

Europe Direct Contact Centre Annual activity report 2017

Executive version



European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, unit 'Citizens Contact'



Contents

	page
The year in summary	2
Number of enquires	3
Enquiries by country	4
Enquiries by country, per month	5
Enquiries by country and channel	6
Enquiries by language and channel	7
Enquiries by economic category	8
Escalations	9
Response time	10
Enquiries by subject	11
Cross-border issues	12
The ten political priorities of the Juncker Commission	13
Hot topics	14
Trends in the volumes over years	15
User satisfaction	16

The year in summary

In 2017, the Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC) continued providing citizens with all sort of replies linked to the European Union, on a wide variety of subjects often about the practical and tangible benefits of EU policies.

The EDCC replied to a total of **97 481** enquiries. They ere treated via email (69.9%) and phone (30.1%).

In comparison with the previous year, the volume of cases treated by the EDCC was stable, slightly lower than the 99554 enquiries replied in 2016.

The largest number of enquiries concern individual rights and potential personal participation in EU activities. This includes among others consumer rights, rights of residence, the possibility for jobs and social protection, grants and passengers' rights.

In 2017, the main hot topics concerned Brexit, the political situation in Catalonia and the Mediterranean refugee crisis. In addition, the EDCC received during the months of May and June 2017 a relatively high volume of enquiries linked to the vaccination regime in Italy.

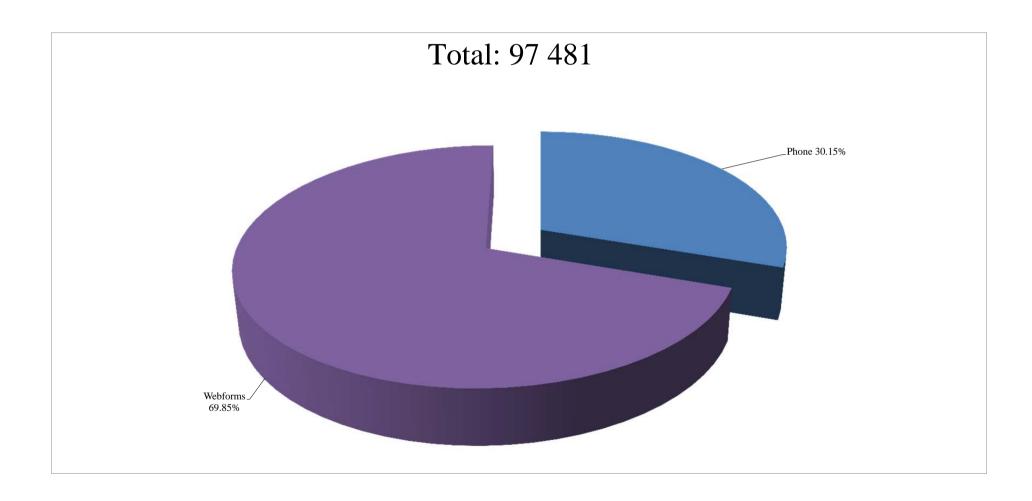
The EDCC answers questions in cooperation with experts throughout the European Commission and other EU entities. This is among others organised via 24 formal cooperation agreements. DG AGRI and DG BUDG were welcomed as new formal cooperation partners in 2017.

84% of all the questions were replied directly by the contact centre, while 16% were so technical and sensitive that they were replied by the competent experts.



Number of enquires

Europe Direct Contact Centre replied to 97 481 enquires in 2017. 30% of them were phone conversations.

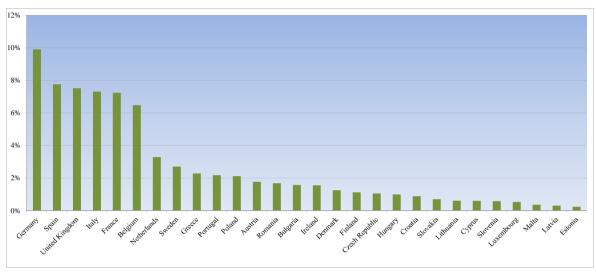


Enquiries by country

Enquiries came from all EU countries. When comparing with the size of the population, Belgium, Luxembourg and some of the smallest Member States werr over-represented. Poland was the country with fewest enquiries compared to the population. 17% comes from outside the EU.

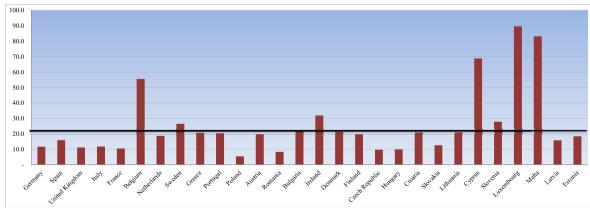
Country	EDCC enquiries	Percent of EDCC volumes	Per 100,000 of population ¹
Germany	9,651	9.9%	11.7
Spain	7,569	7.8%	15.9
United Kingdom	7,327	7.5%	11.1
Italy	7,128	7.3%	11.8
France	7,059	7.2%	10.5
Belgium	6,314	6.5%	55.5
Netherlands	3,208	3.3%	18.8
Sweden	2,647	2.7%	26.5
Greece	2,234	2.3%	20.8
Portugal	2,127	2.2%	20.6
Poland	2,067	2.1%	5.4
Austria	1,731	1.8%	19.7
Romania	1,650	1.7%	8.4
Bulgaria	1,540	1.6%	21.7
Ireland	1,521	1.6%	31.9
Denmark	1,226	1.3%	21.3
Finland	1,099	1.1%	20.0
Czech Republic	1,032	1.1%	9.8
Hungary	971	1.0%	9.9
Croatia	874	0.9%	21.0
Slovakia	687	0.7%	12.6
Lithuania	600	0.6%	21.1
Cyprus	588	0.6%	68.8
Slovenia	576	0.6%	27.9
Luxembourg	529	0.5%	89.6
Malta	366	0.4%	83.1
Latvia	309	0.3%	15.8
Estonia	242	0.2%	18.4
Total EU	72,872	74.8%	25.3
Non-EU	16,550	17.0%	
Unspecified	8,059	8.3%	
Grand Total	97,481	100.0%	

¹ Population is calculated based on Eurostat population data for 1st January 2017.



Enquiries by country as a percentage of EDCC total volumes

Non-eu' and 'unspecified' enquiries are excluded



Enquiries by country per 100 000 of the country's population

The black line represents the EU average for enquiries per 100,000 population, which is 25.0 enquiries per 100,000 inhabitants. For example the United Kingdom is below the EU average and Belgium above.

Non-eu' and 'unspecified' enquiries are excluded.



Enquiries by country, per month

Enquiries come throughout the year, with the highest number during the working seasons. The time of the summer holiday season with lower number of enquiries vary between the Member States.

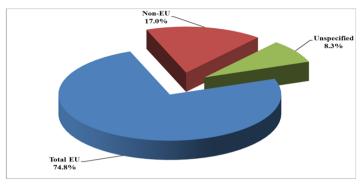
Country	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total	Average
Germany	889	900	968	687	806	766	780	909	804	777	748	617	9,651	804
Spain	647	618	644	561	684	610	620	520	819	786	576	484	7,569	631
United Kingdom	726	678	766	509	629	588	648	608	579	661	521	414	7,327	611
Italy	617	614	670	510	812	882	583	450	553	558	530	349	7,128	594
France	663	649	669	503	594	539	513	529	699	683	567	451	7,059	588
Belgium	684	582	661	467	640	492	447	422	508	542	510	359	6,314	526
Netherlands	323	318	313	220	296	266	278	252	243	267	227	205	3,208	267
Sweden	258	254	256	211	250	203	202	208	200	220	233	152	2,647	221
Greece	260	179	157	152	214	135	182	222	223	211	159	140	2,234	186
Portugal	200	189	190	160	182	187	181	181	174	163	200	120	2,127	177
Poland	223	144	204	151	207	178	196	174	173	163	159	95	2,067	172
Austria	151	123	214	137	162	131	127	148	122	138	150	128	1,731	144
Romania	158	145	148	125	137	135	141	137	114	153	140	117	1,650	138
Bulgaria	124	134	127	109	116	132	124	146	139	136	158	95	1,540	128
Ireland	154	146	131	95	115	128	135	135	147	121	131	83	1,521	127
Denmark	102	115	139	108	107	109	86	96	88	105	92	79	1,226	102
Finland	121	105	92	99	113	77	106	80	79	89	70	68	1,099	92
Czech Republic	105	88	80	64	88	100	72	101	102	91	87	54	1,032	86
Hungary	121	80	84	65	93	79	101	77	79	71	67	54	971	81
Croatia	85	57	69	63	70	66	86	65	85	87	77	64	874	73
Slovakia	73	50	60	48	52	35	58	69	53	70	77	42	687	57
Lithuania	54	48	61	53	47	60	36	43	43	61	54	40	600	50
Cyprus	64	55	47	37	50	56	34	50	48	61	48	38	588	49
Slovenia	45	61	51	59	58	47	46	42	51	35	46	35	576	48
Luxembourg	63	50	48	34	47	42	47	29	58	43	43	25	529	44
Malta	40	21	35	26	38	34	32	21	39	32	27	21	366	31
Latvia	42	28	28	25	28	20	30	17	24	22	31	14	309	26
Estonia	17	30	17	18	27	12	23	21	18	25	25	9	242	20
Total EU	7,009	6,461	6,929	5,296	6,662	6,109	5,914	5,752	6,264	6,371	5,753	4,352	72,872	6,073
Non-EU	1,494	1,357	1,529	1,272	1,429	1,284	1,469	1,375	1,480	1,464	1,441	956	16,550	1,379
Unspecified	630	566	799	596	771	698	683	551	648	751	804	562	8,059	672
Grand Total	9,133	8,384	9,257	7,164	8,862	8,091	8,066	7,678	8,392	8,586	7,998	5,870	97,481	8,123



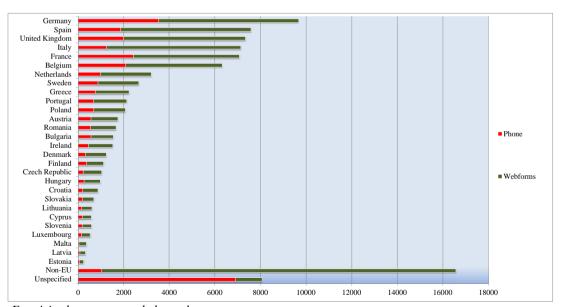
Enquiries by country and channel

About 30 % of the enquires were phone conversations. The highest shares of phone compared to webmail are found in enquires coming from Germany (37%) and France (34%). Malta has the lowest share (10%).

Country	Phone	Webforms	Total
Germany	3,525	6,126	9,651
Spain	1,865	5,704	7,569
United Kingdom	1,981	5,346	7,327
Italy	1,220	5,908	7,128
France	2,398	4,661	7,059
Belgium	2,082	4,232	6,314
Netherlands	970	2,238	3,208
Sweden	859	1,788	2,647
Greece	736	1,498	2,234
Portugal	671	1,456	2,127
Poland	685	1,382	2,067
Austria	570	1,161	1,731
Romania	535	1,115	1,650
Bulgaria	570	970	1,540
Ireland	443	1,078	1,521
Denmark	318	908	1,226
Finland	360	739	1,099
Czech Republic	220	812	1,032
Hungary	260	711	971
Croatia	199	675	874
Slovakia	190	497	687
Lithuania	165	435	600
Cyprus	166	422	588
Slovenia	167	409	576
Luxembourg	150	379	529
Malta	38	328	366
Latvia	75	234	309
Estonia	45	197	242
Total EU	21,463	51,409	72,872
Non-EU	1,029	15,521	16,550
Unspecified	6,898	1,161	8,059
Grand Total	29,390	68,091	97,481



Share of enquiries from inside or out-side the EU.



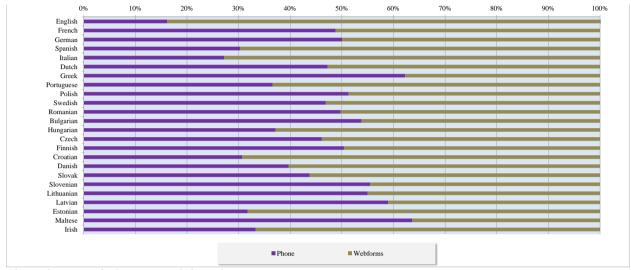
Enquiries by country and channel



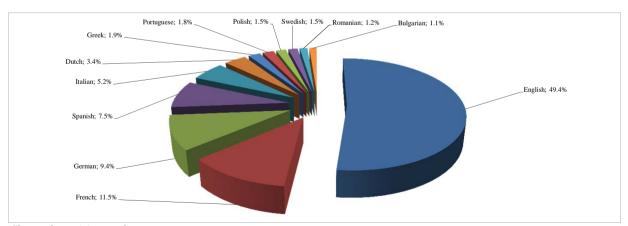
Enquiries by language and channel

All the 24 official EU languages are used. But almost half of the enquiries are in English. Some enquirers in non-English speaking countries prefer to use English, in particular for written questions.

Language	Phone	Webforms	Total	% of total
English	7,795	40,340	48,135	49.4%
French	5,455	5,722	11,177	11.5%
German	4,582	4,568	9,150	9.4%
Spanish	2,204	5,065	7,269	7.5%
Italian	1,386	3,706	5,092	5.2%
Dutch	1,568	1,752	3,320	3.4%
Greek	1,142	693	1,835	1.9%
Portuguese	626	1,085	1,711	1.8%
Polish	766	728	1,494	1.5%
Swedish	664	752	1,416	1.5%
Romanian	587	592	1,179	1.2%
Bulgarian	592	509	1,101	1.1%
Hungarian	246	416	662	0.7%
Czech	304	355	659	0.7%
Finnish	321	316	637	0.7%
Croatian	192	434	626	0.6%
Danish	210	319	529	0.5%
Slovak	200	257	457	0.5%
Slovenian	208	167	375	0.4%
Lithuanian	176	144	320	0.3%
Latvian	112	78	190	0.2%
Estonian	34	73	107	0.1%
Maltese	14	8	22	0.02%
Irish	6	12	18	0.02%
Total	29,390	68,091	97,481	100.0%
	30.1%	69.9%	100.0%	



Share of enquiries by language and channel



Share of enquiries per language.

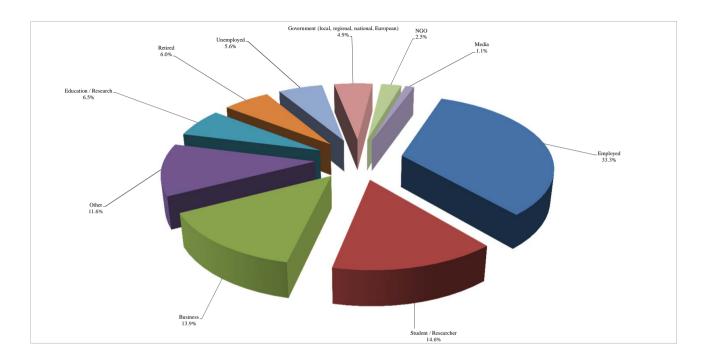
Hungarian, Finnish, Czech, Croatian, Danish, Slovak, Slovenian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, Maltese and Irish do not appear on the pie chart because the total amount of enquiries for each language does not exceed 1% of the total.



Enquiries by economic category

The largest categories of enquirers are citizens in employment, students and researchers and citizens working in businesses.

Economic category	Enquiries	%
Employed	24,682	25.3%
Unspecified	23,257	23.9%
Student / Researcher	10,865	11.1%
Business	10,342	10.6%
Other	8,621	8.8%
Education / Research	4,796	4.9%
Retired	4,423	4.5%
Unemployed	4,160	4.3%
Government (local, regional, national, European)	3,619	3.7%
NGO	1,889	1.9%
Media	827	0.8%
Total	97,481	100.0%





Escalations

By far the largest number of enquiries are relplied directly by the EDCC based on general guidelines and information already published. 16% of the questions were so technical or sensitive that the contact centre had to ask experts within the European Commission or other EU entities.

Back office	Total	%
HORIZON 2020	4,508	28.8%
DG COMM	2,957	18.9%
SANTE	1,123	7.2%
YOUR EUROPE ADVICE	1,102	7.1%
JUST	633	4.1%
EMPL	452	2.9%
EAC	450	2.9%
TRADE	450	2.9%
TAXUD	440	2.8%
EEAS	383	2.5%
HOME	365	2.3%
ENER	352	2.3%
DEVCO	332	2.1%
SOLVIT	331	2.1%
FISMA	318	2.0%

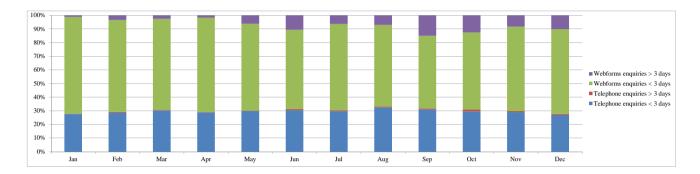
REGIO	224	1.4%
NEAR	176	1.1%
EP	165	1.1%
WEB	160	1.0%
EPSO	149	1.0%
ECFIN	111	0.7%
COUNCIL	84	0.5%
ROAD SAFETY	79	0.5%
EIT	67	0.4%
PASSENGER RIGHTS	67	0.4%
EUROPAN CITIZENS INITIATIVE	47	0.3%
AGRI	41	0.3%
EDIC	28	0.2%
EC SOLVIT	27	0.2%
BUDG	6	0.0%
Total	15,627	100.0%

The shown "Back offices" are the services that have a formal cooperation agreement with EDCC. The agreements with DG AGRI and BUDG only started 1 November 2017. DG COMM Back office handles escalations under the competence of any other entity within the EU institutions. The files related to Your Europe Advice and SOLVIT are transfers, not escalations.



Response time

92% of enquiries are replied within 3 days. The figure is 97% for the phone enquiries and lower for emails. When it takes longer time to provide a reply it is mostly due the time needed for experts in the departments of the Commission.



	Working days to closure	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	%
Telephone enquiries	< 3 days	2,522	2,395	2,804	2,064	2,635	2,460	2,395	2,498	2,594	2,535	2,317	1,579	28,798	97.97%
receptione enquiries	> 3 days	19	41	37	25	28	72	50	38	59	117	67	44	597	2.03%
														29,395	100.00%
Webforms enquiries	< 3 days	6,484	5,661	6,180	4,955	5,662	4,708	5,111	4,604	4,478	4,859	4,960	3,658	61,320	90.06%
webtorms enquiries	> 3 days	108	287	236	120	537	851	510	538	1,261	1,074	655	589	6,766	9.94%
68,08										68,086	100.00%				
	Total	9,133	8,384	9,257	7,164	8,862	8,091	8,066	7,678	8,392	8,585	7,999	5,870	126,876	



Enquiries by subject

The largest number of enquiries concerned individual rights and potential personal participation in EU activities. This comprises consumer rights, rights of residence, the possibility for jobs and social protection, study grants and passenger rights. Questions in the category "EU general" are also often based on personal interest. EDCC has a special agreement for questions related to participation in the Horizon 2020 research programme and had a large number of enquiries in that area.

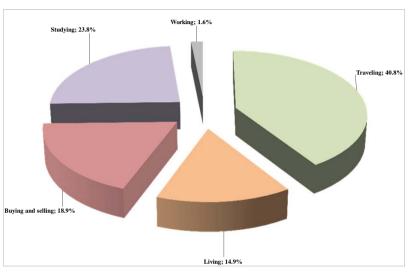
TOP 10 subjects	Total	%
EU general, EU Institutions and Member States	11,338	11.6%
Justice and Consumers rights	8,448	8.7%
H2020 Enquiry Service	7,900	8.1%
Employment social affairs and inclusion	7,302	7.5%
Education and Culture	7,315	7.5%
Passengers rights	5,628	5.8%
Careers / Competitions	4,198	4.3%
Migration and Home affairs	4,188	4.3%
Customs and taxation	4,130	4.2%
Food safety and Public health	3,777	3.9%
Total	64,224	
Other subjects		
Europe Direct (requests for clarification, about EDCC as sevice, etc.)	3,811	3.9%
Other specific policies (including Internal Market and services, Environment, Foreign Policy, Neighbourhood policy and Enlargement, Competition, Economic and monetary affairs, Energy, Regional policy, Agriculture and rural development, Information Society and media, Research and innovation, Fisheries and maritime affairs, ECHO, Financial markets and capital movements, YEA, SOLVIT)	14,941	15.3%
Enterprise and industry	2,901	3.0%
Mobility and transport other	2,248	2.3%
International Cooperation and development	2,094	2.1%
External trade	1,429	1.5%
Export Helpdesk	956	1.0%
Publication Orders	491	0.5%
European Parliament	421	0.4%
Council of the European Union	169	0.2%
European Institute of Innovation and Technology	159	0.2%
European Citizens Initiative	144	0.1%
Out of Scope	3,493	3.6%
Grand Total	97,481	100.00%



Cross-border issues

Many enquiries relate to the EU's effort to open up the single market and reduce the obstacles of borders in daily life: travelling, living shopping, studying and working abroad.

	Cross-border Issues	Total	% of cross- border cases	% of total volume
Travelling	Passenger rights	5,628	29.0%	5.8%
Travening	Visa and border controls	2,291	11.8%	2.4%
	Free movement of persons	1,092	5.6%	1.1%
T ::	Immigration	1,081	5.6%	1.1%
Living	Judicial cooperation	531	2.7%	0.5%
	Welfare (social security, rights at work)	178	0.9%	0.2%
	Protection of consumers economic and legal	1,349	7.0%	1.4%
	Customs	1,303	6.7%	1.3%
Buying and Selling	Consumers Rights	589	3.0%	0.6%
buying and Seiling	Consumer information	258	1.3%	0.3%
	Free movement of goods	90	0.5%	0.1%
	Consumer security	77	0.4%	0.1%
	Erasmus +	2,545	13.1%	2.6%
	Funding for non-EU citizens	625	3.2%	0.6%
Studying	Youth	507	2.6%	0.5%
Studying	Education and other related funding programmes	472	2.4%	0.5%
	Recognition of diplomas	429	2.2%	0.4%
	Lifelong learning	32	0.2%	0.0%
Working	Professional qualifications	314	1.6%	0.3%
Total:		19,391	100.0%	19.9%





The ten political priorities of the Juncker Commission

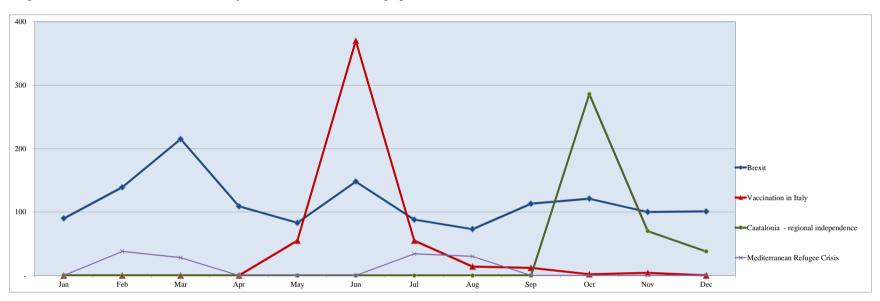
About two thirds of the questions in 2017 could be directly related to one of the 10 political priorities of the European Commission. The largest share was about job, growth and investment.

Priority	Number of enquiries
A new boost for jobs, growth and investments	19,906
A deeper and fairer internal market with a strengthened industrial base	16,293
An area of justice and fundamental rights based on mutual trust	15,853
A stronger global actor	5,283
Towards a new policy on migration	3,520
A union of democratic change	2,850
A resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy	1,638
A connected Digital Single Market	835
A deeper and fairer Economic and Monetary Union	796
A balanced and progressive trade policy to harness globalisation	406
Total	67,380



Hot topics

Current affairs from the media gives occasion to questions to EDCC. Brexit was the biggest subject in 2018. The subject of vaccination shows that citizen might also associate the EU with other subjects than the traditional "high politics".



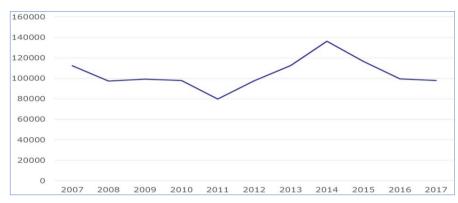
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Brexit	90	139	215	109	83	148	88	73	113	121	100	101	1,380
Vaccination in Italy	-	-	-	-	55	370	55	14	12	2	4	-	512
Caatalonia - regional independence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	286	70	38	394
Mediterranean Refugee Crisis	-	38	28	-	-	-	34	30	-	-	-	-	130
Total	90	177	243	109	138	518	177	117	125	409	174	139	2,416

The figures are for individual enquires that been answered. Standard emails sent to EDCC as an organised political campaign are not counted. Vaccination: all these enquires related to a campaign in Italy against compulsory vaccination of babies.



Trends in the volumes over years

The total number of enquiries fluctuate from year to year. This cannot easily be attributed to any single reason. The highest number of enquires were in the year of the European elections in 2014.



Total number of enquiries per year

	2013							2014					2015					2016				2017		
Month	Calls	Emails	Chat	SMS	Total	Calls	Emails	Chat	SMS	Total	Calls	Emails	Chat	SMS	Total	Calls	Emails1	Chat	SMS	Total	Calls	Emails1	Total	
Jan	3,730	5,478	399	42	9,649	4,748	8,566	544	73	13,931	3,485	7,416	569	52	11,522	2,117	5,394	339	39	7,889	2,541	6,592	9,133	
Feb	3,200	4,785	359	52	8,396	3,551	7,977	535	53	12,116	3,437	7,066	546	42	11,091	2,460	4,862	0	0	7,322	2,436	5,948	8,384	
Mar	3,386	5,451	361	37	9,235	3,841	8,333	561	53	12,788	3,618	7,560	546	31	11,755	2,718	6,075	0	0	8,793	2,841	6,416	9,257	
Apr	3,368	5,213	431	26	9,038	3,771	7,528	513	41	11,853	3,446	7,376	496	30	11,348	2,741	6,254	0	0	8,995	2,088	5,076	7,164	
May	3,347	5,420	546	45	9,358	3,674	7,627	529	66	11,896	2,925	6,391	583	37	9,936	2,708	5,983	0	0	8,691	2,663	6,199	8,862	
Jun	3,443	5,120	364	40	8,967	3,378	6,685	444	48	10,555	3,377	6,495	531	34	10,437	3,165	6,216	0	0	9,381	2,532	5,559	8,091	
jul	3,595	6,031	526	52	10,204	3,856	6,986	358	47	11,247	3,237	6,549	393	45	10,224	2,803	6,381	0	0	9,184	2,442	5,624	8,066	
Aug	3,029	5,500	463	39	9,031	3,070	6,378	457	42	9,947	2,578	5,616	231	40	8,465	2,737	4,954	0	0	7,691	2,535	5,143	7,678	
Sep	3,397	6,214	467	33	10,111	3,688	7,707	678	59	12,132	2,417	6,761	324	42	9,544	2,878	5,742	0	0	8,620	2,653	5,739	8,392	
Oct	3,630	6,520	457	52	10,659	3,400	7,289	641	72	11,402	2,043	5,964	354	38	8,399	2,565	5,502	0	0	8,067	2,652	5,934	8,586	
Nov	3,062	6,232	461	45	9,800	2,844	6,346	507	48	9,745	1,739	5,463	373	22	7,597	2,720	6,232	0	0	8,952	2,384	5,614	7,998	
Dec	2,278	5,625	273	47	8,223	2,507	5,748	396	33	8,684	1,486	4,541	195	31	6,253	1,709	4,260	0	0	5,969	1,623	4,247	5,870	
Total	39,465	67,589	5,107	510	112,671	42,328	87,170	6,163	635	136,296	33,788	77,198	5,141	444	116,571	31,321	67,855	339	39	99,554	29,390	68,091	97,481	
%	35.0%	60.0%	4.5%	0.5%	100.0%	31.1%	64.0%	4.5%	0.5%	100%	29.0%	66.2%	4.4%	0.4%	100%	31.5%	68.2%	0.3%	0.0%	100%	30.1%	69.9%	100%	

Chats and SMS was discontinued as channels in February 2016



User satisfaction

All citizens are proposed the possibility to give feedback on the service of EDCC when they have received a reply; no matter whether it is via phone or eby mail. The overall satisfaction rate was 87%.



Satisfaction rate

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average or Total
Unsatisfied citizens	227	245	239	193	288	262	227	197	250	287	267	191	2,873
Satisfied citizens	1,529	1,755	1,621	1,015	1,124	1,254	1,573	1,507	1,354	1,601	1,449	873	16,655
Total	1,756	2,000	1,860	1,208	1,412	1,516	1,800	1,704	1,604	1,888	1,716	1,064	19,528
Satisfaction rate	89.5%	90.2%	89.0%	85.8%	80.7%	85.0%	90.2%	92.0%	88.5%	86.9%	87.9%	84.2%	87.5%