



European  
Commission

# Management Plan 2020

DG Interpretation

**Contents**

INTRODUCTION ..... 3

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission’s priorities: main outputs for the year..... 3

PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year..... 14

    A. Human resource management ..... 14

    B. Sound financial management ..... 16

    C. Fraud risk management ..... 17

    D. Digital transformation and information management..... 17

    E. Sound environmental management..... 18

    F. Examples of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities ..... 19

ANNEX: Performance tables..... 19

## INTRODUCTION

The mission of DG Interpretation (DG SCIC) is to facilitate the EU's democratic decision-making process by providing high quality **conference interpretation** to EU institutions<sup>1</sup>, bodies and agencies and by delivering corporate **conference organisation** and **meeting room management services** across the Commission. In all its service strands, **DG SCIC gives its 'customers' a 'voice'**.

This Management Plan describes the main outputs that will be produced in 2020 to deliver on the objectives specified in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

As interpretation service of the Commission and corporate domain leader for event and meeting room management, DG SCIC is proud to provide high quality services and to make the difference. In this respect, an overall goal for 2020 is **modernising, greening and making meetings and conferences more digital**, following the guidelines of the digitalisation agenda of von der Leyen Commission.

In 2020, DG SCIC will have to fully take into account the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has **accelerated digital and green transformation**. Meetings and conferences will not be the same after the crisis. However, multilingual communication will remain crucial for trust building and taking decisions that can unite and bring the European Union forward.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, DG SCIC was already at the forefront of discussing the **impact of new technologies for the interpretation** profession. It tested the **Simultaneous Interpretation Delivery Platforms** (SIDPs) and had initiated a reflection about possible use cases and invested in digital support solutions, such as the Interpreter's Digital Toolbox. The COVID-19 crisis changed the context dramatically and new use cases emerged. To address the urgent need for multilingual communication in virtual and hybrid meetings sparked by the pandemic, DG SCIC has integrated the SIDPs into the meeting room infrastructure, which is now available for use in the Commission. DG SCIC will endeavour to further adapt and deliver new services to provide multilingual communication in a new environment to its customers.

Moreover, in 2020 DG SCIC will continue the roll out of the ongoing **modernisation of conference and meeting room management**, while adapting the services to the needs of the users in the post-COVID-19 reality. These two domains are since 2016 an integral part of the core business of DG SCIC.

DG SCIC will continue working closely together with other central services/corporate domain leaders (SG, HR, BUDG, COMM, DIGIT, OIB, COMM etc.) on the modernisation and efficiency improvements, also in relation to the Commission's Communication on the workplace of the

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<sup>1</sup> Except the European Parliament and the Court of Justice, who have their own interpretation services.

future. The inter-service project teams set up under the auspices of Commissioner Hahn will help to drive the green and digital transformation agenda in the Commission.

Given the current international sanitary and economic context of great uncertainty, it is possible that in the course of 2020, further actions, not described in this Management Plan, will be deployed to match the emerging needs.

## **PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for the year**

### **General objective: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission**

#### **Specific objective 1: Interpreting services meet our customers' priorities and demand and are effectively managed**

As the new Commission just took over, 2020 was expected to have a higher level of interpretation demand than 2019. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has completely changed the game. With Europe locked down and most physical meetings cancelled in the EU institutions, interpretation was at a near standstill from March to mid-May, with only slight first signs of activity in the offing and recovery still uncertain.

However, this crisis has accelerated changes in our customers' needs. Faced with social distancing and travel restrictions, they organise **more meetings in a virtual or hybrid setting**. This leads to a growing demand for **new ways to deliver interpretation**, for appropriate and often tailored solutions and for guidance on how to run such meetings.

DG SCIC strives to offer state-of-the-art solutions to introduce multilingualism in virtual meetings, by providing interpretation even when most meeting participants are located at a distant site. In this context, it accelerated the roll out of **Simultaneous Interpretation Delivery Platforms** (SIDPs) with standard ISO specifications to support this new and still evolving technology. DG SCIC is also faced with a reduced room and interpretation booth capacity, due to the physical distancing rules in place. Innovative and flexible settings are being found with customers and staff, to continue satisfying demand to the largest extent possible. The established social dialogue structures inside DG SCIC will be involved in the roll-out of these new delivery forms.

In such an unprecedented situation, DG SCIC has to cater for **interpreters' safety**, while ensuring **business continuity**. It has to monitor closely the availability of both staff and freelance interpreters when activity resumes and, meanwhile, make the best use of this recess time to **prepare for the future**. The current focus is on professional development, training future interpreters, adapting DG SCIC's offer to the new needs and on digital modernisation. DG SCIC will also start a review of the **management of interpreters' tasks**, including the on-duty times ('reserve').

For interpreters to continue improving their **linguistic, thematic and digital knowledge and their professional skills**, learning opportunities have been adapted through virtual language classes, on-line courses, remote peer learning and knowledge sharing. A catalogue of learning resources and activities is now available online in all of the above domains. This **virtual professional support offer** will allow interpreters to progress throughout the pandemic until the scaling down of restrictions. Special attention is paid to

ensure the continuity of language learning paths towards adding the languages without unnecessary delays.

As part of the Interpreter's Digital Toolbox project, **DG SCIC's terminology** will become part of [IATE](#) (Interactive Terminology for Europe), the inter-institutional terminology database. During the period of low interpretation activity, linked to the COVID-19 lockdown, many interpreters have started to help with the migration of more than 200 000 terms to IATE, aiming to complete the preparatory work this year.

In addition, interpreters are reassigned to other tasks, such as preparing and recording speeches for students on mobile devices and transcribing existing material for the **Speech Repository**, one of DG SCIC's e-learning tools that will be feeding the Speech Recognition project.

DG SCIC will analyse which available tools could complement the existing video-conference equipment, to **enhance on line training support to universities**, taking into account their instruments and possibilities.

In 2018, the Council expressed the wish to use **complementary remote interpretation** during ministerial lunches in the Europa building, allowing for a more extended use of languages. Following a social dialogue with the interpreters' representatives, an arrangement for a one-year trial period started on 1 January 2020. This agreement provides for a monitoring report on the trial period to be subject to a confirmatory vote by interpreters, before the parties decide by consensus on the continuation of the arrangement. It also sets out a number of provisions specific to this additional service, including confirming teams 12 weeks in advance, managing a voluntary cap on assignments for individual interpreters and rotating booths between direct and remote interpreting modes. Due to the current lack of activity, the trial period will need to be extended or even modified in the light of the new situation.

In the same vein, and following the request of the President of the European Council, DG SCIC has worked closely with the General Secretariat of the Council on the technical solutions to provide **remote interpretation for bilateral meetings**, where previously consecutive interpretation was used.

As part of its ambitious **Digital Modernisation Plan**, the **modernisation of corporate management tools for the provision of interpretation** will kick off in 2020 with the launch of a business analysis of all processes. Its aim is to identify the best way to enhance existing management tools to reduce handling risks and to complement them with new instruments for reporting and analysis of data, to improve anticipation of needs and optimise the use of resources.

This project also features an interoperability solution for the Council and other customers that use the Commission's interpretation services, including **the digitalised distribution of documents for meeting preparation** to interpreters and the **management of interpretation requests**. In 2020, DG SCIC will start working with the Council on the document distribution.

These modernisation efforts will contribute to **sustainability and sound management of resources** while ensuring that DG SCIC continues to provide high quality services, which meet its customers' needs and are cost effective. Interpretation is also a means for the inclusion of European citizens in the European project. Meetings that have high media/profile repercussions and can be followed by a great number of citizens outside the Commission, should be interpreted also into **international sign language** to make them accessible to all. DG SCIC has already started providing sign language interpretation for President von der Leyen's video-recordings throughout the pandemic and will continue developing capacity to enlarge its offer.

## **Specific objective 2: The quality of interpretation meets our customers' needs**

One of DG SCIC's key missions is to provide quality interpretation to support multilingual communication at the EU Institutions and therefore to facilitate transparent, efficient and democratic EU decision-making.

The complex and diverse meetings, which take place at the EU Institutions, require quality interpretation provided according to high professional standards by interpreters who have excellent analytic and communication skills and language combinations adapted to the needs of the meeting participants.

DG SCIC continuously provides support to its interpreters through **life-long linguistic and thematic learning** and invests in their **digital upskilling**. It also provides them with the **digital tools** which are necessary for their work.

The growing use of Simultaneous Interpretation Delivery Platforms (SIDPs) to provide interpretation at multilingual videoconferences can affect quality of interpretation as the quality of the video and audio feed depend on the quality of the internet connection. DG SCIC will continue working with DG DIGIT and its customers' IT services to address connectivity. Virtual and hybrid meetings require different management and participation modalities. DG SCIC will provide guidance to meeting managers, chairs and participants to ensure that the meeting is managed in a way conducive to quality interpretation.

The **Interpreter's Digital Toolbox** (IDT) aims to modernise terminology and documentation management for interpreters to help them to work more efficiently with electronic documents and to have access to modern terminology tools, when preparing for assignments and while interpreting. In 2020, the IDT project will continue to be implemented in cooperation with DG DIGIT. The following will be delivered: the project charter, the users' interface for document upload and meeting documentation, the continuation of integration of DG SCIC glossaries into IATE. The next stage of the IDT project should also be decided and start to be implemented.

The quality of interpretation is measured by a **biennial Customers' Satisfaction Survey** (CSS). DG SCIC responds to customers' feedback and takes measures to improve the quality further. DG SCIC has scheduled a new version of the CSS in the second semester of 2020,

but might not be able to carry it out because of the uncertainty about meetings with interpretation caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

DG SCIC will continue to invest in **capacity development** by supporting universities that provide conference interpreting training, focusing on high-priority languages. DG SCIC will also continue to contribute to setting standards, best practices and benchmarks, and to building a pool for future recruitments not only for EU languages, but also for those of the candidate countries.

DG SCIC has adapted its training offer to universities replacing events on site by a wide range of **online support actions**, such as virtual training sessions, webinars, mock conferences and ad hoc coaching sessions for students. This trend will continue in the first semester of the academic year starting in September, when all pedagogical support will be carried out online. DG SCIC will expand and modulate its offer according to universities' needs depending on developments. This new way of cooperating with universities focusses on the **use of virtual tools** to provide support. This will mean a fast track digital transformation, for the support team and for the interpreter trainers, and a real opportunity to learn, not least by piggy-backing on what universities are already doing and making the most of the communities of the Knowledge Centre on Interpretation. Adapting to new circumstances and diversifying activities on offer will help design a coherent approach, focussed on profiles and language combinations of interest to the service. In the future, virtual training will not fully replace on site pedagogical assistance, but will be part of a panoply of training support activities.

DG SCIC will continue its efforts to **attract new talent in particularly deficient languages** such as Irish and Danish. It will also follow closely the impact of Brexit on the number of English-speaking interpreters to ensure satisfaction of demand for English. Finally, DG Interpretation will stabilise resources for Bulgarian, Romanian and Maltese through running an internal competition for these languages.

**External communication actions** will continue to systematically support capacity development, promoting multilingualism, languages, the interpreting profession as well as DG SCIC as a reference point for conference interpretation on a global level. To inspire young generations to pursue a conference interpreter career, DG SCIC will continue using **digital communication channels** including social media. Depending on the circumstances after the COVID-19 crisis, DG SCIC will also continue reaching out to stakeholders at language shows and similar events as well as organising targeted tailor-made awareness-raising campaigns.

### **Fostering human networks through multilingual communication**

The COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected **international cooperation projects** in the field of interpreter training with public administrations and universities in China, Macao, Mongolia, Cuba or Russia in the first half of the year. All pedagogical assistance missions, traineeships and study visits had to be postponed or replaced by virtual classes or other

forms of remote training and assistance. This trend is expected to continue in the second half of the year and beyond, with reduced international travels. DG SCIC will nevertheless continue to implement international cooperation projects, by offering more training in a virtual or remote setting, which will be facilitated by the accelerated digital transformation.

Following the completion, at the end of 2019, of the **PAMCIT Programme** (Pan-African Masters Consortium in Interpretation and Translation) involving 5 African universities, DG SCIC will continue to explore in 2020, with potential partners, to which extent it would be possible to renew EU support to an interpreter and translator training project in Africa from 2021 onwards, based notably on the conclusions of the evaluation of the Programme and in line with the EU strategic priority to invest in education and skills in Africa.

On cooperation with **China**, a Commission decision was adopted in 2020, under the Partnership Instrument, confirming the next programming cycle of the EU-China Interpreter Training Programme. This long-standing programme underpins the EU-China strategic partnership and contributes to widespread understanding and visibility of the EU in China.

In 2020, DG SCIC also expects to launch, in cooperation with the EU Delegation in Ulaanbaatar, an interpreter training course for participants from **Mongolia**, although the first phase of the project, i.e. an aptitude test to select trainees, was delayed because of the COVID-19 situation. It will be the second training course of this kind, the first one was organised in 2015 in preparation of the ASEM Summit in Mongolia.

On **Cuba**, after the successful implementation of the interpreter training cooperation programme in 2017, 2018 and 2019, and depending on specific needs to be identified by our Cuban partners, DG SCIC will examine with DG DEVCO how training support may be continued.

Following the successful organisation of the 'International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications' (**IAMLADP**), a major event gathering international organisations employing conference and language service providers, co-hosted by EU institutions in 2019 in Brussels, DG SCIC will continue to actively contribute to the work and activities of IAMLADP in 2020. The 2020 annual meeting was held in June in videoconference format.

These cooperation projects reflect the economic, political and cultural priorities of the EU's external action, in particular as regards **strategic partners** such as Africa and China or the promotion of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 and 8: skills, education, decent jobs, economic growth). They represent an integral part of **public and cultural diplomacy** and **people-to-people contacts**, and also enhance widespread understanding and **visibility of the EU** in partner countries. **Multilingual communication** is an enabler for more effective bilateral and multilateral cooperation. It gives the Union a unique competitive advantage as a **global actor** and standard setter and as a responsible leader in the world promoting **multilateralism** and the rules-based international order.

### **Specific objective 3: Modern meeting room services are available for the European Commission**

As corporate domain leader for meeting room management, DG SCIC will pursue the **scaling up of services** and the **roll out strategy** covering 17 additional DGs. On top, DG SCIC will launch a new inter-institutional call for **tender for audio-visual services**. The aim is to provide **better meeting room services** to DGs, to report on under-occupancy of meeting rooms and **reduce room design and operational costs** by standardising room equipment and user experience.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, DG SCIC integrated the technology enabling **multilingual communication in virtual and hybrid meetings** into standard meeting rooms' video-conference infrastructure. This is to allow participants present in the meeting room and remote participants to follow the meeting in the language of their choice, based on the interpretation provided in the booths integrated in the meeting room. The **Simultaneous Interpretation Delivery Platforms** (SIDPs) will gradually be installed in more corporate meeting rooms. The use of these platforms has become an integral part of the services offered by DG SCIC, as multilingual virtual meetings are expected to continue beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

Moreover, DG SCIC will continue to work in cooperation with other domain leaders on the **Project on Integrated Logistics Services** which aims at providing a single integrated model for logistical services, including support services for meeting rooms.

In parallel, DG SCIC will continue to work with OIB to support the different phases of the project concerning the Commission's **new Conference Centre** (Conference Centre 2.0).

### **Specific objective 4: Improved customer journey through high-quality digital solutions and workflows in meeting room management**

DG SCIC is moving forward with a number of concrete initiatives to upgrade its service delivery model, optimise its internal processes and workflows and enhance the customer journey. Notably, the **project 'MIRA' (Meeting-management and Interpretation Reservation Application)** for the new corporate tool for managing meeting rooms, meeting room services and interpretation requests, will implement the one-stop-shop concept together with **simpler and more user-centric processes**. MIRA will be designed to support requests for various types of meetings and technical setups, in line with the evolution towards having more participants connected remotely. Additionally, other important initiatives are:

- Extending our framework contract for **corporate audio-visual services** and standardised services and installations for meeting rooms in the Commission. An addendum to the framework contract will include the Simultaneous Interpretation Delivery Platforms offer for all EU Institutions and Agencies;

- optimising our **web streaming** facilities;
- progressively making available the necessary equipment for providing interpretation services in meeting rooms via **remote meeting platforms**;
- gradually introducing **digital signage** across Commission buildings;
- exploring the setting up of a potential **one-stop-shop for virtual meetings and events**, in cooperation with DGs DIGIT and COMM.

### **Specific objective 5: Modern and sustainable conference organisation services are available for the European Commission**

DG SCIC's objective is to ensure that conference and meeting management services reflect Green Deal objectives and to further promote DG SCIC's leadership role for **greener events** (in cooperation with EMAS). A partial **shift towards all-digital and hybrid conferences** was becoming apparent even before the COVID-19 crisis, but the crisis rapidly accelerated this development. With virtual conferencing suddenly gaining in importance as physical attendance at events was severely disrupted due to travel restrictions and public health measures, DG SCIC as domain leader for conferences is contributing to **building the necessary expertise and providing information** to Commission services. DG SCIC works closely with other services responsible, in particular DG DIGIT and DG COMM.

DG SCIC is further **extending its offer to accommodate these new needs**: a new virtual conferencing chapter with useful information and links has been added to the **conference wiki as a self-service option**; a **conference helpline** put in place in March is acting as a first port of call for ad-hoc requests related to conferences, with the majority of requests relating to virtual conferences. A **workshop** was organised in early June to channel the expertise and services provided by all actors involved in making virtual conferencing a success. The **Events Database** has been enhanced to allow for registration of virtual and hybrid conferences and to **request necessary services**. These include the **corporate framework contract** for event management, through which **virtual and hybrid conferencing services** can be obtained. All these measures will be fine-tuned, adapted and expanded further to **respond to evolving needs**.

Looking beyond the immediate pandemic situation, it is clear that virtual conferences and hybrid conferences will have a **key role** to play for the digital transformation, as a **modern and professional means of interaction with stakeholders and citizens**.

**Digitisation of conferences** will be further enhanced by providing access to the corporate participant registration tool to more Commission DGs and services. This will be combined with ensuring effectiveness of the Event@EU App, enabling DGs to easily share conference information and documentation with stakeholders as well as offer direct networking options and social media integration.

DG SCIC will continue to ensure that Commission flagship conferences – be they virtual, hybrid or in-person – benefit from **modern and professional conference management services**, through its in-house team of conference managers.

Virtual and hybrid conferencing will also be crucial in reducing the carbon footprint of Commission conferences. Expertise built to respond to the crisis today will help our organisation to **generate wider sustainability benefits** in the future.

Furthermore, DG SCIC is **raising awareness about sustainability in conference management** through the sustainable events and conferences competition organised jointly by DG SCIC and EMAS. Sustainability aspects in conferencing are also stressed by DG SCIC in its outreach and communication activities (presentations, articles and other contributions to communication campaigns, conference wiki, contacts with client DGs and contractors, lunch time talks etc.). DG SCIC will also explore options for **calculating and offsetting negative environmental impacts caused by conferences** and will continue to apply the ‘sustainable-by-default’ logic to contracting. This applies in particular to a new framework contract for promotional items to be signed in the autumn.

DG SCIC will also compile a **package of texts and layouts to enable DGs to communicate to their conference audience** on what they are doing to make their event more **sustainable**. Visuals will be based on the Green Deal visual identity to reinforce coherence of communication.

### **Specific objective 6: The conference community is further professionalised and engaged**

DG SCIC’s objective is to provide modern and professional conference management services for the Commission. To do this successfully, our decentralised domain leadership model relies on working hand-in-hand with line DGs. **Building, maintaining and further professionalising of the Commission’s conference organisation capacity** as well as **providing user-friendly tools and services** are key factors.

In a bid to offer more structured professionalisation to the community of practice, 2020 will see first steps towards developing a beginner-level event management course, with a training pathway defined by the end of the year.

During the COVID-19 crisis, DG SCIC has **stepped up communication with the conference community**, by sending frequent updates on relevant points, such as how to deal with cancellations and postponements, what to bear in mind for scheduling events later in the year, and many other topics. More than ever, Commission services rely on DG SCIC as domain leader and trusted partner to respond to their many questions related to the conference domain and to coordinate with other responsible services.

The guidance put in place for virtual or hybrid conferences mentioned under specific objective 5 provides guidance to conference organisers Commission-wide and helps to

upgrade the capacity of conference managers across the Commission in the post-COVID-19 reality.

### **General objective: A Europe fit for the digital age**

#### **Specific objective 7: A European speech technology is used by the EU institutions and the public**

DG SCIC, together with DG CNECT, DG DGT and DG DIGIT decided to initiate a **speech recognition project** in the context of the **Connecting Europe Facility**. This project is one of the initiatives of the '**Centre of Excellence for Language Technologies**'. Through this Centre of Excellence DGs SCIC, CNECT, DGT and DIGIT aim to develop solutions in the field of languages technologies, based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data.

In 2020, the project will start by setting up a **repository for text and speech resources**. DG SCIC is to provide **speech data and related expert advice**. Furthermore, DG SCIC will identify and define the use cases related to its role as corporate domain leader for conference organisation and meeting room management. In the second half of 2020, the data collection and data curation will start. This phase will include the creation of a legal and ethical framework (e.g. with regard to the GDPR/IDPR).

## PART 2. Modernising the administration: main outputs for the year

DG SCIC deploys effectively its resources in support of the delivery of the Commission priorities and core business, has a competent and engaged workforce, led by an effective and gender-balanced management. In 2020, DG SCIC's follow-up plan to the Staff Opinion Survey focuses on three topics: *Staff engagement*, *My Professional Future* and *Change and Innovation*, including digital upskilling of staff in order to be prepared for the European Commission's objectives.

DG SCIC practises sound financial management. As part of the business continuity measures adopted in response to COVID-19 crisis, the fully dematerialised financial circuits to manage all types of financial transactions were set up. Once back to normal operation, dematerialised financial circuits shall be further fine-tuned and consolidated.

DG SCIC continues to prevent fraud and therefore training actions and interviews with staff and management are planned for 2020.

The work on several projects that will digitally transform the DG's activities and improve its information management is currently underway. These projects are the main drivers for the transition towards a greener, more modern, and more connected DG.

DG SCIC is well aware of the necessity of the sound environmental management. In 2020, the Green SCIC Committee has drafted an Action Plan with concrete projects on waste reduction and better use of energy as well as communication actions.

The internal control framework<sup>2</sup> supports sound management and decision-making. It notably ensures that risks to the achievement of objectives are taken into account and reduced to acceptable levels through cost-effective controls.

DG SCIC has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances. The effective functioning of the service's internal control system will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the year and be subject to a specific annual assessment covering all internal control principles.

### A. Human resource management

The open competition to **conference operators** was published in 2019 at DG SCIC's request. Once the results are known, DG SCIC can resort to the **reserve list and recruit permanent staff** to accomplish tasks in the SER domain (meeting room management).

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<sup>2</sup> [Communication C\(2017\)2373 - Revision of the Internal Control Framework](#)

The European Personnel Selection Office currently refrains from launching open competitions in conference interpreting in agreement with institutions' interpreting services. In 2020, DG SCIC has received approval to run an **internal conference interpreters competition** for **Bulgarian, Romanian and Maltese language interpreters** in order to ensure the most efficient and balanced use of permanent and contractual resources in meetings. In parallel DG SCIC will run inter-institutional freelance interpreters' tests for various languages, which partly were put on hold due to COVID-19 and will be rescheduled. In addition to EU languages, tests for Russian and Albanian have been programmed with a view to continuing responding to interpretation demand and preparing for future needs.

The European Commission has established new targets for each DG in terms of appointing **female middle managers during the period 2020-2022**. DG SCIC had reached its previous target of 6 female first time managers in 2019 and has got the new target to increase new female colleagues joining the management team by 5 before the end of 2022.

The new Equality Strategy published in 2020 broadens the view on equality from gender balance to an inclusive and equal approach in all fields of life. The new strategy includes ensuring gender balanced representation among speakers and panellists in conferences, according to the Commission's Conference Chart initiated by DG SCIC.

The **staff engagement rate** in DG SCIC was 75% in 2018, which was 1% more than in the previous survey. All staff was involved in setting up a follow-up plan, the implementation of which continues in 2020. DG SCIC's **follow-up plan to the Staff Opinion Survey** focuses on three topics: **Staff engagement, My Professional Future** and **Change and Innovation**. Change and innovation imply mastering digital working environment. DG SCIC is engaged to enhance its specific and general digital skills.

The lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the biggest ever telework experience as its consequence created a life-size classroom where staff needed to acquire quickly **new digital skills**. More skills are required in the near future, as the use of **remote working methods** is likely to stay with us. Well-being and health actions are brought into the focus in the implementation of the development plan to nurture staff engagement in the second half of 2020. Adjustment to the 'new normal' and responding to resistance after the pandemic is best achieved by ensuring safety and security, transparent communication, emphatic leadership and special attention to general well-being of employees.

The **Conference managers' professionalisation path** to be created in cooperation with the DG HR is in line with the other actions related to *Staff engagement* and *My Professional Future* of the Follow-up plan. Future enhanced use of videoconferencing tools calls for more new skills which will now become part of the professionalisation path. Moreover, DG SCIC pilots a scheme of internal temporary redeployment of interpreters to non-interpreting tasks. These new postings, like 'rotateur' jobs, allow participants to use, develop and enhance their competencies in a new environment.

**Efficient and proactive internal communication** constitutes an essential link between the hierarchy and the various DG SCIC populations (administrators, staff interpreters and

freelance interpreters). The COVID-19 crisis highlighted its central role as a two-way exercise as well as the importance of listening and showing empathy towards each other. Therefore the internal communication policy has been adapted by **multiplying updates about ongoing discussions affecting staff**, organising **virtual information sessions with staff** allowing live interaction and **more communication via videos** while keeping an emphasis on Commission priorities, sustainability and digitalisation. At Commission level, DG SCIC contributes to the **DG HR modernisation communication campaign**, promoting DG SCIC as the **domain leader in conference organisation and management of meeting rooms**.

## **B. Sound financial management**

DG SCIC's actions in the area of sound financial management aim at providing the authorising officer by delegation with reasonable assurance with regards to the legality and regularity of transactions to ensure that:

1. Controls put in place being effective: *ex ante* controls result in a low risk at payment, *ex post* controls ensure keeping the risk at closure at a low level and the physical inventory exercise confirms the effective safe-guarding of assets;
2. Controls being cost-efficient measured by the cost of controls;
3. Ensuring that DG interpretation collects revenues in a timely manner hereby supporting the financing of planned activities and continuity of operations;
4. Guaranteeing the timely execution of payments hereby complying with the Commission's corporate commitment.

Complying with the on-boarding requirements of the Commission, in 2020, DG SCIC has implemented **Public Procurement Management Tool** (PPMT) for managing its open calls for tenders, replacing pre-existing arrangements for having tender specifications approved and signed in Ares.

In the framework of digitalization of DG SCIC working methods, DG SCIC intended to expand further the use of dematerialised financial circuits. As part of the business continuity measures adopted in response to COVID-19 crisis, DG SCIC accelerated the introduction of **fully dematerialised financial circuits** to manage all types of financial transactions remotely, based on a combination of ABAC and Ares, without compromising the level of internal control.

Once back to normal operation, dematerialised financial circuits shall be further fine-tuned and consolidated, based on feedback to be collected from all DG SCIC staff and the introduction of the qualified electronic signature currently being tested by DIGIT. This should also encompass adaptation of checklists and more targeted training on the most effective use of Ares, already used to track circulation of financial files from one actor to

the next and to have official documents related to financial management signed electronically.

### C. Fraud risk management

DG SCIC is classified as a low risk DG as its spending is in quantity and quality or typology not posing any particularity. Hence, the issue of anti-fraud measures is dealt with in the wider context of ethical behaviour in a professional context.

The DG has established its own Anti-Fraud Strategy back in 2015, with updates in 2016 and 2018. The strategy itself remains valid until a new version is adopted by the Director-General. As the analysis of the 2019 Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) has shown to be more concentrated on shared management and data analysis, there are no immediate effects on DG SCIC's strategy. One aspect of this is that the DG has appointed an Anti-Fraud Correspondent who acts also as OLAF contact point and is a member of the Fraud-Prevention and Detection Network (FPDNet) organised by OLAF. In order to continue the assessment of the risks, interviews with staff and management are planned.

In 2020, the training efforts undertaken since 2019 will continue, in an effort to contribute to two actions from the 2019 CAFS, in particular actions A.I.3 (professional ethics – lead DG HR) and A.I.4 (awareness raising – lead OLAF).

### D. Digital transformation and information management

In 2020, the DG will start with the implementation of the following IT projects that make up the DG's Digital Modernisation Plan:

- Implement the use of **Simultaneous Interpretation Delivery Platforms** (SIDPs) at the Commission in an endeavour to deliver high-quality interpretation services in meetings where participants are connected remotely.
- As business domain leader, providing the Commission with a user-centric, state-of-the-art **corporate tool for management of rooms, meetings and interpretation services** (MIRA).
- **Modernisation of corporate management tools for the provision of interpretation**, in particular regarding digital distribution of documents and digital management of requests from external clients.
- Digitalising the meeting preparation workflow (documents, terminology) with the **Interpreter's Digital Toolbox**.
- Modernising the delivery of public services with the development of voice-based services (**Speech Recognition**), together with DGs CNECT, DGT and DIGIT.

DG SCIC will carry on **implementing the electronic document management policy** in the European Commission (eDomec) with regards to the digital transformation of the DG's files and archives. DG SCIC expects from the Secretariat-General to undertake the

measures to revise the eDomec policy in the framework of Synergies and Efficiencies in the document management domain. The aim is to measure the performance of the document management domain, assess the compliance with the rules, procedures and policies.

In line with the strategy on Data, Information and Knowledge Management DG SCIC will continue to open as many files and data assets as possible to either the DG or the Commission to ensure information sharing and promote collaborative workings methods. DG SCIC will do this in accordance with data protection measures and with the principles defined in the Commission's data governance and data policies, ensuring the access right to sensitive information is based on the 'need to know' principle.

As DG SCIC holds personal information on accredited freelance interpreters (ACIs), with a significant share on paper, the DG will define a project aiming at digitalising this information, building on the experience of DG HR and PMO. It will also prepare rules and guidelines on what types of documents should be kept by DG SCIC as part of personal files and which retention periods should apply to them.

DG SCIC will be chairing the Commission Working Group on the **Processing Operations of Personal Data** in the context of meetings and events and providing information and guidance to DGs in this area. As part of this exercise, a new collaborative site will be created on Teams, bringing together the key data protection challenges when organising meetings.

DG SCIC will also continue to give briefings and updates to its senior and middle management during meetings throughout the year. However, in 2020, the DG will focus on newcomers and prepare information and a brief presentation on data protection basics for all newcomers in the DG. In addition, an updated intranet page aimed at giving support and further guidance to DG SCIC staff, in particular, Assistant Controllers will be developed in 2020 to ensure continued awareness.

Moreover, DG SCIC increasingly uses **collaborative working methods**. In early 2020, the 'DG SCIC Collaborative Site - Working Better Together' was created on SharePoint. This collaborative site is actively used for work on, among others, Strategic Planning and Programming documents, such as this Management Plan. In addition, Confluence wikis are increasingly used for work on the main digital transformation projects. These wikis are used to exchange information with the project team members as well as with colleagues in collaborating DGs. As of June, Microsoft Teams is also increasingly being used for multiple purposes, such as collaborative work on cross-services projects (e.g. risk assessment, 'project teams' set up by the Commissioner) and online workshops or meetings.

## **E. Sound environmental management**

The **Green SCIC Committee** is taking stock of ideas and needs of staff related to sustainability as well as looking at initiatives ongoing in other parts of the Commission, including the EMAS network. The Committee has drafted an **Action Plan**. The Action plan

includes concrete projects on **waste reduction** and **better use of energy** as well as **communication actions**.

The COVID-19 crisis has forced behavioural change on the whole Commission, including DG SCIC, on an unprecedented scale. Having more **staff working from home** and **replacing physical meetings by videoconferences** can be major contributors to achieving climate neutrality if we continue these practices for the staff categories where this is possible, even after restrictions have been eased. The Green SCIC Committee will discuss these and other ideas and submit suggestions for action to the DG's Senior Management Board. Actions may also be incorporated into the EMAS action plan where suitable.

## **F. Examples of initiatives to improve economy and efficiency of financial and non-financial activities**

As more meetings are being organised through virtual or remote settings, DG SCIC will start working with the Council on the **digitalisation of the distribution of documents for interpreters**. The Service Level Agreement with the Council provides that interpreters should be provided with an adequate documentation, and the Council has developed an API which allows delegates to access the documents they need (including through a mobile app). DG SCIC will aim at reaping the benefits of this solution: faster sharing of documents, moving towards paper-smart meetings and efficiency gains for the documentation team.

As corporate domain leader for meeting room management, DG SCIC will continue the rollout of **services related to the management of meeting rooms and meeting services**. This will bring the progressive installation of **standard audio-visual solutions** in the meeting rooms across the Commission, coupled with the provision of **professional support services for meeting rooms**. The rollout will greatly improve the user experience thanks to the modern, easy-to-use equipment in meeting rooms and the dedicated on-site or remote support to users. DG SCIC will offer a **one-stop-shop service** for all aspects related to meeting rooms and ensure efficient communication with other related services (in particular DG DIGIT, OIB and OIL).

## ANNEX: Performance tables

### PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities: main outputs for the year

General objective: A modern, high-performing and sustainable European Commission			
Specific objective 1: Interpreting services meet our customers' priorities and demand and are effectively managed			Not related to a spending programme
Main outputs in 2020:			
Main outputs			
Output	Indicator	Target	Service responsible
Conditions are created to deliver interpretation throughout the crisis	Number of face-to-face and hybrid meetings with interpretation	Steady increase until the end of 2020 (compared to 16 March level)	Directorates A, B, C
New methodology for reporting on standby rate of staff and optimised ratio between staff and freelance interpreters	Preliminary analysis on a new methodology for standby rate of staff and optimised ratio between staff and freelance interpreters	Q4	Directorates A, B, C
Implementation of agreement on complementary remote interpretation	Monitoring team report	Q4*	Monitoring team (representatives from Dir. A, B2, the Interpreters Delegation, the Secretariat General of the Council and the AIIC as observers)
*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and notably, regarding the period from 3 March to 8 June, which was governed by either the application of force-majeure in our contractual relations or by corporate lock-down rules, the monitoring team might not be able to finalise the report in due time but discuss a possible stop-the-clock extension for the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.			
Assistance to the President of the European Council	Implementation of agreement on use of remote interpretation for bilateral meetings in the Europa building	Q2	Directorates A, B, C
Provision of interpretation in virtual meetings	SIDP (platform technology) is implemented	Q3	Directorates A, B, C
Digitisation of the distribution of documents from the Council for meeting preparation	Business case presented to the ITCB, external contract concluded for a solution	Q4	C3, B3
IT project to modernise corporate management tools for the provision of interpretation	Business process analysis by external consultant launched	Q4	B2, C3
Develop and implement an	Operational IT solution	Q4	B4, C3

IT tool to import data concerning the tickets issued by the travel agency for freelance interpreters	to increase data processing efficiency and eliminate the risk of errors linked to manual processing of data		
Mentoring scheme for international sign interpreters	Number of international sign freelance interpreters in the Joint list	At least 2 new freelance interpreters added to the list by the end of 2020	B1, B2
Implementation of paperless screening of ACI (freelance interpreters) candidates' files for all EU-booths in 2020-21 accreditation cycle	100% of screenings in 2020-21 accreditation cycle are paperless	Q4	B4, C3
<b>Specific objective 2: The quality of interpretation meets our customers' needs</b>			<i>Not related to a spending programme</i>
<b>Main outputs in 2020:</b>			
<b>Main outputs</b>			
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Service responsible</b>
Follow-up of quality issues in meetings served by DG SCIC interpreters	Number of complaints about quality of interpretation followed up	100%	Directorate A
Extend direct language cover of meetings	Number of active languages and retours added by staff and freelance interpreters	40	Directorate A and B3
Knowledge centre on interpretation 7.0	A fully operational, more dynamic and multilingual platform is available, allowing for sharing knowledge on interpretation, for creating communities and for managing the interpreters training support activities with external partners	Q4	B1
Capacity development through cooperation with universities in the EU and candidate countries	Adoption of the annual programme	Q1	B1 and Directorate A
Capacity building for future interpreters' training through a more modern and sustainable scheme	Review and extension of the catalogue of virtual training activities	Q3	B1 and Directorate A
Training project for interpreters from Mongolia	Funds committed and project launched	Q4	O1
Interpreters' Digital Toolbox: Stage 1 – Meeting documentation interface	Completion of stage 1	Q4	Directorate A, B3, C3, DIGIT.B4
Interpreters' Digital Toolbox: Stage 2 –	Design completed and development & test	Q4	Directorate A, B3, C3, DIGIT.B4

Additional functionalities documentation interface (IATE/Lithos integration)	underway		
Interpreters' digital upskilling	Provision of digital learning resources to interpreters and organisation of the digital week for interpreters	Q3	B3
Continuity of professional support activities in the different domains	Ensure virtual learning opportunities for interpreters in the different domains as long as the confinement measures and restrictions are in place	Q2/4	B3

### External communication actions

Output/ Result	Indicator	Target	Service responsible
Keep the high level of DG SCIC's presence on social media	Number of followers	>60 000	02
Outreach events abroad: - Drongo festival, Netherlands	Number of participants (main event, virtual because of COVID-19)/ Social media: number of impressions	1 450/26 000	02 with Directorate A
- London Language Show, UK	Number of participants (main event, physical or/and virtual according to COVID-19 situation)/Social media: number of impressions	6 000/54 000	02 with Directorate A
- Languages Connect #Think Languages Event, Ireland	Number of participants (virtual event because of COVID-19)/ Social media: number of impressions	20 000/19 000	02 with Directorate A

**Specific objective 3: Modern meeting room services are available for the European Commission**

*Not related to a spending programme*

### Main outputs in 2020:

#### Main outputs

Output	Indicator	Target	Service responsible
Support OIB during the phases of the Commission's new conference centre project	Inter-service consultation approved	December 2020	C4 (with all of SCIC) and OIB
ISO deliverables on new technologies in simultaneous interpreting	- 2 Working Drafts (WD) - 1 Committee Draft (CD) of the future ISO 24019 Standard	September 2020	C4 (with C5, and Directorates A and B)

Support and maintenance services for all meeting rooms related to the 17 newly enrolled DGs	Roll out of the meeting room services (design, installation, help desk, maintenance and support) to the 17 newly enrolled DGs	December 2020	C4, C5
<b>Specific objective 4: Improved customer journey through high-quality digital solutions and workflows in meeting room management</b>			<i>Not related to a spending programme</i>
<b>Main outputs in 2020:</b>			
<b>Main outputs</b>			
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Service responsible</b>
Project Charter and Business use cases of the MIRA (new WebDOR) project	Project Charter and Use cases completed and approved by the Project Steering Committee and the ITCB	Q4	C4 (with B2 and C3)
<b>Specific objective 5: Modern and sustainable conference organisation services are available for the European Commission</b>			<i>Not related to a spending programme</i>
<b>Main outputs in 2020:</b>			
<b>Main outputs</b>			
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Service responsible</b>
Exploring calculation mechanism for offsetting negative environmental impacts of conferences	Report exploring options for offsetting negative environmental impacts of conferences published	End of 2020	C1
7 steps for Greener Conferences	Percentage of kick-off meetings with involvement of DG SCIC conference managers featuring information on greener conferences	100%	C1
New all-sustainable promotional items framework contract	Contract signed	Q3	C1, C2
Framework Contract PCO	Report showcasing how 'sustainable-by-default' was put into action by contractors, using 3 conferences as an example	Q3	C1
New wiki page on virtual conferencing	Wiki updated – page on virtual conferencing created	Q2	C1
<b>Other important outputs</b>			
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Service responsible</b>
Standard communication/information package on sustainability of events for DGs (could be adapted individually and used by other DGs in their communication of the event)	Package completed	Q4	C1 with EMAS, O2, DG COMM

<b>Specific objective 6: The conference organisation community is further professionalised and engaged</b>			<i>Not related to a spending programme</i>
<b>Main outputs in 2020:</b>			
<b>Main outputs</b>			
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Service responsible</b>
Beginner level Conference Management course	Progress in designing and implementing a training course	Training pathway defined by the end 2020	C1 with DG HR

<b>General objective: A Europe fit for digital age</b>			
<b>Specific objective 7: A European speech recognition technology is used by the EU Institutions and the public</b>			<i>Related to the IT 'Global envelope' and a spending programme – CEF and Digital Europe Programme</i>
<b>Main outputs in 2020:</b>			
<b>Main outputs</b>			
<b>Output</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Service responsible</b>
Initiate project for Automatic Speech Recognition	Solutions on recordings/web streaming were tested Data Curation phase for the ASR model finished	Q4	C3 and DGT.R3, together with CNECT.G3 and DIGIT.D1

## PART 2. Modernising the administration

### A. Human resource management

**Objective: DG SCIC employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission's priorities and core business**

#### Main outputs in 2020:

Output	Indicator	Target	Service responsible
Enhancing digital skills of staff: Providing digital learning opportunities and resources for interpreters; digital week for interpreters and 2 lunch-time conferences for all staff	Percentage of staff expressing positive feedback or percentage of staff participating	80%	HR Business Correspondent and B3
An internal competition in conference interpreting	Reserve list is published	Q4	HR Business Correspondent and DG HR
Implementing the Follow-up plan of the Staff Opinion survey: Completion of actions agreed for 2020	Actions agreed for 2020 completed	Q4	HR Business Correspondent

### B. Sound financial management

**Objective: The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions**

#### Main outputs in 2020:

Output	Indicator	Target	Service responsible
Effective controls: Safeguarded assets	Periodic verification (every three years) of the location of goods listed in the inventory of audio-visual equipment	Share of non-located items <5% of their value	C5
Economical controls	Overall estimated cost of controls	remains 2% of funds managed	C2
Ensuring the availability of revenues for the financing of interpreting activity	Average cashing time for interpretation services	<60 days from the end of the invoicing period for interpreting services to 3 largest users	C2
Timely execution of	Percentage of payments	>95% of payments on	C2

payments	on the budget made within the applicable time limits	time	
	Average payment delays	<20 calendar days including suspension periods	

## C. Fraud risk management

**Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy (CASF)<sup>3</sup> aimed at the prevention, detection and correction<sup>4</sup> of fraud**

### Main outputs in 2020:

Output	Indicator	Target	Service responsible
Discussion at management level on anti-fraud awareness	Dedicated management level meeting on Anti-Fraud Awareness	Q4	C2
Workshop on Anti-Fraud and Ethics for the Directorate B	Training followed by the Directorate B staff	50% of eligible staff participates	C2

## D. Digital transformation and information management

**Objective: DG SCIC is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission**

### Main outputs in 2020:

Output	Indicator	Target	Service responsible
Full implementation of 15 rooms with Simultaneous Interpretation Delivery Platforms (SIDPs) - hybrid solution at the European Commission	SIDPs implemented	Q4	C4 in cooperation with C5 and DG DIGIT
Interpreters' Digital Toolbox: Stage 1 – Meeting documentation interface	Completion of stage 1	Q4	Directorate A, B3, C3, DIGIT.B4
Interpreters' Digital	Design completed and	Q4	Directorate A, B3, C3,

<sup>3</sup> Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019 – 'the CAFS Communication' – and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 – 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

<sup>4</sup> Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

Toolbox: Stage 2 – Additional functionalities documentation interface (IATE/Lithos integration)	development & test underway		DIGIT.B4
Digitisation of the distribution of documents from the Council for meeting preparation	Business case presented to the ITCB, external contract concluded for a solution	Q4	C3, B3
IT project to modernise corporate management tools for the provision of interpretation	Business process analysis by external consultant launched	Q4	B2, C3
Project Charter and Business use cases of the MIRA (new WebDOR) project	Project Charter and Use cases completed and approved by the Project Steering Committee	Q4	C4 (with B2 and C3)
Initiate project for Automatic Speech Recognition	Solutions on recordings/web streaming were tested Data Curation phase for the ASR model finished	Q4	C3 and DGT.R3, together with CNECT.G3 and DIGIT.D1
Setting the rules for Administrative Retention Schedules for the documents held by DG SCIC relating to freelance interpreters	List of different types of documents held by DG SCIC related to freelance interpreter's personal files	Q4	C.3, B4
Number of outstanding electronic files to be eliminated or transferred	Production of NomCom first review requests	Q2	CAD
Volume of paper files decreased in DG SCIC archives	Physical elimination and transfer of existing paper files	All year	CAD
Adonis ingestion project	Number of intercalaires sent to OIB Historical Archives	All year	CAD, OIB
Ensure information sharing and data protection measures	Percentage of files open at DG and EC level	Q1	CAD
Digitalisation of personal files of Accredited freelance Interpreters (ACIs)	Business Case approved by senior management	Q4	C.3, B.4
Data protection presentation aimed at newcomers	Presentation prepared	Q3	C3
Updated page for data protection issues on SCICNet	Page updated	Q3	C3
Creation of collaborative space on MS Teams for	Collaborative space on	Q4	C3

key topics on data protection and meeting organisation with specific channels on: web streaming; audio-visual recording; participant registration; use of interactive tools such as Sli.do in meetings	MS Teams created		
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## E. Sound environmental management

**Objective: DG SCIC takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work**

### Main results and outputs in 2020:

Output	Indicator	Target	Service responsible
GREEN CORNER page on SCICNet	GREEN CORNER page on SCICNet is online	Q2 – already online, but improvements necessary	EMAS team, O2
Reducing use of plastic bottles through promotion of tap water and drinking water fountains	Drinking water bottles purchased and distributed to staff combined with awareness raising actions	Q4	EMAS team, C2
Newsletter <i>Green Digest</i>	<i>Green Digest</i> sent at least once per quarter to mailing list of interested colleagues	Q1 – 4	EMAS team, Green SCIC Committee
Green Person of the Month portrait or other article related to sustainability on SCICNet	2 portraits or other articles published on the SCICNet	2 portraits or other articles by the end of 2020	EMAS team, Green SCIC Committee
SCIC EMAS Action Plan	Document drafted	Q3	EMAS team, Green SCIC Committee
<i>From crisis mode to the new normal – lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis for making DG SCIC more sustainable</i> brief for Senior Management Board	Document drafted	Q3	EMAS team, Green SCIC Committee