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European Commission

Annual Activity Report 2021

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND SECURITY

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Our mission

'To promote excellence in the practice of human resource management and in ensuring internal security for the European Commission.'

Our values

- A commitment to honest, fair and ethical practice.
- A commitment to providing quality services to our staff, management and stakeholders.
- Provision of an environment that encourages innovation and recognition of accomplishments.
- Leadership in the promotion and development of human resource professionals.

Our activities

In pursuing our mission, we carry out the following main types of activities:

- set the HR framework within which an effective and efficient use of resources can take place,
- deliver HR services from recruitment to retirement;
- support HR service delivery by professionalising the HR function and automating processes;
- provide health promotion and education measures for active staff;
- ensure the safety, security and protection of staff, property, activities and information at all places of employment;
- ensure full respect of the Staff Regulations;
- ensure open and efficient dialogue with staff representatives in order to guarantee adequate working conditions;
- provide local HR shared services to several Commission Services.

Our legal framework

The legal framework regarding EU staff matters is found in several legal sources which, when combined, constitute the body of law governing the European Civil Service:

- Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)
- Staff Regulations of Officials (SR) and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union (CEOS)
- Delegated acts
- EU Directives
- Case law
- Report on the implementation of the Staff Regulations by all institutions

Our system

SYSPER is the main HR management information system supporting most HR processes under the responsibility of DG HR.

Our resources

In 2021, DG HR counted 1 332 statutory staff members. DG HR's implemented its budget of EUR 282 million under centralised direct management.

Our organisation

In 2021, DG HR prepared a large-scale reorganisation that was implemented in 2022. DG HR continues to be organised in 8 directorates with staff members based in Brussels (84%), in Luxembourg (9%), in ISPRA (6%) and in other EU countries (1%).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Activity Report is a management report of the Director-General of DG Human resources and security (DG HR) to the College of Commissioners. Annual Activity Reports are the main instrument of management accountability within the Commission and constitute the basis on which the College takes political responsibility for the decisions it takes as well as for the coordinating, executive and management functions it exercises, as laid down in the Treaties.[1]

A. Key results and progress towards achieving the Commission's general objectives and DG's specific objectives

In 2021, DG HR aimed at providing a solid base to deliver on the political priorities set out in Commissioner Hahn's mission letter.

A new human resources strategy to continue modernising the Commission

At the start of this Commission, President von der Leyen mandated Commissioner Hahn to develop a new HR strategy for the Commission, with a view to further modernising the organisation. The purpose of the new strategy is to maintain and to develop the Commission as a modern, diverse and flexible organisation with a skilled and dedicated workforce.

Work on the new strategy is at an advanced stage; it is planned to be adopted in spring 2022, together with a detailed action plan for 2022 and subsequent years.

Gender equality at all levels of Commission management

In 2021, the comprehensive set of measures and actions put in place the previous year in the pursuit of gender equality at all levels of management bore fruit.

At senior management level, the combination of these binding measures and flanking actions led to an unprecedented increase in female appointments. At middle management level, the female appointment targets assigned to each Directorate-General led to a steady improvement of female representation.

A majority of women were designated as Deputies to Director and a majority of newly appointed Deputy Heads of Unit were also women; both these roles represent an excellent opportunity to gain exposure to higher management responsibilities.

The talent management initiatives, resources and programmes deployed to support women aspiring to management were also instrumental to nurture and develop the pool of female talent.

[1] Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union

The Commission as a diverse and inclusive place to work

In early 2021, DG HR set up a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Office under the authority of the Director-General. The Office's mission is to liaise with the directorates and units in DG HR to promote diversity, equality and inclusion in the Commission. The Office, working closely with the SG Task Force on Equality Secretariat conducted the first ever diversity and inclusion survey of Commission staff in March 2021. The results of the survey have provided data to guide the new HR strategy and will be further used to update a detailed diversity and inclusion action plan.

DG HR, together with EPSO and the other EU institutions, has revised the selection model in order to ensure greater diversity of candidates corresponding to DGs' needs. In addition, DG HR closely monitored the progress of the competitions in partnership with EPSO and other institutions with a view to reducing the time needed to produce reserve lists. A new modern competency framework has been developed to keep up with current trends and recruitment needs.

DG HR has also continued to closely monitor geographical balance and has prepared measures, including updated figures for guiding rates per Member State, that will be implemented in the framework of the new HR strategy.

Implement the full digitalisation of the Commission

DG HR is driving the practical implementation of digitalisation through the HR Modernisation and Digital Transformation programme. The programme addresses both the redesign of the HR services, the underlying business processes and HR IT platforms, with the aim of maximising the digital potential for our clients, up to inter-institutional level.

The programme builds upon and integrates existing actions both within DG HR and at corporate level, notably in the HR business intelligence domain: moving from standardised operational reporting through a reporting toolbox for managers to advanced analytics and insights which contribute directly to a digital administration. Our work in 2021 has been instrumental in refining the blueprint of the target HR ecosystem, including its integration into the corporate landscape, in defining the gradual implementation, bringing early business value, and in fostering the alignment with HR strategy and its priorities.

The Commission has the right infrastructure to face up to ever evolving physical and digital security threats

In 2021, DG HR worked on all strands of its security operations to reinforce the protection of the Commission's interests. Protecting the Commission's sensitive and classified information featured high on the agenda.

DG HR prepared a major legislative initiative to harmonise the rules governing information security across all EU institutions, bodies and agencies in the context of the EU Security Strategy Union.

Regarding physical assets, DG HR upgraded its protection against unauthorised access and hostile attempts to gain access to Commission premises, with a particular focus on the Commission's most sensitive buildings.

Evolving security threats require constant adaptation, not only of our internal policies but also of our internal structures. To achieve this, DG HR launched a project to integrate - both physically and operationally - three security operations entities in a new Integrated Security Operations Center by 2024. This initiative forms part of the DG HR SIRIUS project, which aims to integrate the different components of security under one umbrella, based on a security risk management platform, in order to connect threats, incidents and mitigating security measures.

Implement the objectives of the Green Deal and to become climate neutral by 2030

In order to improve the Commission's environmental performance, DG HR has continued to implement and to register under the EMAS Regulation. In 2021, the EMAS extended its scope to four executive agencies and the Commission representations in Europe beginning with those in Vienna and Valletta.

Significant progress was made on all of the Commission's environmental performance indicators, with the pandemic accelerating the downward trend.

Building on the experience from EMAS, DG HR assumed a leading role in preparing the Commission Green Deal communication, including actions for becoming climate neutral by 2030.

In 2021, the Commission increased its building energy performance by moving to new higher efficiency buildings such as L107 and L-51.

Managing the COVID-19 crisis

Management of the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021, with an aim of keeping staff members safe while ensuring business continuity.

A large vaccination campaign against COVID-19 was done in Brussels for European Commission staff as well as for staff in executive agencies, joint undertakings, Committee of Regions, European Economic and Social Committee, EEAS, EDPS and European Schools.

B. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Result indicators	Baseline 2019	Interim milestone 2022	Target 2024	Latest known results 2021
Allocation of staff to priorities	55,9%	59%	60%	56.9%
Average length of the recruiting process				
When a medical visit is not needed	80% finalised within 30 calendar days	85% finalised within 21 calendar days	90% finalised within 14 calendar days	84.1% finalised within 30 calendar days 73.7% finalised within 21 calendar days
When medical visit is needed	80% finalised within 60 calendar days	80% finalised within 30 calendar days	80% finalised within 25 calendar days	83.1% finalised within 60 calendar days 29.8% finalised within 30 calendar days
Staff satisfaction index *	66%	68%	70%	68%
Staff motivation index *	60%	62%	65%	62%
Management index*	58%	59%	60%	63.5%

Number of recruitments and average length of the recruiting process

Despite the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, which had a significant impact on the recruitment process, DG HR maintained the same high output of recruitments as in the pre-pandemic period. In addition, recruitment processes have been further shortened. They are already close to the interim milestone for 2022, except for cases requiring involvement of the Medical Services (highly affected by the pandemic).

Year	Officials and temporary agents recruited	Contract agents recruited
2019	1310	1404
2021	1379	1404

C. Key conclusions on Financial management and Internal control

In accordance with the governance arrangements of the European Commission, DG HR conducts its operations in compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, working in an open and transparent manner and meeting the expected high level of professional and ethical standards.

To ensure the achievement of policy and management objectives, the Commission has adopted a set of internal control principles, based on international good practice. The financial regulation requires that the organisational structure and the internal control systems used to implement the budget be set up in accordance with these principles. In line with the Commission's internal control framework, DG HR has assessed its internal control systems during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective, and the components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies were identified related to IT security management. Further details are included in section 2.1.3.

In addition, DG HR has systematically examined the available control results and indicators, as well as the observations and recommendations issued by the internal auditor and the European Court of Auditors. These elements have been assessed to determine their impact on management's assurance about the achievement of the control objectives. Further details are included in section 2.1.

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

D. Provision of information to the Commissioner

In the context of the regular meetings during the year between the DG and the Commissioner on management matters, the main elements of this report and assurance declaration, have been brought to the attention of Commissioner Hahn, responsible for Budget and Administration.

1. KEY RESULTS and progress towards achieving the Commission’s general objectives and DG's specific objectives

DG HR Specific objective 1 Foster a modern and high-performing organisation

Make the organisation agile and fit-for-purpose

2021 was the first year of implementation of the new multi-annual financial framework. The allocation of resources will have to duly reflect changed priorities and particular needs of EU policy areas. DG HR will provide quantitative and qualitative inputs to resource allocation for the 7-year perspective and will ensure prompt implementation of decisions taken. First measures have been taken by establishing a contribution methodology based on HR indicators and political priorities with the aim of fostering inter and intra DG redeployment.

One of the lessons learnt during the pandemic is that new ways of working are possible. Workplace flexibility may go hand in hand with productivity and better work-life balance. Surveys showed that an overwhelming majority of colleagues wish to continue to work from home several days a week. The new working time and flexible working decision will make it possible (see separate specific section below).

The Commission's approach to office space is also evolving. Our offices increasingly offer both possibilities to collaborate, brainstorm, network and build relationships, and the opportunity for individual, focused work. An inter-service team, led by DG HR, was set up to help staff, managers and teams to make the most of their new flexible working environment (see also the section on the Workplace of the Future).

Working together with the One-Stop-Shop for Collaboration, of which DG HR is a founding member, DG HR provides consultancy support to help DGs work in more agile and collaborative ways. In particular, DG HR is a leading member of the change management team supporting the roll-out of M365, a set of tools which helps us work in more collaborative and efficient ways. The M365 pilot phase ended in November when the tools became an integral part of the moves towards more flexible ways of working.

In building towards a data-driven HR, ‘Managers’ HR dashboard’ was launched in March 2021, as a first data service from DG HR to managers across the Commission. It presents middle and senior managers with aggregate data and insights for their teams, including trends and benchmarks with DG or Commission averages. On a monthly basis, more than 40% of the Commission’s managers consult the dashboard and learn new insights about their teams.

Accompanying the HR strategy with data - the development of the HR strategy was a data-driven exercise, supported by data analyses in multiple domains, helping to shape the policies in those areas, including recruitment, gender balance in management, parental leave, forecasts on average age/function group/nationality, and more.

Toward digital transformation

The HR modernisation and digital transformation (HRT) programme aims to digitally transform the HR services delivery, propelled by a new HR IT platform. Like DG HR's reorganisation, the HRT programme is a key enabler of the new HR strategy. The programme is the Commission's digital strategy applied to the HR function. It focuses on client-centric services, processes and solutions, and fosters the use of data to create business insights, and seeks maximum interoperability and the highest levels of security and data protection.

Following the adoption of the HR IT transformation strategy in 2020, 2021 was devoted to define the blueprint of the best-fitting target architecture, leveraging commercially available solutions, fully respecting the imperatives in terms of data protection and cybersecurity. In addition, the integration of the new HR platform with corporate IT services, such as identity and document management, were launched. With a view to meet the challenges in terms of assuring business continuity, data protection and resource availability, the envisaged implementation was revised end of 2021, fostering a more incremental approach, yet delivering regular flagship projects. The first flagship projects focus on 'preselection, selection and recruitment' an 'HR Service Desk'. In parallel, emerging technologies such as process robotisation and usage of 'low code' platforms tools were tested on HR use cases. Whereas these technologies bring high potential, the experiences gained demonstrate that careful attention is required to integrate such technologies in a seamless, secured and sustained way into the IT ecosystem. These 2021-deliverables make us well-positioned test-drive the envisaged architecture, refine the data protection by design, the integration into the corporate IT ecosystem and the implementation plan.

In parallel, DG HR continued improving the current IT tools that support its policy priorities and its performance. Special efforts have been dedicated to support the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, the possibility of obtaining proof of vaccination, teleworking from abroad and the preparation for the return to office. DG HR has also invested in process automation and workflow digitalisation in order to create productivity and efficiencies. In addition, IT security and data protection of all HR IT systems have been addressed in a more structured way, creating the conditions for more in-depth work in 2022.

DG HR also strengthened its collaboration with the inter-institutional partners, onboarding new agencies in SYSPER, providing quality support to the EU organisations already using it and creating the necessary interest and involvement in the preparation for the future HR IT platform.

Work done in 2021 has been instrumental in defining the target architecture of the new HR IT platform and the subsequent implementation. Improved client service is the essential aim, ideally through a single user-friendly IT platform. As a step towards this, the use of StaffContact, a tool to ask online questions on HR issues, has been stabilised.

Greening the Commission

In order to improve the Commission's environmental performance, DG HR continued to coordinate the implementation of the Commission's environmental management system

(EMAS) and its registration under the EMAS Regulation. In 2021, EMAS was extended to four Executive Agencies (REA, ERCEA, EACEA and EISMEA) and the extension to the remaining two (CINEA and HaDEA) is in progress. The extension of EMAS to Commission Representations has started with Vienna and Valetta as pilots.

The pandemic accelerated the downward trend on all of the Commission's environmental performance indicators. This resulted in overachieving all milestones for 2020. Performance was particularly strong for paper and non-hazardous waste reduction, whilst energy-related parameters and water were more strongly tied to the buildings operation and therefore not reducing as much in percentage terms.

Using its experience from EMAS, DG HR assumed a leading role in the preparation of the Communication on greening the Commission, which contains actions contributing to the objective of climate neutrality by 2030. DG HR updated the EMAS Environmental Policy and the EMAS Global Annual Action Plan 2022 to reflect the objectives and actions from the draft Communication.

Foster collaboration with partners

In order to foster collaboration, DG HR maintains trusted partnerships with external stakeholders. DG HR has ensured a broad coordination with other institutions, Member States and international organisations and further exchanged best practice on staff policies.

DG HR supports agencies and institutions by providing to them with a wide range of services via Service Level Agreements: from the Medical Services through legal and security, as well as learning (EU-LEARN), SYSPER and others. Furthermore, DG HR cooperates with the executive agencies and parent DGs for the redesigned portfolios of the delegation of implementation tasks.

DG HR strives to harmonise and rationalise HR policies in executive and decentralised agencies and joint undertakings. For executive agencies, DG HR provides specific assistance regarding the next delegation of programmes for the period 2021 – 2027, with special focus on the transfer of programmes from the ex-CHAFEA executive agency in Luxembourg to Brussels and the set-up of the new Health and Digital Executive Agency.

In 2021, the Commission adopted two reports prepared by DG HR, which are required by the Staff Regulations (SR). One report under Article 110(6) of the SR, providing an exhaustive inventory of all the implementing rules adopted by appointing authorities across all EU institutions and agencies, showing a wide use of the mechanisms for coherency. The other, adopted under Article 113 of the SR, offering a full review of the functioning of the SR in all institutions, including on promotion rate and career progression, as mandated by Article 6 of the SR. This report showed that the SR have withstood scrutiny by other stakeholders, including in cases brought before the Court of Justice.

DG HR has developed a system of administrative cooperation to share experience and exchange best practice in HR matters with Member States through the European Network for Public Administration (EUPAN) and international organisations such as the United Nations. In June 2021, an EUPAN ministerial meeting took place in Lisbon under the Portuguese

presidency. Following the conclusions adopted by the Ministers, the Commission is participating in a pilot EU leadership exchange programme between Member States, focused on HR management and digitalisation.

DG HR Specific objective 2 Foster a secure, ethical, engaging workplace

Managing the COVID-19 crisis

Management of the Commission's response to the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021, with the aim of keeping staff members safe while ensuring business continuity. DG HR ensured coordination and follow-up with relevant services of the COVID-19 Task Force activities chaired by Commissioner Hahn. DG HR monitored the number of confirmed cases in the Commission, provided quick responses to the crisis, defined rules and guidelines for staff and managers relating to teleworking and flexitime arrangements, leave, selection and recruitment, health, missions and meetings as well as protocols and FAQs. The necessary legal bases and data protection records for processing the related personal data were also put in place.

DG HR chaired a group for inter-institutional exchange of information and coordination on COVID-19. The group, which was established in March 2020 in the framework of the Preparatory Committee for Matters Relating to the Staff Regulations (CPQS), met around 40 times in 2021 and has ensured a constant exchange with the other EU institutions and bodies on COVID-19 related policies and matters in general.

Throughout the pandemic, DG HR ensured regular information meetings with the staff representation, as well as coordination with DG COMM and other EU institutions.

Since March 2020, the Medical Services were responsible for updating the medical protocol for follow-up of COVID-19 cases and other hygiene and safety protocols. In 2021, the number of positive cases exploded and the Medical Service in Brussels followed 2 300 cases through constant interaction and guidance. In addition, specialised guidance was issued to address the needs of specific staff profiles (e.g. nuclear inspectors, drivers, translators, EPSO etc.). Particular care was taken to identify and address the needs of vulnerable staff with a higher risk of complications if they were infected.

The Medical Services organised a successful COVID-19 vaccination campaign for 2021. In 2021, the Medical Service in Brussels administrated 48 000 shots to 20 000 persons and also conducted a flu vaccination campaign, administering 7 000 shots in Brussels.

The Medical Services' psychosocial team supported colleagues particularly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and published information on how to cope during the crisis (teleworking with children, managing anxiety and fear facing COVID-19, facing the psychological effects of the pandemic etc.).

The Fit@home programme, intended to complement the fit@work strategy (further details in a separate section below), specifically catered for the COVID-19 crisis and staff wellbeing

while working from home.

Foster a secure workplace

The Commission's internal security policy seeks to ensure that staff, assets and information are adequately protected against risks to their security, and are adapted taking into account the threat environment, in a flexible manner.

In 2021, DG HR has worked on all strands of security operations in order to further reinforce the protection of the Commission's interests. The need to protect the institution against growing cyber and hybrid threats has led to an increase in the work on cyber security, in collaboration with DG DIGIT.

Reinforcing information security, in the context of hybrid threats and ensuring seamless secure flows of information between EU institutions and with stakeholders is a key priority.

In 2021, DG HR has prepared a major legislative initiative, in close cooperation with the other EU institutions and bodies, aiming to harmonise the rules governing information security across all EU institutions, bodies and agencies, pursuant to the EU Security Strategy Union.

DG HR also rolled out a new system to exchange RESTREINT UE/RESTRICTED EU information and a pilot for handling RESTREINT UE/RESTRICTED EU information in a teleworking/mission context. DG HR finalised the production environment for a highly classified system in close cooperation with the Council, to support key Commission priorities including Foreign Direct Investment monitoring and Defense financing.

Protecting the Commission's sensitive and classified information featured high during 2021. Some of the actions are specific to the Members of the College (secure room, secure phones), whereas others apply to all staff (deployment of dedicated IT systems, review of awareness-raising actions). These measures were adapted to ensure that the Commission's information confidentiality and integrity will be appropriately protected, in the context of frequent attacks against infrastructure and end-users devices.

DG HR upgraded its protection against unauthorised access and hostile attempts to gain access to Commission premises. Works on the Berlaymont Welcome Centre were completed and the Welcome Centre began operations in autumn 2021. DG HR piloted an inter-institutional working group on the security risk of drones and identified a series of mitigating measures. Helping to reduce the threat of unauthorised access to Commission buildings, DG HR completed the roll-out of its new more secure Commission access badges in Brussels and Luxembourg.

The evolving security threat requires constant adaptation not only of internal policies but also of internal structures. DG HR began looking at the physical integration of certain security operations services into a new Integrated Security Operations Center. They also defined the exact scope, criteria and expectations for a new security and risk management platform and explored the market and identified several such platforms. The process for selection of the appropriate platform is ongoing and is connected to the SIRIUS Project (Security, Intelligence and Risk Management Upgraded Strategy), a DG HR project to connect and integrate the

different security components under one umbrella, based on a single security risk management platform to connect threats, incidents and mitigating security measures.

Foster an ethical workplace

In 2021, DG HR coordinated the Commission's corporate training offer on ethical matters. It also delivered 44 tailor-made awareness-raising and training sessions in order to improve staff member awareness of the ethical framework and of the potential consequences of ethical obligation breaches. In total, 4 530 staff members took part in ethics-related training sessions. This participation largely exceeded the target set for 2021 (i.e. 3 500 participants).

DG HR collaborated closely and held awareness-raising meetings with ethics contacts from across the Commission departments. Their involvement is crucial to ensure the effective implementation of the Appointing Authority's decisions related to the prevention of conflict of interest among its staff members.

Moreover, in 2021, DG HR fully cooperated with the office of the European Ombudsman on the strategic inquiry on 'revolving doors' launched in February 2021.

Work to revise the Commission policy on harassment prevention continued in 2021. The presentation of a new Commission decision on the prevention of and fight against harassment has been postponed to 2022 in order to follow the adoption of the new HR strategy. To underpin the revision with further evidence, in 2021, DG HR carried out a staff survey on respect in the workplace. The survey resulted in useful insights into respondents' perceptions of behaviours that could potentially be associated with psychological and sexual harassment as well as their subjective views on the support and services that the Commission provides to prevent and address harassment. Moreover, DG HR consulted various stakeholders to collect their views on future actions in that respect. DG HR also conducted a benchmarking study on best practice relating to harassment prevention in EU institutions and international organisations.

In addition, as part of its prevention efforts, DG HR coordinated training sessions on harassment and provided advice to staff and managers on where to find further help.

The Investigation and Disciplinary Office of the Commission (IDOC) continued to play a key role in ethics enforcement by conducting administrative inquiries, disciplinary proceedings, suspension proceedings and procedures related to waivers of immunity of staff.

With the launch of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, IDOC continued to be a member of the working group setting up the 'Agreement establishing the modalities of cooperation between the European Commission and the European Public Prosecutor's Office'. In this context, IDOC actively participated in the working group meetings and the drafting of the Agreement, which was signed on 18 June 2021.

Foster an engaging and caring workplace

fit@work

Aligned with the new HR strategy, fit@work 2.0 will come into force around the same time as the HR strategy. It is structured as a result of listening to staff and experts, and lessons learned. The pillars focus on physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, and wellbeing at the workplace – contributing towards fostering an engaging and caring workplace.

In 2021, Velomai (the annual cycling challenge) was linked to a walking challenge, which ran from 1 April to 31 May, promoted under the name VeloWalk. The concept of green commuting was widened to include not only travelling to and from work, but also the use of bicycles for short trips, such as dropping off the kids at school. Apart from encouraging staff to commute to work by bicycle or on foot, the aim of the campaign was to encourage colleagues to engage in regular exercise, on foot or by bike.

The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) programme was launched in 2021. MHFA is the initial help given to someone developing a mental health problem or who is in a mental health crisis. First aid is given until appropriate professional support is received or until the crisis is resolved.

Awareness raising training for managers on psychosocial risks at work continued to be given to different DGs, online. During the training, managers explore how to detect risky situations at the psychosocial level, how to prevent them within their teams, and how to adopt an optimal attitude and appropriate procedures to deal with them when necessary. During 2021, 138 managers received this training.

On 10 October, the World Health Organisation (WHO) observes World Mental Health Day. On this occasion the psychosocial team met colleagues personally, in small groups, in order to raise awareness in an interactive and fun way around the theme 'Taking Care of Yourself and of Others'.

Telework and flexible working

Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, telework has remained the norm at the Commission. To accommodate staff during this difficult period, different measures were put in place, providing more flexibility.

Full flexibility was given to staff who were working many extra hours because of service needs. Furthermore, for staff whose childrens' schools or crèches/kindergarten facilities were temporarily closed due to COVID-19, and who needed time during the day to home school their children, could agree with their line manager on core tasks to be performed during this period and on the extent to which they had to be available.

Special leave was also provided to staff whose tasks were not compatible with teleworking and had to stay at home to self-quarantine or because they belonged to specifically-defined categories, such as being immunosuppressed or having a dependent child with a disability at home because their caring facility was closed.

In March 2021, the option for ten days of teleworking from outside the place of employment was introduced to allow staff flexibility to comply with the quarantine rules in place in several countries. The ten days could be taken separately, but could only be taken in agreement with the line manager and had to be linked with at least 5 days annual leave. This measure was maintained during 2021.

From mid-2021, as the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 allowed for it (DG HR followed the recommendations of its host countries), staff were encouraged to come to the office again - from September to November, presence of one day in the office per week was mandatory. This was introduced to help staff interact in physical meetings and generally to benefit from physical contact with colleagues again.

New working time and flexible working decision

The Commission promotes a modern, digital and flexible working environment. Related to this, the Commission has been allowing more teleworking over recent years, and during the COVID-19 pandemic it became the way that the majority of staff worked. In response to this and the impact that extended periods of teleworking has had on staff expectation, a proposal for a new decision covering working time and teleworking was prepared in 2021.

DG HR has amended the draft decision based on the comments provided by Directorates-General and Services in the previous interservice consultation and the discussion with the trade unions and staff associations in the context of the social dialogue. The adoption of this new decision is expected in the first quarter of 2022.

Workplace of the future

Following the Communication on the workplace of the future in the European Commission, the approach has been updated taking into account the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis as part of the preparation of the new HR strategy. An inter-service team (FLEX), led by DG HR, was set up to support the transition to flexible ways of working and the moves to flexible workspaces. The FLEX team has:

- produced several practical guides to help teams settle into new ways of working;
- put together an information package for senior management teams in DGs moving to flexible workspaces;
- created a blog for people at all levels of the organisation to share their experience;
- set up a team of experienced facilitators able to go into DGs or train DG staff to run the workshops and information-sharing events necessary to make this transition a success;
- run peer sharing meetings and offered consultancy and coaching slots.

Supporting the Commission's health and safety policy

To further harmonise requirements for the management of health and safety issues in Brussels and Luxembourg, occupational health and safety (OHS) auditing continued in line with the 2020-2022 audit programme. In 2021, the performance and conformity in the field of OHS emergency preparedness and response was audited on both sites. The audit revealed the disparity in the way training, management and response of the intervention teams are

organised between services in Brussels and Luxembourg. Also, new ways of working call for new ways to identify the presence of volunteers in the event of an emergency. The audited services have been requested to submit a corrective action plan by end of Q1 2022.

Support to create a digital key and access the Belgian authority's MaSante portal

Colleagues with a special identity card were not able to authenticate themselves on the Belgian platform (MaSante) to retrieve their COVID Safe Ticket (CST). This was the result of the special id card not having an embedded electronic chip. To solve this problem, an alternative was put in place - in collaboration with the Belgian authorities (SPF BOSA and Digital Vlaanderen) - via a new SYSPER functionality to allow access to the CST.

The procedures to be followed were communicated via a dedicated page on My IntraComm, through step-by-step guidelines. In addition, the expat office put in place a dedicated Functional mailbox to guide and support colleagues facing problems in getting a digital key, an essential requirement to retrieving their CST.

Reasonable accommodation

An ad-hoc committee on reasonable accommodation was put in place in order to deal with individual requests from staff members with a disability. The committee consists of experts in the different fields needed for each individual request (e.g. the Medical Services, OIB, DIGIT, the time management team, the Diversity and Inclusion Office). There were more requests than usual in 2021, due to the teleworking arrangements (e.g. need for special (IT) equipment when working from home) and the return to office (e.g. mobility difficulties due to COVID restrictions, some difficulties in working in open, collaborative, working spaces).

Social integration and engagement

Social integration, in the form of meaningful social attachments to the people and places where we live, is an important factor in determining health and wellbeing. The Commission's Corporate Social Responsibility programme continued to promote volunteering activities within and outside the workplace, as a means of getting more staff more involved and engaged in their local communities.

Internal Communication

In 2021, an important focus of the Commission's corporate internal communication activities centred around the crisis communication around the COVID-19 pandemic, and vaccinations. DG HR informed staff through regular e-mail updates, as well as a dedicated website (with some 41 000 page views per month).

In addition, and in collaboration with DG SANTE, a series of online information sessions on vaccines and vaccinations were organised. Experts from European Medicines Agency, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Commission's Medical Service, DG CONNECT and DG JUST informed staff about vaccines, vaccination process and the implementation of the EU digital COVID certificate.

DG HR, in cooperation with the DGs and Services concerned launched a large communication campaign on the new flexible working arrangements. To support staff, a dedicated web page on the corporate Intranet was developed. It contains practical guides, articles and other useful information.

Additional efforts were dedicated to promoting the full roll-out of M365 in the Commission and corporate activities in the context of diversity and inclusion.

Stakeholders were consulted on the future internal communication strategy and the new corporate Intranet. Work on these important files will continue in 2022.

A staff survey, held every two years, took place in November 2021. First results showed that the staff engagement index raised by 3 percentage points to 72% and the internal communication index raised by 2.5 points to 62%.

DG HR Specific objective 3: Attract diverse and high-quality talents to build the workforce of the future

Attract and retain talents

The Commission aspires to have a diverse workforce that better reflects the diversity of the European population. It has taken significant strides in recent years in promoting equal opportunities between its male and female employees, but the notion of diversity should be extended to include other underrepresented groups. This work is coordinated by the Diversity and Inclusion Office created in early 2021. The Office, working closely with the SG Task Force on Equality Secretariat, conducted the first ever diversity and inclusion survey of staff in the Commission, External Action Service and the executive agencies. More than 10 000 responses gave an insight into the diversity of our staff and their experiences working in the organisation. The results were used to guide some flagship initiatives of the new HR strategy. They will also guide a detailed diversity and inclusion action plan to be updated in 2022.

With regard to the selection of future staff, DG HR, in partnership with EPSO and the other EU institutions, worked on improving the external channel of recruitment, relying to a great extent on specialised competitions based on the assessment of DGs' needs and available profiles.

Operational measures, such as the single measurement of competencies and simplified testing matrixes, were taken. These measures were applied in five specialist competitions organised for the Commission in 2021. These measures aim at modernising the competition model and implement the recommendations adopted by the EPSO Management Board to overcome the constraints of the current model. They will reduce the time needed for the organisation of competitions. In addition, a specialist competition was launched in December 2021 to pilot the new 24-language competition model.

The monitoring of geographical balance has been pursued throughout the year. DG HR reported about the evolution to the Council. Bilateral discussions with Member States have

also taken place. On this basis, DG HR has prepared important measures that will be implemented in the framework of the new HR strategy.

DG HR also worked on improving the internal recruitment channel. In particular, DG HR defined the priorities and testing matrixes for the future organisation of internal competitions, to be ready to launch such competitions for all categories of staff once the HR strategy is formally adopted. In addition, an internal AD5 competition covering three fields was completed in July 2021, and a new AD5 internal competition was published in November 2021, implementing the revised testing matrix. These internal competitions, and the ones that will be organised after the adoption of the HR strategy, will cater for the Commission's need to retain highly qualified talents by giving them an opportunity to be appointed as officials.

In addition, two selections of the Junior professional programme were organised for the selection of 50 Junior professionals in 2021, under the renewed pilot. The programme, including its learning and development, mobility and group projects components, continued to be operated with a high level of quality despite the COVID-19 context. In addition, the Commission decision for permanent establishment of the programme has been prepared for adoption by the College and is being finalised in close liaison with the legal service in anticipation of the launch of the Interservice consultation and concertation with staff representatives. Orientations for the new decisions were given by the Corporate Management Board in December, after initial consultations with the main stakeholders, including executive agencies.

Furthermore, DG HR advanced on the blueprint for a future decision on the rules applicable to temporary staff, in order to modernise, simplify and adapt them to the needs of services. The text will be finalised after the adoption of the new HR strategy to take full advantage of the reflections conducted in that context and fully incorporate the future decision on temporary agents in the global approach to Commission staffing.

Anticipating the development of a future integrated solution as part of the HRT programme, DG HR also worked in 2021 on a number of small-scale, quick-win projects for the simplification and automation of processes. In this context, a pilot project for the simplification of selection and recruitment procedures, covering eight DGs, reduced the selection time and the steps in the process. The pilot will be rolled out fully in 2022, as part of the NextHR exercise. In addition, an e-Workflow for the extension of contracts of temporary agents was developed and a project for the use of RPA technology in the recruitment process was initiated in the second half of 2021.

Conscious of the difficulties to attract staff to Luxembourg, Commissioner Hahn launched in December 2020 the high-level interinstitutional initiative for Luxembourg. For the first time, the European institutions in Luxembourg came together at the highest administrative level to reflect together on the attractiveness of the site. Intensive works on 12 different actions, adopted in the high-level meeting of June 2021, started in the summer. A dedicated steering group was created within the College of heads of administrations in Luxembourg and a series of extraordinary and monthly meetings were organised during autumn 2021. A final report was subsequently prepared with a set of concrete actions, which will be proposed for

endorsement by Commissioner Hahn and the Secretaries-General at the high-level meeting in April 2022.

DG HR Specific objective 4: Better know, develop and deploy people

Enhance remote Learning and Development activities

The large-scale conversion of conventional training activities into online activities has highlighted the benefits of an organisation that is no longer dependent on one site and thus opens up more learning opportunities for staff at all sites and in all EU institutions, bodies and agencies. The virtual learning offer also provides more flexibility to learners, who can access learning content wherever and whenever they want. The training offer is currently 100% online, and a large part of it will never again be delivered physically, in a classroom setting.

Learning packages and digital skills

In the area of learning paths/packages, the learning and development unit started to develop data training packages, starting with policy officers and managers, as well as a 'general' path for informing any audience without any specific focus.

The Commission's data-led policy development was addressed through the preparation of a training programme for upskilling policy officers to data analysts.

DG HR continued to support the improvement of digital fluency across the Commission by aligning staff profiles with training requirements, and began to consider how to integrate digital skills in the various learning paths/packages per job profiles.

DG HR was able to meet the Commission's training requirements by significantly increasing the number of courses in Microsoft 365 and Teams - the main tools for internal collaboration. This was complemented with additional remote courses as well as self-study material and coaching sessions for managers. Moreover, DG HR supported a community of practice for 'digital champions', that are now part of the regular digital skills training offer. The overall satisfaction rate of staff is about 85%.

LinkedIn learning

To expand and enrich the online learning offer, the Commission rolled out the access to LinkedIn Learning in October 2021, giving all Commission staff access to more than 16 000 online courses. This makes learning more flexible as staff can learn from anywhere, whenever they need it. The percentage of active licences reached 15% of Commission staff at the end of the year.

To guide and support the learning experience, the learning and development unit is working on content curation together with staff from LinkedIn Learning. The objective is to integrate LinkedIn Learning online training modules into learning packages, which DG HR will continue to develop for the main job families and domains, as outlined in the new HR strategy.

Languages courses

All language courses were converted into virtual classes, and the learning and development unit made several hundred online learning resources available. Excellent inter-institutional collaboration has reinforced our capacity to deliver high quality courses to participants from all institutions, bodies and agencies of the European Union and from several other sites.

Staff satisfaction with the virtual classroom format was positive, where a clear preference for that format was expressed (73% of satisfaction rate, with 77% expressing an interest for future language courses either in a virtual or blended format). This is integrated in the language course programme design for the 'new normal', where the majority of language courses will remain virtual, while face-to-face courses will be preferred for conversation tables or similar activities.

Spotlight on DGs – series of online conferences

Spotlight on DGs is a series of conferences where participants learn about the central policy projects of DGs, their priorities and how they have an impact on European citizens. In 2021, there were 16 sessions with presentations given by various DGs of the Commission, including SANTE, EMPL and REGIO.

Other conferences and events

In response to the pandemic, DG HR organised conferences, webinars and panel discussions to address relevant topics and give colleagues the opportunity to exchange their views and feelings related to the crisis and the particular working conditions. Through innovative, participatory workshops, such as the Together-Ensemble series, DG HR has applied the collective intelligence of colleagues to address topical issues. These have adapted techniques used around the world to co-create policies with citizens to invite colleagues to reflect on wider issues, such as different aspects of life beyond the pandemic, developing a caring culture and global collaboration.

EC Induction and Welcome programmes

Newcomers used to have a classroom session for the Welcome day and a 5-day EC induction programme. Both events were redesigned into appropriate online formats with an adapted pedagogical structure (shorter, more interactive, etc.), the main objectives being that our new colleagues would not feel isolated, would have all the necessary information to work remotely and create a network with other new colleagues attending their session.

Modernise the Commission-wide headhunting service

The further development of headhunting and of jobhunting has an important role to play in view of an optimal allocation of Commission talent and a proactive approach from staff to seize available career opportunities.

The current pilot headhunting service continued to operate in the remote working context, helping managers to fill specialised posts. The automation of headhunting has also been

pursued with the development of the HR search project, which will provide managers and HR professionals with a user-friendly search tool based on staff eCV and job profile. Following the agreement from the Information Technology and Cybersecurity Board in July 2021, a test version of the HR search IT tool has been delivered by DG DIGIT. It is scheduled to be available for all end-users in spring 2022.

Mapping of career, learning as well as internal and external mobility paths

In 2021, DG HR continued the analysis of the level of jobs held by contract agents. In this context, it launched a new targeted exercise to change function groups in PMO.This will allow a comprehensive mapping of the careers of contract agents and make them more internally consistent and equitable.

A proactive professional career guidance service is essential to support staff in the management of their careers. The service has been supported in 2021 by a highly appreciated enhanced continuous training programme with additional elements on evolution of practices in career guidance in other organisations, HR rules and procedures and knowledge of DGs business context and priorities. The continuity of the career guidance service was ensured despite the COVID-19 context with a record 4 270 individual career guidance sessions and over 1 000 participations in the different career guidance workshops and webinars organised in 2021. Satisfaction with the service among clients has also reached a very high level of 90%.

The service proactively reached out to AD officials via the organisation of a pilot exercise of 4-year career talks launched in 2021, in order to prepare the launch, under the new HR strategy, of systematic invitations to staff with four years in their current job to career guidance sessions, on a voluntary basis.

Two structural annual mobility exercises for staff in EU delegations were organised, focusing on the rotation of officials and mobility of contract agents.

Career Days

The Career Days 2021 took place in November 2021. It was a five-day event, which included 128 online sessions. The online format made the event more attractive and accessible to all Commission staff, regardless of their location, resulting in over 13 500 individual registrations. The event received very good evaluations with an overall score of 8.2/10 and very positive comments.

Performance management

Without modifying its general principles and legal provisions that have provided for a sound and adequate basis and framework, the Commission started the modernisation of the yearly appraisal exercise for staff. This modernisation aims at simplifying the format of the report and reinforce the importance of operational objectives to serve as a basis for the appraisal, allowing for a more meaningful exercise. Preliminary internal consultations involving technical services of DG DIGIT have taken place in order to determine the parts of the existing appraisal report that need to be reviewed to increase its legibility and internal consistency.

DG HR Specific objective 5: Develop and support inspiring, inclusive and effective managers

Senior Managers

At the level of senior management, the Commission has to ensure that the profile, quality, motivation and performance of senior managers are of the highest standard possible. To this end, DG HR put in place two development tools specifically designed to support them with their leadership challenges:

- the senior management development programme, which welcomed 15 new senior managers. The programme was further enriched with the development of two streams, one for new leaders and one for confirmed leaders, which address the needs and objectives of the participants depending on where they stand in their senior management career. Senior managers receive a thorough assessment of their competencies and further guidance from HR experts with a tailor-made programme of personal development and individual coaching; and
- the corporate 360° feedback pilot for senior managers, which met the 2021 target of 30 new senior managers, bringing the total number of participants to 218 across the Commission. Several DGs have now completed the pilot with their entire senior management team. As a result of their participation, senior managers are given an all-round view of their leadership capabilities and can compare their self-image with observations from their managers, peers and staff. This allows them to identify their management blind-spots and reflect on possible areas for self-development.

Middle Managers

At the middle management level, the talent management strategy acknowledges the fundamental role that middle managers play in the success of the institution. They need to ensure the effective delivery of the Commission's political priorities. They chart new courses of action and translate the political and strategic vision into concrete operational objectives. Middle managers are also central to the Commission's talent management efforts, as they are responsible for the management and development of their staff. In 2021, DG HR continued supporting the middle management population through a variety of internal initiatives, including:

- Due to the change of contractor beginning of July 2021, the corporate development programme for newly appointed middle managers was put on hold from mid-June until mid-November 2021. Nevertheless, 73 newly appointed middle managers benefited from at least one session of the programme, consisting of a personal development plan session and three individual follow-up sessions. Three introductory sessions on HR management were also organised for them. In addition, the development programme for established middle managers with performance issues was offered upon request; and
- After two 360° feedback pilots for middle managers in 2019 and 2020, the programme was rolled out in 2021 to interested Directorates-General. 11 DGs ran a

360° feedback survey mechanism and 92 middle managers were provided with structured feedback on their managerial skills from a number of different sources and perspectives. All middle managers were offered follow-up career talks with Career Guidance Officers to explore the appropriate development opportunities that would help them further improve their managerial skills.

Diversity specific actions

An overarching priority of the talent management strategy is to honour the commitment of President von der Leyen to achieving gender balance at all levels of management in the Commission by the end of its mandate.

- By the end of 2021, more than 45% of management posts were held by women. At senior management level, 43% of Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Directors and Principal Legal Advisers were women, up nearly 7 percentage points from the beginning of the mandate. 46% of the middle managers were women. 249 Heads of Unit were designated as 'Deputy to Director' across the Commission and the share of women at this level was 56%, thus exceeding the initial objective. Furthermore, 57% of the Deputy Heads of Unit appointments were women and the overall share of women at this level was 48%. Following the adoption by the Commission of targets for first female appointments to middle management positions for the period 2020-2022, 82 out of 146 first appointments to middle management in 2021 were women, corresponding to 56% of the total number of first appointments made.
- A new talent development programme for middle managers who aspire to become senior managers has seen an excellent uptake. The programme offers individual coaching and can be tailored to the specific development needs and objectives of each participant. In 2021, more than 100 Heads of Unit from across all Directorates-General, mostly women, joined the programme.
- The third edition of the Female Talent Development programme was completed. 119 female colleagues from all Commission services and executive agencies benefited from a mix of competency-building, mentoring by senior managers, networking and individual coaching. By December 2021, 50 participants from the 2018 programme, 35 from the 2019 programme and 26 from the 2020-2021 programme had been appointed head of unit.

2. MODERN AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL CONTROL

2.1. Financial management and internal control

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management which support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives (ICO) ([2]). The DG's assurance building and materiality criteria are outlined in AAR Annex 5. The AAR Annex 6 outlines the main risks together with the control processes to mitigate them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the relevant control systems.

Assurance is provided on the basis of an objective examination of evidence of the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

This examination is carried out by management, who monitors the functioning of the internal control systems on a continuous basis, and by internal and external auditors. The results are explicitly documented and reported to the Director-General.

The Director-General ensures that responsibilities are assigned appropriately throughout the organisation. The financial circuits have been designed taking into account the risks and with a view to optimising the use of available resources. DG HR has both decentralised and centralised circuits in place.

- The centralised model is applied for high value tendering procedures.
- A centralised model for the financial control of transactions applies to all but one Directorate (DS), and the geographically dispersed units in Ispra. This has already optimised and harmonised operations, which will lead to further synergies.

Responsibilities are aligned with risks and thus only the most senior managers have the power to approve high value transactions. They are also empowered to sub delegate the less risky aspects of their financial management tasks to their staff.

Regular reviews of achievements and control results take place notably:

- The Director-General meets the Directors and key staff twice a year, to take stock of progress made in achieving operational results and internal control objectives.
- DG HR and the Cabinet discuss, as part of their weekly meetings, the Commission Agenda planning, internal control issues and other priority actions.

([2]) 1) Effectiveness, efficiency and economy of operations; 2) reliability of reporting; 3) safeguarding of assets and information; 4) prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; and 5) adequate management of the risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions, taking into account the multiannual character of programmes as well as the nature of the payments (FR Art 36.2). The 2nd and/or 3rd Internal Control Objective(s) (ICO) only when applicable, given the DG's activities.

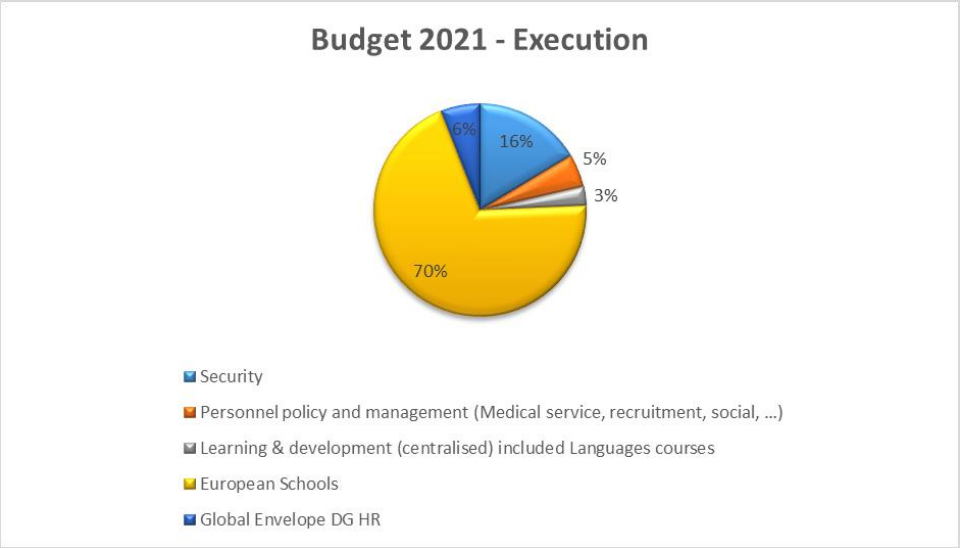
- A scoreboard, with performance indicators associated with financial management and control, is prepared each month. It is discussed periodically with management.
- Budget review and programming exercises are organised at least twice a year.
- DG HR determines its error rate in financial processes through the following measures:
- Campaigns of ex-post controls are performed both by senior management and by the internal control sector. The latter coordinates the overall campaigns and ensures coherence.
- The Unit housing the internal control sector is independent with respect to the transactions which are authorised by the Financial Transaction Unit.
- High-value procurement files are sampled and scrutinised by the Administrative DGs' inter-service group on public procurement (GAMA - Groupe d'Analyse des Marchés Administratifs).
- Procurement Board (new): established in 2021 (ref. 2.1.1 Control results).

These reports result from a systematic analysis of the available evidence. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in a complete coverage of the budget delegated to the Director-General of DG HR.

This section covers the control results and other relevant elements that support management's assurance. It is structured into 2.1.1 Control results, 2.1.2 Audit observations and recommendations, 2.1.3 Effectiveness of internal control systems, and resulting in 2.1.4 Conclusions on the assurance.

2.1.1. Control results

This section reports and assesses the elements identified by management, which support the assurance on the achievement of the internal control objectives. The DG's assurance building, and materiality criteria are outlined in AAR Annex 5. Annex 6 outlines the main risks together with the control processes to mitigate them and the indicators used to measure the performance of the relevant control systems. All reporting requirements applicable to DG HR are included in this section.

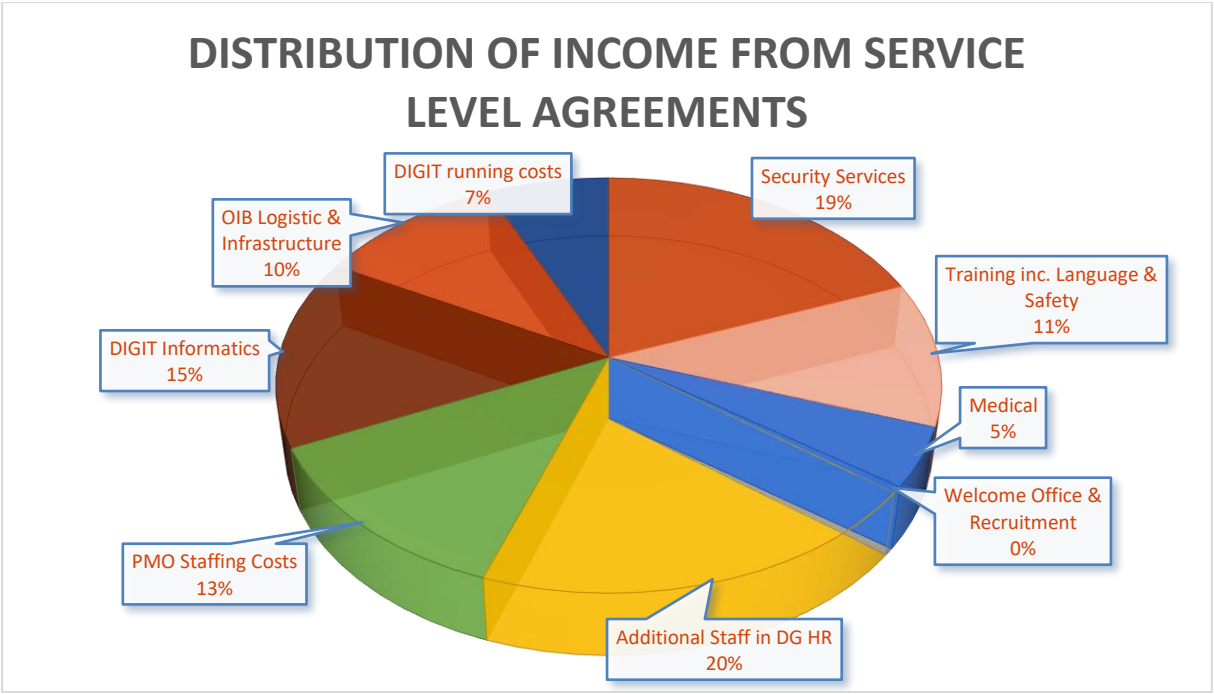


DG HR's institutional budget of EUR 282 million is implemented under centralised direct management. 70% of the budget is earmarked as financial contributions for the European Schools. Most of the remainder EUR ~85 million is used to purchase goods and services for the Commission's security services, for implementing the Commission's personnel policy, and for centralised learning and development activities. In this particular year, EUR 2.5 million was dedicated to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

All objectives were achieved, with assurance on the sound execution of the budget, at a 100% budget execution rate. Recoveries on erroneous payments are negligible, representing less than 0.1% of the amount paid.

With a view to making efficiency gains across the EU institutions and bodies, DG HR delivers some of its services to other institutions and bodies. These services are subject to chargeback and the associated legal basis are defined in contracts with customers referred to as Service Level Agreements (SLAs).

In 2021 DG HR charged EUR 19.7 million for services. Of this 70% representing EUR 13.8 million was returned to DG HR's operational and staffing budgets. This amount covered the costs associated with offering HRM services to a broader client base. The remaining 30% was used to cover the extra costs incurred by other Commission services (OIB, DIGIT and PMO).



A large part of the revenue was allocated to the Commission's informatics DG, DIGIT to fund the provision of the HRM IT system, SYSPER, to other institutions and bodies. Other major costs incurred by DG HR to serve others, resulted in revenue for security services, training and Medical Services. The additional revenue on the DG HR budget corresponds to 4.9% of the total DG HR budget or, excluding the European Schools, 16.2% of the operational budget. More details on the specific budgetary context can be found in annex 7.

In terms of additional AAR reporting requirements within the meaning of the 2018 Financial Regulation, no such cases did occur in DG HR in 2021.

Overview table (amounts in EUR million)

Risk-type / Activities	Grants (e.g. actual costs based, or lump sums, or entitlements)	Procurement (e.g. minor or major values)	Shared mngt (MS's OPs, PAs, etc) + EAC (for NAs)	Cross-delegations to other DGs (other AOXDs)	Contributions and/or funds to EE (EU Agency, EA, JU)	Delegation / Contribution agreements with EE (EIB, Int-Org, etc)	Other (describe any other expenditure not covered by the previous columns)	*Total Expenditure*	NEI, e.g. Revenues, Assets, OBS ((in)tangible or financial assets & liabilities)
Procured goods and services	N/A	97	N/A	0.1	N/A	N/A	N/A	97	36.9[3]
European Schools	N/A	210,5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	210,5	N/A
Totals (coverage)		**307,5**		**0.1**				***307,5***	**36.9**
Links to AAR Annex 3	***Overall total (m EUR); see Table 2 – payments made***						***Overall total (m EUR)***	***n/a***	***Table 4 – assets Table 7 - revenue***

Legend for the abbreviations: OP=Operational Programme, PA=Paying Agency, NA=National Agency, AOXDs =Authorising Officer by Cross-Delegation, EA=Executive Agency, JU=Joint Undertaking, NEI =Non-Expenditure Item(s), OBS= Off-Balance Sheet, ICO = Internal Control Objective, L&R=Legality and Regularity, SFM= Sound Financial Management, AFS= Anti-Fraud Strategy measures, SAI=Safeguarding Assets and Information, TFV=True and Fair View, RER=Residual Error Rate, CEC=Cost-effectiveness of controls, Mngt =Management

[3] For more details, see Annex 7, Heading 1 on the budget.

2.1.1.1. Effectiveness of controls

a) Legality and regularity of the transactions

DG HR's relevant expenditure, estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are disclosed in the table below.

DG HR's portfolio consists of segments with a relatively low error rate, i.e. transfers to the European Schools, and the rest of HR related expenditure.

This is thanks to the inherent risk profile of the funding modalities of the European Schools and the performance of the related control systems.

DG HR uses internal control processes to ensure sound management of risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions it is responsible for, taking into account the nature of the payments concerned.

The corporate ex-post control campaign is well established in DG HR. Its primary purpose is to estimate the DG's error rate and thus the controls are based on a randomly selected representative sample of transactions. A second objective of the ex-post control campaigns is to identify and remedy any control weaknesses in financial management.

It is clear from the key internal control processes such as ex-post control and exception reporting that DG HR has a consistently very low error rate. There is no need, therefore, for an elaborate mechanism for correcting errors. During the reporting year the executed corrective capacity amounted in total to €0 million representing 0% of the relevant expenditure. The benefit at ex-ante level control amounts to €0 million, whilst recoveries and financial corrections following the results of ex post controls amounted to €0 million (for more details see Annex 7).

DG HR's relevant expenditure, its estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are set out in Table X: Estimated risk at payment and at closure.

The estimated overall risk at payment for 2021 expenditure amounts to €0.038 million, representing 0.01% of the DG's total relevant expenditure for 2021. This assessment is based on the analysis of the exception register and the ex-post controls, the details on those 2 key features of internal control are documented in annex 7. This is the authorising officer by delegation's best, conservative estimate of the amount of relevant expenditure during the year not in conformity with the contractual and regulatory provisions applicable at the time the payment was made.

This expenditure will subsequently be subject to ex-post controls and a proportion of the underlying errors will be detected and corrected in subsequent years. The conservatively estimated future corrections for 2021 expenditure amount to €0 million.

The difference between those two amounts results in the estimated overall risk at closure of €0.038 million, representing 0.01% of the DG's total relevant expenditure for 2021. This is in line with previous years, confirming the very low error rate in DG HR.

For an overview at Commission level, the DGs' estimated overall risk at payment, estimated future corrections and risk at closure are consolidated in the AMPR.

Table X: Estimated risk at payment and at closure (amounts in EUR million)

The full detailed version of the table is provided in Annex 9.

DG HR		Relevant expenditure	Estimated risk (error rate %) *at payment*		Estimated future corrections and deductions		Estimated risk (error rate %) *at closure*	
(1)		*(2)*	*(3)*		*(4)*		*(5)*	
RCS		*m EUR*	*m EUR*	*%*	*m EUR*	*%*	*m EUR*	*%*
1. Procured goods and services		97	0.038	0.04%	0	0%	0.038	0.04%
2. European Schools		210,5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
DG total		**m EUR 307,5**	***m EUR 0.038***	***0.01%4***	***m EUR 0***	***0%***	***m EUR 0.038***	***0.01%***

b) Fraud prevention, detection and correction

DG HR has implemented its own anti-fraud strategy since 2013, and updated it on 29 September 2021, on the basis of the methodology provided by OLAF. Its action plan was last updated on 2 February 2022. Its implementation is being monitored and reported to the management together with the risk management. The implementation of the actions defined in the action plan is ongoing; their completion is expected for the fourth quarter of 2022.

DG HR also contributed to the Commission anti-fraud strategy and followed up 100% of OLAF's *financial* recommendations.

On the basis of the available information, DG HR has reasonable assurance that the anti-fraud measures in place are effective.

c) Other control objectives: safeguarding of assets and information, reliability of reporting

DG HR's assets, as booked in the accounts (annex 3), consist of internally developed Information Systems. They are thus intangible, non-current assets worth EUR 0.2 million. They correspond to internally generated IT Projects, worth EUR 3.7 million, (including Modules of the SysPer Human Resource Management System) which are amortised each year (cumulated amortisation of EUR -3.5 million in 2021).

For this control objective (safeguarding of assets and information, reliability of reporting), DG HR's goal is to make sure that all relevant measures are applied to avoid any security

4 The 0.5% is the upper limit of error rate centrally defined in the field of administrative expenditure for years. It is applied as a matter of prudency, to show the theoretical max. amount at risk.

breaches or leaks of personal and/or sensitive data. DG HR manages several IT systems that store personal data (SysPer, e-Sire, SerMed and HR Business Intelligence). Some DG HR decision making processes use, inter alia, reports based on data from these systems. The systems' security is monitored and improved when appropriate.

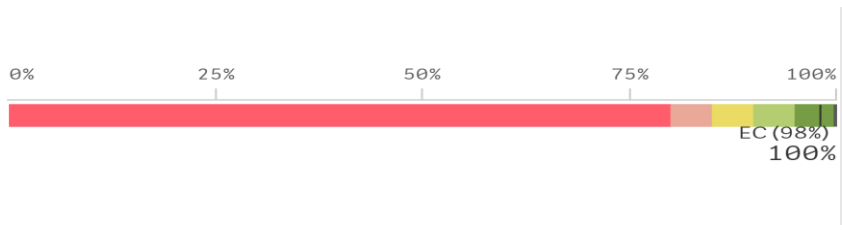
In February 2022, DG HR implemented the recommendation regarding the improvement of the LISO (Local Information Security Officer) function, following the ad-hoc ex-post control on IT access to a sample of Information Systems by the internal control sector. The remaining recommendations from the concerned audit on information security in the HR family (for further details, see annex 7) - regarding the documentation of certain procedures and controls - will be finalised in 2022.

In 2021 DG HR fully implemented IAS's audit recommendation on data protection i.e. to review its centralised Data Protection Coordination role for the DG HR family (OIB, OIL, EPSO and PMO). DG HR devolved the role to the Offices, all of which have their own Data Protection Coordinator since the end of Q1 2021. IAS subsequently closed the recommendation.

By focussing resources on DG HR personal data processing only the restructured HR Data Protection Coordinator team was able to provide greater assistance to DG HR controllers and further raise the overall level of compliance with the data protection rules. 630 pieces of written data protection advice were given to HR Controllers ensure compliance, including dealing with complex projects such as HRT or the data processing related to the COVID-19 pandemic. DG HR concludes there are no major issues in the other control objectives.

2.1.1.2. Efficiency of controls

DG HR adopted generic efficiency indicators related to the time taken to pay suppliers and other beneficiaries (see annex 4). DG HR achieved its 2021 target of making 95% of payments on time. The average time taken to process a payment was 12 days, improving by 2 days compared to 2020. The new indicator that places emphasis on the *amount* paid on time, as opposed to the number of payments, paints a better picture. DG HR paid virtually all of the total amount on time, this represents and improvement on last years result 99% paid on time.

Timely Payments	HR Score	EC Score
	**100%**	**98%**

The COVID-19 driven measures have allowed DG HR to make important steps towards implementing paperless workflows, resulting in efficiency gains in all aspects of financial management and procurement. The push for paperless workflows, has accelerated a move towards greater efficiency (and economy of paper and human resources). The impact of these

exceptional measures has also proven to be beneficial to the quality of work and to our endeavours to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy.

2.1.1.3. Economy of controls

DG HR has estimated the costs associated with its key financial controls. The benefits of preventative controls are not all quantifiable e.g., ethics training and awareness raising actions taken to mitigate the risks of reputational damage. Consequently, they cannot be considered in the calculations below. Such unquantifiable benefits of controls remain important to DG HR's operations, and they underpin the control environment.

Compared to many other DGs, DG HR does not have a large budget and it operates under direct management. The error rate is very low, it follows that the amounts associated with the recovery of funds associated with erroneous payments are negligible. When such monies are due, DG HR fulfils its duty to protect the Communities' budget.

The principle of economy requires that the resources used by the institution in the pursuit of its objectives shall be made available in time, in appropriate quantity and quality and at the best price. The principle of efficiency concerns the best relationship between the resources employed and the results achieved. DG HR has developed indicators to measure the efficiency of the controls associated with financial management in line the Commission's requirements.

Indicators for the budget associated with procured good and services

An estimated EUR 1.2 million of staff costs were invested in controlling procurement procedures for contracts worth EUR 59.1 million. Thus 2% of the total contract value was dedicated to control and the benefit: cost ratio is estimated at EUR 49, compared to EUR 258 in 2020 and 88 in 2019. The difference was essentially linked to the value of contracts awarded as the time invested in control and the workload remained aligned. Indeed, the procurement of goods and services worth more than Procurement Directive threshold are subjected to the same strict controls as per the Commission's Vademecum.

For financial transactions, an estimated EUR 8,8 million was invested in controlling 15 600 transactions worth a sum of ~EUR 668 million. At an unchanged salary cost, we would have seen a EUR 0.4 million decrease in cost of control compared to 2020. The total cost of control amounts to EUR 563 per financial transaction.

Most of the cost of transaction control (78%) was dedicated to the processing of payments. The cost, EUR 6.8 million, is in line with previous years and corresponds to 7%, of the total of amount paid in relation to procured goods and services[5] (EUR ~97 million). An estimated EUR 0.6 million was invested in internal control and ex-post controls on 181 financial transactions pertaining to DG HR and a further 40 pertaining to EPSO/EUSA.

[5] Procured goods and services' includes a negligible amount associated with payments made that are based on Decisions linked to staff rights (reimbursements).

Overall, an estimated EUR 10.5 million, a cost in line with 2020, was invested in control activities. If we consider this only in terms of the total amount paid on the procurement and other expenses budget i.e., some EUR 97 million, the cost of control indicator for this activity would be 10.8%. However, if the value of all procurement contracts that the controllers have worked on (EUR 554 million) is considered, i.e., including contracts not yet awarded, the cost of control indicator for procurement-related activities drops to 1.6%.

Indicators for the financial contribution to European schools

The European Schools' 2021 payments totalled EUR 210.5 million. The estimated costs of controlling the associated financial management overall are around EUR 0.25 million (staff costs). Thus 0.1% of the total of the European Schools budget was dedicated to control.

Overall Cost of Control indicators

Considering the total costs dedicated to control for the two main areas covered by DG HR, we can conclude that the overall proportion of payments dedicated to the ex-ante and ex-post control is 3%.

Understandably, the cost of control for the budget available for procured goods and services is proportionally higher than that of the European Schools because the transactions related to the European Schools are few (1% of transactions) and considerably higher in value.

	2021 payments (MEUR)	Estimated % payments dedicated to control
Procured Goods	97	9.65%
European Schools	210.5	0.01%
2021 Total Budget managed by DG HR	307.5	**3.05%**

The cost of control on procurement procedures and payments, amount to 1.22% of the total amount (EUR 855 million) concerned by the contract values and total amounts paid.

2.1.1.4. Conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of controls

Based on the most relevant key indicators and control results, DG HR has assessed the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of its control system and reached a positive conclusion on the cost-effectiveness of the controls for which it is responsible. In 2021, total cost of control decreased slightly compared to 2020, to EUR 10,5 million.

It is recognised that the benefits gained from increased investment in control are not easily quantifiable. The sharp increase in benefit-cost ratio of control over procurement is a clear case in point. Ideally, the negative consequences of insufficient control should be measured to monetise the impact of sound internal control. This, of course, is virtually impossible.

DG HR continues to make efforts to improve the efficiency of financial processes. The resources dedicated to control are aligned with the risks in the operational context. DG HR concludes that the cost-benefit of control is acceptable.

2.1.2. Audit observations and recommendations

This section sets out the observations, opinions and conclusions reported by auditors – including the limited conclusion of the Internal Auditor on the state of internal control. Summaries of the management measures taken in response to the audit recommendations are also included, together with an assessment of the likely material impact of the findings on the achievement of the internal control objectives, and therefore on management's assurance. All audit findings resulting in recommendations are appropriately addressed through action plans agreed with the internal and external auditors, as detailed below.

The Internal Audit service (IAS)

There are 3 new very important recommendations from the audit finalised in 2021 on IT security management. They are about IT security governance, logical system-related controls and IT service provider management. In December an action plan was agreed with the IAS and is being implemented.

Conclusion Internal Auditor

Based on all work undertaken by the Internal Audit Service in the period 2019-2021[1], namely,

- Consultancy on the governance and supervision of executive agencies (2019);
- Audit on the management of public cloud services (2020);
- Audit on data protection (2020);
- Audit on the Commission's strategy for data, information and knowledge management (2020);
- Audit on IT security management in the HR family (2021).

and taking into account that:

- Final audit reports issued in the period 1 February 2019 – 31 January 2022 2021;
- Management has adopted action plans to implement all the accepted recommendations. The IAS considers that these action plans are adequate to address the residual risks identified by the auditors;
- The implementation of these action plans is monitored through reports by management and follow-up audits by the IAS.

The IAS concludes that the internal control systems in place for the audited processes in DG HR are effective,except for the observations giving rise to the 'very important' recommendations on IT security management. Further details can be found in annex 7. These recommendations need to be addressed, in line with the agreed action plans.

The European Court of Auditors

No recommendations in the latest Annual Reports from the European Court of Auditors (ECA). Low error rate <1% confirmed by the European Court of Auditors.

DG HR has open recommendations related to 2 Special reports produced in 2019:

- Special Report 34/2018 'The efficiency of EU management of spending on office accommodation': the ECA will report on its follow-up of the recommendations in 2022.
- Report 15/2019 on the 'Implementation of the 2014 staff reform package at the Commission': The recommendations have not been completed as most of the actions will be implemented through the new HR strategy. The ECA is likely to start the follow-up of the recommendations in 2022.

The ECA started a new Performance Audit on 'Resilience', on the administrative response of auditing how the EU Institutions acted in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. The Commission is part of the audited institutions, and the audit will only be published later in 2022.

2.1.3. Assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems

The Commission has adopted an Internal Control Framework based on international good practice, to ensure the achievement of its policy and management objectives. Compliance with the internal control framework is a compulsory requirement.

DG HR uses the organisational structure and the internal control systems suited to achieving its policy and internal control objectives in accordance with the internal control principles and has due regard to the risks associated with the environment in which it operates.

Some minor deficiencies were identified related to IT security management (for further details, see annex 7). Therefore, improvements will be sought in the application of the internal control principle 11[6] *Select and develop control over technology*, even though it is considered to be present and functioning.

The other principles are effectively functioning, and indeed the fact that the 2021 objectives were achieved without major difficulties, even in pandemic times, is a strong indicator of this. The internal control principles will nevertheless continue to be followed-up to make sure the Internal Control Framework continues to function effectively.

DG HR has assessed its internal control system during the reporting year and has concluded that it is effective, and the components and principles are present and functioning well overall, but some improvements are needed as minor deficiencies were identified related to IT security management. The recommendations from the IAS audit, have already been

[6] For details on the internal control principles, see Budgpedia page: Internal Control and Risk Management (europa.eu)

translated into strong actions that were accepted by the IAS. The improvements and remedial measures are already being implemented or envisaged.

During the evaluation of the Internal Control Framework, a few key themes invariably featured in the assessment of many principles:

- the COVID-19 related changes, on top of those associated with the new Commission objectives (greening, digitalisation);
- the new HR strategy, which was being finalised in the reporting period;
- the translation of all this into new short- and long-term objectives for DG HR and an organisational structure that has been adapted accordingly;
- IT security.

The key word is change. And as a result, the emphasis is on risks, the 2nd internal control component, and more precisely on principle 9 *identifies and analyses significant change*. The principle will require the attention, to ensure that it continues to function effectively.

Regarding principle 3 *establishes structure, authority and responsibility*: the major change process DG HR has resulted in a new organisation implemented mid-February 2022, which will contribute to the effective establishment of the structure, authority and responsibility, governed by principle 3.

Principle 11 is affected by weaknesses identified by the IAS audit on IT security management related to IT security governance, logical system-related controls, IT service provider management and to controls related to data protection, for which an action plan to remedy them was launched in 2021 (for further details, see annex 7). As a result, the effectiveness of the Local Informatics Security Officer's functions has been reinforced by joining in February 2022 the c-LISO (centralised Local Information Security Officer) service of DIGIT, to ensure that DG HR reaches the level of service necessary to ensure sound information security. The remaining weaknesses are being addressed through actions to be implemented in 2022 and 2023. They should result in improvements in the effective adoption of principle 11 'control over technology'.

DG HR has followed the methodology established in the 'Implementation Guide of the Internal Control Framework of the Commission' using a wide range of tools such as the register of exceptions, analyses of internal control weakness or control failures recorded during the year, the risk assessment, relevant audit results and supervisory reports. The annual review also focused on an analysis of the results of the staff opinion survey, and on the annual risk assessment. This information was complemented by information and inputs from managers and staff who play a key role implementing the internal control principles.

2.1.4. Conclusions on the assurance

This section reviews the assessment of the elements already reported above (in Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and 2.1.3), and the sub-conclusions already reached. It draws an overall conclusion to support the declaration of assurance and whether it should be qualified with reservations.

Review of the elements supporting assurance

The information reported above stems from the results of management reports, supervisory controls, surveys, and audits that cover the whole organisation. DG HR operates in an environment where the risks are sufficiently well-managed and rather low:

- A centralised and direct mode of budget implementation, the mode with the lowest intrinsic risk. Absence of grants and limited asset management, which are notoriously risky areas of financial management.
- Assurance received from DG HR's sub-delegated Authorising Officers and Assurance received for the credits (cross) sub-delegated to other DGs. Monitoring, registration and analysis of exception reports and non-compliance events indicated no material issues.
- Positive assurance on administrative expenditure given by the Court of Auditors for several years, and again in the annual report issued in 2021.
- Conclusions of ex-post control indication no issues with significant financial impact,
- Positive feedback received from inter-DG group of procurement experts (GAMA) and the Procurement Board concerning the procurement procedures scrutinised.
- No critical audit recommendations issued and no significant delays in addressing audit recommendations that were classed as 'very important' in reports of previous years.
- Statement issued by the IAS concludes that the internal control systems in place for the audited processes are effective, except for the observations in recent reports that gave rise to only one 'very important' recommendations.
- The DG's annual risk assessment is integrated in an annual planning exercise and incorporates fraud risks. Any critical risks are identified, and they are the subject of management attention and mitigating actions are systematically defined and implemented.

The information reported in Section 2.1 stems from the results of management and auditor monitoring contained in the reports listed. These reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available. This approach provides sufficient guarantees as to the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in a comprehensive coverage of the budget delegated to the Director-General of DG HR.

In conclusion, based on the elements reported above, management has reasonable assurance that, overall, suitable controls are in place and working as intended; risks are being appropriately monitored and mitigated; and necessary improvements and reinforcements are being implemented. The Director-General, in her capacity as Authorising Officer by Delegation has signed the Declaration of Assurance.

The Issue of the European Schools

The European Schools, governed by an intergovernmental convention, have a distinct and separate mandate which is defined in terms of providing a multilingual and multicultural education for children. The fulfilment of the schools' mandate cannot thus be construed as 'executing a part of DG HR's mission'. For this reason, the European Schools are not considered as an entrusted entity which indirectly executes DG HR's budget.

The latest reports from both the European Court of Auditors and the Internal Audit Service indicate that the European Schools' financial management has improved but not sufficiently.

Overall, in its latest report, the Court is still unable to confirm that the Schools' financial management was fully compliant with their Financial Regulation and Staff Regulations and the IAS still reports several recommendations that are long overdue.

The Commission monitors the implementation of the recommendations issued by the IAS and other audit bodies to the European Schools. Given the absence of major improvement of the Schools' financial management, as confirmed by the auditors, DG HR keeps reminding the schools about the absolute need to improve significantly their administrative management and the urgency of closing the open audit recommendations.

DG HR holds quarterly meetings with the Central Office of the European School to follow closely on the implementation of outstanding audit recommendations. On top of that, DG HR will also initiate discussions with the IAS with a view to working together on ways to help the schools complete their action plans on the open IAS recommendations.

2.1.5. Declaration of Assurance

I, the undersigned,

Director-General of Human Resources and Security

In my capacity as authorising officer by delegation

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view ([7]).

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

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

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

Brussels, 31 March 2022

Signed

Gertrud Ingestad

([7]) True and fair in this context means a reliable, complete and correct view on the state of affairs in the DG/Executive Agency.

2.2. Modern and efficient administration – other aspects

2.2.1. Human resource management

2021 marked the year of the move to a new building with dynamic working arrangements ('HR ON THE MOVE') and the preparation of the DG HR reorganisation ('NEXT HR'), implemented in 2022. This represented a lot of change for colleagues, in addition to the challenges and feelings of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to adequately support staff during this change process, DG HR boosted its communication and staff engagement initiatives. For example, tailor-made webpages ('HR ON THE MOVE' and 'NEXT HR') were created and kept updated regularly. More than 20 workshops were held as a means to update staff on the new building and the proposed layout as well as to discuss how to best adapt to the new working environment. In so doing, there was an opportunity to discuss the accompanying new ways of working. In addition, practical guides have been published on My IntraComm to make the most of the new flexible working environment. Monthly town hall meetings were also organised to keep staff up-to-date with the latest developments and to provide staff with the opportunity to ask questions directly to management. Furthermore, regular e-mail messages were sent from the Director-General providing updates on the state of play of the move and the reorganisation in addition to any other local HR news relevant to all staff. Staff were also consulted on the draft structure of the DG. Six focus groups were also organised to provide input towards shaping the 'NEXT HR'. In order to provide DG HR colleagues with the opportunity to explore job opportunities within the DG, vacancies were published on a specific intranet page and all staff members – including managers – were invited to have a career talk to discuss their interest in short- or medium-term mobility, and preferred working areas. This resulted in a lot of internal mobility. The development of a local HR strategy was postponed to 2022 in view of DG HR's large-scale reorganisation and the focus on the new corporate HR strategy.

In 2021, DG HR had met its quota of appointing women as the three first appointments to Head of Unit position by December 2022. However, due to a withdrawal, DG HR still needs to make one appointment in 2022. Throughout the year, DG HR continued injecting additional effort into enlarging its pool of potential female candidates by improving its communication and awareness raising. This was done, for example, by ensuring that potential candidates were aware of existing and upcoming management vacancies, and through systematic career talks. In addition, colleagues who participated in the Female Talent Development Programme were closely followed throughout and after the programme to ensure a continuous exchange of information.

2.2.2. Digital transformation and information management

In 2021 DG HR has intensified the activities of the HR modernisation and digital transformation programme (HRT) in view of gradually implementing, in the course of the next five years, a new HR IT platform, based on top-tier commercially available solutions. Further details are included in section 1 'DG HR Specific objective 1 Foster a modern and high-performing organisation'.

In the implementation of the corporate data governance and data policies at local DG HR level, DG HR has implemented several measures to better manage HR data as an asset. Amongst others, it is worth mentioning the first version of the HR family conceptual data model, an important step towards the future HR transformation data architecture. Prototyping of data lineage from source systems to data analytics products, helps setting the basis for better data quality and implementation of data protection rules. In addition, introducing a new business-term definition template provides data stewards across DG HR a better and more complete way of documenting definitions, and a more controlled way to manage their data.

In 2021, DG HR fully implemented IAS's audit recommendation on data protection i.e. to review its centralised data protection coordination role for the DG HR family (OIB, OIL, EPSO and PMO). DG HR devolved the role to the Offices, all of which have their own Data Protection Coordinator since the end of Q1 2021. By focussing resources on DG HR personal data processing only, the restructured HR Data Protection Coordinator (DPC) team was able to streamline its actions on the implementation of the Commission's Data Protection Action Plan (C(2018) 7432 final). In particular, an in-depth review of all HR data protection records in the Data Protection Management System took place. Furthermore, a comprehensive assessment of the HR process was launched in the framework of the HRT project with special attention to the need of conducting DPIAs on some of the underlying operations on personal data of Commission staff. Also, HR performance indicators were exceeded with more than 60% in the part on the training target and met in the part on data breaches as all three eligible breaches were notified to the EDPS within the 72-hour deadline. Overall, the DPC team provided 630 pieces of written data protection advice to assist DG HR controllers and further raise the level of compliance with the data protection rules, including on issues such as COVID-19 measures and the HRT project.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the move to the new building (L107), document management in DG HR has been simplified with almost 100% of the workflows being electronic (paperless). The introduction of the Qualified Electronic Signature (which replaced the signature by hand) has also helped in this respect. A massive exercise of throwing documents away and sending documents to the Service of Historical Archives (SHA) of OIB was done in the context of the move to the new building. In total, at least 1 700 boxes and 2 200 A4 binders were sent to SHA. Documents filling 1 060 blue bins, corresponding to 254 000 litres, were removed. To prepare the reorganisation, all staff in DG HR were asked to file their documents in Ares, to close old files, to prepare their new filing plan, virtual entities, FMBs etc.

2.2.3. Sound environmental management

Objective: To contribute to the common Commission objective and further improve the environmental performance of the institution.

EMAS corporate communication campaigns were organised by DG HR to reach out to Services across the Commission, as well as to the executive agencies and gradually the EC Representations to inform them about the latest Commission performance figures. The

biannual Environmental Awareness Survey included additional questions related to homeworking, to get a better understanding of the impact of teleworking on generating emissions. for reporting.

DG HR organised and promoted local actions as part of the main 2021 EMAS corporate communication campaigns, including: the second corporate competition on the organisation of sustainable conferences and events (in collaboration with DG SCIC); the 'Less waste, more action' waste reduction campaign, including digital mindful tips and tricks (in collaboration with DIGIT); and sustainable commuting actions (EU Mobility Week, VeloWalk). In 2021, the VeloMai was combined with the Walking Challenge initiative, named VeloWalk. Whilst there was a 58% decrease in DG HR participants in VeloMai due to COVID-19, there was an overall 71% increase in the total number of participants in VeloWalk. In addition, following the move to L-107, DG HR created a volunteer group to focus on specific greening activities for the building (involving SCIC, DIGIT and EPSO), named 'EMAS Taskforce for the One'. During 2021, the group set up a waste reduction info-fair including quizzes and interactive games in December, as well as prepared the organisation of a small electric appliances' collection action in collaboration with a local social enterprise for January 2022.

Thanks to the move to the One (L107), one of the best environmentally performing buildings in the Commission's portofolio, several actions in DG HR's strategic plan 2020-2024 have already been implemented, such as the increase of the available videoconference facilities (more than 3 videoconference rooms per floor), as well as the installation of new waste sorting stations (pilot project).

Other actions in DG HR's strategic plan 2020-2024 will be implemented in 2022 following the return to the office, for example the reporting on waste and energy performance trends, the monitoring of the 'greening' of DG HR events and conferences (almost 100% virtual in 2021) and office supplies (very limited demand in 2021) and the promotion of bike parking facilities, lockers and showers for the cyclists.

Lastly, some other actions were also postponed pending the adoption of the communication on greening the Commission, for example: the action related to the analysis of DG HR's missions trends / patterns with a view to reducing their carbon footprint and the monitoring of the inclusion of green criteria in DG HR's public procurement tenders.