webinars.

EuSA significantly increased the number of participants (more than 11,850 registrations) thanks to the organisation and format of online conferences/talks. Participant numbers for the training courses also increased, to 8,452 from 7,615. This increase in numbers comes mainly from the European Parliament and the European Court of Auditors. On the other hand, there was a slight decrease of registrations from the European Commission and the Council of the EU. Participants continued to be highly satisfied with the School's programmes. Evaluations of the participants' perception concerning the transfer of the skills and knowledge acquired to the workplace (impact assessment) also show that a high number of participants find that they are able to transfer their learning to the workplace.

The School is satisfied with the extent to which it has been able to diversify its delivery with diverse course formats and the increasing use of a blended approach. In order to support a successful transfer of learning to the workplace, the School has ensured that many of its most recent courses are modular, interspersing moments of virtual classroom learning with tasks to do at home, group coaching, etc. Although this makes the courses more challenging to manage administratively, research shows that this approach is more effective in making the new skills and learning 'stick'.

The School is always looking at ways in which it can enhance its blended approach, and the seconded member of staff from the European External Action Service plus the two seconded members from the Commission have been engaged to assist with the internal development of courses and its communication. We have started experimenting with videos and filming of events and more will undoubtedly happen in this area in the future.

At the same time, there is clear evidence that a large part of the added value of the School's programmes stems from the opportunities they afford participants from different institutions and with different professional experience to meet, although only virtually for the moment. The School is always looking for new formats for its courses that can also be offered outside the classroom such as the leadership walking seminars for managers, the possibility for small groups of managers to meet out in nature and connect and learn together, which has received very good feedback from participants.



In 2021, the School continued its communication drive. The [website](#) was revamped with a different look and feel and as a result the number of visitors highly increased (from 15,567 in 2020 to 21,351 in 2021).



A Newsletter for Managers was launched with useful recommendations and testimonials from managers to managers, as well as practical information on new management courses.

A new account was created in LinkedIn with high number of followers. Finally, the School updated regularly its online catalogue and used the different communication channels for publicity. As always, School staff participated in various learning events in different institutions, such as the Commission's Career Day. It also launched the first ever Learning and Development Awards in order to garner all the creative learning initiatives that have emerged during the confinement. All projects were presented at different Online Talks and recorded for all EU staff.

The [new app](#) developed internally clusters all the Online Talks and webinars per topic and gives the possibility to watch the recordings at any time anywhere on current EU topics.

2. MODERN AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL CONTROL

This section is covered in EPSO's AAR.