



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Annual Activity Report for 2020

European Committee of the Regions

June 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENTS	4
2.	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN PER SERVICE	8
2.1	SECRETARIATS OF THE POLITICAL GROUPS	9
2.1.1	EPP GROUP	9
2.1.2	PES GROUP.....	13
2.1.3	RENEW EUROPE GROUP	18
2.1.4	ECR GROUP	25
2.1.5	EA GROUP	30
2.1.6	THE GREENS GROUP	33
2.2	DIRECTORATE FOR MEMBERS AND PLENARIES (DIR A)	34
2.3	DIRECTORATE FOR LEGISLATIVE WORKS 1 (DIR B)	42
2.4	DIRECTORATE FOR LEGISLATIVE WORKS 2 (DIR C)	49
2.5	DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATION (DIR D)	56
2.6	DIRECTORATE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE (DIR E)	60
2.7	PROTOCOL SERVICE.....	66
2.8	INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE (IAS).....	68
2.9	DIRECTORATE FOR LOGISTICS (DL)	69
2.10	DIRECTORATE FOR TRANSLATION (DT).....	82
3.	INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS, AUDIT AND FOLLOW-UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY FINANCIAL CONTROL BODIES	85
3.1	RISK MANAGEMENT AS AN INTEGRATED PART OF THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT AT THE COR.....	85
3.2	INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM.....	85
3.3	INTERNAL FINANCIAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	86
3.4	BUDGET PLANNING, EXECUTION AND MONITORING	86
3.5	FINANCIAL VERIFICATION	88
3.6	EX-POST CONTROL	88
3.7	EXCEPTION REPORTS	89
3.8	OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF CONTROL.....	89
3.9	PUBLIC PROCUREMENT	90
3.10	INTERNAL AUDIT FUNCTION	90
4.	ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE	91
5.	THE DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE	92

1. POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The European Committee of the Regions (the CoR) is a Political Assembly of 658 elected representatives of Local and Regional Authorities (329 Members and 329 Alternates). Its mission is twofold:

The Committee contributes to the EU policy shaping and decision making process from the view point of the Local and Regional Authorities

At the same time the Committee's members contribute to make the Union more effective and closer to the citizens by implementing EU law and communicating on the Union's policies on the ground.

Local and regional authorities are responsible for one third of public spending and two thirds of public investment hold in many Member States competencies in key areas such as education, economic development and cohesion, environment, social protection, health and services of general interest.

Cooperation between local, regional, national and European levels is the best response to common challenges.

A European Union that takes into account local and regional needs and concerns increases the legitimacy of its legislation, improves ownership and achieves greater added-value and effectiveness on the ground for the benefit of citizens.

To this end, the CoR works closely with the other EU institutions and with associations of local and regional authorities, as well as in the Member States with the various tiers of government. The CoR's activities, as well as the annual work programme of its commissions, are defined on the basis of the overall political strategy of the CoR, set out in the resolution on the political priorities.

2020 marked the start of the CoR's seventh term of office 2020-2025, under the leadership of President Apostolos Tzitzikostas and First Vice-President Vasco Alves Cordeiro.

Shortly after the start of the new political mandate, the Covid-19 pandemic broke out. Since the outbreak, regional and local authorities have fought tirelessly to safeguard their communities, increase resilience and support their people and businesses in this time of need.

The CoR never stopped working despite the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the constitutive Plenary Session in February in Brussels, the CoR afterwards met three times in Plenary Session (1 hybrid and 2 remote). Unfortunately, two planned plenary sessions had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. The planned external Bureau meetings marking the Croatian and German Presidencies of the Council were replaced by two remote Bureau meetings.

As regards the situation in the regions of Europe, the CoR focused immediately on informing the European legislator of the concrete needs state authorities have on the ground to fight the pandemic and its consequences. The CoR defined a COVID-19 Action Plan and launched a COVID-19 Exchange Platform to assist, inform, engage and represent regions and cities by sharing news and information. Based on the warnings, analyses and the input from the CoR, the European Commission very soon asked for an outlook opinion on the lessons to be learned from the crisis. The CoR adopted this opinion in May 2021.

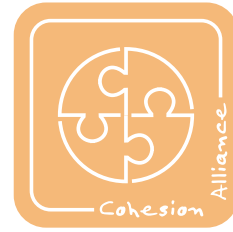
The CoR adopted three political priorities for the mandate 2020-2025, accompanied by 3 communication campaigns, in a resolution in July 2020:



**Bringing Europe closer to people:
Democracy and the future of the
EU**



**Managing fundamental societal
transformations: Building
resilient regional and local
communities**



**Cohesion, our fundamental
value: Place-based EU policies**

In accordance with the political priorities, 9 flagship initiatives have been identified to make the CoR more strategic and impactful:

1. Recovery and resilience facility (RRF)
2. Health related COVID –19 response
3. The Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (SEDEC)
4. CoR 4 Climate Pact
5. The future of cross-border cooperation
6. The New Pact for Migration and Integration
7. Conference on the Future of Europe
8. Long-term vision for Rural Areas
9. Strategic CoR's Budget – ensuring a fair share of the resources for the CoR

The CoR continued its political goal to strengthen the assembly's involvement along the whole EU political and legislative cycle, building on the existing cooperation agreements with the European Parliament and the European Commission.

- More involvement throughout all stages of the EU legislative process (European Commission, European Parliament and Council of the EU);
- Raise the CoR's institutional profile by building even more effective and trustful partnerships with other EU Institutions;
- Put regional and local authorities at the heart of designing and implementing European policies;
- Further develop the EU's decentralised communication with and within regions and cities.

2020 Political Achievements

Bringing Europe closer to its people and launch our first ever regional and local barometer

On 9 May for Europe Day the CoR reflected on the future of the EU and how it must support regions, cities and villages. The following month, during the CoR's first hybrid digital plenary session, initiatives such as Next Generation EU were debated with the European Commission. At our October plenary, the CoR presented the first Regional and Local Barometer to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen and Chancellor Angela Merkel.

All of this took place during #EURegionsWeek involving over 10,000 participants and 800 partners. Finally, Brexit dominated the first online Plenary in December, with a debate with the Mayor of London. In all CoR meeting representatives of local and regional authorities communicated with high-level political leaders in Europe and exchanged their views.

A new era of cooperation

During these months the CoR also launched new initiatives under the framework of the CoR-European Commission cooperation agreement. Joint action plans on the Green Deal, Integration of migrants, as well as

European Committee of the Regions

Research and Innovation were adopted. In preparation of our contribution to the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe we launched a High Level Group on European democracy, chaired by Herman Van Rompuy.

The cooperation with the EP has been continuously increased despite the Covid-19 restrictions. The CoR and the EP pursue effective bilateral cooperation on a set of selected priority files which are reviewed and updated every year. Regular meetings between the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the two institutions and structured cooperation between the rapporteurs of both institutions as well as between CoR commissions and EP Committees increased throughout 2020.

The CoR continued its close cooperation with the Council trio Presidencies and the acting Council Presidency. This involved the design of their future programmes as well as the opportunity to present CoR positions at Presidency events, Council Working Parties and Informal Council meetings. The CoR issued 6 opinions based on referrals received by the Presidency of the Council. Each Council Presidency presented its priorities at a CoR plenary session and in various CoR statutory bodies meetings.

The CoR has also developed cooperation initiatives with the Council secretariat on thematic priority files. The CoR opinions, as well as other relevant CoR documents (studies, consultation reports, impact assessments etc.), are presented in respective working parties of the Council. The CoR has also achieved to set up and information exchange on the respective internal planning documents.

A more detailed account of achievements is provided in the Annual Impact Report 2020.

2020 Administrative achievements supporting political priorities

Early in 2020, at the start of his new mandate and based on the objective set by the Members and the CoR President to modernize the administration, the Secretary General launched his **“Going for IMPact!” reform programme**. The plan includes a comprehensive set of measures to make the administration’s support to the CoR’s political mission more strategic, to use the CoR’s resources in a more efficient way and to boot the impact and outreach of the institution. Throughout 2020 and despite the obstacles created by the crisis, the Secretary General and the senior management team effectively implemented the reform agenda.

The aim of that programme is to refocus management on boosting the CoR’s impact and performance through the following clusters:



Focused policy support



Increased outreach



Smart and modern administration



Lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic

Common features of the work related to the clusters from all parts of the administration are:

- The concentration of resources and administrative support to areas where the institution can achieve the most impactful added-value for the Union
- Strong focus on digitization
- Inclusive and cross-service cooperation increasing project oriented work focused on impact
- Review of processes in order to achieve efficiency gains in times of scarce resources
- Focus on outreach activities increasing inter-institutional impact and good communication with regional and local politicians and citizens

In the context of the “Going for IMPact!” programme, a thorough and inclusive analysis was made on the CoR’s priorities (via SWOT analyses, staff suggestions, management seminars and based on the 2019 workload assessment exercise), coupled with an exercise of administrative simplification of processes and procedures (cutting red-tape). Based on this work, 9 cross-service, non-hierarchical Task Forces were created for priority areas in July 2020 and a new organisational chart was presented by the Secretary-General to the Bureau and was adopted at its meeting on 7 December 2020.

The following 9 Task Forces were created (5 political and 4 administrative):

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Strategic planning | 6. Financial Management |
| 2. Simplification of administrative environment | 7. Electronic Workflows & XML |
| 3. The Green Deal Going Local | 8. Digital Strategy |
| 4. Conference on the Future of Europe | 9. Better Regulation and the Fit4Future Platform |
| 5. COVID19 Action Plan | |

Covid-19 Pandemic: Business Continuity and Beyond

The year 2020 will be remembered as a truly unprecedented year. The extra-ordinary situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic has put both the organisational resilience of CoR and that of the Committee’s Members and staff members to the test. Nonetheless, building on a robust IT environment and thanks to the flexibility, creativity and commitment of staff in all CoR departments, the institution managed to ensure business continuity in a satisfactory manner in almost all areas of activity.

Within a few weeks, the CoR’s Secretariat-General effectively adapted to the crisis and continued supporting its members and implementing its new administrative and political priorities. Specific initiatives in the area of HR communication were organised and served as vector of stability, creating a sense of security and belonging. Telework was already before the pandemic a widely used working tool, but the necessary IT equipment, experience and teleworking culture were not yet present throughout the CoR. IT services deployed significant efforts to acquire, configure and deliver the relevant material to allow the whole institution to operate fully remotely.

Notwithstanding the very demanding circumstances, the collective efforts of all involved enabled the Secretariat-General to ensure continued support to the political activities of the Committee. Whilst putting health and safety of Members and staff first, the organisation adapted to the continuously evolving situation. Statutory and non-statutory meetings as well as other core activities were pursued in times of pandemic, thus enabling the Committee to play its role in the European decision-making process without interruption and to support the other EU institutions and the local and regional authorities in the handling of the crisis situation at hand.

In the following parts of this report, the main achievements and activities are compared against the objectives set in the Strategic Management Plan 2020-2021, as well as the budget execution within the parameters of the control environment. The report also contains a declaration, signed by the Authorising Officer by Delegation, on the application of the principle of sound financial management to the use of the resources and on the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions in 2020..

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN PER SERVICE

This chapter presents the implementation of the Strategic Management Plan per service.

The table below shows the staff of the Committee of the Regions as of 31 December 2020.

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	300	180	11	491
Contract staff (1)	19	34	0	53
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	38
Seconded national experts	10			10
Other personnel (specify) (2)	1			1
Total	330	214	11	593

(1) contract staff replacing absent staff (e.g. maternity leave or short-term assignments) are not included.

(2) medical doctor

2.1 Secretariats of the Political Groups

2.1.1 EPP Group

Objective 1: Build on the stronghold of the EPP group as political motor

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of meetings held and EPP positions carried 2. Members participated in CoR activities and events; 3. rapporteurships secured on major issues, 4. amendments tabled and carried with the EPP line. 5. Substantial contribution of the Group in the context of the CoR initiative to express the local and regional authorities' views to the European Parliament. 	<p>The EPP Group will continue to reinforce its position in shaping policies, notably via its rapporteurs and amendments, and its meetings. It will seek to defend its common lines and values by generating debate and providing voting guidelines on each opinion and resolution. It will also dedicate its ordinary and extraordinary meetings to shaping and delivering EU policies in line with its values. The EPP Group will closely follow the evolution of the new EC Work Programme through its coordinators in each of the CoR Commissions in order to appoint rapporteurs for key opinions, and to propose own-initiative opinions where new issues must be placed on the EU agenda. Specifically for 2020, particular focus will be given to the strategies published by the new European Commission during its first 100 days and their evolution throughout the year. Regarding both 2020 and 2021 focus will be given, amongst other political initiatives and legislative proposals, to address two key ambitions of the European agenda, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the European Green Deal and contribute to the Conference on the future of Europe. In 2020, the Group will organise an extraordinary meeting in Brussels to mark the beginning of the new mandate as well as two other meetings (external meeting and external seminar) in different Member States.</p>	<p>1. Achieved: In 2020 the EPP organised 1 regular, 1 extraordinary and 3 hybrid or remote Group meetings. Moreover, it organised several meetings alongside CoR commission meetings (preparatory and follow-up ones). Lastly, the Group held a workshop during the European Week of Regions and Cities on the topic of the Green Deal which is at the forefront of the EU current affairs. There were no external extraordinary meetings, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>2. Achieved: 65% of members attended each meeting.</p> <p>3. Achieved: The Group secured a majority of rapporteurships on topics considered of strategic importance according to its priorities. Moreover, several of the EPP led opinions were approved unanimously.</p> <p>4. Achieved: Result of the voting occurred in statutory meetings on opinions and resolutions as well as other legal documents included in the CoR's rules of procedure, was welcomed by the members who appreciated the excellent work and advice of the political advisors of the secretariat.</p> <p>5. Achieved: Several members (including the ones who had rapporteurships) represented the CoR in meetings with MEPs, EU officials, EU Commissioners as well as in conferences and EC Working Groups.</p>

Objective 2: Strengthen co-operation with other institutions and EPP Party

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p>1. Number of MEPs and CoR members in each other's activities;</p> <p>2. Number of Commission representatives in Group meetings and activities;</p> <p>3. Regional office and association representatives in group meetings and seminars.</p>	<p>Continue to foster strong relations and working methods with the Party. Organise joint events which reinforce synergies between politicians from the various levels of government to best defend the values of the EPP family. Build links with newly appointed EPP Commissioners. Work closely with key Committees in the European Parliament linked to the 2020-2021 priorities. Enhance the promotion of the legislative amendments of the CoR opinions to the European Parliament Committees' members. Contribute to building deeper relations with members of national parliaments via EPP Inter-Parliamentary debates.</p>	<p>1.Achieved: EPP-CoR Participation in EPP Political Assembly and Working Groups regularly assured.</p> <p>2.Achieved: EPP-CoR participation in the European Parliament's EPP Group meetings, external Bureau meetings, working group staff meetings and hearings.</p> <p>3. Achieved: participation of EPP MEPs, EPP Party members, and Commission representatives in EPP-CoR meetings.</p>

Objective 3: Promote and improve visibility of EPP-CoR Members' work

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p>1.Press releases and publications published and taken up by media or participants; audio-visual material published and integrated onto the website;</p> <p>2. Number of social media posts: likes, shares, follows and retweets;</p> <p>3. Number of interviews with the EPP-CoR members;</p> <p>4. Visitors received in the CoR.</p>	<p>Continue increasing the visibility of the EPP-CoR members and rapporteurs through intensified use of social media, audio-visual materials, the EPP-CoR website, various newsletters and e-newsletters and other publications. Reach out to citizens and the media outside the 'Brussels bubble' via dedicated EPP communications projects.</p>	<p>1.Achieved: News concerning ongoing work in the CoR Commissions, plenary sessions and participation of our members in key policy debates were regularly published on the website.</p> <p>2.Achieved: Social media activity was intensified as a means of communication whilst support and social media training was provided to members.</p> <p>3. Achieved: We had 20% more interview requests with EPP-CoR members in 2020.</p> <p>4. Achieved: In 2020, the EPP-CoR continued its ongoing project launched in 2018 in bringing citizens closer to Europe through EPP Local Dialogues.</p>

Objective 4: Contribute to the running performance of the CoR, its Administration and budget		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p>1.Ownership of decisions increased;</p> <p>2.Number of briefings prepared,</p> <p>3. Number of meetings attended.</p>	<p>Follow-up of political and administrative work especially by the relevant CFAA/EPP rapporteurs with improved implementation of CFAA recommendations. Concerning both 2020 and 2021, particular focus will be given to supporting the full implementation of the CoR's digital strategy; concerning firstly members and secondly the CoR staff.</p>	<p>1.Achieved: EPP Members' provided an essential contribution to the adoption of important decisions (for example CoR Digital Strategy and successful start of its implementation (on-going);</p> <p>Review of regulations 26/2014, 29/2015 and 30/2015 on budget allocation for Political Groups was discussed during 17 Nov CFAA based in the proposal by the EPP Member.</p> <p>2. Achieved: External study was launched to support the CoR decision on future organisation of IT;</p> <p>3.Achieved: Full participation of EPP members in the meeting and Chair's focus on improving overall work of the CFAA;</p>

Objective 5: Integration of new members in the EPP group

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibilities given to members: rapporteurship, participation in votes, occupying EPP seats in CoR bodies, Inviting members to CoR and EPP activities. 	<p>Concerning 2020, focus will be given to the integration of EPP members in the context of the 7th CoR mandate. While a large percentage of those members are already appointed in the CoR, several delegations will naturally include new members and/or new heads of the delegations. In this context, the Group will work closely with the relevant units in the CoR (e.g. Dir.A-Unit A1, Dir. B, C and D) as well as the National Delegations Coordinators in order for the integration process to be as smooth as possible. Concerning both 2020 and 2021, with elections regularly taking place throughout Europe and a resulting movement in CoR membership, the EPP will continue to actively integrate all members of the EPP family in its cohesive work. Building on the expertise and added value that each individual can make, the group will make use of its broad membership to reinforce the work and representativeness of the CoR. It will also seek to incorporate members sharing the EPP values in the Group.</p>	<p>1. Achieved: Despite the health crisis which impacted most of 2020, the Group succeeded in integrating all EPP members in the context of the membership renewal of the 7th CoR mandate. Moreover, throughout the year EPP Group has welcomed successfully new members and alternates from all Member States except Latvia & UK where the EPP-CoR Group had no representatives in 2020. New members are regularly incorporated in the work of the EPP group in the CoR. Apart from the Welcome package the new CoR members receive from the CoR administration, the newcomers in the EPP Group should receive a welcome message notifying officially their EPP-CoR Membership and containing useful info & links on the composition & functioning of the EPP Group. All EPP Group Members receive a digital Vade-Mecum of the Group 3 to 5 times a year reflecting the membership and functions members possess.</p>

Impact of the COVID-19 extraordinary circumstances.

The restrictions related to the COVID-19 health crisis has had a considerable impact on all activities of the Group. In accordance with the decisions by the Belgian government and the CoR, the Group did not organise any external extraordinary meetings. Following the beginning of the pandemic, the Group organised all its scheduled meetings in a remote or hybrid format and with limited interpretation capacity. It adapted quickly to the technical requirements and ensured high level speakers during all meetings. Regarding press and communication, all the online activities had an approximately 30% increase (press releases, social media posts, number of followers, online events and trainings). Concerning consultative works, the Group's secretariat adapted its working methods and assisted members completing their tasks. Given the

lack of physical meetings, more information emails and extended briefings were used prior to statutory meetings taking place. The calendar of meetings of the EPP Members on the Member's Portal was constantly checked and adapted to the evolving situation resulting in changes of dates and format of meetings. Additionally, remote meetings were organised with individual Members in addition to statutory ones in order to keep the bilateral contact in a period of almost complete absence of their physical presence in Brussels. EPP Members were active in CFAA in setting up the new legal framework, which allowed the CoR to start operating under completely new circumstances, including establishing the new working methods, as well as providing conditions for Members' work during this period.

Human resources of the EPP Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan*	10	4		14
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	10	4	0	14

2.1.2 PES Group

Objective 1: Strengthen PES Group’s impact on the CoR political activities		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p>1. Amendments tabled and votes on opinions and resolutions, decision on documents submitted for decisions in the various bodies in which PES members are sitting (plenary, commissions, Bureau, Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs (CFAA), ARLEM, CORLEAP, UTF, working Group on budget, subsidiarity steering committee, JCCs, working groups with third countries, etc.).</p> <p>2. Number of PES Group meetings, resolutions, press releases, newsletters, etc.</p>	<p>The PES Group will contribute to the work of the different CoR commissions in order to reflect the PES priorities on the strategic agenda of the EU. The PES Group will follow closely the rolling programme of the European Commission in order to appoint PES rapporteurs for major opinions. The PES Group will involve itself closely on the new European Commission and the recently newly established European Parliament by further establishing contacts with the new MEPs and with the progressive Commissioners.</p>	<p>1. The PES Group has produced voting lists for opinions adopted in plenary sessions and commission meetings. 8 resolutions were tabled in 2020 and 6 Press release were submitted by the PES Group, nevertheless, the group has contributed to more to nearly dozens of Press releases from the CoR in which quotes from PES members were requested.</p> <p>2. There were 5 PES group meetings alongside the plenary sessions and commission meetings via videoconference. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the Group could not finally organise the extraordinary meetings and seminar foreseen for the 2020 and had to cancel one more Group meeting.</p> <p>Thematic debates were organised in remote mode (see objective 4).</p>

Objective 2: Strengthen the CoR’s impact on the EU decision making process

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
1. Level of participation and intervention in meetings organised by the PES Group at interinstitutional level (mainly European Commission and European Parliament) or with external stakeholders.	The PES Group will reinforce its strategy on the follow-up of opinions or its contacts at inter-institutional level. As much as possible, the CoR PES rapporteurs would work closely with the counterparts at the European Parliament.	1. In 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, PES rapporteurs had meetings with their counterparts in other EU institutions, particularly with counterparts in the European Parliament.

Objective 3: Increase PES Group’s monitoring of CoR administrative and budgetary affairs

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
1. Modifications brought to the existing rules and the work of the CFAA and the Bureau.	Concerning the Cooperation Agreement with the EESC, evaluation of the 13 fields for action and milestones for their implementation identified in the current cooperation agreement with the EESC 2016-2019. Close observation via CFAA and PMG on the negotiations for a new administrative cooperation agreement with the EESC, which should enter into force as of 1 January 2021. Finding a consensual solution for a building strategy and the future occupation of CoR/EESC buildings, particularly in the case of the VMA building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The PES Members in CFAA and Bureau closely followed the advancement on the implementation of the administrative cooperation agreement with the EESC and supported the prolongation of the current administrative cooperation agreement until June of 2021. <p>Conversations with regards to managing the building strategy and the future occupation of the CoR/EESC building are still ongoing.</p>

Objective 4: Develop PES Communication strategy		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of hits on the new website.	The website will continue to be improved. With the full launch of the "Progressive Local Stories" series and other activities, the PES Group aims at increasing again the website visits by 15% compared to 2019. However, due to the restrictions now imposed by both Facebook and Twitter, this will rely mainly on organic traffic and more qualitative traffic.	In 2020, we published over 60 articles on our website, including several opinion pieces by members, which covered a wide range of topics, ranging from the European Union's answers to the pandemic to LGBTI rights, from gender equality to biodiversity, and so on. In 2020, 21 811 users visited the website, representing an increase of 92% compared to 2019. Of these, 92% (21 650) were new users. This proves the success of the content and engagement strategy targeting local and regional leaders and providing fresh, interesting and relevant content.
Number of recipients of the newsletter in our database	<p>The newsletter concept has been thoroughly reviewed and reformed in order to try and touch a bigger audience. After a few months, we have already experienced an increase in traffic to the website and more engagement on our activities.</p> <p>This will be further improved in the future, with a goal to increase the subscribers by at least 10%.</p>	<p>In 2020, the Group published a monthly fully mobile newsletter, which was sent to 2 000, which correspond to an increase of 200 compared to 2019, meeting the target fixed at 10%.</p> <p>The PES also started a specific communication for our group of young local leaders.</p> <p>The highlight of 2020 was the so-called "PES Group Digest", a weekly newsletter developed during March-July 2020 to inform PES Group members, young local leaders and the general public on the EU institutions' response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

European Committee of the Regions

<p>Number of Facebook followers</p>	<p>The new rules of Facebook for advertisement and algorithm make it difficult for political pages to grow. The PES Group will put in place new strategies to grow engagement and maintain its followership, although, as per the current rules of Facebook, we do not plan a big increase of likes for the next years, as political advertisement has been now completely blocked since March 2019. Our target will be to maintain our followership and increase it by at least 5%.</p> <p>The PES Group will further focus its resources on other social media channels, such as Instagram and LinkedIn.</p> <p>The PES Group will continue to maintain its position as first political group of the CoR on all social media.</p> <p>The PES Group will continue to engage with its members to help them improve their social media presence and engagement.</p>	<p>In 2020, the PES Group continued to be the most followed group within the Committee of the Regions on Facebook.</p> <p>The PES Group created a WhatsApp group and Facebook group with its young progressive local and regional leaders, which is working well as an exchange platform, particularly in times in which direct contacts are difficult to create.</p> <p>The PES Group proactively contributed also to the social media work of the European Committee of the Regions, encouraging a more active strategy, promoting quotes by its own members and supporting the administration in its campaigns.</p>
<p>Number of Twitter followers</p>	<p>The PES Group will continue to increase its Twitter followers in the next years by at least 15% per year.</p>	<p>In 2020, the PES Group has reached important milestones of 5 000 followers on Twitter and 1 000 on Instagram. This correspond to an increase of followers on Twitter (+11%), Instagram (+274%) but also on YouTube (+12%).</p>

<p>Number of visitor groups</p>	<p>The PES Group will continue to keep this level of groups of visitors for the next years.</p>	<p>Despite the pandemic, the PES Group Secretariat as kept a high involvement in the CoR efforts to welcome visitors physically – in January and in February 2020 - but also virtually (a video involving the PES Secretariat has been seen by 2900 young students). Once again, the PES group secretariat has seen a member of its staff being awarded the CoR acknowledgment “Speaker of the Year”, for the personal commitment of the colleague but also thanks to a favourable working environment for this kind of extra activities. In total, the PES Group has organised 39 presentations in 2020. Members of the staff took also part in the program “Back to School” either physically in the beginning of the year or on-line as from March 2020.</p>
<p>Organisation of public debates alongside statutory meeting outside Brussels or standing alone</p>	<p>The PES Group will continue to organise events and citizens debates in Brussels and outside, at the request of PES Group members and in cooperation with the S&D Group in the European Parliament and the wider PES family. The concept of the “Progressive Local Labs” will be continued and expanded, with new events already planned in Spain and Italy. This work aims at enlarging the platform of progressive cities and regions across Europe to allow them to exchange views and best practices on the topic of sustainable development to build a more sustainable Europe from the ground up and give political input to the PES family.</p> <p>The PES Group will continue to focus on the involvement and engagement of young local and regional politicians.</p>	<p>2020 has been a year of change in the communications strategy of the PES Group, adapting it to new challenges and circumstances caused by the pandemic, causing the cancellation of three major planned events: the PES Group Seminar in Florence, the Extraordinary Meeting in Seville and the School for Young Local Leaders. It was a major change that also impacted our series of local events, Progressive Local Labs, all cancelled and postponed. The communications strategy of the PES Group therefore had to shift to more digital events and tools, strengthened online communications and projects, and also focused on the major issues happening at EU and local level, such as the response of cities and regions to the COVID-19 pandemic and the EU’s Recovery Plan.</p>

European Committee of the Regions

Human resources of the PES Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan*	10	4		14
Contract staff		1		1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	10	5	0	15

2.1.3 Renew Europe Group

Objective 1: Propose ideas and solutions for Europe, EU legislation, and local and regional democracy		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
speeches: provided at every plenary	To provide and deliver speeches at every plenary	The focus of the speeches shifted towards bringing concrete experiences and concerns from the ground and connect it to the relevant EU decisionmaking process or bring a new topic on the EU agenda: e.g. Jasna Gabric (SL) spoke in response to Commissioner Várhelyi at the December plenary, emphasising the importance of peer-to-peer exercises between local authorities in the EU and in North Macedonia, something that the Commissioner warmly welcomed; October plenary: Eamon Dooley spoke in response in the Green Deal debate with F. Timmermans about the experience of his region and it's need to be part of a just transition.
Amendments: tabled at every plenary and most commissions	Tabled at each plenary and most commissions	Amendments are being tabled by Group Coordinators, generally on Commission level. If, proven necessary, additional amendments suggested at plenary level.

<p>Opinions: successful approval in plenary</p>	<p>- 100% approved at plenary</p>	<p>- Towards more sustainable tourism for EU cities and regions, A new Industrial Strategy for Europe, The service package, The Digital Transformation of Local Democracy – all approved at plenary in 2020.</p>
<p>Input to ALDE Party Congress: - Successful contributions to the ALDE Party Congress with the aim of raising awareness of the role of local and regional authorities and building relations with the new ALDE Party Bureau members.</p>	<p>- Continue to contribute to raising the awareness of the Renew Europe -CoR group within the wider liberal family and to raise the concerns of local and regional authorities through tabling of resolutions, amendments, hosting of debates, providing a stand with a quiz, organising bilateral meetings and to continue finding new innovative ways of raising our profile.</p>	<p>- The congress that normally would have taken place in December 2020 has been postponed to June 2021 because of the pandemic. We presented some amendments (some of them successfully adopted) to two resolutions for the ALDE party council in November:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Lessons learned from the COVID19 pandemic 2 ALDE Input to the Conference on the Future of Europe.
<p>Renew Europe Seminars, study visits and Renew Europe events: concrete proposals and recommendations resulting from discussions and contributions to future policy work</p>	<p>- Continue increasing participation and engagement rates during our events. - Take additional steps in researching interesting speakers and topics for all meetings and events.</p> <p>- Place greater focus on the content and completely revise how we organise external activities, based on content, message and the need.</p> <p>- Distribute events evenly across the year allowing more time and resources to better prepare them. Consider reducing the number of events to focus resources more on message development and impact.</p>	<p>- Renew Europe seminars and external group meetings as well as study visits were cancelled in 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

European Committee of the Regions

<p>Renew Europe Events in collaboration with the Liberal Family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue developing the Liberal Mayors Network and organise a larger summit at the next Congress in 2020. Possibly organising also smaller more focused meetings in Brussels for mayors during the year. • Continue developing the Summit of Young Elected Local and Regional Leaders together with European Liberal Youth. Enabling more opportunities for participants to engage with other Renew Europe and CoR pilot initiatives. Integrate them also into wider policy work of the group. • Improve and modernise the organisation of all Renew Europe events to make them more engaging and political and thus increased member participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6th Liberal Mayors Summit: our largest online Summit to date with more than 60 mayors & regional leaders who gathered for a special Europe Day • Summit. The Summit led to a number of proposals and a declaration calling for a Sovereign, Decentralised, and Federal Europe • 7th Liberal Mayors Online • Summit: more than 20 mayors focused on the rule of law and LGBTIQ rights with EU Commission VicePresident Vera Jourová, • Michal Šimečka MEP of Renew Europe. • 4th Online Summit of Young Elected Local and Regional Leaders: focusing on youth and COVID-19: response, recovery and the way forward the Summit enabled young leaders to share best practice and experience with COVID-19.
<p>Provide our members with a compilation of CoR proposals from this mandate which they can include in their citizen dialogues or national party communications with citizens</p>	<p>An update to be provided at the end of the CoR mandate.</p>	<p>Too early in the mandate</p>

Objective 2: Ensure participation of Renew Europe members in the work of the CoR and provide support for them ahead of statutory meetings

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Briefings: Provided for every statutory meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% briefings for all statutory meetings. - Redesign of briefings to facilitate digital transition of the CoR and continue working on video briefings, as an additional service to members. - Continue to develop a new group meeting format to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> generate discussion on Renew Europe positions on key dossiers at the plenary increase debate on crucial amendments tabled for plenary or Commission meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Briefings are delivered for each commission meeting. In addition, the Secretariat staff was actively involved in monitoring and helping members navigate through the digitalised workflow – including voting procedures, speaking slots at digital meetings, etc.
Rapporteurships: Renew Europe obtains 13% proportional to its relative size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of opinions proportional to size of group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From overall 48 opinions adopted in 2020, 4 had a Renew Europe Rapporteur. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CoR members were for the first half of the year more focused on handling the health crisis and not necessarily on EU decisionmaking process.
Analysis of opinions from liberal perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain the same level of service to members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided in every briefing for CoR Commission meetings.
The setting up of meetings with local liberals for members when they go to meetings outside of the EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue organising meetings for our members then they travel to countries outside of the EU. - We will continue organising meetings with liberals both at national and local level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not relevant for year 2020.

Objective 3: Help to ensure that the CoR’s messages are reflected in the EU legislative process

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Meetings: Arranged for every Renew Europe rapporteur following plenary approval and during the process of preparing the opinion if considered appropriate.	- Meetings for 100% of Renew Europe-CoR rapporteurs.	- On 12 October 2020, Manuel Alejandro Cardenete rapporteur on the opinion “Towards more sustainable tourism for EU cities and regions” took part in a high level panel debate on “Investing in the European tourism ecosystem of tomorrow” at the European Tourism Convention, organised by DG GROW. The Convention had as speakers Commissioner Thierry Breton, CEOs of major companies in the field and key policy makers.
Proposals for amendments: Submitted to MEP ahead of EP deadline	- Amendment deadline: 100% to be met	- 2020 was a particular year due to covid 19. Our secretariat submitted to the Renew Europe Group in the European Parliament throughout the year evidence based info regarding the situation on the ground following the outbreak of the pandemics.

Objective 4: Contribute to organisation of CoR work and efficient running of the Administration

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Contribute to the strengthening of the CoR as it develops the cooperation agreement with the European Parliament, and increases its focus on its legislative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with Renew Europe MEPs first results arising from the agreement and the final report of the Subsidiarity Task Force. • Continue to push for resources to be allocated to achieving impact of CoR on the legislative process and push for a greater proactive and strategic approach to obtaining visibility in the Brussels-based European media. • Communicate with Renew Europe MEPs our objectives for the Conference on the Future of Europe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COFEU not yet launched. • New collaboration with Renew Europe EP agreed and being implemented.

<p>Ensure a smooth transition for new Renew Europe members and efficient farewell for Renew Europe outgoing members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue ensuring that all members receive the Renew Europe welcome pack (or Farewell Pack) punctually • Set up meetings for new members with the relevant members of the secretariat. • Maintain a high level of problem solving when it comes to Dynamics failures and change of logo and names in all Dynamic lists (following change of the Group's logo and name • Encourage outgoing members to contribute so the secretariat has more feedback in terms of service provided to the members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Pack sent to Michael Crowe • Meetings and missions on hold because of pandemic.
<p>Improve efficiency of mission budget expenditure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic use of comparative search to find cheapest flight combinations and cheaper hotel rates whenever possible. • An even more efficient system or regular monitoring of the budget • Continue to book flights early whenever possible for a better price and a more efficient organisation of the work. 	<p>- Not relevant due to Covid pandemic.</p>

Objective 5: Increase the profile of the CoR towards specifically targeted stakeholders		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Press releases and newsletters/ brochures: Circulated to CoR, Renew Europe MEPs, wider liberal caucus, and reflected in Renew Europe Party newsletter	<p>Press releases and newsletters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital newsletter since May 2016. Rebuilding the numbers following the significant loss due to the introduction of GDPR. - Increase the amount of newsletter recipients steadily and further content optimization to increase the open- and click rates. - Possible survey to our readers to get feedback and better tailor content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newsletter now sent via new digital tool, current subscribers at just under 700. Increased open rate, status quo for click rates
Events: Attendance, new contacts developed, policy proposals agreed	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue increasing visibility of LMS and YELL within the liberal family and in media. - Continue developing the Liberal Mayors Network and improve the format and gender balance of the summit of Young Elected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successful organization and execution of two Liberal Mayors Summits and Summit of Young Elected Local and Regional leaders enabled us to expand our Liberal Mayors Network with new contacts and leads as well as involve young leaders in our campaign on LGBTI+ rights and other policy work.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local and Regional Leaders. 	
Renew Europe presence on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the twitter and Facebook followers total organically by 5% - Increase the LinkedIn followers by 10% and establish the LinkedIn account(s) as an integral part of Renew Europe COR's social media presence, on the same level in terms of activeness, engagement and reputation as Twitter & Facebook. - Launch of a Renew Europe CoR Instagram account in the new mandate, making it an integral part of our social media outreach - Increase traffic to the website & reshape website to reflect new mandate and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LinkedIn established as real new medium albeit solely focused on job and career communication - Instagram account used since 2020, growing organically, with over 500 followers so far even though sparingly used (as it is picture & video-centred, it's use is limited due to the Coronapandemic). - Website being reshaped, e.g. to better highlight priorities and objectives (ongoing)

Human resources of the Renew Europe Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	5	3		8
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other outside personnel (specify)				
Total	5	3	0	8

2.1.4 ECR Group

Objective 1: Propose ideas and solutions for EU legislation, EU governance and local and regional democracy		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Speeches: Assistance with preparation of interventions for selected Members.	Assistance ahead of each CoR plenary session and majority of other CoR meetings.	Achieved. A high number of speeches were delivered by the ECR members during the major debates with high level speakers at the plenary sessions in 2020. Secretariat's assistance was ensured at all times.
ECR amendments: Tabled at every plenary and most commission meetings.	Amendments to be tabled at each plenary session and most commission meetings in 2020 and 2021.	Achieved. ECR Group amendments were tabled at every plenary session to most of the opinions and during most commission meetings. Relatively to its size, the ECR Group is by far among the most active political groups when it comes to tabling amendments.
ECR-led opinions: Successful approval in plenary	Maintain the 100% approval rate in 2020 and 2021.	Achieved. All ECR opinions were successfully approved in 2020 plenary sessions, i.e.: - European Year of Rail 2021 (rapporteur Marshal Jarosław Stawiarski) - New Circular Economy Action Plan (rapporteur Mr Tjisse Stelpstra).

European Committee of the Regions

<p>ECR meetings: Further elaboration of and follow-up to ECR policy proposals at strategic meetings of the ECR Group – the Localism Summit and the ECR Study Days, as well as Group meetings in the margins of plenary sessions.</p>	<p>ECR Localism Summits (1 x year) and Study Days (1 x year) to serve as platforms for discussions with other EU institutions.</p> <p>ECR trainings (1 x year) to serve as instruments helping to boost communication skills of members and staff.</p> <p>ECR Group meetings in the margins of plenary sessions (each plenary session) to discuss CoR matters.</p>	<p>Partially Achieved. During 2020, the ECR Group held four ordinary Group meetings at the margin of each plenary session as well as three Bureau meetings. The majority of these meetings were organised in either hybrid or virtual form via interactivio platform. The ECR Group and ECR Bureau meetings that were scheduled to take place in March and May 2020 were cancelled, as was the case of with the CoR plenary session (due to the COVID-19 pandemic).</p> <p>Partially Achieved. Despite the Group's intention and commitment to organise in 2020 its core strategic meetings (the ECR Localism Summit and the ECR Study Days), the Localism Summit that was due to take place in the Czech Republic was cancelled as a result of the pandemic. ECR Study Days conference has been postponed. Funds to this end were frontloaded from 2020 and the conference will take place on 19 February 2021.</p> <p>The ECR Group held on 11 December 2020 a virtual extraordinary meeting devoted to the much-needed revision of the ECR Constitution and a crisis communication training for members, which was led by experts on communication from the United States.</p>
<p>Events addressing EU policy and/or governance issues: well-attended events that address policy issues and enable ideas to be discussed.</p>	<p>Continue organising well-attended events that address policy issues, including as part of the EWRC.</p>	<p>Achieved. The ECR Group organised a well-attended, hybrid conference on tackling air pollution in European cities and regions as part of the 18th European Week of Regions and Cities on October 15th.</p> <p>The event brought together representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, as well as local and regional representatives from various parts of Europe.</p>

Objective 2: Supporting the full participation of ECR Members in the work of the CoR

Result and/or impact indicator(s):	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Briefings: Provided for every meeting	Maintain frequency and quality of briefings at the current level.	Achieved.
Rapporteurships: Ensure that ECR obtains percentage (%) proportional to its relative size.	Maintain or increase the current level of engagement in 2020 and 2021.	Achieved.
Administrative support: preparation of voting lists, annotated plenary agendas, research and gathering data, negotiating logistical arrangements.	Maintain the current level of support in 2020 and 2021.	Achieved. The ECR Group members received full support and were supplied with all the necessary materials and documentations well ahead of all plenary sessions, commission meetings and meetings of other CoR bodies.

Objective 3: Ensure good use of public resources

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Adoption and application of rules: follow the application of key decisions relating to the running of the CoR e.g. through CFAA and the Ad Hoc Group on the Revision of the Rules of Procedure.	Provide briefings for all meetings. Monitor and review if and where necessary.	Achieved.
Budget: Working within allocated amounts and ensuring that only activities with added value are proceeded with.	Not exceed overall budget allocation and use existing budget efficiently. Use the resources available at Member's disposal in addition to CoR resources when organising conferences. Continue hosting high-level speakers.	Partially achieved. While none of the budget lines was surpassed during 2020, they were not fully executed due to the pandemic. Despite these obstacles, the use of the budget lines was satisfactory (BL 1004 (32.2 % execution rate); BL 264 (68.5%); BL 214 (100%); BL 2602 (99.4%); and BL 2546 (12.46%).)
Publicity: Sufficient and reasonable up-to-date publicity.	Keep publicity to a necessary and reasonable level. Keep leaflets and brochures updated at a regular basis (at least two times per year).	Achieved. The ECR newsletter was issued four times during 2020, ahead of every CoR plenary session organised. It is typically 12-24 pages long and sent in hard copy and electronically. The ECR "About Us booklet" was updated twice during 2020. It was also translated into new languages to achieve a broader outreach.

Objective 4: Strengthen ECR Group and CoR profile vis-à-vis institutional clients

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p><u>Press releases, newsletters and social media:</u> Newsletters to be circulated to members of our Group, ECR MEPs, relevant EPEC REP Group Secretariat members, MPs, wider conservative and reformist circles, EU Commissioners and local and regional representations in Brussels. Tweets to be sent out on members' activities. Press releases to be sent out on key ECR events and developments. Press materials and tweets to be sent out more than just in English.</p>	<p>Continue to prepare the ECR newsletter for every second CoR plenary session, continue the wide circulation of the newsletter to all relevant stakeholders (maintain up-to-date database), maintain a steady growth in the number of followers on social media, continue to provide content in more languages than just in English, increase the frequency of updating the ECR website.</p>	<p>Achieved. Each ECR Group newsletter was circulated to a list of 186 contacts, which includes our ECR Group members, MEPs, regional offices and other politicians. Our Group also increased significantly its outreach on Twitter – it increased the number of its followers by more than 10%.</p>
<p><u>Meetings:</u> Arranged for every ECR rapporteur in relation to his/her opinion and for members who want to strengthen their visibility in Brussels.</p>	<p>Continue to organise high number of bilateral meetings and a stakeholders meeting for each rapporteur in cooperation with commission secretariats. Continue to assist Chairs of Intergroups and other Members who want to hold more bilateral meetings in Brussels</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
<p><u>Follow-up of opinions:</u> Organise and encourage commission secretariats to organise bilateral follow-up meetings for rapporteurs.</p>	<p>At least maintain the number of bilateral meetings at the current level. Engage with most senior officials.</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>
<p>Events: Organisation of events, ensuring good attendance, inviting high profile speakers from all partner institutions, developing new contacts, agreeing policy proposals.</p>	<p>Events: Organise the four activities in both 2020 and 2021. Continue to invite senior officials from EU institutions, central government and policy experts. Organise two of the events (1 and 2) outside Brussels and the other two (3 and 4) in Brussels.</p>	<p>Partially achieved. During 2020 the ECR Group organised an extraordinary group meeting in Brussels on the revision of the ECR Constitution as well as a training for ECR members on crisis management.</p> <p>The ECR Group is also organising its ECR Study Days on February 2021 from the 2020 budget (frontloading caused by the pandemic). Furthermore, we organised our workshop as part of the EWRC.</p> <p>The Localism Summit that was planned to take place in June 2020 in the Czech Republic had to be cancelled because of the pandemic and the travel restrictions.</p>

Hosting of ECR Group MEPs at ECR Group meetings and organisation of bilateral meetings between ECR CoR Members and ECR MEPs	Host ECR MEPs at least at every second ECR Group meeting in Brussels; maintain high number of bilateral meetings of ECR CoR Members and ECR MEPs.	Achieved. As an example, EU Commissioner for Agriculture Mr. Janusz Wojciechowski attended our ECR Group meeting on December 7. Main trends in reforming the agricultural policy post-2020 and the Farm to Fork Strategy were discussed with the Members.
Hosting visitors groups and young elected politicians	Increase the number of visitors in 2020 and 2021 and invite YEPs to our flagship events (Localism Summit and Study Days).	Not achieved. Despite requests from MEPs and our Members to meet groups of visitors at the beginning of the year in the CoR (councillors, students), this was not possible due to the pandemic.

Objective 5: Integration of ECR Group Members in the activities of the CoR

Result and/or impact indicators: Providing information and support to members during their rapporteurship activities, participation in votes, assistance during meetings, ensuring adequate ECR representation in CoR bodies and conferences.	Target for 2020- 2021: To provide all new Members with up-to-date welcome packs and everyday assistance, including – to the extent possible – in their native language.	Latest known result: Achieved.
---	--	---------------------------------------

B – Overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Directorate

The pandemic had a big impact on our activities:

- our budget and political planning had to be almost entirely revised. One of our major political events was cancelled; another one postponed to next year; and the third one had to take a virtual form;
- we were forced to change our operating methods and review internal regulations of the Group.

On a positive note, the new working methods allowed us to realise a project that our Group has never had sufficient finances for in the past – namely the design and creation of a new ECR Group website, thanks to BL 264.

Human resources of the ECR Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	3	1		4
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other outside personnel (specify)				
Total	4	1	0	5

2.1.5 EA Group

Objective 1: Enhance the Political Identity of the European Alliance group and of the CoR in EU institutions, Regional and Local Authorities and Political Groups		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of joint meetings and initiatives 2. Number of articles on EA group members activity in various publications 3. Number of MEPs and CoR members in each other's activities 	<p>Joint initiatives with the EP</p> <p>Cooperation with the EC</p> <p>Key European events where EA members are speakers</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cooperation achieved with MEPs & European, National and Regional Political Parties. <p>Substantial cooperation with the European Parliament in particular with EFA Group MEPs on Catalonia as well as BREXIT.</p> <p>An EA group COVID exchange was formally created and had input into the CoR's exchange subsequently set-up.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The EA group specifically targeted Members local newspapers and radio on key topics such as Green deal; rural development; smart villages, Regional innovation scoreboard and achieved notable successes in PL / IE and FR with Op-Eds by members on Europe day 2020. 3. EA members and rapporteurs were invited to European Commission and European Parliament virtual meetings and MEPs and European Commission officials participated in EA group meetings and events. All meetings apart from January / February 2020 were held virtually.

Objective 2: Achieve goals as defined by the EA group, organise group meetings, achieve ‘rapporteur’ positions in key policy areas.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p>1. Number of successful group meetings held</p> <p>2. Number of EA seminars organised</p> <p>3. Number of meetings co-organised with the European Parliament</p> <p>4. Number of articles published</p>	<p>EA group meetings organised along each plenary session of the CoR in 2020-2021</p> <p>Focus for 2020 will be on new EP and also the EC and their priorities</p> <p>EA extraordinary group meeting during 2020- 2021</p> <p>Study visit for EA members</p> <p>EWRC event.</p>	<p>1. Apart from the short time when the Plenary session and work of the CoR was more restricted there was a meeting prior to all Plenary sessions in 2020.</p> <p>2.. We held a seminar on: Promoting Regional Tourism recovery after the Pandemic during the EUregionsweek</p> <p>3. One extraordinary meeting was held to begin the new CoR mandate (3rd February) but unfortunately the second external meeting to be held in Poland was postponed due to the pandemic.</p> <p>No study visit was held in 2020 due to the pandemic.</p> <p>4. Over 35 articles printed in EU, Local and regional press relating to opinions or events led by EA members.</p>

Objective 3: Ensure members are fully briefed on issues of importance to them in the context of CoR work; ensure that members have the opportunity to fully participate and influence the decision making process. Link with European Alliance Group political priorities 2015-2020

Result and/or impact indicator:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p>Number of members participating, contributing and influencing meetings.</p>	<p>Members to be briefed in advance before Commission meetings, several Working Groups meetings, Bureau meetings and plenary sessions along the year.</p> <p>2020 will be a continued focus on the EC and EP and influencing their new priorities</p>	<p>Members were briefed before all plenary sessions, commission meetings, working groups and other relevant meetings.</p> <p>The European Alliance group organised a lunchtime briefing informing the members and the Brussels public about the Role of Regional airports in stimulating recovery.</p>

Objective 4: Increase the profile of the Institution among specifically targeted stakeholders. Link with European Alliance Group political priorities 2015-2020.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p>Number of secondary schools students participating in annual essay and multiple choice competition</p> <p>Number of primary schools participating in the annual children's art competitions: "my region, my....."</p> <p>Opening up a dialogue with specific stakeholders</p>	<p>Achieve greater interaction between students from different regions to discuss and debate Europe;</p> <p>More recognition of the annual primary schools competition;</p> <p>Increasing invitation to different events of specific stakeholders.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Secondary Schools competition was cancelled due to the pandemic but the finance was used for a digital enhancement project. 2. The Primary Schools competition has also increased in profile with the theme for 2020 being 'My Region, my Europe'. 3. Our group were invited systematically to the Rural intergroup in the EP (RUMRA) which opened up huge contact to Rural stakeholders and involvement in the 2040 working group of the EC. We followed up with stakeholders with all opinions undertaken by EA members in 2020.

Human resources of the EA Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	3	1		4
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other outside personnel (specify)				
Total	4	1	0	5

2.1.6 The Greens Group

Objectives:		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
n.a.	n.a.	Ensured participation of Greens members and provided support in preparation of CoR statutory meetings: briefings as requested, analysis of opinions and proposals for amendments, development of voting lists.
n.a.	n.a.	Began building co-operation with Greens in other institutions and the European Green Party: established contacts, supported each other's campaigns and communication efforts.
n.a.	n.a.	Strengthened the group internally: successfully organised group meetings ahead of all CoR Plenary Sessions, and coordinated other forms of collaboration.

The Greens Group was established in February 2020, and the secretariat in April 2020. Since then, the secretariat ensured Greens representation in all CoR statutory meetings; coordinated the work of the Greens members; provided support to Greens members (e.g. voting lists and - as needed - briefings or speaking points) and additional representative roles; was involved in political negotiations between the political groups; started building relationships with the broader Greens family in Brussels; established and maintained external communication channels (website and Twitter account); planned events and financial management; represented the group in all relevant CoR internal task forces and vis-a-vis all commission secretariats; followed various calendars and fulfilled administrative obligations.

Business continuity was maintained, though it remained at constant and severe risk (due to illness or other impediment to the 1 staff member). As the secretariat functioned with very few human resources (1 staff member), many political objectives could not be reached, and the outreach of its work beyond the political group itself remained limited.

B – Overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Directorate

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Greens members could only meet in person at the very beginning of the mandate. For a new political group established in February 2020, this resulted on one hand in a challenging environment to develop the group's profile and to establish links to members of the other groups and other EU institutions. On the other hand, it allowed for more frequent participation in meetings, with a lower carbon footprint and less time spent travelling, than with physical meetings. The main lessons learnt is that digital tools and meetings could be harnessed also post-covid, for increased outreach beyond the CoR and for the reduction of the institution's carbon footprint, provided the technical setting allow smooth communication. The voting system in remote sessions is still an issue to be improved.

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	1			1
Contract staff		1		1
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	1	1	0	2

2.2 Directorate for Members and Plenaries (Dir A)

Objective 1: Facilitate the political activities carried out at the CoR by providing efficient legal, financial and administrative support to CoR members and bodies

Result indicators and/or impact indicators:	Target for –2020-2021:	Latest known result:
1. Quality assessment of the adaptations of Members’ Portal in the phasing-in period based on users’ feedback	1. Required adaptations in Members’ Portal implemented	1. Achieved.
	2. Legal assistance to the smooth setting up of the first Plenary of 2020	2. Achieved The inaugural Plenary session was held in accordance with the rules, adopting the appointments provided for and taking the decisions necessary for the smooth running of the Committee’s work.
	3. Analysis of the legal framework in force and, as the case may be, contribution in the preparation of new legal acts (e.g. preparing a draft decision on the implementation of the new EU regulation of the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the EU institutions and bodies)	3. Achieved: A Decision of the Bureau adopting implementing rules concerning Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions and bodies was adopted on 9 October 2020.

<p>4. Code of Conduct implemented</p>	<p>4. provisions of the Code of Conduct lawfully implemented (including publication in the Official Journal and, as the case may be, memos and/or training sessions for the parties concerned, for explaining the scope of the new rules)</p>	<p>4. Achieved: - the Code of conduct was published on 24 January 2020.</p> <p>-The Advisory Board on harassment is now constituted: it is made up of six members who are appointed by the President of the CoR.</p> <p>Partially achieved: Some implementing measures are still ongoing:</p> <p>The Code of Conduct lays down the obligation (for both members and alternates) to submit a declaration of financial interests within 60 days of taking up office, in order to avoid, or at least minimise, instances of conflict of interests. In 2020 several emails have been sent to members and alternates by the SG in order to obtain this declaration. As of January 2021, 146 declarations (from members and alternates) had not been submitted.</p>
<p>Quality assessment based on feedback from all actors involved (members and their assistants, staff, including Political Groups, external guests, VIP guests, co-organising partners)</p>	<p>1. best possible language combination considering the conference rooms and the budget constraints</p> <p>2. best possible technical services (sound, screens, web-streaming etc.) within the allocated budget</p>	<p>1. Achieved: before the Covid-19 crisis, language combinations were always provided as requested by the requesting service and according to the current language policy. During the Covid-19 crisis, language regimes had to be reduced to comply with safety regulations from Belgian authorities and SCIC working conditions, but have always been the maximum possible.</p> <p>2. Achieved: best possible technical services are always allocated to meetings. When the Covid-19 crisis started, the Interactio project was quickly deployed to resume CoR activity as soon as possible. During 2020 the Interactio project has continued being optimized and enhanced to give Members the best user experience possible.</p>

European Committee of the Regions

	3. meeting documents available to Members in due time	3. Partially achieved: Given the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in the political agenda, documents could not always be published within the foreseen deadlines.
– quality assessment of the renewal	<p>1. Complete data for new members encoded (December 2019-January 2020);</p> <p>2. All members invited to the constitutive Plenary in due time, following nomination by the Council of the EU;</p> <p>3. Smooth setting up of the new CoR constituent bodies and other bodies (February 2020)</p> <p>4. Organisation of CoR constitutive Plenary of the new mandate in February/March 2020</p>	<p>1. Achieved: all data timely registered in Agora enabling the smooth organization of the renewal.</p> <p>2. Achieved: Ahead of the plenary the Council appointed the members who received the invitation to the inaugural session of the 7th term of office on time.</p> <p>3. Achieved: All bodies were timely established including the election of the President, 1st VP and Bureau members.</p> <p>4. Achieved: Very successful organization of the constitutive session together with a ‘welcome village’ highly appreciated by the members.</p>
Adoption of the new CoR language policy	Language policy adopted by the CoR Bureau in 2020	Not achieved: the language policy was planned to be discussed in the Bureau of March 2020, which had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Language policy to be reviewed to set up a system for establishment of priority languages when reductions are necessary because of «force majeure», for adoption by the CoR Bureau in 2021.

<p>% priority projects successfully implemented</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain activity of clusters for mid-term and long –term projects 2. carry out financial assessment of prioritised projects 3. align 2021 budget to ambitions and priorities validated by the clusters set up in the framework of the Digital strategy 4. implement prioritised projects for 2020 in accordance with available budget 2020 5. allocate the human resources needed for the implementation of selected projects 	<p>IT Digital Strategy was moved to DIR D in charge since mid-2020 of implementing the projects and managing the budget. Under the guidance of the Secretary General Directorate D has established a forward-looking IT startegy in close cooperation with the members of the Digital Future Group and restructured and optimized the relations with the IT services of the joins EESC-CoR services</p>
<p>Travel agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rate of use by Members and level of satisfaction – ratio between the management fees paid to the CoR travel agent/ number of tickets sold 	<p>Increase use rate by end 2020 towards 20% management fee paid to CoR Travel Agency equivalent to the management fees CoR would have to pay if these tickets were bought with an external travel agent should present a break even balance</p>	<p>Not achieved: The travel agency was present at the welcome village during the first plenary session of the new mandate and was consulted by many members. Further similar steps were planned during 2020 but could not be executed because of COVID-19. Moreover, due to the pandemic, only a limited number of members did participate face to face in CoR meetings between March and December.</p> <p>For the same reason, despite the fact that the management fee was not fully claimed by the travel agency, the ratio during 2020 is rather negative because there was only a limited number of occasions where tickets needed to be bought by members.</p>
<p>– no. of simultaneous EPRS researches</p>	<p>- Streamline tailored simultaneous research requests with CoR's Library as a coordination service</p>	<p>Not achieved: Due to Covid-19 cancellation of commissions' meetings, the request for EPRS research via the Library stopped between March-November 2020 to resume in December with 3 requests of background notes and briefings introduced by CIVEX and 1 by COTER.</p>

Objective 2: Contribute to the internal functioning of the CoR by providing efficient legal, financial and administrative support and tools to CoR services

Result indicators and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
<p>% of new documents created after the adoption of the new Filing Plan with the appropriate metadata filled in</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated Filing Plan adopted by Bureau and used by all Directorates 2. IT application to manage the CoR's filing plan developed in order to be integrated into DM and Adonis2 3. Implementation of the following features in Adonis2: a) Adonis2 Outlook; b) electronic signature; c) Adonis virtual stamp; d) expedition from Adonis. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieved: Implementation of the feature "virtual stamp" and "basic electronic signature" in Adonis2 Updated Filing Plan to be published and implemented in Adonis and in DM. 2. Not achieved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standalone "IT application to manage the CoR's filing plan" was not included among the CoR's IT priorities to be developed 3. Ongoing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closing previous Adonis features was a prerequisite for beginning to develop "Adonis2 Outlook" and "expedition from Adonis". Nevertheless, this feature is part of the Adonis Roadmap 2021.
<p>Meeting rooms</p> <p>Technical upgrade of conference rooms done</p>	<p>Meeting rooms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Room JDE51 upgraded (summer 2020) 2. Digital signage outside conference room upgraded (2020-2021) 3. Review locations of all other digital signal screens in 2020 and upgrade the existing ones (2020-2021) 4. Interpreter consoles upgraded in JDE51 and JDE52 in 2020. 5. Improve lighting of Atrium 5 widely used for events and for communication purposes in 2021 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieved 2. Achieved 3. In progress. This project had to be put on hold due to Covid19 crisis. 4. Achieved 5. Achieved

<p>Library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of premium subscriptions used by members and staff on a daily basis • Number and type of research requests per day • Number of books transactions via the Library's online system • No. of requested e-books • Number of event podcasts • Number of visits in the Library (including visitors) • quality monitoring of our services with regular surveys (including via "FEED GOORFY" feature online) and surveys on an annual basis 	<p>Library</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. at least 1 or 2 of the Library's subscriptions/services are considered essential by colleagues in their work by 2020-2021 7. Substantially increase the number of requests for information per day (from 3 per day on average in 2019) and evolve to more value-added research inputs (from 1 or 2 per week on average in 2019) Double the number of books transaction via Library's system by 2021 8. e-Books from the EP E-Books ProQuest Platform become fully integrated in our services offer by 2020 (include e-books in all our researches and reading recommendations) 9. at least 1 event podcast per month in connection to CoR's areas of interest (by 2021) 10. substantially increase (double) the number of visits in the Library by 2020-2021 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Achieved: during COVID-19 crisis, several subscriptions were viewed as essential by colleagues: Agence Europe, Politico and Contexte, followed by PressReader, Financial Times and Le Soir. News Harvest was key to make available contents. 7. Not achieved: Due to the lack of human resources (1 skilled person between mid-February – 1st of May) followed by the arrival of a new colleague who had to be remotely trained, Library's services had to evolve from «pull» to «push» services via News Harvest. Fewer requests were received due to the slow down and the availability of the «News Harvest». 8. Not achieved: EP retrieved the e-books service for the CoR in summer 2020. 9. Not achieved: due to Covid-19, no events with podcast were organized. 10. Not achieved: physical Library closed from mid-March to December due to COVID -19 pandemic.
--	--	---

European Committee of the Regions

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. number of training sessions provided 2. efficiency of approval workflows and accuracy of budget reports in the new system 3. quality assessment based on users' feedback 	<p>- Integrated electronic workflows both on the operational and the financial level, budget planning and monitoring and foreseen meetings functionalities implemented by the end of 2020</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieved: two time two training modules provided. 2. Ongoing: the integrated electronic workflows still needs to be developed by the IT service. The project (36) has again been put on the priority list for 2021. 3. Users feedback Module1: How to organise meetings within the planned budget 27/1 <p>Overall evaluation= 80%</p> <p>Module 2: Entitlements of participants and reimbursement requests:</p> <p>Overall evaluation: 100%</p>
---	---	--

In 2020, 4 Plenary Sessions were organised. Unfortunately, two planned plenary sessions had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. The pandemic functioned as a catalyst for digitalization, with a platform for organising on-line meetings with interpretation (Interactio) was set-up and operational as early as April. Out of the 4 sessions that were organised, 2 were organised on a hybrid basis and 1 on a remote basis, using a new procedure for voting, EU Survey. Next to the 4 Plenary sessions, 4 Bureau meetings were organised and the planned external Bureau meetings were replaced by two remote Bureau meetings. Furthermore, three written procedures were organised for the approval of documents by the Bureau before it could meet again in a remote/hybrid format.

In addition, 8 meetings of the Conference of Presidents (out of which 4 were organised next to the 4 plenary sessions and 4 other extraordinary meetings on a remote basis) were prepared and followed up.

In total, 1,609 meetings (1,475 internal meetings and 134 external meetings) were organized in 2020, out of which 23.5% (379) with interpretation.

The budgetary impact of the cancellations amounted to € 235,441, which represents 14.54% of the total budget spent for interpretation for 2020 (€ 1,618,860).

Of these € 235,441:

- € 51,663 (22%) were due to cancellations to SCIC due to Covid-19 (major force for the period March-June 2020).
- € 37,666 (16%) were due to late cancellations to SCIC and EP, due to modifications of the language regime.
- € 140,993 (60%) were due to late cancellations to SCIC, due to meetings initially planned as technically hybrid to full remote, as a result of the recrudescence of the Covid-19 pandemic during the Autumn 2020 (UK contact group 16/11, CFAA 17/12, JCC Montenegro 18/11, December Bureau + Plenary Session + CoP + political group meetings)

24 calls for tender for interpretation services and mobile interpretation equipment (meetings organized outside Brussels and full remote Interactio meetings) were successfully organised. This is a 30% decrease compared to 2019, linked to the cancellation of all external events from mid-March on. Of the 24 calls for tender, 6 were cancelled due to reasons linked to COVID-19 (cancelled events, external events who were finally organized in Brussels).

In 2020 efforts were continued to limit the need for paper files during Plenary sessions and Bureau meetings. By the end of 2020, thanks to the paperless approach put in place by the Secretary General and due to the Covid-19 crisis, Plenary Sessions and Bureau meetings were fully paperless.

No meetings were held between mid-March and the beginning of May 2020, except for CoP on 21st April. The Bureau of March, and the Plenary Sessions of March and May were cancelled. In the interval, 4 written procedures needed to be organised to adopt urgent documents and decisions.

Out of the 4 Plenary Sessions held in 2020, a total of 65 documents were adopted: 56 opinions, 8 resolutions and 1 report. A virtual Plenary Session was also organised in May to adopt the Declaration of the CoR on local and regional authorities as actors of the European response to the COVID-19 crisis.

In 2020 a continued smooth cooperation with the national delegations and interregional groups was ensured, via the organisation of 7 meetings with the national coordinators, assisting the secretariats of CoR's interregional groups for the preparation of 8 interregional groups meetings in 2020. The Bureau renewed the interregional groups through a written procedure in June 2020. Webex meetings were proposed in July, and Interactio meetings from October on.

In the area of legal advice and action, including around 200 files in a wide range of matters (interinstitutional, staff regulations, public access to documents, data protection, ...), it is worth to highlight the implementation of the Code of Conduct for members, and drafted the legal instruments that enabled the CoR to continue its work during the pandemic.

In 2020, 6,260 reimbursement claims from members and alternate members, experts, speakers and third parties were treated. These amount to 2,302 travel days and 2,146 meeting allowances and 4 086 remote meeting allowances.

To conclude, most of the foreseen targets in 2020 were achieved. The non-achievement or postponement of some of our targets finds mainly its origin in the COVID-19 crisis to which we were confronted since March.

Moreover, despite the COVID-19 crisis, we went much further and broader than the targets indicated in the management plan. For the first time at the start of the new mandate in February, members were welcomed in a "Welcome village" where different stands and staff from different CoR services provided information on their tasks as member of the CoR as well as the services that we are able to provide. Furthermore and for the first time ever, financial training was provided to all members during the opening plenary session for the renewal of the CoR mandate. The situation of the COVID-19 crisis turned into a success story. The continuity of the work of the Committee was ensured by quickly providing the Institution with the possibility to organize meetings on a hybrid or remote basis, including interpretation services. A legal framework based on never earlier applied methods now covers the organisation and reimbursement of those new types of meetings. The proactivity of this Directorate during previous years allowed members to present all their claims during the COVID-19 crisis electronically.

Human resources of Directorate A

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	20	26	1	47
Contract staff		13		13
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	1
Seconded national experts				
Other outside personnel (specify)				
Total	20	39	1	61

2.3 Directorate for Legislative Works 1 (Dir B)

Objective 1: Support the political priorities of the mandate through thematic and strategic planning		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Annual Work programme for each commission	6 agreed commission WP 2020 in the light of the CoR political priorities adopted by the Plenary	CIVEX: adopted ENVE: adopted NAT: adopted
Annual Work programme of the joint consultative committees (JCC) and working groups (WG)	Draft Work Programmes 2020 – 2025 prepared for discussion at first JCC/WG meetings in 2020 and to be presented to CoR Bureau beginning of 2021	- “Green Deal Going Local” Working Group (created in 2020): 2020 WP outlined in the Green Deal Roadmap presented at CoP, in February 2020 - Adoption of the multi-annual work programme at the Inaugural meeting of the CoR-UK Contact Group, September 2020 - JCC Montenegro: WP adopted in October 2020
Annual Work programme Subsidiarity and support to CoR participation in the EC Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and ‘Doing less more efficiently’ (Jan-July 2018)	Work programme 2020 (depending on availability of EC Work Programme 2020)	- WP 2020 adopted by the Bureau in September 2020.
Bi-annual Action Plan for ARLEM	Adopt ARLEM Action Plan 2020-2021 at 11th Plenary Session (22-23 January 2020)	- ARLEM Action Plan 2020-2022 adopted, at 11th ARLEM Plenary Session (January 2020), submitted to CoR Bureau for information (written procedure of 6 April 2020).
Bi-annual Action Plan for CORLEAP	Adopt CORLEAP Action Plan 2020 – 2021 at 10th CORLEAP annual meeting in April 2020	- The Action Plan 2020-21 was not adopted, due to the postponement of the CORLEAP annual meeting.
Bi-annual Work programme of the Ukraine Task Force	Implement remaining activities from the Work programme 2018-2020; Prepare a new Work Programme (subject to Bureau decision on extension of mandate)	- The Ukraine Task Force was renamed “Working Group on Ukraine” by the Bureau in April 2020. Its Work Programme was drafted and will be presented to Bureau
Number of thematic strategies approved	100%	5 (100% approved): EU enlargement and neighbourhood policies at local level ; integration/subsidiarity and Brexit planning; Green Deal Roadmap; Health policy; Rural Policy

Discrepancies between targets and results: delays in the adoption of work programmes of external relations bodies, due to the fact that some statutory meeting did not take place.

¹ Subject to the proposed revision of the Rules of Procedure

Apart from the pandemic, some other events affected the activities: elections and/or conflicts in the EU's neighbourhood and enlargement regions that affected the activities of the respective external relations bodies.

Objective 2: Provide timely and clearly defined support for the work of all CoR rapporteurs and other CoR commissions members		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Policy analysis prepared for each opinion	Yes	Yes
Stakeholder consultations/ hearings organised at rapporteur's request	100%	100%
Number of studies (launched)	Approximately 10 studies per year (exact figure depending on scope and price of individual items)	CIVEX: 8 ENVE: 5 NAT: 4
Studies produced with EPRS in 2020	2-3	CIVEX: 11 ENVE: 0 NAT: 0

Objective 3: Follow up activities for all opinions and impact evaluation for all policy areas		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Have reliable objectives for each opinion that can be monitored throughout the process of its elaboration (via KIKLOS)	When inter-institutional procedure is finalised add the impact of the CoR opinion in KIKLOS	All opinions have clear and reliable objectives inserted in KIKLOS
Follow-up document for each commission meeting	1 follow-up document per commission meeting	Yes
Organise once a year a debate in each commission on the impact evaluation for the previous year	Next debates to be organised in Q1 2020 and Q1 2021	- AIR 2019 discussed in Q1 2020
Annual Impact Report (AIR)	1/ year presented mid-year (e.g. AIR 2019 presented in July 2020)	Yes

Objective 4: Coordinate and strengthen the inter-institutional relations of the CoR in order to increase the involvement of other EU institutions in activities related to CoR opinions, networks and platforms as well in the thematic planning process.²		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021, per year:	Latest known result:
Number of MEPs in commission meetings	CIVEX: 3 ENVE: 3 NAT: 2	CIVEX: 5 ENVE: 3 NAT: 3

²

European Committee of the Regions

Number of CoR rapporteurs participating in EP committee meetings	CIVEX: 5 ENVE:2 NAT:1	CIVEX: 0 ENVE: 2 NAT: 0
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR and EP rapporteurs	CIVEX: 5 ENVE:4 NAT:3	CIVEX: 3 ENVE: 3 NAT: 2
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and EC services	CIVEX: 10 ENVE: 10 NAT:10	CIVEX: 10 ENVE: 7 NAT: 7
Number of consultation meetings between CoR rapporteurs and other institutions (including EESC) and stakeholders	CIVEX: 28 ENVE:20 NAT:10	CIVEX: 7 ENVE: 10 NAT: 8
Number of CoR members participating systematically in the activities of the bodies set-up by the EC	CIVEX: 17 ENVE:3 NAT:3	CIVEX:3 ENVE: 7 NAT: 2
Number of CoR members participating as speakers in the conferences and events organised by the EC	CIVEX: 10 ENVE:30 NAT:8	CIVEX: 3 ENVE: 12 NAT: 4
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and Permanent Representations on legislative dossiers	CIVEX:1 ENVE:10 NAT: 2	CIVEX: 1 ENVE:1 NAT: 0
Participation of the CoR in events of the EU Presidency	CIVEX: 3 ENVE:3 NAT: 3	CIVEX: 0: ENVE: 1 NAT: 0
Number of CoR rapporteurs in Council workgroups	CIVEX: 1 ENVE:1 NAT:1	CIVEX: 0 ENVE: 0 NAT: 0
Number of CoR members in meetings with EP Inter-groups	CIVEX: N/A ENVE:1 NAT:3	CIVEX: 0 ENVE: 5 NAT: 1

Discrepancies between targets and results: the pandemic reduced the occasions to involve other EU institutions in activities related to CoR opinions, networks and platforms. CoR rapporteurs participated to fewer EP committee meetings, EC activities, conferences or events than expected. Similarly, consultation meetings between CoR rapporteurs and stakeholders were less frequent.

Objective 5: Foster co-operation with local and regional authorities and other partners		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of new formal agreements or MoUs signed	<p>Concrete follow-up on signed agreements</p> <p>EU Covenant of Mayors Ceremony, March 2020</p> <p>CoR-FEDARENE (European Federation of Agencies and Regions for Energy and the Environment) 2020 Action plan in place</p>	- CoR-EC Partnership on Integration, announced in December 2020

European Committee of the Regions

<p>Number of joint events or thematic activities organised with partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-organise the Joint Technical Platform meetings with DG ENV, ICLEI, Regions 4 and the German Presidency (incl. BfN Federal Agency for Nature Conservation), 2020; • Co-organise events with the Covenant of Mayors, 2020; • Joint workshops CORLEAP-EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly • Annual Dialogue with Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA); • European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) Awards Ceremony (in the framework of the EU Green Week), May/ June 2020 • European Migration Forum – selection of LRAs, participation of CoR members, Spring 2020 • 2-day workshop (external) to develop local strategic integration action plans, March 2020; • Co-organise with the EC a 2 day event Urban academy on integration, May 2020; • Workshop on communication / fighting hate speech / discrimination, October 2020; • Seventh edition of the Forum «Cities and Regions for development cooperation» co-organised with EC (DG DEVCO); • 10th Subsidiarity conference, 2021; • Participation of the ENVE Commission to annual conferences and joint events of Climate Alliance and ICLEI at COP; 	<p>May:</p> <p>Workshop (Webinar) on communication / fighting hate speech / discrimination «Thinking like a troll. Fighting disinformation campaigns in the context of integration of migrants»;</p> <p>June:</p> <p>Multilevel Energy and Climate Dialogue</p> <p>July:</p> <p>CoR-Congress High Level Group meeting</p> <p>Participation to pre-COP15 (UN CBD) event</p> <p>September:</p> <p>16th meeting of the Technical Platform on environment;</p> <p>9th ICLEI conference in Manheim (online) and 3 ICLEI-CBC webinars</p> <p>October:</p> <p>Joint workshop CORLEAP-EURONEST;</p> <p>ARLEM award: evaluation committee (chaired by CoR) composed of EC (NEAR and JRC), UfM secretariat, Eurochambres, Medcities, CRMR-CIM, Anima Invest Womenpreneur;</p> <p>EWRC workshops (3 for CIVEX; 3 for ENVE)</p> <p>Participation of a CoR Member to pre-COP15 (UN CBD);</p> <p>European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) launch event co-organized as partner event of the Green Week and 1 Green Week 2020 session</p>
--	--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 meetings CoR/EC Technical Platform for Cooperation on the Environment (establish a network of ambassadors within the Platform to promote the implementation of the environment legislation at all levels of governance) • Cooperation with DG Environment in the development of the Green City Accord initiative, through joint activities targeting EU LRAs • Participation of CoR rapporteur to UN CBD COP15 and 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Local and Regional Governments (October 2020, Kunming, China) • Participation to side events of UNFCCC COP26 (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties) • 2 meetings per year of CoR/EC/MS Platform for discussion of climate and energy topics, such as for example the National Energy and Climate Plans (Platform still to be established) • Organise European Week of Regions and Cities workshops in 2020. 	<p>November: CoR/RUMRA conference «A European Rural Agenda is urgently needed for rural areas after COVID crisis»;</p> <p>December: The 2020 EU Agricultural Outlook Conference Annual Dialogue with Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA); The 2020 EU Agricultural Outlook Conference; Participation to UNFCCC Dialogue with COP26 Presidency Participation to pre-COP15 (UN CBD) event</p>
<p>Number of events / activities organised by partners and attended by the CoR</p>	<p>CIVEX: 60 ENVE: 75 NAT: 45^[2]</p> <p>^[2] Targets count attendance of members and staff members</p>	<p>CIVEX: 5 ENVE: 15 NAT: 7</p>
<p>Capacity building projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring next steps of capacity building between EU and Ukrainian LRAs • Further strengthening cooperation with Libyan municipalities in the framework of the Nicosia Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Ongoing consultations with DG NEAR, regarding peer-to-peer cooperation with Ukraine and North Macedonia • - Two major projects signed end 2020 that will support further cooperation with Libyan municipalities, REBUILD and TAMSALL, total worth: over EUR 7 mio.

European Committee of the Regions

Discrepancies between targets and results:

<i>*Postponed/ pending events due to covid-19:</i>	<i>Cancelled due to the pandemic:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal signing ceremony of 1 MoU (ICLEI) + 4 Action plans (ICLEI, Fedarene, Under2Coalition, Regions4) - New green deal and new industrial policies - 2-day workshop (external) to develop local strategic integration action plans - 2-day event Urban academy on integration - Subsidiarity Conference - 7th edition of the Forum "Cities and Regions for development cooperation" (co-organised with EC INTPA) - UN CBD COP15 - UNFCCC COP26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Migration Forum - NAT conference "New green deal and new industrial policies"; - NAT external event in Malaga "Digital and data driven making sustainable tourism smart" - Covenant of Mayors Ceremony.

Objective 6: Increase the efficiency of the CoR administration by improving internal governance, co-ordination, co-operation, IT solutions and human resource development

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Attendance of meetings of the IT project KIKLOS	Regular participation to inter-service meetings	Regular participation to meetings and participation of commissions to define needs for current and further development.
Attendance of meetings organised within the "HR contact point" network	Regular participation to inter-service meetings	Achieved.
Attendance and contribution to meetings related to the CoR Digital Strategy	Regular participation to inter-service meetings 100 % of contributions ensured (following needs and/or requests)	Task Forces 7 (e-workflow and XML) and 8 (Digital Strategy) carried over the work of former Clusters. Representatives of the Directorate attended these meetings and ensured adequate follow-up.

B – Overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Directorate

CIVEX

Some of the statutory meetings of external relations bodies (e.g. CORLEAP, JCC North Macedonia) could not be held, partly because the format of an online meeting was considered challenging for the partners. ARLEM succeeded holding its commission meeting in fall 2020 fully remote online. The CoR Conference of the Presidents on 10 September 2020 adopted the document regarding the "future framework of the CIVEX commission" where it is indicated that the CIVEX can set an example in the use of innovate tools and working methods in the digital era to support the political work of its members. In this regard, the experiences and realities of members in their local and regional authorities are diverse and can be better reflected in the work of the CoR. And one of the actions is to "Consider use of videoconferencing for certain non-statutory activities

in the field of external relations.” While online non-statutory meetings should not entirely replace physical meetings they should help to increase efficiency and decrease the ecological footprint of the CoR.

ENVE

The pandemic required a continuous adaptation to new format of meetings and voting procedures, taking away time and resources from policy work. The CoR cancelled or postponed several planned events until summer 2020 when they could be organised online.

The combination of the renewal of the mandate and the cancellation of physical meetings hindered the knowledge of CoR Members and their engagement. Health-related restrictions hampered high-level bilateral meetings between the Chair and relevant Rapporteurs. Many events co-organised by the ENVE secretariat have been cancelled (incl. ENVE commission meeting originally scheduled on 06/04/2020) or postponed to 2021, such as the external activities.

NAT:

Due to COVID, neither the planned NAT external seminar nor the NAT external meeting and conference could be organised. Moreover, it was also not possible to organise other events physically, e.g. stakeholder consultations, conferences, etc.

The biggest impact of COVID on the NAT work was undoubtedly the fact that many of the NAT policy areas directly related to the pandemic. Health, Civil Protection, Tourism, Rural Policy were very quickly in the centre of political attention. This policy attention had a significant impact on the usual workload of the NAT secretariat, notably during the first phase of the pandemic.

Human resources of Directorate B

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	31	16		47
Contract staff	2			2
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts	3			3
Other outside personnel (specify)				
Total	36	16	0	52

2.4 Directorate for legislative works 2 (Dir C)

Objective 1: Support the political priorities of the mandate through thematic and strategic planning		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result (by 31/12/2020):
Annual Work programme for each commission	3 agreed commission WP 2019 by 2 nd Bureau 2020	Achieved
Number of events/seminars/workshops/hearings /stakeholder meetings	COTER: 15 ECON: 12-15 each year EGTC: 8 TIA: 5 SEDEC: 6-8 each year	COTER: 10 ECON: 11 (+ 2 written stakeholders consultations) EGTC: 3 TIA: 4 SEDEC: 13 (+5 written stakeholders consultations)

European Committee of the Regions

Percentage of briefing notes/speeches	100 %	100%
Percentage of analytical notes on key topics	100%	100%
Number of EGTC meetings	8	3
Number of EER applications	10	11
Number of participants in surveys/consultations	EGTC: 1 survey or 100% of requests of the rapporteurs ECON (Survey on SDGs): ~150 ECON (Survey on pp): ~120	EGTC: 1 ECON Targeted ECON survey of national associations of LRAs on RRF: 29 covering 19 MS (approx. 50% response rate) ECON survey with OECD on Covid impact: 550 ECON survey on SMEs: 40 Targeted RegHub consultation on State Aid rules: 21 Targeted RegHub consultation on CAP: 24 Targeted RegHub consultation on State aid and public procurement (Covid-19): 20 1 SC Truskolaski single market (written SC)
Number of references of results of networks/platforms in CoR opinions/resolutions	EGTC: 2 opinions TIA: 2 opinions ECON/ Monitoring of the European Semester: 2 RegHub consultations: 2-3	EGTC: 2 TIA: 2 opinions ECON/ European Semester: 1 opinion and 1 Barometer RegHub consultations: 3 KEP : 1 Science meets regions : 1

Number of inputs from networks/platforms in CoR Thematic Commission debates / CoR conferences	EGTC: 2 per year ECON/ Monitoring of the European Semester: 2 RegHub consultations: 2-3 Broadband platform: continued work; working programme to be agreed with DG CONNECT	EGTC: 2 ECON: Monitoring of the European Semester: N/A as this Monitoring Platform was discontinued. Survey with OECD on Covid impact: 550 persons KEP : 2 RegHub consultations: 3 Broadband platform: New Members nominated in 2020, cooperation with DG Connect continued and first Platform meeting planned for January 21
---	---	---

Objective 2: Provide Timely and clearly defined support for the work of all CoR rapporteurs and other CoR commissions members

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Percentage of policy analysis prepared for each opinion	100%	100%
Percentage of stakeholder consultations or other specific monitoring activities organised at the request of rapporteurs	100%	100%
Percentage of studies delivered at the request of rapporteurs	100%	100%
Studies on EGTC	1	1 launched
Percentage of briefing notes/speeches	100%	100%
EPRS consultations	COTER: 4 ECON: 1-2 SEDEC: 1 (NB: those targets depend on Legislative files)	COTER: 4 Briefings in 2020 ECON: 1 (EPRS national state aid) SEDEC: 2 (NB: those targets depend on Legislative files)
Percentage of planning documents established for opinions	100% planning documents	100%

Objective 3: Follow up activities for all opinions and impact evaluation for all policy areas

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Have reliable objectives for each planning/follow-up document that can be monitored throughout the process of preparing an opinion (via KIKLOS)	Close planning documents when interinstitutional procedure is over and present impact of the opinion in KIKLOS.	Objectives for each opinion: 73 % Impact evaluation for each opinion: 56 %

European Committee of the Regions

Number of follow-up e-mails to the rapporteur sent	100%	100%
Number of leaflets produced	100%	No leaflets
Number of "follow-up of opinions meetings" organised	COTER: 7 ECON: 5-10 SEDEC: 5	COTER: 3 ECON: 8 SEDEC: 2
Timely produce "Annual impact report"	100%	100%

Despite being in lockdown almost all of 2020 the overview of the consultative activity clearly shows that the CoR was able to largely comply with the tasks and activities set out in the SMP. The impact of these actions are included in the Annual Impact Report that is currently being prepared. The recent completion of the legislative files related to the MFF (i.e. all the EU programmes) clearly shows that the impact of the opinions has to be measured over the time span of the legislative cycle (ranging from CoR input before the proposals of the European Commission, providing input once the Commission proposals are being presented and producing revised opinions in the further development of the trilog negotiations).

It also should be noted that during the lockdown the CoR commissions started to produce electronic Newsletters to keep CoR members informed and to provide a new platform for exchange during the Covid Pandemic. Since these actions were carried out largely online and in line with the paperless strategy of the CoR no requests for leaflets on opinions in 2020 were received and therefore leaflets were not produced during this year.

Objective 4: Coordinate and strengthen the inter-institutional relations of the CoR in order to increase the involvement of other EU institutions in activities related to the CoR opinions, networks and platforms as well in the thematic planning process

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021, per year:	Latest known result:
Number of MEPs/commissioners in commission meetings	ECON: 2 SEDEC: 3 COTER: 40	ECON: 6 SEDEC: 5 COTER: 17
Number of CoR rapporteurs participating in EP committee meetings	ECON: 2 SEDEC: 2 COTER: 2	ECON: 0 SEDEC: 4 COTER: 2
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR and EP rapporteurs	ECON: 5-7 SEDEC: 5 COTER: 18 (depends on number of opinions)	ECON: 3 SEDEC: 4 COTER: 2 (depends on number of opinions)

Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and EC	ECON: 12 SEDEC 13 COTER: 12 (depends on number of opinions)	ECON: 6 SEDEC: 10 COTER: 4 (depends on number of opinions)
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and Permanent Representations on legislative dossiers	ECON: 1 SEDEC: 2 COTER: 2	ECON: 3 SEDEC: 5 COTER: 1
Participation of the CoR in events of the EU Presidency	ECON: 2 SEDEC: 2 COTER: 7	ECON: 4 SEDEC: 5 COTER: 5
Number of occasions in which external experts (scholars and practitioners) contribute to activities of platforms and networks	Monitoring of the European Semester: 4 (on average 3 meetings + 1 study) per year RegHub: up to 3 speakers per workshop	Monitoring of the European Semester: N/A as this Monitoring Platform was discontinued. RegHub: regular input from scholars (more prominently: A. Bunea, University of Bergen; S. Pazos-Vidal, COSLA) and 'external experts' (Commission SG for exchange with the network); contribution of the former to the network's evaluation report KEP : 3

The Covid crisis had a significant impact on the inter-institutional relations of the CoR which also challenged some of the targets that were set before the Covid 19 crisis. The number of Opinions produced by the CoR fell compared to previous years since many of the urgent measures proposed by the European Commission to address the crisis did not allow a full and time consuming consultation between the CoR and the other EU institutions. Furthermore, the meeting time of EU institutions was reduced as a result of the pandemic making it more difficult for the CoR rapporteurs to join the meetings. Despite these obstacles it was possible to even increase actions towards the Council and the Presidencies.

Objective 5: Foster the co-operation with local and regional authorities and other partners

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of events organised	EGTC: 8 OECD: 2 EER: 5-6 (3 Brussels-based events + up to 3 evaluation missions to EER regions) RegHub: 3 Monitoring of the European Semester: 1 SEDEC: 5	EGTC: 3 OECD: 1 EER: 1 info day RegHub: 4 (3 workshops + additional meeting on F4F) Monitoring of the European Semester: this Monitoring Platform was discontinued. SEDEC: 4

Objective 6: Increase the efficiency of the CoR administration by improving internal governance, co-ordination, co-operation, IT solutions and human resource development

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Attendance of meetings of the IT project KIKLOS	Regular participation to inter-service meetings	Achieved
Attendance and contribution to the CoR Digital Strategy Clusters' meetings	Regular participation to inter-service meetings 100 % of contributions ensured (following needs and/or requests)	Achieved
Timely registration and publication in OJ of EGTCs	100 % of EGTC registered (following submission of requests)	100 % of EGTC registered (following submission of requests)

On top of the above set objectives, within the framework of overall simplification of procedural environment and digitalisation, the implementation of the CoR Digital strategy was started by developing Project Initiation Requests on Kiklos module on follow-up to opinions and Kiklos module on Impact evaluation and report, started working on the Business case for the new tool for management of rapporteurs' amendments. Overview of all existing processes and procedures of the directorate gave a possibility to identify some processes and procedures which could be further simplified and/or digitalised. These projects, started in 2020, were included to the SMP 2021-2022 with related targets and will be further developed during coming years.

Globally, it can be noted that, due to current pandemic and operational changes as well as adjustments needed to face it, the priority was given to maintain services and consultative work based on political exchanges and debates. As a consequence, some activities were more successful than others at the early stage with the full recovery through the time. Also, some targets were not completely met in 2020, while some others have seen an improvement. Lessons learned from this pandemic period are presented under a separate part below.

Coordination team

Providing policy support for the CoR priorities and monitoring of the interinstitutional relations, the coordination team of the Directorate C consolidated its input in support of the strategic planning of the Directorate and its contribution to the CoR Plenary sessions, Bureau, Conference of Presidents and CFAA.

As every year, the coordination team was leading the input given to the Strategic management plan and Budget 2021 and 2022 preparations. On top of this, in 2020, the team was highly involved in the CoR Digital Strategy's implementation and in the work of Task Forces (TF) created by the CoR Secretary General. In this respect, directorate's C coordination team was leading TF1 on Strategic planning and contributing to the TF2 on Simplification, TF4 on the Conference on the future of Europe, TF7 on Electronic Workflows and XML and TF8 on Digital Strategy.

Under the instructions of the Directorate's hierarchy, the coordination team has been the main contact point for ensuring internal coordination both in the preparatory phase and during the term of the rotating presidencies of the Council of the EU, helping establish a permanent and interactive exchange with the respective CoR National coordinators and Permanent Representations to the EU. This enhanced communication with the presidencies has led to an overall strengthening of CoR's cooperation with the Council.

The coordination team also put a lot of effort to prepare the constitutive session of the new CoR mandate, including subsequent decisions concerning the main priorities and objectives for 2020-2025. At the same time, main principles for strategic planning were defined and are now implemented both through the annual planning process of the CoR, but also in respect to inter-institutional relations, primarily through resolutions concerning the European Commission work programme for the following year. These resolutions, adopted before and after the publication of the said work programme, outline the main concerns and objectives of the CoR for 2021, with a specific focus on the various initiatives under preparation.

B – Overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Directorate

C.1 Unit C1 -COTER

Concerning TIA activities, all TIA reports are based on a full-day workshop that was done onsite. The pandemic implied that such workshops could no longer take place. Despite the disruption in the work planned for the year, the platform managed, in cooperation with our partners at ESPON and OIR, to reorganise its activities in order to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic. We moved to online workshops divided into two half-days, which allowed to implement two workshops (one on TEN-T and one on the Barometer) in the new format. The TIA Platform closed the year with four workshops, not too far from the five initially estimated.

C.2 Unit C2- ECON

The ECON commission has undertaken a number of additional activities during the pandemics. The ECON commission was in the lead for drawing up of the EU Annual Regional and Local Barometer, which focuses on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and also produced nine regular economic bulletins on recent research, articles and discussions on the socio-economic impact of the pandemic in Europe and on the different economic response measures planned and implemented at EU, national, regional and local level.

The ECON commission also spearheaded the organisation of hybrid and remote meetings as well as online voting in its commission meetings. In addition, a number of other remote meetings, remote plenaries, and telephone conferences replacing seminars were held. Thanks to the increased flexibility inherent in remote meetings, the ECON commission significantly increased the number of dignitaries speaking at ECON events.

C.3 Unit C3 - SEDEC

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the national measures in place, the external activities (the external meeting and conference, the seminar) were postponed and an on-line meeting was held instead in November. The staff managed to organise in good conditions all the SEDEC meetings (remote and hybrid) and to ensure appropriate support to SEDEC members and rapporteurs. In order to directly contribute to the CoR Action plan, SEDEC produced regular bulletins on the policy fields within its remit, reflecting response measures at EU, national, regional and local level (8 editions). Despite difficulties posed by the pandemic and the new way of working (mainly remote), the unit managed to finalise the first stage of two important Joint Action Plans with Commissioner Gabriel and Schmit services respectively (DG RTD, JRC and DG EAC; DG EMPL) with their implementation phase undergoing. These efforts and the results were publicly appreciated by the SEDEC Chair and Political Coordinators.

An informal steering group was proposed for the implementation of the Joint Action Plan with Commissioner Gabriel and also to ensure further ownership by members of the process. What lacks is a proper tool to organise online meetings for the rapporteurs (especially in cases when interpretation is required).

B.4 Coordination team

By its very nature, the system of teleworking led to a limitation of personal contacts, which are essential to ensuring proper coordination within the directorate. This was compensated by a relative increase in electronic communication, which is generally more time-consuming than personal contact. However, the availability of electronic collaboration tools (such as Sharepoint) and their increased overall usage helped maintain a good level of idea-exchange and ensured the necessary coherence in outputs.

In respect to outside contacts with the other institutions, the challenges were similar. However, at least in some situations (for example, in respect to the cooperation with the Council presidencies), teleconferencing tools were useful to ensure a broader and easier participation in meetings for counterparts in locations further from Brussels, and this did facilitate overall coordination. A clear example in this respect is the organisation of the External Bureau in September 2020, initially scheduled to take place in Dusseldorf during the German Presidency.

European Committee of the Regions

In terms of lessons learned, a more rigorous organisation of online meetings has improved the effectiveness and clear outcome of discussions. A clear agenda for each meeting, sent well in advance, is certainly a practice to be consistently followed during the times of remote working, but also once the normal activity in the CoR premises will be resumed.

Human resources of Directorate C

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	29	10	3	42
Contract staff	2			2
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts	5			5
Other outside personnel (specify)				
Total	36	10	3	49

2.5 Directorate for Communication (Dir D)

Objective 1: Communication for reputation		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020:	Latest known result:
Number of CoR members involved in the activities of the Conference	All Members should participate at least once before the end of the Conference (2 years duration)	Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the consecutive postponement of the launch of the Conference, all the CoR activities related to the Conference were reduced. Activities like the launch of the "Fit for Future platform" for better and more transparent EU legislation - established by the European Commission with three CoR members were run.
Number of other regional/local politicians involved in the activities of the Conference	All EU mayors (100,000) should be connected in a new platform for consultation hopefully before the end of the Conference (2 years duration) or even in a longer-term perspective following the outcome of the Conference. The YEPs initiative could be considered a good experiment in this direction.	This was done through organising citizens' dialogues / consultations at local and regional level, and supporting relevant landmark activities and initiatives of the CoR, notably the Barometer report, the EU Regions' Week, the YEP programme, EuroPCom and others.

<p>Number of other regional/local politicians involved in the activities of the Conference</p>	<p>All EU regions (political) should participate at least once before the end of the Conference (2 years duration)</p>	<p>The messages collected during citizens' dialogues / consultations at local and regional level will be integrated in the CoR's contribution to the Conference. In March the CoR organised a first consultation of citizens in Cluj-Napoca (150 participants) and in September an online debate with 360 young people from 15 countries accompanied the meeting of the CoR Bureau. In December, an online citizens' dialogue was organised by the EPP and hosted by CoR member Sergio Caci.</p>
<p>Young elected politicians programme: overall outreach</p>	<p>1,000 new contacts 250 participants New platform for engagement*</p>	<p>The YEP page was viewed approximately 25 000 times in 2020 (+417% compared to the previous year). The online YEP community, launched on 9 May, reached the 100 registered users landmark. The YEP Programme 2020 has received a good number of applications (600 from 27 Member States) and the three online events organised gathered more than 500 registrations altogether.</p>
<p>Communication action for 8 March (International Women's Day)</p>	<p>All female Members engaged</p>	<p>The press seminar and events with young elected politicians (YEPs) had to be cancelled, however around 70 journalists who were already in Brussels had possibility to meet seminar speakers including MEPs and CoR members, and a group of young elected politicians. The communication on the thematic was also done online through a series of videos published on CoR social media channels: one thematic video and five messages from members from the five political groups.</p>
<p>#EURegionsWeek 2020 7-10 October</p>	<p>750 politicians (not the number of participants)</p>	<p>Despite the challenging times: local/regional/national politicians: 348, MEPs: 140, YEPs: 107, CoR members: 75.</p>
<p>Number of visitors groups and visitors welcomed to the CoR</p>	<p>1,000 politicians (not the overall number of visitors)</p>	<p>Since July 2020 Protocol Service is in charge of this area of activity.</p>

Objective 2: Focus CoR communication on three campaigns: (1) Engaging regional and local politicians for the Future of Europe (2) Investing in regions and cities - #Cohesionalliance and associated MFF/ Investment work; (3) “Regions and cities delivering a sustainable Europe”.		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020:	Latest known result:
Media outreach attributable to each campaign	Maintain 80% focus on the 3 campaigns	<p>Campaign 1: 1 336 articles related to the campaign (9% of the total);</p> <p>Campaign 2: 3 778 articles related to the campaign (25% of the total);</p> <p>Campaign 3: 4 414 articles related to the campaign (about 29% of the total).</p>
Social media outreach (by most-used keywords or hashtags in a campaign)	<p>Target remains 80% focus on the 3 campaigns</p> <p>Politicians on their own channels engaging with CoR or related topics</p>	<p>Campaign 1: total number of the campaign’s mentions: 6 700 (-41%), total number of engagements generated by the campaign: 26 600 (-28%);</p> <p>Campaign 2: the total mentions 5 717 (+53%), total engagement on campaign hashtags/keywords: 22 386 (+108%);</p> <p>Campaign 3: total number of the campaign’s mentions: 37 000 (+28%), total number of engagements generated by the campaign 95 800 (+41%).</p>
Narratives, graphic design products, hosted/co-organised events related to the campaigns	<p>Target remains 80% focus on the 3 campaigns</p> <p>NB: evaluation shows website is the most popular channel among stakeholders</p>	<p>Campaign 1: 61 clips and videos produced reaching more than 230 000 views; Web: 6 400 page views (+16%) on “Future of Europe” – the overall limited progression in the number of pages’ views reflects the limited number of activities that the campaign could organise in the context of the pandemic;</p> <p>Campaign 2: seven clips and videos reaching more than 55 500 views on CoR social media platforms; Website: 1 700 page views (-12%) plus 7 100 page views for “Green Deal going local” (new page) and 5 800 for “RegHub” (+10%);</p> <p>Campaign 3: 52 clips and videos reaching more than 458 000 views on CoR social media platforms (more than two thirds of the total); Web: 5 000 page views (+18%).</p>

Objective 3: Improve the CoR's consultative works through targeted communication		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020:	Latest known result:
New format "Background notes" (starting point for Opinions) including a communication section based on context, coherence and call to action.	All Opinions. Those without this section will not necessarily receive any communication support	See comment below this table.
New format standard "Opinions" (covers, social media, leaflet, invited journalists)	All Opinions	See comment below this table.
Impact Report	Having the CoR Impact Report ready by the end of the year	In line with the new CoR definition of impact proposed by the Secretary General, it was agreed that policy officers will use the dedicated KIKLOS' tab to report on how the institution is: a) influencing the EU legislative process; b) raising the visibility of regions and cities; c) bringing concrete change to the working methods of the EU or elsewhere thanks to actions promoted or initiative by the CoR.

In 2020, the definition of standard package of communication products and services for legislative work introduced by the 2019 CoR's Communications Plan was clarified and expanded by defining two categories of the products, channels and services: "Standard" - the actions ensuring the minimum expectations of rapporteurs, commissions and other services are met and "Standard Plus" - additional activities related to the campaigns and priority (high-level) initiatives, to support the political guidelines of the mandate. A summary for members was revised by the Group of Communicators and was made available in the first Plenary Session of 2021.

B – Overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Directorate

Lessons learned by the Unit "Events" which faced the most radical changes

COVID-19 pandemic brought about profound changes in two key areas: 1, changing the way of working to purely remote and online interaction amongst colleagues within the unit and across its teams, with impact on allocation of resources and workflow planning (as has been the case in the entire administration); 2, completely changing the way of working in terms of delivering events in online and hybrid formats instead of the usual physical events which lead to new capacity and expertise-building as well as new roles and tasks outside the staff remit pre-COVID.

The following should be highlighted in particular:

Competence framework: Urgent need to train all unit members in different online platforms for hosting events (Webex, Zoom, Interactio, GoTo), their functionalities, technical usage and IT infrastructure requirements.

European Committee of the Regions

This included research, training using internal and external training sources, as well as intensive liaison across various services and partners. In turn it also included our colleagues training other internal colleagues and also partners and services in events such as speakers, moderators, participants, interpreters, etc., and assuming new roles and tasks such as for example technical moderation and technical support. Plus, for good part of 2020, due to uncertainties about possible physical presence, staff had to work simultaneously on several scenarios for most of the events (physical, hybrid, digital).

Team work: COVID pandemic and working in digital only environment highlighted more than ever the importance of team effort and team spirit as an essential basis for carrying the tasks forward in the difficult work and private circumstances. Without having a solid team spirit in the team pre-COVID the work results could not have been as positive as they were in 2020. Challenge is maintaining the team spirit long-term when this situation continues.

Digital innovation: On a positive note, the pandemic also unlocked further potential for digital innovation. The need was clear before the pandemic, with a concrete example of work for new interactive digital platform for YEPs having started at the end of 2019 and launched in May 2020. The pandemic further underlined the need and appetite for digital creativity, and our two flagships events, EURegionsWeek and EuroPCom were used to test and deliver innovative digital products such as virtual market place for digital networking, new digital registration tools, and interactive digital streaming and replay facility.

All in all, we have managed to shift the focus of our work delivery into digital events, and we have succeeded to bring in record editions for our flagship events, and at the same time be at the forefront of delivering innovative digital communication products amongst the EU institutions. Such results were only possible thanks to active mobilisation, flexibility, dedication, perseverance, team effort and creativity.

Human resources of Directorate D

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	25	20	2	47
Contract staff	6	5		11
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	12
Seconded national experts	2			2
Other personnel (specify)				0
Total	33	25	2	72

2.6 Directorate for Human Resources and Finance (Dir E)

Objective 1: Ensure appropriate allocation and sound and regular management of financial resources in the institution		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Acceptance of the CoR's 2021 budget by the Budget authority	CoR DB 2022 to be decided by the CoR's Plenary in March 2021	Due to COVID-19 the CoR's Bureau adopted the 2021 draft budget in Spring 2020 by written procedure and the CoR's Plenary adopted DB 2021 early Summer 2020. The Budget Authority adopted an adjusted CoR 2021 budget at the end of December 2020.
Acceptance of 2020 external transfers by the Budget authority	100%	Two out of five of the CoR's transfers of appropriations were adopted partially in 2020.

% of commitment execution	99%	92.7% in 2020. This is lower than normal as a result of the Covid-19 effect, that was reinforced by Council's partial rejection of two CoR transfer of appropriations requests in 2020.
% of payments execution	90%	82.4% in 2020. This is lower than normal as a result of the Covid-19 effect.
Average number of days for recording of invoices	1 day	Achieved (1 day).
% of invoices paid in the deadline	85 %	Achieved (Commercial invoices – 90%, Cost claims – 99%).
Treasury balances	Max 2 Mio € balance on the account	Achieved

During the budget implementation year **2020 budget execution reports** including estimates for the execution of the salary related budget lines and other management reports have been submitted regularly. **Quarterly in-depth budget execution reviews** have been undertaken as well and followed-up with COVID-19 instigated reallocation of appropriations involving the Budget Authority when applicable.

Annual accounts and Report on the budgetary- and financial management covering the financial year 2019 were submitted in 2020 to the EC and the **European Court of Auditors** respecting the deadlines outlined in the Financial Regulation. No observations have been received from the Court in its 2019 Annual Report with regard to the information provided. IT-based submission of account balances to the EC for consolidation of the EU-accounts in 2021 was prepared during autumn 2020 to simplify the EU inter-institutional workflow.

Remuneration to staff has been authorised and paid in respect of the EU inter-institutional planning requirements throughout 2020. Preparation for replacement of the salary-related IT HR application Centurio with the **Payment Factory** application continued in 2020 but the PMO did not yet provide a final Payment Factory for the use of the CoR.

By concluding **new global service level agreements (SLA) with DG Budget, DIGIT and PMO** in 2020 the number of agreements has been reduced significantly, the timeliness of information sharing is foreseen to be improved and the possibility to secure the use of new EU inter-institutional IT-applications has been extended. Further steps to modernise the CoR's horizontal work practises have been taken by providing the CoR services with the possibility to implement applications that support management of procurement (e-submission) and management of contracts and monitoring of consumption (LCK). Moreover, the use of the e-invoicing application was significantly extended within the CoR's horizontal electronic workflows. The COVID-19 circumstances in 2020 gave the incentive to extend electronic invoicing application to multiple contractors (under DIGIT SLA). At the end of 2020, the SLA signed with the PMO covering the use of NAP (current pay application) did not include the use of Payment Factory.

The CoR Conference of Presidents has discussed the strategic guidelines for preparing **the CoR's 2022 draft budget** in autumn 2020. The CoR's President tabled the guidelines to the CoR Bureau in December 2020. Using these guidelines as a basis a more detailed first version of that draft budget was developed for submission to the CoR's Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs (CFAA) meetings in January and March 2021.

The definite CoR 2021 budget was adopted by the Budget authority at the end of December 2020, was introduced in the CoR's IT-based workflow system (ABAC) and has been made available for implementation at the beginning of 2021.

Objective 2: Prepare and report on CFAA meetings

Result and/or impact indicator:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of CFAA meetings organised in the year	5 per year	4 in 2020

In 2020 the second meeting of the year (March) was cancelled due to COVID-19 and a written procedure was organised instead.

Objective 3: Optimise the use of human resources and further develop a human resources policy adapted to the institution's priorities

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
% of occupied posts at the end of the year	At least 96%	96,3 %
Number of cases of internal mobility	15 (depending on reinforced mobility policy)	33 in total and 7 via the Mobility service
% of operational/overhead posts	Increase share of operational posts	The share of operational posts increased slightly with 55% operational / 22% overhead (at 1/01/2021)
Average number of training days per staff member	5 days	4 days (3.99), in spite of the difficulties due to the pandemic
Number of Staff members on structural teleworking	70	78 between 1/1/2020 and 16/3/2020. The figure has lost relevance after that date due to generalised and – for most of the year – mandatory teleworking.

Staff allocation and recruitment

2020 was a year of adjustment of resources in particular in the Covid-19 pandemic context. It was also marked by the continued effort to reinforce the political role of the Committee and to ensure optimised use of available expertise according to the new political and administrative priorities of the institution.

In May, the organisation chart has been adapted in order to centralise communication activities and digital strategy within a single directorate (Directorate for Communication).

Furthermore, as a result of the *Going for IMPact!* initiative launched by the Secretary-General and in view of matching the CoR's political action with smart and modern administration, a new organisation chart has been approved by the Bureau on 7 December 2020 and will enter into force on 1 March 2021.

Talent management

During 2020 the CoR organised its third round of **internal job shadowing** with the participation of 22 guests. With a satisfaction rate of 77%, the job shadowing exercise has been considered a valuable staff opportunity which may provide for a more flexible workforce in the long run.

In parallel, the initiative of **external interinstitutional job shadowing** has been launched and preparations are underway for a roll out in the post Covid period. Initial contacts have been taken between the institutions, with the CoR as lead actor, starting with a pilot project as soon as the working conditions allow for physical shadowing.

As a new strong push for management development and ownership, the **360° feedback exercise**, previously rolled out as a voluntary development program, has now been rendered **mandatory for all middle managers**, every five years on a rotational basis, starting with those who have never participated.

Staff engagement

Throughout 2020, staff have demonstrated a solid level of staff engagement visible in the results attained in all fields of operation. However, the pandemic and large scale telework has had a massive impact on the tools which HR has at its disposal to promote staff engagement and work life balance. See section on Covid working environment.

In an effort to keep staff in massive telework engaged, motivated and to create a sense of belonging, a **weekly newsletter called HR Update** was initiated with varied information aimed at keeping staff constantly up to date with the situation as regards Covid, new measures, the institution’s rules, co-working etc.

In addition, all managers have received regular tailored communication letters with tips, advice and **support measures to help them manage their teams remotely**.

After the first two years under the current appraisal and promotion system, at the request of the staff representatives and in agreement with the Secretary-General, a social dialogue was carried out with the aim of further improving the schemes. An agreement was reached on the appraisal system in December 2020. The dialogue on promotion is expected to be finalised early 2021 and implemented as of the same year as well.

Health and well-being

As the central service delivering all the **support to staff and managers in the various stages of the emerging Covid pandemic**, the Medical service has mobilised all its resources to meet the needs of the service (see part related to Covid). In a concerted effort to **decrease absenteeism** and create the best conditions for a smooth integration after long term absence, focused attention is placed on ensuring efficient absence management on the one hand and an active return to work policy on the other.

HR implementing decisions and general matters

At the very start of the current mandate, clear expectations were established to **simplify and digitalise all workflows, processes and procedures**. A lot of progress was made in the area of Human Resources in 2020, also as a result of the pandemic.

In 2020, focu was on **internal communication** and further developing CoR **employer branding** policy, in particular by redesigning the format of vacancy notices and the “Jobs” page of the CoR website.

Efforts have been made in order to modernise the structured social dialogue with the CoR Staff Committee from a rather classical reactive cooperation to a more proactive approach whereby the Staff Committee have been involved at the start of some important HR files, such as the drafting of a new decision on Dignity at work.

In the 2020 **Equal Opportunities** action plan, a concrete target of 40% women in all management positions by the end of the mandate was introduced.

Objective 4: Ensure effective internal control environment, effective support for the completion of the public procurement programme, and monitor the implementation of the Financial Regulation		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of remarks from ECA in the annual report on CoR internal control system and in the annual report on public procurement files	No remark	Achieved: no remark

European Committee of the Regions

Rate of return for correction of transactions (by verification service)	2-2.5%	2.4%
Number of exceptions	No significant increase as compared to previous year	Achieved: moderate increase as compared to 2019
Timely verification (within 5 working days) of all files submitted to the Verification service	100%	100%

In terms of financial management, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as from 19 March 2020 the Authorising Officer by Delegation decided on the introduction of an exceptional ad-hoc paperless workflow for all financial transactions. In the absence of an adequate and immediate technical solution for electronic signatures, for contracts the signature on paper with blue ink signature by both contracting parties remained however mandatory. In the course of 2021, a solution for adequate electronic signatures will be sought.

Throughout 2020, in the area of **public procurement** 18 calls for tenders above 15.000€, of which 8 were awarded in 2020, resulting in the signature of 8 contracts by CoR Own Services. Three procedures were cancelled/not awarded due to event cancellations linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. For the remaining seven procedures, the contracts are scheduled to be signed in early 2021.

Actions in the sphere of **internal control** continued to be monitored in the Internal Control Standards working group throughout 2020. More details are to be found in Chapter 3. As far as the specific issue of **exception reports** is concerned, notwithstanding the extra-ordinary Covid-19 circumstances, there has been in 2020 only a moderate increase compared with the low number of financial exception reports registered in 2019.

Verification of financial files is reported on in Chapter 3.

Objective 5: Coordinate the management planning and reporting cycle, by defining the objectives of all services of the CoR in alignment with budget planning, monitoring and reporting the achievement of objectives through key performance indicators

Result and/or impact indicator:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Discharge from Discharge Authority	Discharge obtained	Discharge 2019 obtained (see also annex 10)

In addition to the elaboration of the 2019 Annual Activity Report and the 2020-2021 Strategic Management Plan (SMP), an in-depth cost-effectiveness analysis was performed in 2020 on the **planning & reporting** cycle. A number of short and long term improvements were identified, some of which are already being applied as from the 2021-2022 exercise.

Objective 6: Carry out horizontal administrative functions in an efficient and transparent way

Result and/or impact indicator:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
% of missions expenses reimbursed within time limit (i.e. within 3 months upon receipt of a complete file)	Stay within a 5% margin as compared to 2019	Achieved: productivity and reactivity equivalent to 2019 for the part of the year when missions were allowed (first quarter)
% of staff responding to the mobility survey	60%	58% in latest survey (2017) 2020 survey postponed to 2021 due to pandemic
% of staff coming to work by a green transport mode (walk, bike or public transport)	70% minimum	77.5% in latest survey (2017) 2020 survey postponed to 2021 due to pandemic

In the area of **mobility/transport**, and in spite of the pandemic, some awareness-raising campaigns fostering sustainable staff commuting modes were pursued in cooperation with other Brussels-based institutions. Other events had to be cancelled however.

As regards staff **missions**, 2020 was an exceptional year with missions being allowed only in the first quarter of the year as a result of the travel restrictions triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

B – Overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Directorate

The extra-ordinary Covid-19 circumstances (with travel restrictions and an extended telework scheme applying during most of the year) impacted the implementation of the Directorate's objectives in several ways.

Generally, it became crucial to **reallocate adequate budgetary and human resources** to IT and logistics services to ensure the continuation of the CoR's political activities and enable staff to work full time remotely.

In addition, temporary reassignments of posts have been made in order to reinforce understaffed teams and allow a rapid transition to a full digital activity.

Like all CoR services, Dir E had to immediately **switch to paperless workflows and working methods**. For instance, all selection interviews were conducted by videoconference; after the CFAA March meeting was cancelled, the following three CFAA meetings were re-arranged from physical to remote meetings and held through the "Interactio" IT platform; CoR temporarily accepted suppliers' invoices in "pdf" by email instead of paper.

In addition, each service has also suffered specific impact.

The **Medical service** was heavily mobilised by the pandemic. Via public procurement procedures, the acquisition of masks, hand gel etc. could be secured and provided to staff at an early stage, thereby contributing to the business continuity level. As the pandemic developed and needs changed in 2020, an additional procedure was launched for the introduction and roll out of PCR testing under strict business continuity related conditions.

Examples of impact of the pandemic on other services include the prohibition of missions during most of the year and the cancellation of a number of actions and tender procedures.

At the same time, it is fair to say that the experience with the Covid-19 pandemic has also brought inspiration and acceleration for **modernisation**, for instance in view of a simplification and structural digitalisation of financial and administrative processes, including in the area of public procurement.

Furthermore, the extra-ordinary situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic has put both the organisational resilience of CoR and that of the Committee's staff members to the test. Although the institution managed to ensure **business continuity** in a satisfactory manner in almost all areas of activity, the experience with the handling of the Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated that the Committee's current Business Continuity Plan can be improved.

In order to keep developing the CoR's readiness for and resilience to major disruptions, as well as to ensure that our services will be able to continue operating to the extent possible, an in-depth revision of the BCP was launched in the 2020. A revised business continuity (BC) policy will be elaborated and adopted in the course of 2021, providing a clear roadmap for continuing and/or restoring the institution's priority business functions during and after a crisis.

Finally, in order to gather input into a comprehensive analysis of all **lessons learnt from the extended Covid telework period**, the CoR administration and the Staff Committee cooperated to arrive at a joint telework survey to be launched beginning of 2021.

European Committee of the Regions

	--	-	0	+	++
Digital environment and connection(IT)	X (several software specific to buildings are missing)				X (lots of good working hard- and software)
Productivity and performance		x			
Communication flow		x			
Team empowerment and commitment		x			
Professional development and training				x	
Stress and fatigue		x			
Motivation			x		
Workload		x			
Work life balance			x		

Human resources of Directorate E

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	20	43	2	65
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				0
Seconded national experts				0
Special adviser (medical doctor)	1			1
Total	22	43	2	67

2.7 Protocol Service

Objective 1:

Provide the Presidency, political groups and other CoR entities with protocol support and assistance

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of VIPs	Non-program-based	About 50/year
Number of official receptions	Non-program-based	About 2/year

Objective 2:

Assist with visa applications and relations with embassies and consulates

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of visas	Non-program-based	About 2/year
Number of acknowledgments and congratulations, condolence letters and verbal notes.	Non-program-based	About +/- 167/year

**Objective 3:
Reply to patronage requests**

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of letters	Non-program-based	About 10/year

**Objective 4:
Provide a daily VIP service for the President and the Secretary-General CoR and ensure that the vehicles are clean and in good working order**

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of journeys	Non-program-based	About 150/year

Objective 5: Transport of post between the CoR buildings, urgent or confidential inter-institutional post blood products or other material for the Medical Service of the two Committees

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of journeys	Non-program-based	About 72/year

Objective 6: Cover all requests for visits introduced via CoR webpage

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021 :	Latest known result:
Number groups and visitors	Non-program-based	154 presentations (in the CoR premises and online through Webex and Skype) 6113 visitors

Objective 7: Assist our Members to organise visits in CoR premises and to give them visibility

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021 :	Latest known result:
Number groups and visitors	Non-program-based	22 Members engaged for 30 groups

Objective 8: Cooperation with other EU bodies in the frame of jointly organised visits or events, and those organised in the frame of European Visitors' Programme (EUVP)

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	: Latest known result
Number groups	Non-program-based +	50 groups/year

Since July 2020, the protocol service has been undergoing an organisational change with the arrival of the Visitors service, the creation of a structure to manage the official letters of the CoR President, which will officially start on 1 January 2021, and the creation of a network of former CoR members..

B – Overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Directorate

The Visitor service had to face technical difficulties (internet and server connection) and unforeseen events (cancellation and lack of access to the digital) from the visitors' side. However, they were able to adapt all their digital visit offers.

European Committee of the Regions

The transport service continues its responsibility to the CoR medical service (blood bag deposit and results). The partial cessation of their activity has allowed them to reinforce their skills through eco-responsible conduct and first aid training.

As the other two services, the protocol service was reorganised in order to maintain business continuity to its fullest, in order to settle into a digital protocol and diplomatic actions.

Human resources of Protocol Service

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	3		5
Contract staff		3		3
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	2	6	0	8

2.8 Internal Audit Service (IAS)

Objective 1: Provide the Authorising Officer with opinion on the adequacy of risk management, control and governance processes in the framework of his declarations for 2019 and 2020 and for the preparation of the 2021 declaration, with references to the areas already audited.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Audit and advice coverage of CoR's activities based on their ranking as defined in the risk analysis established for the CoR by Internal Audit.	82 % of the 50 processes fully or partially covered by audits in the main process. 63% of the 30 top risky processes fully covered by audits.	82 % of the 50 processes fully or partially covered by audits in the main process. 50% of the 30 top risky processes fully covered by audits ³ .

Due to additional tasks allocated to Internal Auditor by the Secretary General in the framework of the modernization of the CoR, the vacancy of one out of the 2 AST posts during a half year and the constraints due to the covid crisis, the audit on adequacy of treasury management and accounting system and the audit on compliance of personal data protection have been partially postponed and consequently the target is not fully met.

Objective 2: Support the audited sectors in implementing audit recommendations within a period of 12 months.

Result and/or impact indicator:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of audit recommendations implemented within 12 months	75% of very important recommendations closed after 6 months 100% of very important recommendations closed after 12 months	n.a.

All the action plans have been defined since less than 6 months. Therefore, this indicator could only be relevant as from end of March 2021. The audit follow-up is performing before each Audit Committee twice per year

³ The indicators based on the 30 top risky processes could decrease from one year to another year as the ranking of the processes is modified each year thanks to audits according to the possible improvement of the control systems or the level of exposure of the risks sources or their impacts.

except last year due to the covid crisis. However, it did not impact the audit follow-up process as all the actions plans were closed at the first semester 2020.

Human resources of IAS

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	2		4
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
Seconded national experts				
Other outside personnel (specify)				
Total	2	2	0	4

2.9 Directorate for Logistics (DL)

Objective DL1: Provide modern, sustainable and effective management of the buildings of the Committees according to the adopted building strategy and improve the service to their occupants.		
Result and/or impact indicators:	Targets for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
N° of building maintenance interventions (KAPI01) (equal to the number of request sent to the helpdesk "facilities")	N/A, the n° of interventions depends on the needs that arise (but remains +/- stable).	KAPI01=152 (average n° of interventions per month in 2020).
Building maintenance intervention lead time (KAPI02): % interventions < set time, which is either 2 days or 5 days, depending on the category of the intervention	Minimum 80%.	KAPI02=87% (average score in 2020). Achieved.
Proposal of implementation of the building strategy	Undertake the light refurbishment works of the VMA (see hereunder for the details). Looking for renting an additional building for housing around 200 staff members, if possible by an agreement with another EU Institution, otherwise via a market prospection. Decision on launching a market prospection to be taken beginning 2020.	Since the beginning of 2020, negotiations with EEAS on the taking over of the lease of the B100 building are ongoing and should result in the signature of an agreement with the EEAS in the first half of 2021, with effect from September 1st 2021. As the B100 is adjacent to the VMA building, taking over its rental contract will also have the advantage for the Committees of having a fully interconnected single group of buildings.
Installation of energy counters	Installing in 2020 or 2021 the missing but useful counters in JDE and BvS buildings following PLAGE (regulation of Brussels Region) and ISO 50001 requirements.	Works are ongoing and will be finished in 2021.

European Committee of the Regions

Improve building safety equipment following a safety audit	For 2020, complementary upgrades will be launched for safety conformity of works at height	Achieved.
Insulation and renovation of the JDE roofs, installation of green roof	Completion of works beginning 2020	Achieved.
Securing of VMA entrance hall	Works to be ordered end 2019 and beginning 2020. Works to be carried out in 2020 and 2021.	Following the terrorist attacks in Brussels in March 2016, the Bureau decided in December 2016 to enhance security in general and in the JDE entrance hall in particular. Similar to the security and renovation works of the JDE entrance hall carried out in 2018, these works were carried out in 2019 in the BvS building and started in 2020 in the VMA building and will be finished at the beginning of 2021. The main purpose of this work is to increase the level of security and the service for members, staff and visitors. Furthermore, the perimeter of the BvS building has been secured on the ground floor as well as the ground floor of the JDE building on rue Remorqueur.
Technical and environmental audit of BvS, in order to define different renovation programs	Propose different transformation scenarios in 2019 and beginning 2020. Works to increase ventilation capacity of meeting rooms to be ordered in 2019 and to be executed in 2020. Works to increase elevator capacity to be ordered in 2019. Elevator capacity works to be executed in 2020	Following the technical audit of the BvS building, the increase in both the capacity of the lifts and the ventilation of the meeting rooms was studied and refurbishment work started in 2020 and is planned to be finished by mid-2021.
Second and direct connection to the Parliament via the BvS building.	Works to be carried out in 2020.	Parliament decided to tender the works. Tender is going on beginning 2021.
Technical and environmental audit of VMA, in order to define different renovation programs	Propose the results of the audit in 2019. Propose different renovation scenarios at end 2019 and beginning 2020.	Achieved.

Light renovation of office surfaces in VMA building.	The launching of a call for tender, beginning 2020. Ordering these works end 2020 or beginning 2021. Starting the execution of these works in 2021.	The call for tender has been launched beginning 2021.
JDE cafeteria transformation and upgrade	Study to be finished in 2020.	During summer 2020, the project has been cancelled by CoR Secretary General
Installation of new cabling system for JDE conference rooms as well as new fiber connections between different technical rooms.	Works to be finished in summer 2020.	Achieved.
Enhancing thermal comfort of JDE conference rooms by improving the air distribution system	Evaluation and/or feasibility study to be carried out in 2020 on other conference rooms.	Achieved.
New contract for different works on technical installations of all buildings	Launching of tender end 2019 or beginning 2020. Contract to be signed in second half of 2020.	The call for tender has been launched beginning 2021.
New contract for architectural and technical studies	Launching of tender beginning 2020. Contract to be signed in 2020.	The call for tender has been launched beginning 2021.
Enhancing comfort performances of JDE building by renovating the HVAC regulation system	Conclusion of studies second half 2020.	Achieved.
Enhancement of fire security in the buildings	Conclusion of studies by first half 2020.	Achieved.
Improving safety and security conditions during execution of works by external companies.	Implementation as contractual documents in new framework contracts as from end 2019 and 2020.	Achieved.
Signposting update in JDE, with particular attention for visitors, events and Members.	Study to be finished in 2020. Works to be committed in 2020.	Achieved.
New contract for internal refurbishment works.	Final version to technical specifications expected end November 2019, tender will be launched at beginning 2020.	Achieved. The contract has been signed in January 2021.
New contract to renovate and replace wooden floor in JDE.	Launching call for tender and sign a new contract in 2020.	Achieved.

Objective DL2: Environmental management according to the commitment of the committees to EMAS.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Targets for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Measurable energy and water savings, reduction in the usage of paper, etc., as specified in the environmental action plan reviewed and updated annually. Number of non-conformities identified.	For all EMAS targets, refer to the EMAS action plan on the Intranet.	Achieved.

Objective DL3: Provide the level of administrative and financial support necessary to ensure efficient and quality catering services.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Targets for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Number of complaints and other requests on the catering services	- Follow up each request (separately for catering and vending machines as of 1/12/2015).	Due to COVID-19 crisis, all cafeterias, the canteen and the à la carte restaurant have been closed from 15 Mars 2020 until the end of the year, except from the JDE cafeteria, which has been opened for about 15 weeks with a reduced offer. That is why no indicator at all is worthwhile to be filled in.
Carry out of satisfaction surveys in the different catering sites.	- Receive the greatest possible feedback from staff.	Not possible due to COVID
Efficient and effective response to the needs for interventions in order to maximise the continuity and the quality of catering services.	- Follow up number of interventions in order to see which equipment's break down more often and probably need to be replaced. - Replace old equipment	Not possible due to COVID
Audits of catering points of sale by a new contractor (on hygiene, quality, service, etc.).	- 4 audits per year. - follow up indicators and take appropriate actions if necessary.	Not possible due to COVID
Type and number of products sold in vending machines	N/A	N/A
Number of customers and purchased items in each point of sale (monthly indicator).	Keep up attendance of canteens and cafeterias.	Not possible due to COVID

<p>Sustainable Canteen project - indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of sustainable fish - % of organic products - % of fair trade products - seasonality of menus and salad bar - quantity of plastic utensils used - number of vegetarian plates sold during the Thursday Veggie Day 	<p>For this objective, see the EMAS action plan on the EMAS Intranet site.</p> <p>During 2020, all catering activities will become free of one single use plastics (canteen, cafeterias, events and conference room services).</p>	<p>Not possible due to COVID</p>
--	--	----------------------------------

Objective DL4: Provide information systems, IT infrastructure and user support services, according to the best practice of IT management while optimising the use of human and financial resources. In accordance with the needs and priorities of the Committee, support its activities in 4 priority domains: Political work, Document production, Communication, Human resources and finance.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Targets for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Infrastructure availability (KAPI21)	99%	99.82% (November 2020).
User support requests (KAPI22)	N/A, it depends on requests from users.	50,023 (November 2020).
Helpdesk reaction time (KAPI23)	94% within 15s 98% within 30s	90.4% (November 2020). 94.5% (November 2020).

Activity Report

IT **Information Systems** support the Committees’ activities in four operational domains: Political Work, Document Management, Communication and HR/Finance. The main activities during the year for each domain are summarised below.

- For **Political Work**, there were three major releases of the Agora application (improved reporting on referrals and compositions, organising paper-poor meetings, organising hybrid and remote meetings, improvements to the authorisation and expert nomination workflows and work on the technical roadmap). Members Portal was adapted as necessary to support the new mandate of the Committee. The Phoenix application for managing meeting expenses was adapted to work with paperless workflows. The Common Consultative Platforms were maintained and developed in line with business requests. Kiklos was developed in accordance with the agreed features roadmap: improved communication and thematic planners. During the February plenary session, IT was at the Members’ village together with business to showcase the application. A leaflet was prepared for the occasion to explain how Kiklos can be installed on the home screen of a mobile device.
- For **Document Management**, new versions of the search engines were deployed to better support paper poor meetings and specific needs of the translation directorate. The Adonis document workflow tool was significantly improved to support paperless document workflows. There was continuous improvement of the other document and translation support services and applications.
- For **Communication**, the existing catalogue of web services was maintained. The contact management was further developed and improved (e.g. new interfaces to the European Parliament mailing lists).

European Committee of the Regions

- For **Human Resources and Finance**, the online staff assessment application was adapted for the new procedures.
- In addition, a Technical Domain works on improvements to all applications. During 2020, the database layer was further optimised and new components for paperless workflows were developed.
- The main projects completed by the **IT Infrastructure** service during 2020 were the installation of new generation office automation and application servers, the replacement of network switches and the doubling of internet capacity. Multi-factor authentication for external access to webmail was introduced (action originally planned for 2019). A number of important forward-looking actions were undertaken; including the preparation of a network evolution strategy, a hybrid cloud assessment and a backup strategy review.
- **User Support Services** provide user support, develop user solutions, maintain user relations, organise logistics and manage user policies. Due to the effects of the crisis, the principal activity indicator increased by some 20% (from 3,500 to 4,200 support requests per month). Performance indicators (some 60% of incidents closed within one hour and an ongoing satisfaction ratio of 91%) remained stable.
- During 2020 some 4 500 000 EUR, which was the equivalent of approximately 50% of the initial budget, were transferred to IT budget lines. These transfers were used to finance twenty-three projects aligned with the objectives of the Digital Strategy.

Business Continuity Measures

The IT unit worked well under business continuity measures. The need for User Support Services to provide intensive support for first-time or inexperienced remote users over the initial period became quickly apparent (double the normal level of requests). After that, the next important priorities were to distribute new portable PCs, in accordance with the priorities established by the Resource Directorates, and to take over the support for the general-purpose web conferencing software. Also within the space of one week the onsite first-line Helpdesk converted itself into a remote support service. The logistics operations continued on-site under the constraints imposed (organised in “bubbles”, occupying adjacent offices ...). The operational objective for the IT infrastructure was to remotely operate and monitor the IT infrastructure components without creating security holes. This initial objective was quickly reached. Work then continued on the range of IT Infrastructure projects foreseen in the annual work-plan. With some exceptions (e.g. network operations), this work could be done remotely. Information systems development continued as planned, but without major releases at first. On-boarding new consultants was a particular challenge, which required a very structured way of working.

Objective DL5: Production of Committee working documents; preparation of meeting files, dispatch of documents by courier service, postal services and by electronic means; printing of publications and of supporting material for the different meetings/conferences and for communication purposes.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Targets for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Copyshop productivity (KAPI11): n° copies per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	744.239/FTE (1.475.457 in 2019) – decrease by -49.6%.
N° of copyshop print jobs (KAPI15): n° of print jobs at copyshop per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	7.718 print jobs/FTE (10.959 in 2019) – decrease by -29.6%.
Offset productivity (KAPI12): n° equivalent print runs per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	956.350 print runs/FTE (1.028.866 in 2019) – decrease by -7.05%.

Mailings productivity (KAPI13): n° mailings (transmissions) per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	3.273 mailings/FTE (6.351 in 2019) - decrease by -48.5 %.
Distribution of files for members productivity (KAPI14): n° files for members distributed per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	8.902 files/FTE (14.619 in 2019) – decrease by -39.1%.
Copyshop productivity colour (KAPI16): n° copies per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	591.565/FTE (1.155.676 in 2019) – decrease by -48.8%.
N° of copyshop colour print jobs (KAPI17): n° of print jobs at copyshop per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	3.106 print jobs/FTE (6.641 in 2019) – decrease by -53.2%.
Mailings productivity per e-mail (KAPI18): n° mailings (transmissions) per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	6.529 mailings/FTE (6.880 in 2019) – decrease by -5.1%.
Courier express mailings (shipments) productivity (KAPI19): n° shipments per full-time employee	No targets set; statistics depend on the number of requests received.	680 mailings/FTE (627 in 2019) – increase by 8.5%.
Specific developments in 2020 Evaluation of needs and adaptation of resources accordingly for the whole printshop but mainly for Offset printing (continuous). The IMP Unit launched an internal reorganization project, called Horizon 2025, which will be implemented gradually from January 2021 until December 2025.	Gradual reduction in the number of machines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 offset press has been sold and removed, • 1 B&W digital printer was removed from the leasing contract

Objective DL6: Rigorous administration within the DL in the areas of procurement management (value above 25,000€), budget monitoring, and coordination of reporting activities.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Targets for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
- Target of procurement procedures planned for launch in 2019: 10	Targets of procurement procedures planned for launch in 2020 and 2021: will be set after establishment of the 2020 & 2021 DL Procurement Plans.	In 2020, PGFC has been processing 12 procedures: 8 Procedures launched: 4 Contracts signed, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Verification ongoing (Maintenance of security installations), • 1 Tenders evaluation ongoing • (Control of technical installations maintenance), • 2 Unsuccessful (no offers): ("Laboratory" launched twice: first as open and then as negotiated procedure). 4 Technical specifications design ongoing (Emas regulatory watch; Technical installations works; Architectural studies; Works in VMA).
Appropriations (C1) committed at end of year. Projection of appropriations (C1) committed in 2019	Minimum 97%.	DL appropriations (C1) committed at end of year: 99,2%.

Objective DL7: The guarantee of a modern, effective and efficient security/safety service for the Committees.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Targets for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Availability rate of security guards (percentage of number of man-hours per month in comparison to the number expected).	100%	Achieved.
Availability of e-visitors program	Fully operational as from September 2020	Not achieved – a delay in the implementing of IT and in the acquisition of hardware (due to Covid19 pandemic) made it impossible to be operational. It will be fully operational during the first semester of 2021.
Number of hours/person of specific training	40 hours/person in 2020 as well as in 2021	Not achieved – courses cancelled due to Covid19 pandemic.

European Committee of the Regions

Number of specific technical interventions for maintaining security technical equipment	Maximum 300 interventions in 2020 and in 2021	Achieved.
Number of new encoded access badges	100 % of the access badges re-encoded in 2020	Achieved.
Number of security verifications for external contractor's staff	100 % of external contractor's staff screened in 2020 and in 2021	Not achieved – a delay in implementing the screening due to administrative problems of the Belgian authorities and imperatives of the DPO made it impossible to launch it. Will be launched in 2021 with objective of 50 % of external contractor's staff screened.
Number of security related meetings with Belgian authorities	6 meetings in 2020 and 6 meetings in 2021	Achieved.

Objective DL8: Prepare for the exchange of B68/TR74 buildings with VMA building, assess the impact in terms of office space needs and on the budget of the DL.

Result and/or impact indicators:	Targets for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Assure sufficient space and meeting rooms to pursue the activities of the Committee.	Looking for renting an additional building for housing around 200 staff members, if possible by an agreement with another EU Institution, otherwise via a market prospection. Decision on launching a market prospection to be taken beginning 2020.	Since the beginning of 2020, negotiations with EEAS on the taking over of the lease of the B100 building are ongoing and should result in the signature of an agreement with the EEAS in the first half of 2021, with effect from September 1st 2021. As the B100 is adjacent to the VMA building, taking over its rental contract will also have the advantage for the Committees of having a fully interconnected single group of buildings.
Light renovation of office surfaces in VMA building.	<p>Launching of a call for tender at beginning of 2020.</p> <p>Ordering these works: end of 2020 or beginning of 2021.</p> <p>Starting the execution of these works: 2021.</p>	The call for tender has been launched beginning 2021.

<p>New Ways of Working (NWOW)</p>	<p>(suggestion to DL:) Contribute to the CoR-EESC working group on NWOW</p> <p>Creation of a collaborative workspace for the IT unit in one floor of the REM building at the beginning of 2020.</p>	<p>This initiative has been stopped because of the conclusions of the working group on the future allocation of space after September 2022, without B68 and TR74 and with VMA light renovated. All the available office space has been allocated to services and there is no floor available anymore on the REM building, to launch this pilot project.</p>
<p>Leading the working group on the future allocation of space after September 2022, without B68 and TR74 and with VMA light renovated.</p>	<p>Evaluate the potential of occupation of buildings in different possible scenarios.</p> <p>Examine the related budgetary aspects and propose an action plan.</p> <p>Presenting a project plan spelling out the different steps leading to the exchange of buildings in September 2022, including the spending plan year by year, starting from 2021.</p>	<p>In order to explore the possibilities for occupying the VMA after its renovation, as well as for occupying the BvS, REM and B100 building after having left the B68 and TRE building in September 2022, a proposal for criteria and principles to be applied when allocating space to the various services has been presented and approved. In addition, also different scenarios for the occupation of the VMA, BvS, REM and B100 buildings during and after the renovation works of the VMA have been proposed and an agreement has been found on the future repartition of office space between the CoR and EESC for the services currently housed in VMA, BvS, REM, B68 and TRE.</p>

B - Ad-hoc section on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your unit/directorate

INFRA

Report on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your unit/directorate and indicate the main lessons learned therefrom by your unit/directorate:

Operational:

Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, Committees' buildings have been adapted by installing different relevant measures in especially common areas:

- Relevant posters and signs have been provided on walls and floors in entrance halls, close to and inside elevators, staircases, conference rooms, meeting rooms, restrooms, toilets, cafeteria and canteen;
- Hydro-alcoholic gel dispensers have been installed on strategic places such as entrances of buildings, close to the entrance doors of elevators, staircases, conference rooms, meeting rooms, restrooms, toilets, cafeteria and canteen;
- The ventilation system is functioning with 100% fresh air;
- Cleaning procedures have been adapted and a medical disinfection procedure has been set to intervene in case of a suspicion of Covid-19 infection;

European Committee of the Regions

- The maximum number of people allowed to enter meeting rooms and conference rooms, has been determined and indicated outside and inside of the rooms;
- Plexiglas screens have been installed on strategic places;
- All catering vending points have been closed except for the JDE cafeteria.

COVID-19 implications on managing people

Budgetary

BL1636 - This line was used to pay the compensation for losses to the catering contractor for keeping open the JDE cafeteria. Following a decision by Belgian authorities to reinstall confinement in November and the related CoR decision to recommend teleworking to staff due to the second outbreak of the Covid-19 crisis, at the end it was decided to close the cafeteria as from November on until the end of the year. As a result, the appropriations foreseen for this purpose have not been used.

BL 212 - The reduction of the physical presence of Members and staff in the buildings due to the COVID19 crisis, resulted in a decrease in the demand for new furniture, which explains the surplus on this budget item. In addition, the existing inter-institutional framework contract expired after summer and prevented some purchase orders to still be placed at year-end. The new inter-institutional framework contract enters into force in 2021.

BL 214 – Extensive Teleworking due to the pandemic and progressive digitalisation resulted in lower requests for repair or supply of equipment on budget sub-item 214 IMM.

BL 230 - The minor surplus on the Infrastructure Service sub-item can be explained by a slight less demand for office supplies due to generalized teleworking as a result of the pandemic. Similarly, Orders for paper were seriously impacted as the production in the Printing Service was rather low.

BL 238 - There were no purchases for clothes in the Printing Service (clothes printing service sub-item). Delivery of clothes will take place during 2021 (security clothes sub-item). Invoicing and payment will follow also in 2021. In addition, due to the Covid-19 crisis, less services were needed for plenary sessions and events (transportation of items).

IT

Report on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your unit/directorate and indicate the main lessons learned therefrom by your unit/directorate:

The IT unit worked well under business continuity measures. The need for User Support Services to provide intensive support for first-time or inexperienced remote users over the initial period became quickly apparent (double the normal level of requests). After that, the next important priorities were to distribute new portable PCs, in accordance with the priorities established by the Directorates for Human Resources and Finance, and to take over the support for the general-purpose web conferencing software. Also within the space of one week the onsite first-line Helpdesk converted itself into a remote support service. The logistics operations continued on-site under the constraints imposed (organised in “bubbles”, occupying adjacent offices ...). The operational objective for the IT infrastructure was to remotely operate and monitor the IT infrastructure components without creating security holes. This initial objective was quickly reached. Work then continued on the range of IT Infrastructure projects foreseen in the annual work-plan. With some exceptions (e.g. network operations), this work could be done remotely. Information systems development continued as planned, but without major releases at first. On-boarding new consultants was a particular challenge.

IMP

Report on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your unit/directorate and indicate the main lessons learned therefrom by your unit/directorate:

For production and operations in situ a scheme of weekly shifts and minimum presence was established in order to guarantee delivery of service to the clients while respecting strict hygiene measures. Due to the cancellation of almost all physical meetings of both committees there was a substantial reduction in printing and distribution of documents.

PGFC

Report on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your unit/directorate and indicate the main lessons learned therefrom by your unit/directorate:

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic can be measured on different aspects:

- The Covid-19 pandemic has also produced an almost immediate change of priorities. The DL has been on the frontline to create the conditions for teleworking and remote meetings, and to adapt the premises and the security asset to the new hygienic standards. The change of priorities has reduced the skilled workforce capacity available in operational units to concentrate on designing and drafting tender specifications. This reduced capacity has particularly affected the drafting of tender documents for 4 procurement procedures initially planned for launch in 2020.
- As regards the processes and procedures, the Covid-19 pandemic has required a lot of creativity to cope for such extraordinary circumstances. We have set up alternative ways to receive offers, we have introduced the “electronic signature” of documents, we have adapted the working methods of opening and evaluation committees to the new hygienic standards and teleworking measures. Such creativity has allowed us to overcome almost all the obstacles created by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, this difficult situation allowed us to unanimously acknowledge that our “traditional” procurement processes were outdated. Such an acknowledgement created a window of opportunity for moving towards digitalisation in public procurement. Suddenly, after years of pleading from DL and hesitating from the Committees, eSubmission became a tangible objective. The two Committees finally bought in: they booked the money on their budget and signed the SLA with DIGIT. Roll-out of eSubmission is planned in January 2021. This a very good news, but it will not fully bridge the gap of our outdated processes in public procurement. More than 90% of procurement procedures run by the Committee fall outside the scope of eSubmission and will have to continue being processed in the “traditional” way.

SECU

Report on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your unit/directorate and indicate the main lessons learned therefrom by your unit/directorate:

Although our Security and Safety service continued its activities for a significant part on site (being an essential function in the organization and an important partner in ensuring business continuity), the COVID 19 pandemic had however an impact:

- After March 2020 almost all trainings for our own security and safety staff, but also the trainings to be given to all staff were cancelled or postponed.
- Teleworking was also partially introduced in our service and therefore some processes and ways of working had to be re-thought (with sometimes a delay for some activities).
- Some projects (such as the implementing of the eVisitors program) were subject to delays in the delivery of some goods and/or services.
- Although some activities came almost to a stop (protection of VIP's for example), other activities (such as safety advices) have significantly increased.

European Committee of the Regions

The main lessons learned are: even in security and safety, some activities can be performed remotely and teleworking can be an asset, however, at the same time some activities in our domain cannot be performed remotely and have to be done on site. Another challenge will be to reactivate the trainings.

Human resources of the Directorate of Logistics (CoR staff only)

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	9	18		27
Contract staff	4	9		13
External contract staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	25
Seconded national experts				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	13	27	0	65

2.10 Directorate for Translation (DT)

Objective DT1: To further deepen and develop the sustainable multilingualism policy for both Committees, in accordance with the Cooperation Agreement and the Code of Conduct for Translation

Impact and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Deadline compliance	> 95%	95.5%
Revision rate	Between 40% and 60%	50%
Documents exceeding the maximum length as defined in the Code of Conduct	≤ 2019 level	9.6%
Percentage of new versions to documents in translation	<6%	11.5%
Timely submission of translation requests as defined in the Code of Conduct	≥ 90%	82.3%
Outsourcing rate	≥ 20%	18.8%
Proportion of pivot versions delivered on time	> 95%	97.1%

Objective DT2: To improve working methods and optimise human and financial resources management

Impact and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Staff using new TMS (Artemis)	100% (as of introduction of TMS)	N/A – Project deferred for contractual reasons
Proportion of pages translated using Studio	≥ 95%	97.1 %
Proportion of edited pages	≥ 2019 level	35%
% of budget line 1420 used	Full coverage of needs	89.2%
% of budget line 2622 used	Full coverage of needs	99.8 %

Objective DT3: To consolidate relations with DT stakeholders and improve integration of translation in the legislative work of the Committee

Impact and/or impact indicator(s):	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
Proportion of success criteria defined for clear writing campaign met	100%	50% of success criteria partially achieved
Proportion of compliant DT procedures published in repository and validated electronically	100%	90%
Evaluation of all outsourced translations in accordance with the new Framework contracts	100%	100 %
Information and language specific meetings with the contractors	23	Suspended in 2020
Number of hours job shadowing/ face-to-face coaching between DT and requesting services	≥ 2019 level	20
Number of units in the CoR's own services targeted by awareness-raising measures (including job shadowing)	≥ 2019 level	Suspended in 2020

Objective DT4: To create synergies in the framework of interinstitutional cooperation in the field of translation

Impact and/or impact indicators:	Target for 2020-2021:	Latest known result:
KIAPI – Average cost per page	EUR 162	EUR 204
Daily workload reference rate	DT: at least 8 pages	7.6 pages
Work-sharing	≥ 2019 level (if possible, and depending on the evolution of internal translation demand and staffing levels)	Pages translated for other institutions by the Committees: 1327.6. Pages translated for the Committees by other institutions: 30. Pages edited for other institutions by the Committees: 178
Representation at interinstitutional network meetings	100%	100%
Number of staff on exchanges/ ILVs to other institutions (per year)	≥ 2019 level	N/A (exchanges not possible due to Covid-19 situation)

B – Overall impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Directorate

The Covid-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on DT. Just like in all other directorates, DT staff had to apply extended teleworking and to quickly adapt to the new situation whilst ensuring business continuity and timely delivery of meeting documents despite disruptions.

One important lesson learned is that full business continuity in translation requires stable and reliable IT systems, as translation tools are very heavy in terms of data transfer. The new CATE project will allow DT to reduce the amount of data being transferred; however, this does not reduce the need for a stable IT system.

Nevertheless, despite struggling with uneven and, at times, exceptionally high translation demand and IT issues, DT managed to mostly reach its objectives set for 2020, with a couple of exceptions, where physical presence was needed (for example, for visits to contractors’ premises).

Human resources of Directorate for Translation (CoR staff only)

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	119	21	3	143
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				0
Seconded national experts				0
Other personnel (specify)				0
Total	120	21		144

3. INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL SYSTEMS, AUDIT AND FOLLOW-UP OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY FINANCIAL CONTROL BODIES

3.1 Risk Management as an integrated part of the Internal Control environment at the CoR

A holistic planning & reporting cycle is organised every year at CoR. In this context, the CoR Strategic Management Plan (SMP) describes the actions which the CoR implements in order to reach its political and administrative objectives. It reflects the budgetary and human resources mobilised and the actions undertaken.

In parallel to the SMP, a yearly risk assessment exercise is carried out for each objective laid down in the SMP. Following the Risk Analysis methodology, depending on the risk level, risks are stored either in a central risk register or in the decentralised risk register of the respective CoR departments. Whereas the follow-up to the most important risks (laid down in the central risk register) and the related mitigating measures is monitored by the CoR Board of Directors, the implementation of the local risk registers is followed-up by the concerned Directorates.

A risk analysis on the objectives of the 2020-2021 SMP was performed in late 2019 and a draft consolidated central risk register was elaborated on that basis in early 2020. However, given the shifting of priorities caused by the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting obsolescence of a number of risks initially identified for 2020 by the different services, the consolidated 2020 Risk Register was in the end not formally adopted. Nevertheless, throughout 2020 CoR management monitored the risks thus identified for the 2020-2021 SMP and the implementation of the appropriate mitigating measures (insofar still relevant) alongside the handling of the unprecedented situation at hand as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the end of the planning & reporting cycle, the final results of actions are reported in the Annual Activity Report and in the Declaration of Assurance of the Authorising Officer by Delegation. Given that the CoR has no operational credits, its financial and political risks are predominantly tied to its administrative expenditure (and notably the risk of non-respect of the regulatory environment) and to the internal organisation and functioning.

Given the political character of the Institution and the size of the budget, any resource inappropriately spent would indeed constitute a risk. To mitigate this risk, the CoR has organised a centrally monitored internal control environment coupled with a partially decentralized financial model with (central) counterweight in the context of which a central verification service verifies all transactions, with “zero tolerance” towards inappropriate resource spending (see also points 3.4 and 3.5 below).

3.2 Internal control system

A compliance and effectiveness exercise was launched in 2020, to assess to what extent the CoR complied with the 16 Internal Control Standards (ICS) and to what extent their implementation was effective.

The exercise consisted of a questionnaire designed to evaluate compliance with and effectiveness of the requirements specified for each ICS, with contributions from members of the ICS Working Group responsible for their coordination (at least one person per Directorate). The results were discussed in the ICS Working Group meeting of 25 March 2021.

European Committee of the Regions

The 2020 compliance exercise has shown that the overall state of implementation and effectiveness of the requirements remained at a high level and stable as compared to 2019.

Future efforts should focus on a cost-effective consolidation of the level achieved, together with targeted efforts to further step up the level of compliance and the degree of effectiveness of selected internal control measures in place. In 2021, special attention will be devoted to:

- ICS 3 (staff allocation): The organisational structure has been aligned with the new priorities to maximise the CoR's impact. As a next step, a general mobility policy should be adopted, following consultation of management and staff.
- ICS 10 (business continuity): Taking account *i.a.* the experiences acquired during the current Covid-19 situation, an in-depth revamp of the existing Business Continuity Plan is to be pursued in 2021.
- ICS 14 (evaluation of activities): Following the Secretary general's «Going for IMPact!» programme, the conclusions of the extensive SWOT analyses carried out in this framework and the report of the Political Impact Oversight Coordinator presented to the Conference of Presidents (CoP), a series of simplification measures as well as the recommendations of the Oversight Coordinator adopted by the CoP will have to be implemented in 2021.

3.3 Internal Financial Legal Framework

The Internal Financial Rules (IFR) for the implementation of the CoR Budget as adopted on 1 January 2019 (Decision No 0014/2018) have been implemented throughout 2020.

A further revision of the IFR was carried out in the second half 2020. The new IFR were adopted in February 2021 and entered into force on 1 March 2021. All related implementing decisions will be carried out in the first half of 2021. The main objectives pursued with the latest new revision of the IFR is on the one hand to ensure efficient and effective financial management by allowing the AOD to adapt the organisational structure and the internal control systems (i.e. through centralisation of the financial initiating agent function and a revised ex-ante financial verification policy) and to ensure the transition to a smart and modern administration by putting the emphasis on electronic treatment of financial files.

3.4 Budget planning, execution and monitoring

The CoR is a political body with a focussed mission. Its budget appropriations are included entirely under Administrative Heading 5 of the EU-budget (MFF 2014-2020). The CoR has no spending oriented programmes of the type the EC manages under other headings of the EU-budget.

The CoR applies a coherent political and supportive administrative system of budgeting, planning, execution and monitoring supporting the realisation of the CoR's political and administrative objectives. The performance oriented system works principally as follows:

- The CoR's President, after having obtained advice from the CoR's Conference of Presidents, presents guidelines for establishment of the CoR's draft budget to the CoR's Bureau for adoption.
- The CoR's draft budget, with appropriations allocated with a view to reach the political and administrative objectives, is established by the CoR's Secretary General based upon the adopted CoR Bureau guidelines.
- The draft budget is then vetted and approved by the CoR Member-driven Commission of Financial and Administrative Affairs (CFAA), then submitted to the CoR's Bureau and to the CoR's Plenary Session for adoption. In this way, subsequent expenditure is tied to the multi-annual planned objectives, actions and political priorities of the CoR Presidencies.

- Once the Budget Authority has adopted the CoR's budget for a given year, the appropriations for its activities are subject to a budget planning adopted at the beginning of the budget implementation year.
- The CoR's planning instructions established by the Secretary General based upon the CoR's political and administrative priorities require that the final appropriations for every budget line be linked to at least one action defined in the planning and there are requirements for establishment of indicators to measure implementation.
- The planning for a given year is executed by sub-delegated Authorising Officers empowered to that function by the CoR's Secretary General, acting in his capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation (AOD). Individual nominations are made by updating the general decision with coherence of delegations given and ABAC accesses granted.
- Prior to a specific actual budget implementation decision on what in detail the CoR will do in the specific political circumstances, it puts together proposals with estimates of how much appropriation are needed from various budget lines. The proposals are then scrutinised / followed up on by the CFAA.

The financial circuits applied in the CoR's budget implementation are established respecting the following principles and rules as outlined by the CoR's Internal Financial Rules:

- Segregation of duties between initiation, verification, authorisation and payment;
- Codification of the operational and financial responsibilities;
- Centralised financial ex-ante verification, and;
- Trained actors (delegations are given based upon followed training).

The monitoring of the CoR budget execution is carried out at several levels:

1. Regular monitoring of budget execution is required to be established and implemented by managing services to steer operations for budget lines falling under their responsibility and management;
2. An analytical tool for monitoring the budget execution, "Budget Watch", is used to centrally monitor the execution (commitments and payments) of all budget lines and sub-line for C1, C4, C5, C8 and C9 appropriations. This tool supports the identification of possible over- and under-spending at an early stage. Based on this tool, monthly budget execution notes are prepared and circulated to the Directorates' and financial actors of the CoR;
3. Progress of the overall budget execution of politically important budget lines is regularly monitored by the CoR CFAA;
4. Estimates of the execution of salaries' related budget lines, covering almost 60% of the CoR total budget, are carried out/updated each month.

In order to better prepare for the possible reallocation of appropriations, when conditions merit and opportunities exist, quarterly budget execution in-depth reviews are coordinated centrally but carried out by the CoR Authorising Officers by sub-delegation, per Directorate and for all CoR budget lines. This contributes to the optimisation of the budget execution through a better preparation for reallocation of resources within budget lines and, if and where estimated necessary, by initiating transfers of appropriations during the budget implementation year.

The CoR continuously remains open to assess if implementation of practices developed and tried with a successful result in other EU Institutions of a similar size and with a similar political representation would result in an improvement of the CoR's political decision making process.

3.5 Financial verification

The financial setting at CoR is a decentralised model with counterweight: whereas (financial and operational) initiation, operational verification and authorisation are ensured by agents within the decentralised services, all financial transactions are subject to financial verification by an independent verifying agent of the central financial verification service in Directorate E. Mid-2020, a task force was however created to assess feasibility and possible efficiency gains which could be yielded from a centralisation of the financial initiation function. On the basis of the works of the task force, a reorganisation of the financial management setting at CoR is contemplated in the course of 2021.

In the same spirit, a pilot project was set up on a temporary basis, during which ex-ante financial verification is no longer performed systematically on a series of low risk/low value transactions and a mere technical validation is given. However, on a monthly basis, the central verification service performs an ex-post verification on a random sample of such low risk files. This pilot project started on 1 July 2020 and will last until June 2021. Upon its completion, a global evaluation of the pilot project shall be carried out in view of a possible revision of the existing ex-ante verification approach at CoR.

In 2020, the central verification service processed more than 13.000 files (including 3.700 files within the scope of the pilot project). These entail a large variety of files: budgetary commitments and legal commitments, payment orders, recovery orders, recruitment decisions, establishment or modification of statutory rights, promotions, salaries, etc.

The overall workload of the verification service was 24% lower than in 2019, which is in line with the reduction of the budget execution rate due to the extraordinary situation with Covid-19. The decrease mostly related to the period between April and June 2020 (i.e. the first months of the lockdown measures adopted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic).

In 2020, 318 transactions (compared to 381 in 2019) verified by the verification service were either refused for correction or rejected. This represents an average monthly correction/refusal rate of 2.4% (slight increase compared to the 2.2% in 2019). This can be considered as a satisfactory outcome as the overall quality of files was finally maintained at an acceptable level despite the radically new ways of working imposed since March 2020, where suddenly all transactions had to be handled electronically (which required the implementation of new procedures in a very short period of time) and where the cancellation of several meetings and events resulted in the cancellation or revision of legal commitments previously undertaken.

The verification service has also a counselling role and is in a permanent dialogue with financial actors with a view to constantly improving financial management. In 2020, the advisory function was particularly solicited because of the unprecedented Covid-19 situation and its immediate consequences on financial management.

The Covid impacted directly the verification service in the following way:

- important reduction of number of files received for ex ante verification (decrease of 24% compared to 2019).
- Substantial increase of the counselling and coaching function following the immediate transition to 100% electronic transactions and teleworking for all.

3.6 Ex-post control

An ex-post control exercise was carried out in 2020. The aim of this exercise is (1) to provide a tool for managers to review internally their own procedures and operations in order to identify any potential systemic issues and, based on the findings, (2) to propose and implement measures that would lead to structural improvements.

No major issues were identified. However, a recurrent recommendation resulting from the different ex-post exercises is the necessity to update written procedures. In 2020 the completeness of the register of procedures was maintained at 2019 level (93%) compared to 2019. Taking into account the changes triggered by the exceptional circumstances (Covid-19) in 2020 and in the light of the various administrative simplification

measures being implemented across CoR, many written procedures will require a fundamental overhaul in the course of 2021 to take into account new and paperless working methods.

3.7 Exception reports

For reporting purposes, an exception (administrative or financial) occurs when there is non-compliance with established rules and procedures detected and approved ex ante.

Financial exceptions

In 2020, notwithstanding the extra-ordinary Covid-19 circumstances the overall number of financial exception reports only slightly increased compared with 2019 (year in which the lowest number of financial exceptions was registered since the introduction of exception reporting in 2008).

The CoR maintains a central register of exceptions and monitors the follow-up of the remedial measures identified therein. The reporting on exceptions is an important element of assurance for the AOD when drafting his declaration of assurance.

All authorising officers by sub-delegation (AOS) report to the AOD on financial exceptions and remedial measures when presenting their declarations of assurance for the budget lines for which they are responsible.

For the 2020 exercise all AOSs have signed their individual declarations of assurance (also see Annex 2). All exceptions reports in the central register are mentioned in the relevant declarations of assurance and corrective measures are being implemented and monitored to prevent these exceptions from reoccurring.

Administrative exceptions

Also one administrative exception report was registered for non-compliance with internal procedures and corrective measures are being implemented to prevent this type of exception from reoccurring.

3.8 Overall assessment of the costs and benefits of control

The budget of the CoR is a purely administrative budget for a political assembly. With regard to risks and loss, the CoR seeks not only to minimise financial loss but also to mitigate reputational risks when deploying controls. Therefore, the costs and benefits of controls cannot be appreciated merely in monetary terms but need also to be considered from a political angle.

Specifically, the benefits of controls which cannot be quantified in the context of the CoR concern deterrent effects and compliance with regulatory provisions.

The CoR has estimated the overall costs of controls in terms of the cost of all staff directly involved in control activities (including ex-ante financial verification, internal control, internal audit and control activities related to procurement procedures) to approximatively EUR 2 M. In relation to the total budget of 2020 of EUR 101.50 M, around 2% was thus dedicated to control. However, since quantitative data of the volume and amounts of errors that have been prevented (ex-ante) or detected (ex-post) is not available, it is not possible to quantify the related benefits other than what can be deduced from the exception reports (cf. point 3.7 above), and thus to determine the cost-effectiveness of controls by comparing costs with benefits.

Given that ex-post controls did not identify any major issues (c.f. point 3.6 above), that financial exceptions were detected prior to validation of the expenditure (c.f. point 3.7 above) and that there are no ongoing litigations related to procurement decisions, CoR considers its controls to be effective.

Yet, considering that CoR has reached a high level of organisational maturity, and as article 74(2) FR demands that internal control measures should take into account their cost effectiveness, a cost-effectiveness of the internal control environment and planning & reporting cycle in place at CoR was carried out in 2020, with the help of an external expert and in close association with key internal stakeholders. The goal of this analysis is to simplify, modernise and/or find synergies of processes without jeopardising an adequate internal control

environment and to explore possible ways to further enhance the purposefulness of the CoR planning & reporting cycle, to increase its added-value and to align it in an optimal manner to the mission, means and risks of the institution.

In 2021, on the basis of the external expert's report, the ICS working group intends to propose a multi-annual action plan for a gradual revision and simplification of the existing internal control environment. The action plan shall also contemplate a series of further improvements to the planning & reporting cycle (to complement the first rationalisation efforts made in 2020 in respect of the 2021-2022 SMP).

3.9 Public procurement

The sector dedicated to the management of CoR's procurement procedures for contracts with a value equal to or greater than EUR 15.000 launched by the CoR Own Services has been operational since January 2016. A similar specialized procurement service assists operational services of the Joint Services when they launch tender procedures on behalf of the CoR. The working arrangements and the allocation of responsibilities between the CoR's public procurement sector and organising departments have been further clarified and simplified in the updated service instruction n°04/2019, which entered into force in January 2020.

3.10 Internal audit function

The monitoring of the internal audit function is provided by the Audit Committee composed of one member per political group of the CoR Commission of Financial and Administrative Affairs and one high-level external advisor. In 2020, one meeting was held by the Audit Committee where internal audit matters were presented such as the 2019 annual internal audit report, the 2021 audit work program, the audit progress report and the IAS quality assurance and improvement program.

The following four internal audits were finalized in the course of 2020:

- **Audit on adequacy of the planning and the management of allowances and reimbursements to members for attendances at meetings**

On the basis of its findings, the audit formulated 15 recommendations, of which 11 consist of the revision or the elaboration of decisions/rules, procedures, instructions checklists, 3 the review of the risk assessment the management plan and the job descriptions and 1 the development of an appropriate IT tool.

- **Audit on the procurement procedure for logistics**

On the basis of its findings, the audit formulated 19 recommendations, mainly in relation to the CoR-EESC Administrative Cooperation Agreement and to the definition and updating of several written procedures.

- **Audit on staff awareness of ethics**

On the basis of its findings, the audit formulated 6 recommendations which aim to improve the documentation of the values and rules, to reinforce the ethic-related framework, its planning, risks management, communication, training and feed-back system, to clarify the role and responsibilities and to complete the documentation of the procedures.

- **Audit on performance of EMAS**

On the basis of its findings, the audit formulated 17 recommendations which consist of documentation and review of procedures, improvement of planning, risk management and supervision as well as definition of clear roles and support for EMAS actors.

4. ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

Taking into account the conclusions of the review of the elements supporting assurance, it is possible to conclude that the internal controls systems implemented by the European Committee of the Regions provide sufficient assurance to adequately manage the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. Furthermore, it is also possible to conclude that the internal control systems provide sufficient assurance with regards to the achievement of the other internal control objectives.

5. THE DECLARATION OF ASSURANCE

I, Petr Blížkovský, Secretary-General of the European Committee of the Regions, in my capacity as authorising officer by delegation,

declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view,

state that I have a reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for the purposes intended in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and that the control procedures put in place provide satisfactory guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the Internal Control self-assessment, the ex post controls, the work of the internal auditor, and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

I confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported which could harm the interests of the institution.

Done at Brussels, on 10 June 2021

Petr Blížkovský



2020 AAR ANNEXES

Annex 1-Financial Resources	95
Annex 2-Declarations of the Authorising Officers by sub-delegation	103
Annex 3 - Transfers of appropriations	105
Annex 4-Negotiated procedures 2020	110
Annex 5 - Report on compliance with and suspension of time-limits for payment of the institution's creditors	111
Annex 6 - Provisional Annual Accounts 2020	113
Annex 7 - Human Resources figures estimates for 2020	116
Annex 8 - Building Policy	118
Annex 9 – Activities of the members of the CoR in 2020	124
Annex 10 - Follow-up to the 2019 discharge resolution	127

Annex 1-Financial Resources

Total 2020 approved budget of the European Committee of the Regions ("CoR") was € 101.5 million (2.8% more than the final budget of 2019).

€ 94.1 million (92.7%) of all appropriations has been committed by the end of 2020 and € 83.6 million (82.4%) has been paid.

1. Use of resources

Commitments in 2020

At the end of the year, the percentage committed from the approved budget was 92.7%.

The commitment execution rate for Title 1 "Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution" was 90.3% and 98.5% for Title 2 "Buildings, furniture, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure".

€ 7.4 million (or 7.3%) of all C1 credits was uncommitted at the end of the year and thus was returned back to the EU budget. Both in relative and monetary terms, this was considerably more compared to the result of 2019 where € 0.4 million (less than 0.5%) was left uncommitted in C1 credits. This is mainly due to Covid-19.

Payments in 2020

The overall execution rate for payments was 82.4%, mainly due to the cancellation of a number of events since March (or replacing them with virtual events) because of the travel and meetings/events restrictions in Belgium and in a number of other Members States caused by the Covid-19 virus. The execution rate in 2019 was 88.8% and 91.0% in 2018.

It should be noted that the final payment execution rate at the end of the budget cycle will be higher, as part of the committed credits related to 2020 was carried forward to C8 credits of 2021 and will be paid in 2021. The actual payment execution rate for 2020 will only be known by the end of 2021 when the final payment execution rate of C8 credits of 2021 will be determined.

Title 1: Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution

In this title, most of the payments relate to staff remunerations. For budgetary items 1200 and 1204, the total budget amounted to € 55.1 million of which 99.3% was paid in 2020. This is more in monetary but less in percentage than in 2019, when € 52.3 million (99.9%) was paid out.

In 2020, the amount of € 1.9 million (34.6%) was paid from the budget item 1004 "Members travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure". This is considerably lower in percentage and in monetary terms than in 2019 (€ 7.3 million and 81.6% respectively). These results are influenced by the travel and physical meetings/events restrictions caused by the Covid-19 virus.

Title 2: Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure

In total, 67.2 % of the Title 2 budget was paid out in 2020, principally due to the 89.5% payment execution rate of chapter 20 "Buildings and associated costs". The other chapters of Title 2 showed lower payment execution rates.

Comparison with the previous years

The following table gives a comparative overview of execution rates for commitments and payments per title, for the years 2020, 2019 and 2018.

	2020			2019			2018		
	Budget 000 €	Commitments	Payments	Budget 000 €	Commitments	Payments	Budget 000 €	Commitments	Payments
Title 1	71,340	90.3%	88.8%	72,332	99.6%	94.5%	71,207	99.1%	95.9%
Title 2	30,168	98.5%	67.2%	26,420	99.7%	73.2%	24,893	99.6%	76.9%
Total	101,508	92.7%	82.4%	98,751	99.6%	88.8%	96,100	99.3%	91.0%

Title 1: Expenditure relating to persons working with the institution

The execution rate for commitments in 2020 was lower than in 2019 and 2018. The 2020 payment execution rate (more representative indicator) is also lower than the rate of 2019 and 2018. This is largely due to lower commitment and payment execution in budget line 1004 "Allowances for members", budget line 1402 "Interpreter services" and a number of smaller budget lines, which, in turn, is mainly due to the evolving situation with Covid-19.

Title 2: Buildings, equipment and miscellaneous operating expenditure

The execution rate for commitments in 2020 was lower than the equivalent rate in 2019 and 2018. The payment execution rate (more representative indicator) is also lower than the rate of 2019 and 2018. This, in turn, is the result of the significant reinforcements of some of these domains by the means of transfers carried out in the second half of 2020. It takes some time before the "transferred in" appropriations are used.

2. Implementation of the budget

Current year appropriations (C1 Credits)

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
10	Members of the institution	5,630,784	2,174,392	38.6%	1,973,471	35.0%
1000	Salaries, allowances and payments - members	230,280	169,520	73.6%	115,087	50.0%
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	5,358,004	1,972,372	36.8%	1,852,325	34.6%
105	Courses for members of the institution	42,500	32,500	76.5%	6,059	14.3%
12	Officials and temporary staff	55,350,442	54,965,814	99.3%	54,965,814	99.3%
1200	Remuneration and allowances	54,893,442	54,580,286	99.4%	54,580,286	99.4%
1202	Overtime	35,000	28,621	81.8%	28,621	81.8%
1204	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	222,000	158,607	71.4%	158,607	71.4%
1220	Staff retired in the interests of the service	200,000	198,299	99.1%	198,299	99.1%
14	Other staff and external services	9,048,116	6,062,164	67.0%	5,433,740	60.1%
1400	Other staff	3,430,849	3,353,032	97.7%	3,273,410	95.4%
1402	Interpreter services	3,544,990	1,121,521	31.6%	804,607	22.7%
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	829,482	768,307	92.6%	737,504	88.9%
1408	Entitlements in connection with entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	92,090	92,090	100.0%	49,311	53.5%
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service	730,705	652,215	89.3%	518,064	70.9%
1422	Expert assistance related to consultative work	420,000	75,000	17.9%	50,845	12.1%
16	Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	1,310,525	1,225,277	93.5%	967,726	73.8%
1610	Miscellaneous expenditure on recruitment	40,000	38,984	97.5%	15,064	37.7%
1612	Further training, retraining and information for staff	330,000	329,164	99.7%	259,857	78.7%
162	Missions	105,000	50,000	47.6%	16,743	15.9%
1630	Social welfare	20,000	4,500	22.5%	2,890	14.5%
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	26,044	26,044	100.0%	23,250	89.3%
1633	Mobility/Transport	28,000	28,000	100.0%	6,357	22.7%

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
1634	Medical service	124,525	123,630	99.3%	44,279	35.6%
1636	Restaurants and canteens	32,000	20,000	62.5%	0	0.0%
1638	Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries	604,956	604,956	100.0%	599,284	99.1%
20	Buildings and associated costs	16,505,295	16,473,891	99.8%	14,772,049	89.5%
2000	Rent	1,866,676	1,856,676	99.5%	1,844,794	98.8%
2001	Annual lease payments	9,267,954	9,264,988	100.0%	9,258,811	99.9%
2003	Acquisition of immovable property	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
2007	Fitting-out of premises	664,566	648,573	97.6%	0	0.0%
2008	Other expenditure on buildings	162,804	161,868	99.4%	20,665	12.7%
2022	Cleaning and maintenance	2,449,700	2,449,690	100.0%	1,809,989	73.9%
2024	Energy consumption	252,878	252,878	100.0%	96,504	38.2%
2026	Security and surveillance of buildings	1,741,286	1,741,286	100.0%	1,741,286	100.0%
2028	Insurance	99,431	97,931	98.5%	0	0.0%
21	Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance	7,961,120	7,846,252	98.6%	4,402,564	55.3%
2100	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software; and related work	2,428,336	2,414,854	99.4%	1,464,436	60.3%
2102	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems	3,981,932	3,977,519	99.9%	1,748,474	43.9%
2103	Telecommunications	185,336	185,336	100.0%	185,336	100.0%
212	Furniture	95,387	79,829	83.7%	28,918	30.3%
214	Technical equipment and installations	1,197,271	1,149,410	96.0%	942,072	78.7%
216	Vehicles	72,858	39,306	53.9%	33,329	45.7%
23	Administrative expenditure	337,306	224,950	66.7%	94,742	28.1%
230	Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	129,137	61,424	47.6%	25,388	19.7%
231	Financial charges	1,500	1,500	100.0%	151	10.1%
232	Legal costs and damages	30,000	30,000	100.0%	0	0.0%
236	Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	61,200	42,290	69.1%	4,121	6.7%
238	Other administrative expenditure	115,469	89,736	77.7%	65,081	56.4%
25	Meetings and conferences	1,450,573	1,327,411	91.5%	145,154	10.0%
2540	Costs of meetings organized in Brussels	145,000	91,000	62.8%	43,364	29.9%
2541	Third parties	66,926	26,926	40.2%	18,131	27.1%

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
2542	Organisation of events in partnership with local and regional authorities, associations and European Institutions	1,127,647	1,099,485	97.5%	70,583	6.3%
2546	Representation expenses	111,000	110,000	99.1%	13,076	11.8%
26	Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and distribution	3,914,319	3,831,737	97.9%	865,668	22.1%
2600	Relationships with press, audio-visual support	1,044,854	1,041,645	99.7%	171,073	16.4%
2602	Web and Social Media, print materials	1,000,960	1,000,960	100.0%	180,606	18.0%
2604	Official Journal	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
2620	External expertise and studies	997,524	939,719	94.2%	291,158	29.2%
2622	Documentation and library expenditure	290,148	289,438	99.8%	97,477	33.6%
2624	Expenditure on archive resources	140,690	133,819	95.1%	75,640	53.8%
264	CoR Political groups' communication activities	440,143	426,156	96.8%	49,714	11.3%
Total Budget:		101,508,480	94,131,888	92.7%	83,620,928	82.4%

Appropriations carried over from 2019 to 2020 (C8 credits of 2020)

The appropriations committed in 2019 but not yet paid out by the end of that year, were carried forward and converted into C8 credits of 2020. In total, € 11.7 million – or 11.8% of the CoR's 2019 budget – was transferred into C8 credits at the beginning of 2020. This amount was mainly derived from C1 credits of 2019.

The total amount of C8 credits carried forward from 2019 to 2020 was higher in monetary and percentage terms as in the previous year when € 8.9 million was carried forward to 2019 (or 9.3% of the CoR's 2018 budget).

The following table gives a summary per title of the carried forward appropriations from 2019 to 2020 (C8).

	Budget 000 €	Commitments	Payments
Title 1	3,666,074	94.1%	70.0%
Title 2	8,042,004	96.9%	89.7%
Total	11,708,078	96.0%	83.5%

The execution rate for 2020 C8 credits was 83.5%. In total € 9.8 million was paid out during this year. This is lower to the execution level in 2019 (91.5%).

As a consequence, € 1.9 million or 16.5% of C8 credits of 2020 was left unused and returned back to the EU budget at the end of 2020.

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
10	Members of the institution	1,686,697	1,686,697	100.0%	940,724	55.8%
1000	Salaries, allowances and payments - members	33,215	33,215	100.0%	9,216	27.7%
1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	1,642,560	1,642,560	100.0%	926,233	56.4%
105	Courses for Members of the institution	10,922	10,922	100.0%	5,275	48.3%
12	Officials and temporary staff	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
1200	Remuneration and allowances	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
1202	Overtime	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
1204	Entitlements on entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
129	Allowance for staff retired in the interests of the service	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
14	Other staff and external services	1,595,253	1,420,694	89.1%	1,330,962	83.4%
1400	Other staff	158,522	144,447	91.1%	144,447	91.1%
1402	Interpreter services	1,183,342	1,078,806	91.2%	1,078,806	91.2%
1404	Graduate traineeships, grants and exchanges of officials	8,020	3,091	38.5%	2,811	35.0%
1408	Entitlements in connection with entering the service, transfer and leaving the service	60,519	60,519	100.0%	41,035	67.8%
1420	Supplementary services for the translation service	89,450	38,431	43.0%	38,431	43.0%
1422	Expert assistance related to consultative work	95,400	95,400	100.0%	25,433	26.7%
16	Other expenditure relating to persons working with the institution	384,123	343,005	89.3%	292,853	76.2%
1610	Miscellaneous expenditure on recruitment	2,398	1,344	56.1%	1,344	56.1%
1612	Further training, retraining and information for staff	118,725	105,655	89.0%	105,655	89.0%
162	Missions	119,287	119,287	100.0%	69,135	58.0%
1630	Social welfare	4,725	1,486	31.4%	1,486	31.4%
1632	Social contacts between members of staff and other social measures	4,714	4,403	93.4%	4,403	93.4%
1633	Mobility/Transport	35,450	35,291	99.6%	35,291	99.6%

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
1633	Mobility/Transport	35,450	35,291	99.6%	35,291	99.6%
1634	Medical service	93,197	69,911	75.0%	69,911	75.0%
1638	Early Childhood Centre and approved day nurseries	5,627	5,627	100.0%	5,627	100.0%
20	Buildings and associated costs	3,920,888	3,808,825	97.1%	3,542,787	90.4%
2000	Rent	38,263	29,455	77.0%	29,455	77.0%
2001	Annual lease payments	4,134	199	4.8%	199	4.8%
2003	Acquisition of immovable property	6,192	6,192	100.0%	0	0.0%
2007	Fitting-out of premises	1,863,864	1,863,864	100.0%	1,774,598	95.2%
2008	Other expenditure on buildings	140,435	102,203	72.8%	88,183	62.8%
2022	Cleaning and maintenance	1,638,671	1,585,452	96.8%	1,509,133	92.1%
2024	Energy consumption	217,138	217,138	100.0%	138,393	63.7%
2026	Security and surveillance of buildings	10,615	2,747	25.9%	2,747	25.9%
2028	Insurance	1,574	1,574	100.0%	79	5.0%
21	Data processing, equipment and furniture: purchase, hire and maintenance	1,776,313	1,704,913	96.0%	1,674,338	94.3%
2100	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software; and related work	630,551	602,947	95.6%	602,947	95.6%
2102	Outside assistance for the operation, development and maintenance of software systems	815,385	787,296	96.6%	787,296	96.6%
2103	Telecommunications	0	0	N/A	0	N/A
212	Furniture	66,049	59,681	90.4%	53,341	80.8%
214	Technical equipment and installations	251,581	242,243	96.3%	221,376	88.0%
216	Vehicles	12,746	12,746	100.0%	9,378	73.6%
23	Administrative expenditure	151,696	96,131	63.4%	73,788	48.6%
230	Stationery, office supplies and miscellaneous consumables	62,059	55,206	89.0%	55,206	89.0%
231	Financial charges	1,343	75	5.6%	75	5.6%
232	Legal costs and damages	32,793	32,793	100.0%	10,500	32.0%
236	Postage on correspondence and delivery charges	26,879	3,348	12.5%	3,348	12.5%
238	Other administrative expenditure	28,623	4,710	16.5%	4,660	16.3%

Ch. / Item	Description	Budget [a]	Commit. [b]	% [b/a]	Payments [c]	% [c/a]
25	Meetings and conferences	556,889	556,810	100.0%	412,201	74.0%
2540	Costs of meetings organized in Brussels	53,862	53,862	100.0%	36,665	68.1%
2541	Third parties	114,048	114,048	100.0%	33,898	29.7%
2542	Organisation of events in partnership with local and regional authorities, associations and European Institutions	315,605	315,527	100.0%	299,128	94.8%
2546	Representation expenses	73,373	73,373	100.0%	42,509	57.9%
26	Expertise and information: acquisition, archiving, production and distribution	1,636,219	1,626,178	99.4%	1,510,857	92.3%
2600	Relationships with press, audio-visual support	319,925	319,925	100.0%	298,004	93.1%
2602	Web and Social Media, print materials	608,852	608,413	99.9%	584,021	95.9%
2604	Official Journal	640	640	100.0%	0	0.0%
2620	External expertise and studies	308,946	299,346	96.9%	299,346	96.9%
2622	Documentation and library expenditure	63,579	63,578	100.0%	63,074	99.2%
2624	Expenditure on archive resources	28,401	28,401	100.0%	28,401	100.0%
264	CoR Political groups' communication activities	305,877	305,877	100.0%	238,012	77.8%
Total Budget:		11,708,078	11,243,253	96.0%	9,778,510	83.5%

Annex 2-Declarations of the Authorising Officers by sub-delegation

According to the Committee of the Regions' Charter of Missions and Responsibilities of the Authorising Officer by delegation and the Authorising Officers by Sub-delegation (AOS), the latter have, inter alia, a responsibility to contribute to the establishment of the annual report of the Authorising Officer by Delegation through their reporting on the activities for which they have received sub-delegation. On top of the regular reporting, the Authorising Officer by Delegation, in preparing the declaration in his annual report for the year 2020 asked the Authorising Officers by Sub-delegation to report on the control environment for which they are responsible and to sign a declaration in the same format as his, as indicated below. Every AOS had to report on individual exceptions and applied remedial measures to the Authorising Offer by Delegation when presenting his declaration of assurance for the budget lines for which he is responsible.

For the budget exercise 2020, 41 officials appointed as Authorising Officers by Sub-delegation signed a declaration.

Authorising officers by Sub-delegation	Declaration(s) signed on
Bachotet Sophie	17 February 2021
Barber Ian	22 April 2021
Battiston Cristina	19 February 2021
Beljaars-Verhoeven Saskia	23 February 2021
Bodova Andrea	12 April 2021
Bouquerel Caroline	19 February 2021
Canoto Argüelles Juan Carlos	17 February 2021
Caruso Paola	26 February 2021
Cercone Michele	13 April 2021
Cervilla Pedro	19 February 2021
Collins Michael	15 February 2021
Da Luz Cintia	25 February 2021
Damyanova Ani	8 February 2021
De Schrijver Patrick	29 April 2021
De Schuiteneer Bart	26 February 2021
Essender Boris	08 April 2021
Feral Pierre-Alexis	26 February 2021
Filipek Francois	09 February 2021
Firmin Thierry	09 April 2021

Authorising officers by Sub-delegation	Declaration(s) signed on
Gnan Reinhold	08 April 2021
Haenebalcke Tom	09 February 2021
Jakobsson Peder	19 February 2021
Janicaud Benjamin	09 February 2021
Kaduczak Joanna	19 February 2021
Kudlinska Agnieszka	08 April 2021
Ladwig Achim	07 February 2021
Lamour Michael	18 February 2021
Lavigne Eric	08 February 2021
Mitelman Anna	26 February 2021
Mokhtari Rachida	26 February 2021
Nardi Serafino	08 April 2021
Pankova Katia	25 February 2021
Petzold Wolfgang	08 April 2021
Schaumans Patrick	19 February 2021
Strautina Ineta	08 February 2021
Suciu Serban	08 February 2021
Taulegne Beatrice	09 April 2021
Thieule Laurent	09 February 2021
Thome Florence	26 February 2021
Tsirimiagos Kyriakos	08 April 2021
Van Hoeymissen Dimitri	08 February 2021

Annex 3 - Transfers of appropriations

Five transfers of appropriations have been submitted to the Budget Authority in 2020 (INF 1, INF 2, INF 3, DEC 1 and DEC 2/2020). The Council's Budget Committee asked the CoR to re-submit the INF 3 transfer as a DEC 3 transfer, which was done. Three of these transfers have been approved by the Budget Authority in full and executed by the CoR thereafter (INF 1, INF 2 and DEC 1/2020). The remaining two transfers (DEC 2 and DEC 3) have been modified (reduced) by the Budget Authority – Council's Budget Committee.

INF 1/2020

The purpose of this transfer was to reinforce budget line 264 "CoR Political Groups' communication activities" in order to allow CoR members to carry out their main planned communications and outreach projects in 2020.

The amount of the transfer was € 255,000. It was approved in March and executed thereafter.

INF 2/2020

With this transfer of appropriations, the CoR intended to reinforce 3 budget lines in order to modernise the CoR digital infrastructure and the video conferencing facilities, especially in the light of Covid-19 crisis. Namely:

- budget item 2100 "IT" (software and hardware) with € 237,216;
- budget item 2102 "IT" (development and maintenance) with € 173,192;
- budget item 214 "Technical equipment" with € 40,000.

The amount of the transfer was € 450,408. It was approved in May and executed thereafter.

INF 3/2020

With this transfer of appropriations, the CoR intended to reinforce 5 budget lines in the fields of IT, communication (Protocol), external expertise and studies, and further digitalisation of the library. Namely:

IT:

- budget item 2100 "IT" (software and hardware) with € 172,829;
- budget item 2102 "IT" (development and maintenance) with € 115,000;

Communication:

- budget item 2602 "Web and Social Media, print material" with € 50,000;

External expertise and studies:

- budget item 2620 "External expertise and studies" with € 38,129;

Library:

- budget item 2622 "Documentation and library expenditure" with € 150,000.

The total amount of the transfer was € 525,958.

This transfer was submitted in early November for approval of the Budget Authority. The majority of delegations in the Council's Budget committee meeting raised objections in accordance with Art. 29(2) FR and the CoR was asked to re-submit its transfer request under the procedure laid down in Art. 31 FR (as DEC 3/2020 transfer).

DEC 1/2020

With this transfer of appropriations, the CoR reinforced 8 budget lines in the fields of IT and video conferencing, communication and events, upkeep of buildings and external expertise and studies. Namely:

IT and videoconferencing:

- budget item 2100 "IT" (software and hardware) with € 385,234;
- budget item 2102 "IT" (development and maintenance) with € 898,184;
- budget item 214 "Technical equipment" with € 60,000;

Communication and events:

- budget item 2542 "Organisation of events in partnership with local and regional authorities, associations and European Institutions" with € 550,000;
- budget item 2600 "Relationship with press, audio-visual support" with € 250,000;
- budget item 2602 "Web and Social Media, print material" with € 100,000;

Upkeep of Buildings:

- budget item 2007 "Fitting out of premises" with € 375,443;

External expertise and studies:

- budget item 2620 "External expertise and studies" with € 243,000.

The total amount of the transfer was € 2,861,861. It was approved in July and executed thereafter.

DEC 2/2020

With this transfer of appropriations, the CoR intended to further reinforce 7 budget lines in the fields of IT, communication and events (Support package for the "Conference on the Future of Europe"), external expertise and studies, language course for the members and further digitalisation of the library. Namely:

IT:

- budget item 2100 "IT" (software and hardware) with € 254,160;
- budget item 2102 "IT" (development and maintenance) with € 635,175;

Communication (Support package for the "Conference on the Future of Europe"):

- budget item 2600 "Relationship with press, audio-visual support" with € 250,000;
- budget item 2602 "Web and Social Media, print material" with € 800,000;

External expertise and studies:

- budget item 2620 "External expertise and studies" with € 216,395;

Others:

- budget item 105 "Courses for Members of the institution" with € 27,500;
- budget item 2622 "Documentation and library expenditure" with € 14,950.

The total amount of the transfer was € 2,198,180.

This transfer was amended by the Council's Budget committee and the appropriations for the following 2 projects were rejected: Green Deal marketing and Support package for the Conference on the Future of Europe. As a consequence, the amount of the transfer was lowered by € 1,175,000. The reduced transfer was approved by the Budget Authority in November and executed by the CoR thereafter.

DEC 3/2020

On 5 November the CoR submitted the transfer of appropriations INF 3/2020. The transfer was approved by the European Parliament's Budget committee on 16 November. On 19 November a majority of delegations in the Council's Budget committee meeting raised objections in accordance with Art. 29(2) FR and the CoR was asked to re-submit its transfer request under the procedure laid down in Art. 31 FR (DEC transfer). The CoR therefore re-submitted the INF 3/2020 transfer as a DEC 3/2020 transfer. Given the time that had passed since the submission of the INF 3/2020 transfer, the CoR reduced the transfer request to include only those parts that at the point of submission of this DEC 3/2020 were still feasible. To allow for a quick overview of what has changed between document INF 3/2020 previously submitted and this DEC 3/2020 document, the part that has been taken out and was no longer requested is marked in ~~strikethrough~~.

With this transfer of appropriations, the CoR intended to reinforce 4 ~~5~~-budget lines. Namely:

IT:

- budget item 2100 "IT" (software and hardware) with € 172,829;
- ~~budget item 2102 "IT" (development and maintenance) with € 115,000;~~

Communication:

- budget item 2602 "Web and Social Media, print material" with € 50,000;

External expertise and studies:

- budget item 2620 "External expertise and studies" with € 38,129;

Library:

- budget item 2622 "Documentation and library expenditure" with € 150,000.

The total amount of the transfer was € 410,958 ~~525,958~~.

This transfer was indeed in the end amended by the Council's Budget committee and the appropriations for the following 2 projects were rejected: screens for teleworkers and outreach communication toolkit. As a consequence, the amount of the transfer was lowered by € 95,749. The reduced transfer was approved by the Budget Authority in December and executed by the CoR thereafter.

List of executed external transfers

No	Donor line		Amount	Recipient line		Amount
INF 1/2020	1200	Remuneration and allowances	-255.000	264	CoR Political Groups' communication activities	255.000
INF 2/2020	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-450.408	2100 JS-I.T.	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work - JS - IT	237.216
				2102 JS-I.T.	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - JS - IT	173.192
				214 MEETINGS	Technical equipment and installations - meetings	40.000
DEC 1/2020	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-2.260.000	2007 JOINT-SERVICES	Fitting-out of premises - JS	375.443

No	Donor line		Amount	Recipient line		Amount
	1200	Remuneration and allowances	-491.861	2100 OS-FIN	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work - OS - finance	40.000
	162	Missions	-110.000	2100 JS-I.T.	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work - JS - IT	345.234
				2102 JS-I.T.	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - JS - IT	398.184
				2102 OS-I.T.	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - OS - IT	200.000
				2102 OS-DIGIT	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - OS - IT - Digital strategy	300.000
				214 MEETINGS	Technical equipment and installations - meetings	60.000
				2542	Organization of events in partnership with local and regional authorities, associations and European Institutions	550.000
				2600	Relationships with press, audio-visual support	250.000
				2602	Web and Social Media, print material	100.000
				2620 DTL1	Studies NAT/ENVE/CIVEX	130.000
				2620 DTL2	Studies COTER/ECON/SEDEC	113.000
DEC 2/20 20	162	Missions	-225.000	105	Courses for Members of the institution	27.500
	1004	Travel and subsistence allowances, attendance at meetings and associated expenditure	-798.180	2100 JS-I.T.	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work - JS - IT	254.160
				2102 JS-I.T.	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - JS - IT	204.175

No	Donor line		Amount	Recipient line		Amount
				2102 OS-I.T.	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - OS - IT	130.000
				2102 OS-DIGIT	Outside assistance in connection with the operation, development and maintenance of software systems - OS - IT - Digital strategy	176.000
				2620 DTL2	Studies COTER/ECON/SEDEC	122.645
				2620 DTL1	Studies NAT/ENVE/CIVEX	93.750
				2622 OS-LIBRARY	Documentation and library expenditure - OS - library	12.450
				2622 JS-DICOTRAD	Documentation and library expenditure - JS - dicotrad	2.500
DEC 3/20 20	1200	Remuneration and allowances	-80.697	2100 JS-I.T.	Purchase, servicing and maintenance of equipment and software, and related work - JS - IT	127.080
	1402	Interpreting services	-234.512	2620 DTL1	Studies NAT/ENVE/CIVEX	38.129
				2622 OS-LIBRARY	Documentation and library expenditure - OS - library	150.000

Annex 4-Negotiated procedures

The present appendix shows, in accordance with article 74(10) FR, the list of contracts concluded in 2020 by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) under negotiated procedures in accordance with points (a) to (f) of point 11.1 and point 39 of Annex I to FR. This information is based on the list of contracts registered in the CoR database of contracts.

Numéro contrat	Direction	Unité/Service	Nom du fournisseur	Intitulé du contrat	Type de contrat	Type de procédure	Montant (€)
CDR/COM/111/2019	Direction D – Communication	D1 Presse - Relation Médias	Polska Agencja Prasowa	Media Partnership with national press agencies from Poland	Contrat direct	Proc.négociée Point 11.1 b) Annexe1 RF 2018	60.000,00
CDR/COM/2/2020	Direction D - Communication	D1 Presse - Relation Médias	Agenzia ANSA	Media Partnership with national press agencies from Italy	Contrat direct	Proc.négociée Point 11.1 b) Annexe1 RF 2018	60.000,00
CDR/DL/35/2020	Direction L – Logistique	DL Unité IT	SAP Belgium NV/SA	Framework contract n° DI-7791 Provision of informatics,- and/or telecommunication services and the provision of high-level services related to sap software	Contrat-cadre interinstitutionnel	Proc.négociée Point 11.1 b) Annexe1 RF 2018	211.800,00
CDR/DL/42/2020	Direction L – Logistique	DL Unité IT	SOGATOS (Sogeti Luxembourg + Atos Luxembourg)	Framework contract n° PROD-EVAL-NP-2020 - Product evaluation, testing, customization and systems integration	Contrat-cadre interinstitutionnel	Proc.négociée Point 11.1 c) Annexe1 RF 2018	477.298,45
CDR/DL/50/2020	Direction L – Logistique	DL Unité IT	CronoComm	Framework contract n° DEV-DISS-NP-2020 - Development and maintenance of dissemination information systems	Contrat-cadre interinstitutionnel	Proc.négociée Point 11.1 c) Annexe1 RF 2018	784.408,55
CDR/DL/62/2020	Direction L – Logistique	DL Unité IT	Deutsche Telekom Business Solutions (ex T-Systems International)	Framework contract n° DI-7820 (TESTA-ng Extension) - Trans-European services for Telematics between Administrations	Contrat-cadre interinstitutionnel	Proc.négociée Point 11.1 b) Annexe1 RF 2018	100.000,00
CDR/DL/80/2020	Direction L – Logistique	DL Unité IT	Consortium Atos - EY	Framework contract n° pe/itec-arc-method-np-2020 - External Provision of IT Services "Enterprise architecture, methodology, quality assurance and audit services"	Contrat-cadre interinstitutionnel	Proc.négociée Point 11.1 c) Annexe1 RF 2018	544.250,68

Annex 5 - Report on compliance with and suspension of time-limits for payment of the institution's creditors

Article 116 of the Financial Regulation (FR) ⁴ defines the time-limits that should be respected for payments made to the institution's creditors and specify the circumstances in which those creditors paid late are entitled to receive default interest charged to the budget heading from which the principal was paid.

Article 116(6) also lays down the obligation for each institution to submit to the budgetary authority a report on compliance with and the suspension of the time-limits for paying its creditors.

Over the years, the Committee of the Regions has set up different actions to enable the authorising services to improve their performance in relation to payment time limits:

- Close monitoring of the payment deadlines by the accounting officer;
- Regular reports (quarterly and on an ad-hoc basis if needed) addressed to the authorising services on the follow up of payment deadlines;
- Communication given to members of staff involved in financial transactions;
- Improvement of the workflows;
- Introduction of paperless workflows and electronic invoices.

Moreover, the integrated system of financial and budgetary management ABAC (owned by the Commission and used by the CoR since 1 January 2007) possesses specific functionalities that make possible:

- the real time visualisation by the authorising services of the tracking of invoices and corresponding payments throughout the internal chain of verification and approval;
- the production of specific follow-up or warning reports that integrate the management of suspension of time limits for payment and the automatic calculation of default interest to be paid on any invoices paid late.

⁴ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 193 of 30/07/2018)

The table below presents the evolution of the average time taken for payments and the number of days of suspension over the years:

Financial year	Commercial invoices paid		Average time taken for payment (in days)	Number of suspension of time-limits
	Number	Amounts		
2008	2.109	30.366.149	29,64	86
2009	2.523	32.549.780	25,77	201
2010	2.255	33.263.362	28,49	220
2011	1.956	34.277.780	22,99	244
2012	1.938	35.768.277	18,86	205
2013	1.820	31.123.497	18,85	124
2014	1.711	29.238.586	19,72	105
2015	1.790	28.956.837	19,52	96
2016	1.997	31.190.480	26,31	93
2017	2.197	30.642.991	22,71	140
2018	2.452	32.619.280	16,39	96
2019	2.839	32.640.808	17,23	87
2020	2.448	23.403.253	17,21	59

The minimum requirement under the FR is that payments need to be made within 30 days.

The CoR continues its work to take part in the efforts proposed by the Commission in April 2009 ⁵ in order to improve the financial situation of undertakings, particularly in this period of crisis.

At CoR, the average time for payment in 2020 was the same as in 2019.

As far as the automatic payment of default interest is concerned, the analysis of data for the financial year 2020 shows that there was no payment of mandatory default interest (case where the amount of default interest exceeds the threshold of EUR 200 defined in Article 116(5) FR).

⁵ Communication of the Commission of 8 April 2009 on streamlining financial rules and accelerating budget implementation to help economic recovery (SEC (2009) 477 final).

Annex 6 - Provisional Annual Accounts 2020

Balance Sheet

	31.12.2020	31.12.2019
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Intangible assets	124,884	195,005
Property, plant and equipment	56,037,833	59,157,423
	56,162,718	59,352,428
CURRENT ASSETS		
Exchange receivables and non-exchange recoverables	9,333,367	9,334,479
Cash and cash equivalents	1,307,818	3,593,488
	10,641,185	12,927,967
TOTAL ASSETS	66,803,902	72,280,394
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Financial liabilities	-42,808,747	-46,597,157
	-42,808,747	-46,597,157
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Financial liabilities	-3,788,410	-3,565,285
Payables	-1,369,958	-556,098
Accrued charges and deferred income	-5,629,418	-5,923,493
	-10,787,786	-10,044,876
TOTAL LIABILITIES	-53,596,534	-56,642,034
NET ASSETS		
Accumulated surplus	15,638,361	14,680,225
Economic result of the year	-2,430,992	958,136
NET ASSETS	13,207,369	15,638,361

Statement of Financial Performance

	2020	2019
REVENUE		
Funding from the Commission	80,822,000	87,200,000
Other revenue	10,958,803	11,770,701
Total revenue	91,780,803	98,970,701
EXPENSES		
Staff costs	-59,090,425	-55,901,654
Finance costs	-2,503,637	-4,840,430
Other expenses	-32,617,733	-37,270,481
Total expenses	-94,211,794	-98,012,566
ECONOMIC RESULT OF THE YEAR	-2,430,992	958,136

Cash Flow

	2020	2019
Economic result of the year	-2,430,992	958,136
Operating activities		
Amortisation and impairments - intangible fixed assets	79,887	88,615
Depreciation and impairments - Property Plant & Equipment	3,434,770	3,417,709
(Increase)/decrease in exchange receivables and non-exchange recoverables	1,111	-214,374
Increase/(decrease) in financial liabilities	-3,565,285	-3,354,520
Increase/(decrease) in payables	813,860	18,801
Increase/(decrease) in accrued charges and deferred revenue	-294,075	2,033,819
Investing activities		
(Increase)/decrease in intangible assets and property, plant and equipment	-324,946	-819,355
NET CASHFLOW	-2,285,670	2,128,832
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-2,285,670	2,128,832
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	3,593,488	1,464,656
Cash and cash equivalents at year-end	1,307,818	3,593,488

Statement of changes in net assets

			<i>EUR</i>
	Accumulated Surplus/ (Deficit)	Economic result of the year	Net assets
BALANCE AS AT 31.12.2018	14,507,861	172,364	14,680,225
Allocation 2018 economic result	172,364	-172,364	-
Economic result of the year	-	958,136	958,136
BALANCE AS AT 31.12.2019	14,680,225	958,136	15,638,361
Allocation 2019 economic result	958.136	-958.136	-
Economic result of the year		-2.430.992	-2.430.992
BALANCE AS AT 31.12.2020	15.638.361	-2.430.992	13.207.369

Annex 7 - Human Resources figures for 2020

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan **	300	180	11	491
Contract staff (1)*	19	34	0	53
External contract staff *	N/A	N/A	N/A	38
Seconded national experts*	10			10
Other personnel (2) *	1			1
Total	330	214	11	593

(Situation on 31/12/2020)

(1) contract staff replacing absent staff (e.g. maternity leave or short-term assignments) are not included.

(2) medical doctor

** Posts

* People

President's Cabinet

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	6	3		9
Contract staff	1	1		2
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	7	4	0	11

Secretary General's Cabinet

Type	SG	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	1	4	4		9
Contract staff					
External contract staff					
SNEs					
Other personnel (specify)					
Total	1	4	4	0	9

EPP Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	10	4		14
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	10	4		14

PES Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	10	4		14
Contract staff		1		1
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	10	5		15

Renew Europe Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	5	3		8
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	5	3		8

EA Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	3	1		4
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	4	1		5

ECR Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	3	1		4
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	4	1		5

The Greens Group Secretariat

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	1			1
Contract staff		1		1
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	1	1		2

Protocol Service

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	3		5
Contract staff		3		3
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	2	6		8

Internal Audit Service

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	2	2		4
Contract staff				
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	2	2		4

Directorate A

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	20	26	1	47
Contract staff		13		13
External contract staff	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	20	39	1	61

Directorate B

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	31	16		47
Contract staff	2			2
External contract staff				
SNEs	3			3
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	36	16		52

Directorate C

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	29	10	3	42
Contract staff	2			2
External contract staff				
SNEs*	5			5
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	36	10	3	49

Directorate D

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	25	20	2	47
Contract staff	6	5		11
External contract staff	N/A	N/A	N/A	12
SNEs	2			2
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	33	25	2	72

Directorate E

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	20	43	2	65
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Special adviser (doctor)	1			1
Total	22	43	2	67

Directorate of Logistics (CoR staff only)

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	9	18		27
Contract staff	4	9		13
External contract staff	N/A	N/A	N/A	25
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	13	27		65

Directorate for Translation (CoR staff only)

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan	119	21	3	143
Contract staff	1			1
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total	120	21		144

Staff Committee

Type	AD	AST	AST/SC	Total
Establishment plan		1		1
Contract staff		1		1
External contract staff				
SNEs				
Other personnel (specify)				
Total		2		2

Annex 8 : Building Policy



European Economic
and Social Committee



European Committee
of the Regions

Joint Services – Directorate for Logistics The Directors

REPORT BY THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS⁶ TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 266 OF THE FINANCIAL REGULATION

1) Article 266 FR

Each institution shall provide the European Parliament and the Council, by 1 June each year, with a working document on its building policy, which shall incorporate the following information:

- a) for each building, the expenditure and surface area covered by the appropriations of the corresponding budget lines. The expenditure shall include the costs of the fitting-out of buildings but not other charges;
- b) the expected evolution of the global programming of surface area and locations for the coming years with a description of the building projects in planning phases which are already identified;
- c) the final terms and costs, as well as relevant information regarding project implementation of new building projects previously submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council under the procedure set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 and not included in the preceding year's working documents.

2) Part 1: The expenditure and surface area for each building

Information about the premises of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions can be found in the attached table.

3) Part 2: The expected evolution of the global programming

A buildings strategy was approved by the Bureau of the European Economic and Social Committee on 17 October 2017 and by the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on 29 November 2017.

This buildings strategy provides a reliable and flexible framework for future decisions in this area and contains a set of guiding principles, which include:

- geographical concentration;
- preference for ownership rather than lease and exercising options to buy;
- sustainable buildings management; and
- multi-annual planning.

⁶ The two Committees are sharing buildings in line with the Cooperation Agreement they signed in July 2015.

Regarding the main priority for the buildings strategy – "geographical concentration" – several scenarios were explored in 2018. The preferred scenarios all include retaining the VMA building (rue Van Maerlant 2) for use by the EESC and the CoR after 2021.

It should be noted here that, in 2016, the European Commission secretary-general informed the Committees that the Administrative Agreement on renting the VMA would not be extended beyond February 2019, and that the Commission intended to demolish the building after that date and to build a new one solely for its own use. Following negotiations, that Administrative Agreement was finally extended until the end of 2021, but no arrangement was made for further use of this building by the Committees beyond that year.

On 28 August 2019, a new Administrative Agreement was signed by the Director of the OIB and the secretaries-general of both Committees on the exchange of the Committees' B68 (rue Belliard 68) and TRE74 (rue de Trèves 74) buildings for the Commission's VMA building. The exchange will become effective on 16 September 2022, the date on which the value of both sets of buildings will be identical⁷.

The signing of the Administrative Agreement was accompanied by an exchange of letters between Commissioner Günther Oettinger, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the Committee of the Regions, and Luca Jahier, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, signed on the same day.

NEED FOR A NEW BUILDING

Exchanging the B68 and TRE buildings for the VMA will, however, result in a significant loss of office space for the two Committees (10 440 m²)⁸, which cannot be entirely offset by alternative measures in the short term such as stepping up the office-space density of the other buildings and increasing teleworking.

On 11 December 2019, the European External Action Service (EEAS) informed the Committees that the Belliard 100 building would be available by early 2021 and proposed transferring its current lease to them. With 5 200 m², the Belliard 100 building would enable the Committees to partially offset the loss of office space following the building exchange scheduled for September 2022. In addition, renting the B100 as from early 2021 would enable the Committees to accommodate some of the staff vacating the VMA building during the refurbishment works planned between summer 2021 and summer 2022. As the B100 is adjacent to the VMA building, taking over its rental contract will also have the advantage for the Committees of having a fully interconnected, single group of buildings.

Considering these elements, the Bureaus of the two Committees mandated the secretaries-general in February 2020 to undertake negotiations with the EEAS in view of concluding an agreement enabling the Committees to take over the rental contract of B100 as from early 2021.

The negotiations started in March 2020, with the initial aim of being concluded before summer 2020. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 crisis caused a major delay in the works of another building that the EEAS intended to occupy at the beginning of 2021 and as a consequence the services currently housed in the B100 building can only move out later in 2021. In its letter dated 12 November 2020, the EEAS informed the Committees that the takeover of the rental contract of the B100 building could only take effect on 1 September 2021.

⁷This date was determined by an external real estate expert and takes into account the market price of the buildings minus the long-term lease instalments still to be paid.

⁸ 13 396 m² minus the VMA surface area of 2 956 m² currently occupied by the European Commission. The other part of the building is already occupied by the Committees.

The draft Administrative Agreement with the EEAS for the takeover of the lease of the Belliard 100 building was approved by the Bureau of the European Economic and Social Committee on 15 September 2020 and by the Bureau of the Committee of the Regions on 9 October 2020.

On 18 March 2021, the Committees referred the matter to the budgetary authority in order to seek its opinion on the financial aspects of this takeover in application of Article 266 of the Financial Regulation (references CESE (2021) D/505 Official registration n° (2021) D/199 and CoR (2021) D/430 Official registration n° (2021) D/352).

Following the exchange of buildings with the Commission, savings compared to 2019 will begin to appear from the beginning of 2023, due to the lower cost of renting the entire VMA compared to the three buildings currently being paid for (B68, T74 and partially the VMA): these savings will be sufficient to cover the rent of B100.

For 2021 and 2022, i.e. before the exchange of buildings, the rent for the B100 building will represent an additional one-off cost for both Committees ⁹ compared to 2020.

NEED TO REFURBISH VMA

The VMA is a 35-year-old building. It needs to be refurbished as soon as possible (2021-2022) in order to function properly in the coming years. It should be noted that if the building exchanges were not happening, the Committees would still need to refurbish the B68 and TRE74 in more or less the same period as these two buildings are also quite old.

The estimated budget for the VMA's refurbishment works is EUR 6 to 9 million ¹⁰. The main part of this budget for the renovation works of the VMA (around EUR 6 million) is already available in the initial 2021 budget approved by the budgetary authority as a "one off" request for this year. This will allow these works to start in September 2021 and be finished by September 2022. This will enable the VMA to be refurbished and operational again before its exchange with B68/TRE74 in September 2022.

In application of Article 266(2) of the Financial Regulation, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions hereby confirm and extend their early warning to the budgetary authority, which has already been notified through a letter dated 24 May 2019 sent to Mr Arthuis ¹¹ and through the Buildings Report sent on 29 May 2020, of the need to undertake renovation works on the VMA building between September 2021 and September 2022 for an amount estimated at EUR 6 million. If further unique opportunities for modernising workspaces are also undertaken, the amount could go up to EUR 9 million.

This amount represents around 3% of the total accounting value of the two Committees' buildings. For the purpose of these refurbishment works, a call for tenders was launched in spring 2021.

⁹ The rent is around EUR 1 500 000 for a full year.

¹⁰ These works on the VMA will require the organisation of several removals and the housing of the staff in question in other buildings, which will have an additional cost of EUR 1.94 million for which funds were also provided in the 2021 initial budget.

¹¹ CESE (2019) D/1831 Official registration No (2019) D/313 – see page 5 of the report submitted in application of Article 266(1) FR attached to that letter: "In conclusion, the budgetary authority is informed about: (...) - an early warning (art. 266 FR) concerning the launch of a call for tender for the renovation works at the VMA building, to be undertaken between 2020 and 2022, for an estimated amount of EUR 6 Mio.;"

LIFT OF PURCHASE OPTIONS

In their letter 001071-01909 dated 11 December 2014, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions informed the budgetary authority of their intention to lift the purchase option provided in the long-term leasehold contracts for five buildings occupied jointly, namely:

- JDE building, on Rue Belliard 99-101, 1040 Brussels
- BvS building, on Rue Montoyer 92-102, 1000, Brussels
- B68 building, on Rue Belliard 68, 1000, Brussels
- TRE building, on Rue de Trèves 74, 1000, Brussels
- REM building, on Rue Belliard 93, 1000, Brussels

The budgetary and financial cost of acquiring the residual property rights is a symbolic sum of EUR 1 per building, this being the price under the contracts for the exercise of the purchase options, to which the indirect costs of legal services and notarial fees have to be added.

It is also important to note that exercising the purchase option will not change the financial conditions set out in the long-term leasehold contracts. The European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions will still have to continue paying the annual leasehold fees in accordance with the contracts for the remainder of their term.

The option to purchase the JDE building was exercised with the signing of the deed on 19 November 2018.

The option to purchase the BVS and REM buildings was exercised with the signing of both deeds on 9 December 2019.

As the Committees will swap the B68 and TRE buildings for the VMA building, the exercise of the purchase options of the B68 and TRE buildings will have to be carried out by the Commission in due time.

The Committees will exercise the option to purchase the VMA building between 1 September 2028 and 31 October 2028 as provided for in the long-term lease contract.

In conclusion, the budgetary authority is informed about:

- the signing on 28 August 2019 of an Administrative Agreement between the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions concerning the exchange of the Committees' B68/TRE74 buildings for the Commission's VMA building ¹²;

• ¹² Both sets of buildings will have the same value on 16 September 2022, the date when the exchange will take effect.

- the intention of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions to sign, before summer 2021, an Administrative Agreement with the European External Action Service for the takeover of the rental contract of the B100 building as from 1 September 2021, in line with the referral to the budgetary authority on 18 March 2021;
- the confirmation of the launch of a call for tenders in spring 2021 for the renovation works for the VMA building, to be undertaken between September 2021 and September 2022, for an estimated amount of EUR 6 to 9 million, following and extending the early warning pursuant to Article 266(2) FR, of which Mr Arthuis was notified in the letter dated 24 May 2019;
- the state of play related to the exercising of the options to purchase the buildings occupied by the Committees, for which there were no changes in 2020.

4) Part 3: Project implementation of new building projects previously submitted to the European Parliament and the Council

No projects were presented to the European Parliament and the Council in 2020. On 18 March 2021, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions addressed a request to the budgetary authority in application of Article 266(3) of the Financial Regulation in order to seek its approval on the financial aspects of the takeover from the EEAS of the Belliard 100 building rental contract, (references CESE (2021) D/505 Official registration n° (2021) D/199 and CoR (2021) D/430 Official registration n° (2021) D/352). See Part 2 of this report for more information.

Item		Building	Area above ground (m2)	Type of contract	Lease payment 2022 (EUR)	
2001 (Annual lease payments)	Office space	JDE	22 026	Option exercised in November 2018	6 998 917	
		BVS	18 280	Option exercised in December 2019	5 886 986	
		REM	2 324		199 141	
		B-68*	7 283 => 5 159	Emphyteusis with option to buy	1 674 028	
		TRE*	5 387 => 3 816		1 086 328	
		VM-2*	11 785 => 3 437		1 221 058	
	Non-office space	JDE	14 353	Option exercised in November 2018	4 560 767	
		BVS	2 285	Option exercised in December 2019	735 873	
		REM	0		0	
		B-68*	22 => 16	Emphyteusis with option to buy	5 057	
		TRE*	692 => 490		139 547	
		VM-2*	4 520 => 1 318		468 339	
	Total item			73 504		22 976 042
	2000 (Rent)	Office space	VM-2*	8 244 => 5 839	Rent	1 827 678
B100			3 698	1 121 770		
Non-office space		VM-2*	3 162 => 2 240	701 009		
		B100	1 827	554 212		
Total item			13 604			4 204 669
GRAND TOTALS			87 108		27 180 711	

Share of office space in total space (%)	74.1%
Share of non-office space in total space (%)	25.9%
Workplaces to be accommodated	1 549
Office space/workplace (m ²)	41.7

(*) For the lines marked with an asterisk, the surfaces and the amounts are adapted pro rata temporis (for 8.5 or 3.5 months respectively) in order to obtain correct results.

The VM-2 appears twice. Part of the building (57.85%) is rented from the Commission until 15/9/2022. After this date, the entire building (100%) will be leased (long-term leasehold contracts) by the Committees. This explains the difference in the surfaces of the building.

Annex 9 – Activities of the members of the CoR in 2020

Statutory meetings

Number	Title	Place
1	Plenary Sessions	Brussels
2	Plenary session on a hybrid basis	Brussels
1	Plenary session on a remote basis	Remote
2	Extraordinary Bureau meetings	Remote
4	Extraordinary Conferences of Presidents	Remote
6	Commission meetings	Brussels
7	Commission meetings on a hybrid basis	Brussels
12	Commission meetings	Remote
1	Commissions for administrative & financial affairs	Brussels
3	Commission for administrative & financial affairs	Remote
1	Meeting of the Working Group Turkey	Remote
1	Meeting of the Working Group Western Balkans	Remote
1	Meeting of the JCC Montenegro	Remote
2	Meetings of the UK Contact group	Remote
2	Meetings of the Working group on the Green Deal	Remote
2	Meetings of the political groups in Brussels	Brussels

Thematic and other political activities

Number	Title	Place
1	European Week of regions and Cities	Remote
1	ARLEM plenary session	Barcelona
1	ARLEM commission	Remote
1	EUROPCOM	Remote

Various

Number	Title
60	Individual presences of the President, 1st Vice President various or replacements
129	Individual presences for rapporteurs
77	Individual presences for political groups
9	Individual presences for CFAA
3	Various individual presences

The breakdown of the total expenses of 1 852 325 € per body is the following:

- Plenary Sessions (4) 587 121 €
- Extraordinary Bureau meetings (2) 17 011 €
- Extraordinary meetings of the Conference of Presidents 5 159 €
- Commissions 936 607 €
- CAFA 6 558 €
- Working groups and JCC's 15 200 €
- Political groups 4 115 €
- ARLEM 42 196 €
- Presidency 21 697 €
- Communication activities 11 093 €
- Individual presences 123 939 €
- Additional political activities 19 139 €
- Management Fee for the CoR travel agency 62 490 €

Appendix: details on Members attendance to local events organised in 2020

Country	City	Title	Date	CoR members involved
Romania	Cluj-Napoca	Future of Europe: Horizon Europe – challenges and perspectives	05/03/2020	Emil Boc (RO/EPP), Adrian Ovidiu Teban (RO/EPP)
Italy	Montalto di Castro	Europe starts in Tuscia	17/12/2020	Sergio Caci (IT/EPP), Gaetano Armao (IT/EPP), Donato Toma (IT/EPP)

ANNEX 10 - Follow-up to the 2019 discharge resolution

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
1	Notes with satisfaction that the Court of Auditors (the 'Court'), in its annual report for 2019 (the 'Court's report'), observed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in respect of the audited topics relating to human resources and procurement for the Committee of the Regions (the 'Committee');	The CoR is fully committed to keep the the good level of administration and even further improve it.
2	Welcomes the fact that, based on its audit work, the Court concluded that the payments as a whole for the year ended 31 December 2019, comprising the administrative and other expenditure of the Committee, were free from material error and that the examined supervisory and control systems were effective;	
3	Regrets, as a general observation, that chapter 9 'Administration' of the Court's report has a rather limited scope and conclusions, notwithstanding the fact that the Multiannual Financial Framework Heading 5 'Administration' is considered to be low risk; requests that the audit work for that chapter be more focused on issues of high relevance or even critical importance for the Committee;	
4	Recalls that the Committee's budget is mostly administrative, with a large amount being used for expenditure concerning persons working within the institution (Title 1) and concerning buildings, movable property, equipment and miscellaneous operating costs;	As a political institution composed of elected members all its budget – as it is the case for the European Parliament – serves the purpose to support the Members in their political work.
5	<p>Notes that in 2019 the Committee had an approved budget of EUR 98 751 000 (compared to EUR 96 101 000 in 2018 and EUR 93 295 000 in 2017);</p> <p>notes that the execution rate for commitments in 2019 was 99,6 % (compared to 99,3 % in 2018 and 98,1 % in 2017) and that the execution rate for payments in 2019 of 88,8 % was lower than the execution rates for payments in 2018 of 91,0 % and in 2017 of 89,9 %;</p> <p>notes, however, that the final execution rate for payment for 2019 will be higher at the end of the budget cycle (after payment of carry-overs);</p>	The very high execution rate over years is the result of the CoR's budget planning and execution optimisation. Further strengthening the CoR's capacities and extending its activities as requested by the European Parliament would require targeted budget increases in key areas.

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
6	Underlines that the execution rate of commitments for Title 1 was 99,6 % and for Title 2 was 99,7 %; notes with satisfaction that approximately EUR 400 000 (0,4 %) remained uncommitted at the end of the year and therefore returned to the Union budget, which represented a reduction compared to 2018 where approximately EUR 700 000 (0,7 %) remained uncommitted;	
Human Resources		
7	Notes that the total number of staff in 2019 was 576 (compared to 538 in 2018 and 533 in 2017); notes that the number of posts in the establishment plan amounts to 491 which is considered by the Committee as insufficient; recognises the results of a workload assessment finalised in 2019 for a potential reorganisation with the objective of making further efficiency gains and create synergies; is informed that the Committee wants the Union budgetary authorities to address the issue and balance the current staff situation progressively; encourages the Committee to deepen its administrative cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) via the joint services arrangement to pool resources in order to develop more synergies.	As regards the cooperation agreement with the EESC, the CoR underlines that the existing cooperation is already the closest among EU institutions and, notwithstanding the challenges it entails, is being developed further, with important gains for the taxpayer.
8	Acknowledges the Committee's continued efforts to reinforce its political role and to face the increased need for permanent expertise in political and administrative domains; notes the talent pool created to motivate and retain experienced staff in the Committee; notes that the first general internal competition in the history of the Committee was finalised in the first half of 2019 with a total of 40 laureates out of 113 candidate staff members; asks the Committee to explain the concrete professional prospects offered to the laureates;	The internal competition allowed the CoR to retain the expertise and the knowledge developed by some non-permanent staff members as well by experienced colleagues recruited at junior grades by offering them more stable working conditions in order to invest more in long-term activities generating added value for the institution, consolidate the teams and ensure their lifelong development opportunities. 100% of the laureates of the AST strand of the competition were already appointed as officials and the AD strands have an 80% absorption rate (situation in April 2021).
9	Notes that the transfer of 24 translation posts from the Committee to the Parliament was estimated to result in yearly savings amounting to approximately EUR 2.9 million, invites the Committee to present a report on the impact of this transfer;	Since 2014 a gradual increase of outsourcing from 2% to 20% was implemented in order to compensate for the transfer of posts to the EP. The CoR regrets that the commitment made in the 2015 cooperation agreement between the EP, the CoR and the EESC to increase the outsourcing

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
10	<p>Regrets that the situation in terms of gender balance in middle and senior management positions has not improved but has rather remained relatively stable since 2018, with 35% of these positions being filled by women; acknowledges that a new equal opportunity strategy containing concrete objectives to be reached by 2025 has been adopted; calls upon the Committee to present the roadmap for the adoption and planned impact of the new equal opportunity strategy, and to report, on an annual basis to the discharge authority on its implementation and on its preliminary results;</p>	<p>budget and the budget for political work as a compensation for the loss of posts has not been respected. In 2019 the budget was cut from 980.000 EUR to 685.587 EUR and has been cut further to 545.000 in 2021. In 2021, the gap had to be filled by way of a budgetary transfer from other budget lines. A structural solution – reinforcement of the budget back to the initial size – is necessary for the upcoming years.</p> <p>The situation in terms of gender balance in middle and senior management positions has remained relatively stable since 2018 due to the small size of the institution, very few changes in management team occurred since 2018 and one modification of the management team could significantly change dramatically the figures in gender balance.</p> <p>The CoR is committed to reaching a better gender balance in management through a range of incentives, laid down in the annual action plans since 2017. Additionally, in this regard, the HR toolkit for managers is under revision and the new version will include a section concerning the Equal Opportunities (EO) strategy of the CoR in order to not only raise awareness, but also to highlight how managers can commit to and engage in EO manners.</p> <p>The policy is successfully implemented and the target of 40% set in the 2020 EO Action Plan in management to tackle the issue of gender balance in management positions was almost reached in senior management (37,5%) following the nomination of a female director in March 2021 (the target was originally set for 2025).</p> <p>As 2021 is the last year of this 5-years strategy, it is proposed to consolidate</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
11	<p>Welcomes the appointment of an equal opportunities officer working centrally in the HR directorate, as well as the 'equal opportunities roadshows'; asks the Committee to report on the concrete achievements of the new strategy, including the results of the actions taken with regard to improving diversity and to making the Committee a more inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities;</p>	<p>and develop the measures taken especially in middle management (33%) and monitor them to avoid any regression.</p> <p>Following the appointment of an Equal Opportunities (EO) officer working centrally in the HR Directorate, an inter-service task force was set up in the 2020 Action Plan to ensure the EO concerns are further mainstreamed into all HR policies and to prepare the next 5-years strategy 2022-2027.</p> <p>Another important point included set up in the 2021 Action Plan for 2021 is to reinforce mainstreaming and encourage decentralised commitment among staff to implement the EO strategy by creating within the Equal opportunities contact persons' network, contact points for specific issues: LGBTQI, disability, gender. These specific contact points would impulse bottom-up initiatives and contributes to make the CoR a more inclusive workplace.</p> <p>In 2020, the CoR has taken several measures to overcome barriers for the staff with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation initiated by the Welfare Service in cooperation with the Medical Service. A section in the social service intranet page dedicated to the explanation of available reasonable accommodations (teleworking, arrangements, IT and ergonomic equipment, etc.) that suits the needs of people with disabilities and staff who have a disabled child or relative has been created.</p> <p>In the context of the Interinstitutional Working Group on Social Affairs, the CoR participated actively in the drafting of the new Guidelines for the implementation of aid for persons with a disability.</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
		<p>In this field, the Buildings Strategy of the two Committees, adopted by the CoR Bureau on 29 November 2017, takes disability fully into account, i.e. through the principle of "Design for All" in order to ensure better accessibility of the premises.</p> <p>In 2020, the renovation work of the Bertha von Suttner building entrance which started in 2020 foresaw installing a drum holder for persons with reduced mobility and a worktop adapted for wheelchair users.</p> <p>A study is also under way to improve signage for visually impaired persons in the building. The entrance hall of the Van Maerlant (VMA) building will also be renovated following the principles of "design for all" in 2021.</p>
12	<p>Notes that all Union nationalities were represented in 2019, with the exception of Luxembourg; calls on the Committee to continue to strive for the achievement enhance the of geographical balance amongof its staff in order to establish a proper representation of nationals from all Member States, including at management level; encourages the Committee to enhance its communication efforts in those countries that are under-represented;</p>	<p>The need of geographical balance within the secretariat of the CoR is enshrined in institution's equal opportunity plan. All vacancies stress that in case of same qualification female candidates or candidates from underrepresented Member States should be selected.</p> <p>The CoR would very much like to implement the EP's request to enhance its communication efforts in those countries that are under-represented.</p> <p>Given the nearly 100% execution rate of its budget (see point 5) the CoR has no money left for such an activity and would ask the Parliament as budgetary authority to provide the necessary means in the annual budget.</p>
13	<p>Encourages the Committee to continue its efforts to achieve gender balance at all hierarchical levels and welcomes actions such as the mandatory presence of both genders on selection panels, the active encouragement of female applicants for all managerial positions, specific training sessions for female staff who wish to prepare for a managerial career and more</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
	flexible working arrangements, including the possibility for part time work and telework; notes the range of incentives put in place by the Committee such as the formal recognition of management responsibilities below head of unit level and the creation of an informal network for gender balance in management, launched with the support of the administration;	
14	Acknowledges the fact that the new equal opportunity strategy also focuses on disability and diversity; notes the training regarding unconscious bias provided for managers and HR staff involved in selection procedures; asks the Committee to report to the budgetary authority on the specific objectives, actions and indicators within the strategy;	See points 10 and 11 above.
15	Appreciates the Committee's focus on developing and upholding high-quality health and well-being services based on prevention and early intervention through close cooperation between the HR services concerned, and on awareness-raising programmes for both managerial and other staff; welcomes the training sessions held with managers at both junior, middle and senior level on the topic of absence management and the successful integration of colleagues after long-term absence; notes that ten cases of burnout were registered in 2019; notes that the Committee's social service provides assistance during the illness period and upon return to work; asks the Committee to include burnout detection in its health and well-being services; welcomes the increased flexitime and teleworking arrangements to improve the work-life balance of staff, as well as the continuation of the stress and burnout prevention programme;; encourages the Committee to complete the flexible working arrangements with a protection of staff members' 'right to disconnect';	<p>The CoR implements an ambitious plan on health and well-being but faces clear limits due to its structural underfinancing in comparison to the EESC. Further improvements are hampered by this unbalanced budget situation.</p> <p>As regards the right to disconnect, the Secretary General put in place several actions to make working arrangements more flexible and to fight burnout, like the possibility to work from the home country. As regards the right to disconnect the Secretary General issued a new in-house email policy declaring evenings, weekends and public holidays as email free zones.</p>
16	Underlines that the Committee uses mainly contract staff to provide appropriate support in the form of replacements for mid to long term absences and for specific projects in different directorates with the objective of providing additional support to members of the Committee; recalls, however, that the use of contract staff also entails considerable loss of knowledge and expertise for the Committee at the end of their contracts and therefore encourages the Committee to continue negotiating the enlargement of its establishment plan; notes that in 2019, as a	The CoR fully agrees with the European Parliament analysis that there is an urgent need to negotiate the enlargement of the CoR establishment plan and will make concrete proposals in upcoming budget procedures. It very much welcomes the European Parliament's support in this regard.

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
	consequence of the cooperation between the Committee and Parliament, the number of long-term contract staff decreased in the directorate for translation of the Committee and the EESC as compared to the years 2013-2017;	
17	Notes that the Committee needs to upgrade its security control systems and ensure a safe workplace for its members and staff, something that requires additional specialised resources, and that the ratio of resources dedicated to both physical security and IT support per member of staff is very low in comparison to other Union entities; encourages the Committee to continue preparing new projects to boost cybersecurity;	The CoR would very much like to give positive follow-up to this request. The implementation of it is though hampered by the CoR's chronic and structural underfinancing and understaffing
18	Notes that the Committee identified additional projects in the area of modernisation of administration and communication, such as support for better law-making through ex-ante and ex-post monitoring of implementation of Union legislation on the ground as well as outreach activities to involve all local and regional authorities in the process, and that these additional projects require adequate resources.	The CoR is more than willing to fulfil its Treaty obligations rightly expected by other EU institutions and the legislators. The implementation of this is though severely hampered by the CoR's chronic and structural underfinancing and understaffing.
Communication		
19	Underlines that an external evaluation of the communication strategy of the Committee was carried out in accordance with the standards applied by all other Union institutions using a shared framework contract; notes that the quality of the Committee's communication did not always meet audience needs but is effective in an overall sense as key stakeholders have a positive perception of the Committee; invites the Committee to improve digital communication with the public and to enhance the visibility of its studies for stakeholders and for the Union citizens; encourages the Committee to reach out to Parliament to enhance cooperation, for instance through the organisation of joint meetings and events;	<p>The CoR implements an ambitious communication plan but faces clear limits due to its chronic and structural underfinancing and understaffing.</p> <p>The CoR has already taken up the Parliament's proposal to strengthen cooperation with the European Parliament and in particular with the EPLOs. This issue will also be addressed in a re-negotiation of the existing EP-CoR cooperation agreement.</p>
20	Requests that the Committee report on how it will implement the recommendations of the evaluation report; notes that the biggest successes of the Committee's communication are the citizens' dialogues with the Commission and the Committee's own local dialogues, the flagship events 'EuroPCom' (European conference on public communication) and	<p>The European Committee of the Regions has a published Communication Strategy with annual communication plans and external evaluations which are published.</p> <p>The recommendations of the evaluation</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
	<p>the 'European week of the regions and cities';</p>	<p>conducted and published in late 2019 were the basis for the recommendations made on 29 November 2019 by the outgoing Bureau. Communication was one of the 4 'Chantiers' (along with energising the legislative bodies, cooperation with other EU Institutions and strengthening bonds with regions/cities and their associations).</p> <p>For communication the recommendations of the outgoing bureau were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to make communication and politics go hand in hand: this was done in a single document on political strategy and communication: the political priorities adopted on 1 July 2020; - to maintain the campaigns-based approach with a maximum of 3 communication priorities at any one time: we increased media outreach by 15% and digital outreach by 20% in 2020 despite the pandemic. - to use communication as a catalyst for change, including involvement in the Conference on the Future of Europe (e.g. 9 May), active subsidiarity (e.g. 29/4), Young Elected Politicians and supporting the CoR's gender strategy. <p>The dialogues with citizens continue (for example in Bologna on 26/3 with the President of the European Parliament and Commissioner Dalli hosted by CoR Member Mayor Merola). The European Week of Regions and Cities and the EuroPCom conference both have made the transition to digital formats in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Communication and outreach was one of the original missions of the CoR along with its formal role as a consultative body – this work continues. The CoR implements an ambitious communication plan but faces clear limits due to its chronic and structural underfinancing (see also point 5).</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
----	-----------------	----------------------

Digitalisation, cybersecurity

21	<p>Welcomes the fact that the bureau of the Committee adopted a digital strategy at the beginning of 2019, on the basis of the Tallinn Declaration on e-Government with its core principle of 'Digital by default', and that implementation started following the adoption; notes that the main deliverables of the strategy are member-oriented information systems to support the political work of the Committee, information systems to support paperless administrative processes and a digital workplace programme; invites the Committee to enhance digitalisation through interinstitutional cooperation also;</p>	<p>The CoR is fully committed to enhance digitalisation in all areas. The CoR would like to underline that the existing cooperation with the EESC is the closest among EU institutions. However, the joint IT budget suffers from structural underfinancing. The CoR is open to more inter-institutional cooperation, particularly in this area.</p>
	<p>Welcomes the inter-institutional cyber cooperation for which the Committee received the assistance of the Computer Emergency Response Team for the EU institutions, bodies and agencies, such as on-the-job training for cloud security and cyber threat intelligence information for targeted attacks against Union bodies; notes that many of the digitalisation projects concern the digitalisation of human resources and financial processes, where the Committee uses the SYSPER and ABAC systems provided by the Commission; asks the Committee to examine the possibility of negotiating better conditions with the Commission to enhance and make the process of application sharing financially attractive;</p>	<p>The CoR is actively pursuing further use of EU inter-institutional IT-applications where this is feasible. The European Commission provides its services to the CoR based upon an adopted charge back-mechanism and conditions included in its internal rules.</p> <p>These aspects are included in service level agreements which form the basis inter alia for the pricing of the services provided. The European Commission does not accept negotiation on prices set based upon the mechanism and conditions enshrined in its internal rules.</p>
22		<p>It is therefore indispensable for the CoR that the European Commission and the Budget authority is not adjusting or cutting the related appropriations in the CoR's draft budget since they are included to pay for the services provided to the CoR by the European Commission.</p> <p>Moreover, the European Commission and the Budget authority ought not to demand savings in other areas of the draft budgets as a pre-condition for not adjusting or cutting the appropriations included in draft budgets to honour the prices charged for the service provided under the service level agreements. If this is not the case, the CoR might not succeed in more profound further developments with regard to the use of EU inter-institutional IT-applications.</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
		<p>In general, the CoR draws the Parliament's attention to the fact of its chronic and structural underfinancing affecting the CoR's capability to fulfil its Treaty functions and hampering the implementation of modernization projects requested by the European Parliament. The CoR will make proposals to address the problem in upcoming annual budget procedures and counts on the European Parliament's support in this regard.</p>
23	<p>Notes that the IT budget is shared with the EESC; highlights the fact that this IT budget was increased in 2019, based on budget transfers, from EUR 7 963 825 in 2018 to EUR 9 082 838,76 in 2019; welcomes the fact that the IT unit worked to deliver information systems supporting four operational domains, namely political work, document management, communication and HR/finance, and that, as regards the digital workplace, progress has been made with all aspects of the programme;</p>	<p>The fact that the CoR needed to increase its IT budget via a budget transfer in 2019 shows the chronic and structural underfinancing and understaffing of the CoR, also in this sector. This situation hampers the implementation of modernisation projects requested by the European Parliament. The CoR will make proposals to address the problem in upcoming annual budget procedures and counts on the European Parliament's support in this regard.</p>
24	<p>Welcomes the Committee's active policy on open-source technology; encourages the Committee to prioritise open source technology in order to prevent vendor lock-in, to retain control over its own technical systems, to provide stronger safeguards for the privacy and data protection of the users, and to increase security and transparency for the public; notes that 39 open source software applications were included in the inventory of software packages in 2019 and that there are currently active projects taking place to implement a new digital signature portal and a management console based on open source technology;</p>	
25	<p>Encourages the Committee to follow the recommendations of the European Data Protection Supervisor to renegotiate the inter-institutional licensing agreement and implementation contract, signed between the Union institutions and Microsoft in 2018, with the objective of achieving digital sovereignty, avoiding vendor lock-in and lack of control, and ensuring the protection of personal data;</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
----	-----------------	----------------------

Buildings, security

26 Welcomes the fact that a series of measures has been implemented to ensure adequate building security standards, such as the installation of new equipment for access control and the installation of a new closed-circuit television (CCTV) system; notes that the related security standards have reached the same level as those of Parliament and the Commission and that, moreover, the procurement process has started for the new visitor's management system planned to be installed in 2020;

27 Notes the guiding principles of the Committee's building strategy which include the geographical concentration of buildings, the preference for ownership rather than lease, a sustainable building management and multi-annual planning; notes that the working group set up jointly with the EESC established guidelines for the use and the distribution of office space, taking into account the situation in other Union bodies; appreciates that these parameters were presented to and discussed with staff representatives; acknowledges the Committee's transparent and cooperative approach vis-à-vis staff representatives; notes that a total of 241 work stations are not in use and asks the Committee to explain its plans for those work stations within the current building strategy;

Those work stations will be used to house part of the staff leaving the VMA building (rue Van Maerlant 2) in Summer 2021 when1 in order to undertake the refurbishments works will start. The other part of the staff leaving the VMA will be housed ion the B100 building (rue Belliard 100). (The office floors of the VMA will be empty during the period of works, between September 2021 and September 2022.)

Once the refurbishments work of the VMA are concluded, those available work stations will be used to house around 200 staff members out of 400 that will leave the B68 (rue Belliard 68) and T74 (rue de Trèves 74) buildings. These buildings will be transferred to the Commission in September 2022 in application of the administrative agreement signed in 2019. The remaining 200 staff members will be housed in the B100.

28 Recognises that the Committee together with the EESC has given instructions to remove asbestos in autumn 2020 while fully respecting the necessary protection measures during the works as requested in the 2018 discharge resolution; welcomes the fact that most of the buildings of both the Committee and the EESC are asbestos free; expresses concerns over the health of workers and the presence of asbestos in the VMA building; acknowledges however that the Committee has received an asbestos-safe certificate;

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
<i>Internal management, internal control and finance</i>		
29	Underlines the fact that the Committee formulates clear key performance indicators for its different administrative areas by formulating objectives and results and setting out the related number of human resources; asks the Committee to provide <u>in the next annual activity report</u> in addition to that very detailed information a consolidated version of the major objectives and the results achieved and to explore data visualisation options for more reader-friendly key performance indicator tables;	The CoR continues to develop the presentation in its Annual Activity Reports considering praxis developed by EU-institutions with a similar political mandate.
30	Notes that a compliance and effectiveness exercise was launched in 2019 to assess to what extent the Committee complies with the 16 internal control standards; notes that the 2019 compliance exercise showed that the overall state of implementation and effectiveness of the requirements remained satisfactory and stable as compared to 2018; notes, however, that areas for further improvement were identified including the alignment of the Committee's mission and organisational structure with new priorities, administrative cooperation between the Parliament and the Committee, further digitalisation of data storage and simplification of administrative processes as well as an in-depth revamp of the existing business continuity plan arising from the experiences acquired during the current COVID-19 situation; calls on the Committee to report on the implementation of these much needed improvements in a follow-up to the 2019 discharge;	<p>A new organisational chart was adopted in December 2020 and entered into force on 1 March 2021, to match better matching the new main political priorities of the CoR.</p> <p>The cross-service Task Force on "Simplification of the administrative environment" elaborated a set of administrative simplification measures, many of which being under implementation. In the Management Plan 2021-2022, a Modernisation and Simplification Objective was set for each Directorate.</p> <p>While a paperless policy and digitalisation were previously defined as a priority, much progress was achieved in 2020 due to the extra-ordinary Covid-19 circumstances: like other institutions, the CoR had to immediately switch to paperless workflows and working methods. The Task Force on "Electronic Workflows & XML" examined workflows to be (further) digitalised/streamlined. Also in 2020, a new IT governance was set up.</p> <p>During the Covid-19 pandemic, the CoR managed to ensure business continuity in almost all areas of activity, however, the experience handling the crisis has shown that the Committee's current Business Continuity Plan (BCP) can be improved.</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
		<p>In order to keep developing the institution's readiness for and resilience to major disruptions, as well as to ensure that our services will be able to continue operating to the extent possible, an in-depth revision of the BCP was launched in 2020.</p> <p>A revised business continuity (BC) policy is being elaborated and is planned to be adopted in the course of 2021, providing a clear roadmap for continuing and/or restoring the CoR's priority business functions during and after a crisis.</p>
31	<p>Notes that monitoring of the internal audit function is provided by the audit committee composed of one member per political group of the Committee's commission of financial and administrative affairs and one high-level external advisor; observes that in 2019 the audit committee held two meetings where the 2018 annual internal report and the 2020 work programme were presented and members were informed about the progress achieved with regard to ongoing audits and open recommendations as well as related risks; notes that 57 % of very important recommendations were closed after six months (target for 2019 to -2020: 75 %) and 100 % of very important recommendations were closed after 12 months (target for 2019 to -2020: 100 %); suggests that the Committee include a summary of the audit recommendations in its annual activity report;</p>	
32	<p>Observes that the internal financial rules for the implementation of the Committee's budget were updated on 1 January 2019 by its decision No 0014/2018 and have been implemented throughout 2019; notes with satisfaction the inclusion of the operational agents as formal actors in the financial approval workflow and the appointment of managers responsible for operational management as authorising officers by sub-delegation;</p>	
33	<p>Welcomes the fact that for the 2019 exercise all authorising officers by sub-delegation signed their individual declarations of assurance, that all reports on</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
	<p>exceptions were mentioned in the relevant declarations of assurance and that corrective measures are being implemented and monitored to prevent these exceptions from recurring;</p>	
34	<p>Calls on the Committee to strengthen its efforts to analyse the situation with a view to attaining a fully paperless tendering environment for all procurement procedures; notes that this would make it necessary to acquire the public procurement management tool developed by the Commission's Joint Research Centre, alongside the development or acquisition of an improved back-office document management system; notes that the existing 'paperless workflow from invoice to payment' procedure was extended to a number of additional units and directorates in the course of 2019 and that the Committee's objective for the coming years is to further extend the scope of paperless workflows to other types of transactions, taking into account available IT resources;</p>	<p>The CoR has made important progress in extending the scope of paperless workflows and will continue its efforts. However, further progress is often hampered by limited IT resources.</p>
35	<p>Appreciates the fact that based on the European Ombudsman's Practical recommendations for the EU administration on the use of official EU languages when communicating with the public (case SI/98/2018/DDJ), the Committee distributed these practical recommendations to all staff; notes that in 2019 the Committee also took the initiative of issuing a guide on staff complaints to the European Ombudsman in order to ensure an accurate follow-up;</p>	
36	<p>Notes that the total cost of outsourced translation for the Committee and the EESC was EUR 6 043 592 in 2019 with the Committee's share amounting to EUR 2 492 830 and that the total cost of translation in-house would have been EUR 8 781 075 with the Committee's share amounting to EUR 3 621 974;</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
37	Requests the Committee to provide information on the on-going rationalisation process in the area of translation which mainly consists of a merger between different translation units; asks the Committee to report on any achieved efficiency gains made due to rationalisation and any related risks;	Sixteen translation units have already been merged. Eight head of unit posts have thus been freed up and redeployed. The merging has proceeded smoothly and no negative impact on the quality of service to the two Committees has been noted. The mergers continue step by step as heads of unit leave.

Inter-institutional cooperation

38	Emphasises the importance of inter-institutional cooperation and notes that the Committee paid approximately EUR 6 million under service level agreements made with other Union bodies in 2019; notes that this cooperation ensures synergies and is in addition to the joint services arrangement between the Committee and the EESC; notes that the Committee holds its plenary sessions in Parliament's and the Commission's premises, that it purchases interpreting services from Parliament and the Commission and that it cooperates with several Union entities with respect to HR, IT and other administrative areas;	
39	Appreciates the cooperation agreement of 5 February 2012 which remains in place between the Committee and Parliament and which covers political cooperation between Parliament and the Committee and administrative cooperation between Parliament, the Committee and the EESC; asks the Committee that it be informed on the outcome of the revision of this agreement;	The CoR will continue to work towards further increasing the political and administrative cooperation with the European Parliament; the CoR President and CoR Secretary General are in contact with their EP counterparts on a suggested revision of the CoR-EP cooperation agreement.
40	Calls on the Committee to report on any achievements related to the negotiation of a new cooperation agreement with the Commission as the current cooperation agreement with the Commission (from 2005 with an addendum from 2007) ended on 31 December 2019, but was extended for one year;	The protocol of cooperation between the CoR and the European Commission (latest update in 2012 (2012/C 102/02)) is currently still in force and has no end date. In 2020 close cooperation with the European Commission continued under the umbrella of the protocol of cooperation, with Joint action plans on the Green Deal, Integration of migrants, as well as Research and Innovation were adopted.

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
		<p>Closer cooperation is foreseen, notably in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe.</p> <p>The CoR will, however, take up the proposal of the Parliament and suggest an update of the CoR-EC cooperation agreement, in particular to step up joint communication efforts to better reach out to citizens.</p>
41	<p>Asks the Committee to report back on any control mechanism to ensure an efficient management of the joint services with the EESC; appreciates the importance of the administrative cooperation between the Committee and the EESC via the joint services, whereby the Committee and the EESC pool some 470 staff (of which around 170 staff belong to the Committee) and more than EUR 50 million yearly (of which some EUR 22 million come from the Committee), excluding salary related expenditure; notes that together with the concerned salary related expenditure, the yearly monetary value of the joint services arrangement exceeds EUR 100 million; notes that the negotiations for a new agreement for administrative cooperation with the EESC (the existing agreement has been entered into for the period 2016- to 2020) were postponed due to the COVID-19-crisis, something which added to the complexity of the changes of mandate of the Committee in early 2020 and the EESC in autumn 2020; notes that the Committee and the EESC agreed therefore to extend the term of the current agreement until 30 June 2021;</p>	<p>Information about the control mechanisms for the EESC's and the CoR's management of their joint services including what is managed jointly are detailed in the administrative cooperation agreement between the two Committees. The existing agreement is presently under revision and it will be shared with the EP once the revision is concluded and agreed.</p> <p>Due to the Covid-19 situation and the need to properly involve members and staff in the renegotiation procedure, the EESC and the CoR agreed to extend the existing cooperation agreement for 4 months.</p>
42	<p>Invites the Committee, in light of the the existing cooperation agreements between Parliament, the Committee and the European Economic and Social CommitteeEESC; invites the Committee to identify further potential synergies and savings, including other areas in which back-office functions could be shared;</p>	<p>The CoR stands ready to explore further cooperation with the EP; see also point 39 above.</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
43	<p>Supports the Committee and the EESC in the view that, in the event of an extension of the current agreement or of a new agreement with Parliament, all outstanding issues must be settled such as the unbalanced situation for the Committee and the EESC, which transferred a total of 60 translators to Parliament (including 24 from the Committee) and in exchange only obtained the use of the services of the European Parliamentary Research Service; notes with concern that as a consequence the Committee and the EESC had to hire contract staff and outsourced their translation services which resulted in an effective budget reduction; is aware of the requests expressed by both the Committee and the EESC in the frame of the discharge procedure for the ongoing cooperation agreement to be respected so that the Committee and the EESC are compensated for the posts transferred to Parliament; asks the three involved parties to jointly report to Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control concerning the ongoing review of the agreement;</p>	<p>The CoR very much welcomes this assessment of the Parliament which it shares. The CoR suggests to address this matter in the context of the discussions on further administrative cooperation with the EP.</p> <p>The CoR recalls in this context that the loss of 24 posts added further strain on the Committee's staffing situation. The CoR believes that this matter needs to be addressed in upcoming annual budget procedures and counts on the European Parliament's support in this regard.</p>
44	<p>Underlines the Committee's acknowledgement in its written answers to Parliament that cooperation with Parliament in 2019 continued to build on the achievements of previous years and revealed a satisfactory progress on several levels such as the relations between the commissions of the Committee and the committees of Parliament, new ways of cooperation including contributions to implementation reports and fact-finding missions and a successful and impactful cooperation through Parliament's Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development; stresses that the Committee has requested that political cooperation continue to be further developed while respecting the autonomy and the specific approaches of each parliamentary committee and commission of the Committee; notes that the cooperation with Parliament the Committee has established the foundation for a sustainable working relationship with Parliament, it intensified cooperation with the parliamentary committees and it secured involvement in European Semester work, a reserved seat during parliamentary committee meetings, the use of the services of the European Parliamentary Research Service, joint projects and synergies on translation, opening of pathways between the buildings of Parliament and the buildings of the Committee and EESC, a service level agreement</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
	<p>including provisions of interpretation services and technical support by Parliament, regular use of Parliament buildings in Brussels as well as of Parliament's Liaison Offices in the Member States for events and activities, intensified cooperation in the area of informatics, mutual access to canteens, multiple cooperation mechanisms to ensure a coherent approach and create synergies in the field of information and communication and, where necessary, legal advice in technical or administrative matters from Parliament's Legal Service;</p>	
45	<p>Notes that the cooperation with Parliament at the administrative level is successful; agrees on the need to further enhance political cooperation with respect to annual and multi-annual programming, to the joint declaration of Parliament, the Council and the Commission on legislative priorities and to the monitoring of the annual work programme; supports the Committee's concrete recommendations to develop a more systematic approach to political cooperation given the importance of the Committee as the representative of regions and cities in the Union; appreciates the participation of the Committee in the Joint Committee on Equal Opportunities;</p>	<p>The CoR welcomes this assessment of the Parliament, which it shares. It has already taken action to start a renegotiation of a more balanced and more political cooperation agreement.</p>
46	<p>Stresses the importance of promoting the involvement of regional and local authorities in the shaping of Union policies via enhanced cooperation with the Commission and the co-legislators;</p>	<p>Please see point 45</p>
47	<p>Asks the Committee to be kept informed of any improvements made with respect to the efficiency of administrative processes, which seem to be an unavoidable result of an ever-increasing workload and a rapidly changing world; reiterates the necessity of on-going reforms in order to ensure that the Committee is well equipped to respond to future challenges;</p>	<p>Early in 2020, an administrative reform programme under the title "Going for IMPact!" was launched. The plan includes a comprehensive set of measures to make the administration's support to the CoR's political mission more strategic, to use the CoR's resources in a more efficient way and to boost the impact and outreach of the institution.</p> <p>As part of the reform, an exercise of administrative simplification of processes and procedures (cutting red-tape) was initiated, with the CoR Bureau adopting a simplification strategy on 7 December 2020. At the same time, the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the digitalization of processes throughout 2020.</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
		<p>The CoR draws the Parliament's attention to the fact that the structural underfinancing and understaffing of the CoR hampers the implementation of modernization projects requested by the European Parliament and has to be addressed and rebalanced urgently by the budget authorities.</p>
48	<p>Recognises and welcomes the Committee's involvement in Parliament's electoral campaign in 2019 by ensuring the mobilisation of all its internal and external networks in promoting both the 'This time I'm voting' ground game and the 'Choose your future' online video, as well as through the Committee's social media outreach; encourages further cooperation activities for the purpose of creating synergies in the field of communication;</p>	<p>The CoR stands ready to step up cooperation in the field of communication and to support the next European election campaign. This will be taken up in the envisaged renegotiation of the CoR-EP cooperation agreement.</p> <p>The CoR has already joined forces with the EP AFCO Committee in rolling out the "Building Europe with Local Entities (BELE) project. In this context the CoR launched a European Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors" which will also be put at the disposal of MEPs once fully established.</p> <p>The CoR draws, however, the Parliament's attention to the fact that the chronic and structural underfinancing and understaffing of the CoR hampers the implementation of more ambitious cooperation in communication requested by the European Parliament. The CoR will make proposals to address the problem in upcoming annual budget procedures and counts on the European Parliament's support in this regard.</p>

Environmental dimension

49	<p>Notes the Committee's efforts in the context of the environmental management system as regards the lowering of the carbon footprint and reducing plastic, food and paper waste; agrees that lowering the carbon footprint is among the most important objectives for</p>	<p>The electricity consumed at the CoR premises is provided via an inter-institutional contract (the same used by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission) and concerns exclusively</p>
----	---	--

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
	<p>the coming years; calls on the Committee to pay due attention to the energy mix of its sources of electricity and encourages the procurement of electricity generated by wind, solar, bio and hydroplants; encourages the Committee to participate in projects in areas which are related with other Union bodies and to elaborate a comprehensive plan for the Committee to implement the principles and recommendations presented in the European Green Deal, with the general objective of becoming climate neutral by 2030;</p>	<p>green energy from sustainable sources. The contract foresees the supply of energy produced from renewable non-fossil sources, namely: wind, solar, aerothermal, geothermal, hydrothermal, marine and hydroelectric, biomass, landfill gas, gas from wastewater treatment plants and biogas.</p>
<i>Ethics and integrity policy</i>		
50	<p>Underlines the fact that on 5 December 2019 the Committee adopted a code of conduct for its members laying down a detailed procedure in the event of alleged harassment of a member of staff by a Committee member, which is largely based on Parliament's Bureau's Decision of 2 July 2018 on harassment complaints; welcomes the fact that the code of conduct includes a number of sanctions in order to ensure its observance and that the Committee has set up an advisory board on harassment; asks the Committee to present a report on the implementation of the code of conduct;</p>	<p>A report will be provided separately later on during the 2021 budget implementation year.</p>
51	<p>Observes that the code of conduct is mentioned in the members' page of the Committee's website with link to a dedicated page; notes that the code of conduct includes provisions that specifically aim to avoid instances of conflicts of interests, including the obligation to submit a declaration of financial interests;</p>	
52	<p>Welcomes the opening of a dialogue with different stake-holders in order to review the current internal decision No 362/2010 of 29 November 2010 concerning psychological and sexual harassment at work on the basis of a proposal for a changed framework to combat harassment which aims to broaden the scope of the matter by including prevention measures and means of conflict resolution, as well as reinforcing the principle of zero tolerance towards harassment, including courses on preventing harassment; calls on the Committee to establish a new framework on harassment as soon as possible and to report on its follow-up actions to Parliament</p>	<p>After intensive preparation and social dialogue, the CoR adopted in April 2021 a new decision No 108/2021 on protecting dignity at work, managing conflict and combating harassment. The decision outlines in a comprehensive and holistic way the rules of conducts, as well as the possible informal and formal conflict resolution mechanisms. Furthermore, a dedicated practical guide provides additional information and complements the decision. With the new decision the CoR disposes of a modern and ambitious legal framework protecting dignity at work and preventing and managing conflict. It underlines the CoR's zero tolerance policy towards harassment.</p>

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
53	<p>Notes that no new cases of whistleblowing have been submitted in 2019; welcomes the fact that at the end of 2019 the Committee launched a survey on awareness of staff ethics, containing in particular numerous questions on the awareness of staff regarding whistleblowing procedures, and that the outcome has been followed up in 2020; notes that decision No 508/2015 defines the safe channels at the disposal of members of staff to address whistleblowing reports internally to any manager of the Committee of their choice or directly to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF); notes that before launching such a procedure, guidance may be sought from the persons responsible for ethical and statutory matters;</p>	
54	<p>Asks the Committee to follow the good example of other bodies in publishing on its website a chapter on ethics, consisting of rules to prevent, identify and avoid potential conflicts of interests and which are applicable to all members and staff of the Committee; expresses its interest in receiving updates on the ethical framework and related training courses on public ethics, including for incoming staff;</p>	<p>From 2019, ethics topics have been progressively integrated in all publications and info-sessions, induction courses for newcomers. Since 2020, a new ethics related in-house training course on public ethics is provided, which is compulsory for all staff members. An action plan on the ethical framework of the institution has been drafted and will be implemented within the next two years' period, comprising a chapter on ethics on its website and revamping ethical rules including also rules on conflict of interest. In the framework of the implementation of this Action Plan on the ethical framework of the institution, a fully-fledged communication and raising awareness raising campaign will be launched for all staff.</p>
55	<p>Asks the Committee to start the procedure for joining the inter-institutional agreement on the mandatory Transparency Register, which was recently reached between the Parliament, Commission and Council; recalls the importance of a high level of transparency with respect to lobbying meetings which might influence members and staff in their advisory role to the Union institutions;;</p>	<p>The CoR is waiting for the final adoption of the interinstitutional agreement. Once it is adopted, the political instances of the CoR will examine the possible involvement or participation of the CoR, which is voluntary for Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies other than the three signatory institutions.</p>
56	<p>Reiterates what the Court stated in its "Special Report 13/2019, the ethical frameworks of the audited EU institutions: scope for improvement", namely that ethical conduct in public affairs contributes to more sound financial management</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
	<p>and to increased public trust, and that unethical behaviour by staff and members of the Union institutions and bodies attracts high levels of public interest and reduces trust in Union institutions;</p>	
57	<p>Appreciates the progress on Mr. McCoy's case in response to the 2018 Discharge; notes the work done by successive rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs for other Institutions who opened the long-stalled dialogue; recalls that the third invalidity committee unanimously confirmed that the former internal auditor was invalidated out on occupational grounds and that, subsequently, on 26 June 2019 the Committee formally endorsed this conclusion; notes that pursuant to article 78(5) of the staff regulations Mr. McCoy was reimbursed in July 2019 in respect of all his contributions to the pension scheme from the date he started receiving the invalidity allowance (1 July 2007) to the day before he started receiving retirement pension (31 July 2010);</p>	<p>Pursuant to Art. 78(5) of the Staff Regulations, Mr McCoy has been fully compensated for the recognised occupational origin of his invalidity by the payment of 25.715,99 euros transferred to him by the PMO in July 2019.</p>
58	<p>Recalls that, based on the 2017 discharge resolution, the appointment of a Member of Parliament as mediator took place and that all parties de facto entered into a mediation process to bring the dispute between the Committee and former internal auditor, Mr. McCoy, to an end with the objective of reaching an amicable settlement; the first phase of mediation led to the signature of a Joint Statement on 4 December 2020 on the principles governing the resolution of Mr McCoy's bona fide whistle-blower case; notes that this concluded the non-financial part of the settlement; recalls that the second phase of the mediation, focusing on the financial settlement, has also been launched and is currently under way;</p>	<p>After having closed the non-financial part, the CoR is fully committed to finding a solution on the financial settlement. Talks between the CoR, Mr McCoy and the EP mediator, MEP in't Veld are ongoing.</p>
59	<p>Appreciates the exchange held in the context of the 2019 discharge procedure on 10 November 2020 with the mediator, Mr. McCoy and a representative of the Committee; recalls that Mr. McCoy and the Committee were invited to a meeting of Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control based on a suggestion by the 2018 rapporteur for the other Institutions and</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
	<p>approved by the coordinators of the political groups; underlines the importance of de-escalating the situation and reconciling the positions of Mr. McCoy and of the Committee; welcomes the mediator's suggestion of a meeting between the President of the Committee and Mr. McCoy as a starting point for reconciliation before the start of the negotiations;</p>	
60	<p>Welcomes the letter of 10 November 2020 sent to the chairperson of Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control by the chairperson of the Committee's committee on financial and administrative affairs confirming the readiness of the Committee's President to meet Mr McCoy;</p> <p>welcomes the follow-up meetings between the mediator, the 2019 discharge rapporteur, the former internal auditor and the Committee's representatives; warmly welcomes the letter of 4 December 2020 announcing that the first phase of the procedure for an agreement was concluded with a joint statement signed by the Committee's representatives and Mr McCoy;</p> <p>encourage the parties to find an agreement to settle the financial part and reminds its disposal to support the negotiation; appreciates the efforts made by all parties, acknowledges that an important first step was taken and believes an agreement should be reached soon;</p>	
	<p>Welcomes the fact that the President and the secretary-general of the Committee readily made a firm commitment to reach an amicable settlement and thus conclude the case;</p>	
61	<p>notes that on 4 December 2020 with the contribution of Parliament's mediator, Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control, Mr. McCoy and the President and the secretary-general of the Committee concluded a joint statement on the principles governing the resolution of the case in line with Parliament's demands since 2004 and the CoR, with Mr. McCoy's consent, have published the joint statement on the Committee's website.</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
62	<p>Acknowledges that in the joint statement, the Committee in particular accepts without reservation the OLAF report and its conclusions and acknowledges its past mistakes and shortcomings; recognises, like Parliament, that Mr. McCoy was right to take his concerns directly to Parliament and that it should have done more to comply with Parliament's 2004 demands, including that Mr. McCoy must suffer no adverse consequences as a result of having reported wrongdoing; recognises Mr. McCoy as a bona fide whistleblower as conferred politically in 2004 by Parliament and is sorry that Mr. McCoy was not protected despite having offered him the protection as a whistleblower in 2003; sincerely regrets the considerable harm the Committee has caused Mr. McCoy, the way in which it treated him and its insufficient observance of its duty of care; and accepts that the case should never have been allowed to remain unresolved for more than seventeen years;</p>	
63	<p>Notes with satisfaction that the President and the secretary-general of the Committee has presented their formal apology to Mr. McCoy on these grounds and for the Committee's mishandling of his case, that the Committee and Mr. McCoy have committed to settle the financial aspects of the settlement with support from Parliament's legal service and under the political guidance of Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control, and that the Committee has reiterated its full commitment to the rules and principles of whistleblower protection and, more particularly, to the inalienable principles of equity and fairness, has drawn the necessary conclusions from Mr. McCoy's case and has taken all necessary steps in respect of its internal governance to ensure that such a situation cannot arise again; urges all parties to reach a financial agreement as soon as possible;</p>	<p>The CoR welcomes Parliament's decision to support the settlement by granting the support of its Legal Service, which should give concrete guidance.</p>
64	<p>Acknowledges the efforts made by the negotiating teams to reconcile the two parties and commends them for brokering a potential basis for a fair, just and appropriately honourable resolution to this dispute;</p>	

Nr	Resolution text	Follow-up by the CoR
65	Urges all parties to conclude an agreement on a fair financial settlement as a follow-up to the joint statement without further undue delay; recognises the sincerity of the request by the Committee to Parliament's Legal Service for its assistance in concluding such financial settlement;	The settlement discussion with MEP in 't Veld are ongoing (trilateral meeting held on 19.3.2021 and 16.4.2021).
66	Notes that the Committee was originally established to address important issues, as about three quarters of Union legislation is implemented at local or regional level for which reason it was necessary for local and regional representatives to have a say in the development of new Union laws; further notes that its original mission was to close the widening gap between the public and the process of European integration by involving regional representation;	The CoR agrees with the assessment that through its members it can – in addition to its consultative role in the development of EU law - make an important contribution to closing the widening gap between the public and the process of European integration. However, so far the CoR has been hampered by structural underfinancing and understaffing. The CoR will make proposals to address the problem in upcoming annual budget procedures and counts on the European Parliament's support in this regard.
67	Encourages the Committee to consider preparing a plan for reorganisation and streamlining of internal processes in order to achieve as such processes could lead to a closer cooperation with Parliament and and, through reforming the Committee, the application of its know- inknowledge in a more effective way;	This will be taken up in the envisaged renegotiations of the CoR-EP cooperation agreement.
68	Welcomes that the Committee published on its website annual reports on to present the impact assessments of its opinions since 2010; in relation to its opinions; invites the Committee, furthermore, to set clear and measurable key performance indicators for the coming years in order to optimise its functioning.	In 2020 the political level nominated one of the CoR commission chairs as political responsible for Impact Oversight Coordinator. A first report was presented to the Conference of Presidents in December 2020. The report contains an array of proposals to achieve, to measure and evaluate the CoR's impact. As one of the concrete measures, in the 2020 annual impact report key performance indicators will be identified, to be used for measuring impact during 2021. These indicators will be further developed and fine-tuned in the next years.



European Committee of the Regions

Created in 1994, after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 350 regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States, representing over 507 million Europeans. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union if its rights are infringed or it believes that EU law infringes the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

Edited by the Directorate for Communication of the European Committee of the Regions

Brussels, May 2021

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 101 | 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel | BELGIQUE/BELGIË
Tel. +32 22822211 | e-mail: PublicationsCdR@cor.europa.eu | www.cor.europa.eu
 @EU_CoR |  /european.committee.of.the.regions |  /european-committee-of-the-regions

