



European Committee
of the Regions



ANNUAL REPORT **HUMAN** **2023**
RESOURCES
EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

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FOREWORD

Dear colleagues, dear readers,

Well-being of staff plays a crucial role in organisational success. Healthy and happy staff is more engaged, productive, and committed to their work. A healthy work environment reduces burnout and increases overall job satisfaction and performance.

This is why I have put in place procedures and actions to support well-being, including measures to keep staff healthy (such as physiotherapy, conferences on health, etc.), to support staff during sick leave, and to help staff resume their activities and reintegrate after a long-term absence. I am convinced that these well-being initiatives contribute to creating a positive workplace where staff can thrive.

This positivity impacts team dynamics, collaboration, and our overall organisational culture.

This in turn results in success and impact. As Confucius said more than 2500 years ago:

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

If we want the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) to have impact, we need to continue to focus on well-being. The past year's achievements demonstrate that we are on the right path. Let me list some examples:

- Our Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors reached 3000 participants and gathered local and regional representatives from all 27 EU Member States. It generated impact by bringing Europe closer to local communities and encouraging local and regional councillors to organise EU and CoR related activities within their regions, cities, and villages.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the CoR and the European Parliament on communication in the run-up and follow-up to European elections 2024, making the CoR a valuable partner in this EU-wide democratic process.
- The CoR's work on Ukraine has been recognised by other EU institutions and internationally. Examples include the CoR's leadership in the work of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine, its contribution to the Ukraine Facility and its role in promoting summer camps for Ukrainian children.
- Progress has been made by the CoR in building a more inclusive, gender-equal and fair EU, by improving gender equality and integrating it into its own operations through a dedicated Gender Equality Action Plan.
- The last European Parliament discharge procedures on the CoR have been the most successful in the CoR's history. They prove and certify that the CoR has a clean, effective, and state-of-the-art administration.

These are only a few examples that show what we can achieve when working together in a positive environment. I encourage all of us to keep up our collective commitment to achieving impact. We are entering a period of change, both politically and administratively, where we will continue to evolve in the way we work. The digital transformation offers great potential if we do it in the right way. It can make our work easier, more efficient and of better quality. I am convinced that if we prioritise and leverage digital tools, we can enhance our well-being while further increasing our impact. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, "There is nothing permanent except change." Therefore, I invite you to embrace these upcoming changes, and join me in further improving our work environment at the CoR.

Petr Blížkovský
Secretary-General



INTRODUCTION

The main mission of the secretariat-general of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is to provide its members with all the necessary assistance to enable the institution to function properly as an assembly of local and regional representatives and thus to achieve its political mission and objectives.

Management of human resources (HR) is the key responsibility of all managers, although the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance plays a leading role in this respect. The mission of the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance is to allocate available human and budgetary resources to allow the institution to achieve its political and administrative objectives and ensure compliance with all applicable provisions when implementing the Staff Regulations, the Financial Regulation and internal control standards, while providing an appropriate working environment and sufficient opportunities for staff to learn, develop and grow.

In 2023, the Secretary-General further implemented the *Going for Impact!* plan, which was initially launched in 2020. The primary objective of this plan, spanning from 2020 to 2024, is to simplify and modernise the administration. This plan includes a comprehensive set of measures to make the administration's support for the CoR's political mission more strategic, to use the CoR's resources in a more efficient way and boost the impact and outreach of the institution.

To achieve these objectives, the plan also refocuses management on increasing the CoR's impact and performance through the following administrative priorities:

- Focused policy support
- Increased outreach
- Smart & Modern Administration

The Secretary-General's proactive approach aims to steer the CoR towards greater impact and performance, while maintaining a forward-looking and adaptive administrative framework.

Considering the administrative priorities outlined above, this report serves as a document to complement the annual activity report. The aim of this report is twofold:

Firstly, it seeks to present the impact and main achievements of the CoR's activities related to human resources policy in 2023 and secondly, it aims to address the challenges that lie ahead for the institution.

HIGHLIGHTS 2023

Full implementation of the new CoR-EESC Cooperation agreement

In 2023, the CoR, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Committee (EESC), finalised the allocation of resources following the changes made under the new CoR-EESC Cooperation Agreement. All managerial positions in the newly established Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology were filled and the teams consolidated.

Job rotation

A new decision on internal mobility, aiming to develop the full staff potential and to break silos across services, was signed on 6 November 2023 and entered into force on 1 January 2024, initially as a pilot project.

Career guidance

Career guidance sessions offered to staff in 2023 were specifically targeting staff members approaching their seventh year in the post, in order to prepare the rollout of the new mobility policy in 2024.

New decision on functional management

The decision on functional management was updated in 2023 with the aim of making the recruitment of functional managers in the institution more transparent and inclusive.



Internal job shadowing

In 2023, the fifth round of job shadowing continued the upward trend in satisfaction, reaching a new record of 8.64 out of 10 in overall satisfaction.

Interinstitutional job shadowing

After the pilot interinstitutional job shadowing organised by the CoR in 2022, the EuSA took over the reins of this project and successfully organised the first interinstitutional job shadowing edition, involving 10 EU institutions and agencies. During this programme, the CoR welcomed 32 external colleagues, while 18 CoR colleagues actively shadowed colleagues in other institutions over a six-month period. Notably, the CoR played a pivotal role by hosting both the opening and closing events of the programme and providing essential support to EuSA colleagues in organising, launching and managing this ground-breaking 'large-scale' edition.

Interinstitutional exchange of officials

Following the success of the interinstitutional job shadowing initiative, the CoR has taken a significant step forward by becoming a pioneer in interinstitutional exchanges of officials in partnership with the EEAS. These two institutions, after an initial six-month secondment in the interest of the service, have proceeded with a permanent exchange of two officials based on Article 8 of the Staff Regulations. This initiative lays the groundwork for a new opportunity for interinstitutional mobility, aimed at promoting the exchange of best practices, learning, and enhanced interinstitutional cooperation. This approach is expected to be further strengthened from 2024 onwards, with the hope that it will inspire other institutions to follow suit.

Further development of the procedure for welcoming and onboarding newcomers

To enhance the onboarding experience, a revised 'Onboarding e-Learning' training course was developed, in collaboration with an external company. This course is now fully managed and hosted in-house, resulting in annual cost savings of EUR 10 000. Key topics, including ethics and diversity and inclusion (D&I), were carefully updated to align with current best practices.

Learning and development

In 2023, face-to-face classes continued to be widely organised, although for certain courses, the online format was still the preferred mode of instruction. The training rooms in BvS were fully equipped to support hybrid training throughout the year, enabling hybrid sessions as and when they were needed. Additionally, several customised training programmes were developed for specific services or categories of staff, such as policy-makers, with assistance from both internal trainers and external contractors.

New decision on ethics

On 18 December 2023, a new decision was adopted to enhance the institution's ethical framework. This decision consolidates all ethical rules applicable to staff members in a single text.



CORE HR PROCESSES



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The HR activities are carried out in accordance with the Staff Regulations, the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union, the Financial Regulation, the General Data Protection Regulation, the CoR Rules of Procedure and the implementing provisions for these legal acts adopted by the CoR. The Staff Regulations and the Conditions of Employment of

Other Servants of the European Union are interpreted and applied by the CoR in a manner consistent with the approach taken at interinstitutional level as part of the relevant interinstitutional working groups and committees. Furthermore, the relevant case-law and recommendations of the Court of Auditors and the EU Ombudsman are also taken into account.

ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

In 2023, the CoR, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Committee (EESC), finalised the allocation of resources following the changes made under the new CoR-EESC Cooperation Agreement. The new Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology (DIIT) became fully operational following the recruitment of the IIT director in September 2023. In October, a smaller reorganisation of two units in Directorate IIT took place, in order to better allocate resources in line with CoR-EESC priorities. The new "Public Procurement and Financial Management" unit, placed under the direct supervision of both secretaries-general of the CoR and the EESC respectively and which aims to centralise all public procurement and financial management of the Joint Services, was the subject of a feasibility study – which continues in 2024 – to determine the feasibility and factors ensuring the success of this undertaking. One year after these organisational changes, the HR services of both Committees in cooperation with the trade unions, organised a first staff survey in all the services concerned to assess their impact on the day-to-day work and on employees' satisfaction. The results of this survey allow CoR-EESC management to develop new ways to further improve the Joint Services and their important contribution to the work of both Committees.

Despite the CoR's struggle to secure additional resources from budgetary authorities for permanent posts in the establishment plan in recent years, there was a significant increase in the budget for contract staff members in 2023. The CoR obtained this increase of € 1.24 million to compensate for the unbalanced effect of the implementation of the administrative cooperation agreement with the EP (signed in 2014). This increase is foreseen to stay in the budget in the coming years. The additional resources were allocated to services and projects directly linked to the political and administrative priorities of the institution, such as the political groups, reinforcing cooperation with

Ukraine and the modernisation of the institution's IT infrastructure.

Talent management is a key aspect of workforce planning. Two very important new decisions were implemented in 2023 under the CoR Talent Management Strategy. Practices for the internal mobility of officials were codified and expanded, including job rotations that further allow colleagues to explore new possibilities within the organisation, thus encouraging in-house talent to remain within the institution and acquire more knowledge, experience and renewed motivation. The second decision aims to make the recruitment of functional managers in the institution more transparent and accessible by targeting a broader base of potential candidates, while at the same time setting relevant eligibility criteria. The CoR competency framework was also adapted in 2023 to align it with the EPSO competency framework. The new competency framework has a stronger emphasis on flexibility, resilience in an ever-changing work environment and a focus on digital skills. The framework impacts HR policies ranging from recruitment and staff assessment to training, and will allow the CoR to recruit the talent of the future.

In the course of 2023, a few other reorganisations of the organisational chart took place, to ensure that the CoR's resources are aligned with the institution's political and administrative priorities. The CIVEX Commission merged two sectors to realize economies of scale and its operational setting, the Financial management unit reorganised its four sectors in a more effective way and units DIT and DIS in the new born Directorate IIT adjusted their structure by adding an additional sector and by appointing three functional managers. Additionally, the CoR regularly fine-tunes the allocation of workforce by redeploying resources between directorates and units, according to the changing needs within the institution. Such dynamic reorganisation and reallocation of resources is also aimed at keeping the overall number of

operational jobs sufficiently high: in the last ten years, the share of operational¹ jobs has gradually increased from 46% in 2013 to 53.6% today. In 2023, three AST posts were converted: one to AD and two to AST/SC.

Establishment plan posts

The establishment plan refers to permanent and temporary posts available to the CoR under the EU budget.

The budgetary authority did not grant the CoR any new posts in 2023. Nevertheless, understaffing remains an issue for the CoR, especially when compared with other EU institutions and bodies (see Table 1).

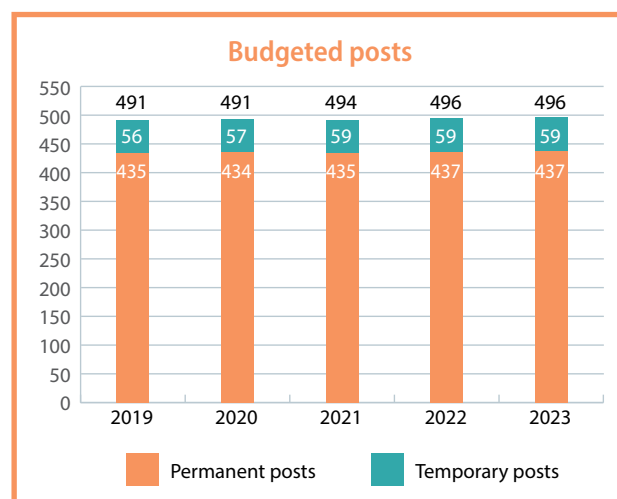


Chart 1 CoR trend in posts 2019-2023

Establishment plan posts per EU Institution*

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
European Commission	23578	23566	23469	23394	23377
European Parliament	6722	6720	6773	6825	6923
Council of the European Union	3029	3029	3030	3029	3029
Court of Justice of the European Union	2073	2097	2110	2110	2114
European External Action Service	1699	1742	1750	1753	1752
European Court of Auditors	853	853	895	873	882
European Economic and Social Committee	668	669	669	669	670
European Committee of the Regions	491	494	496	496	496
European Ombudsman	69	73	73	73	75
European Data Protection Supervisor	84	84	84	84	89
	39266	39327	39349	39306	39407

Table 1 Establishment plan posts per EU Institution 2020-2024 - *source: Resource allocation on 1 January of each year <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/budget/www/index-en.htm>

WORKFORCE

CoR workforce in 2023

On 31 December 2023, the CoR had an active workforce of 620 people; 90% of whom are considered statutory staff (officials, temporary and contract staff, special advisers), while 10% are non-statutory staff (seconded

national experts, trainees, interim staff, external service providers).

The average age at the CoR is following an upward trend that reached the age of 47.7 in 2023. Indeed, 41% of active staff fall in the 40-50 age range, while another

¹ The CoR distinguishes between three categories of jobs: operational (directly linked to the institution's political and communication activities), overhead (administrative support, including HR and logistics) and neutral (linguistic jobs).

34% is aged between 50 and 60 (see age pyramid in Annex IV, chart III).

Overall, the CoR employs more women than men (56.9% women in 2023). Unfortunately, at management level only 34.7% of staff are female, while the goal is to have at least 40% female managers. However, the good practices implemented under the CoR's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy are starting to yield results. The new appointments of middle managers (Heads of unit or Deputy Directors) or functional managers (Deputy Heads of unit, heads of sector or team leaders) show a positive trend, though this is not yet sufficient to offset the historical deficit. In 2023, 44.4% of its senior managers were women.

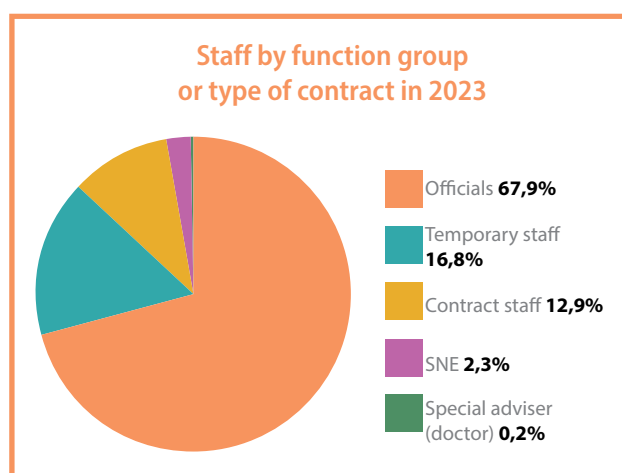


Chart 2 CoR staff "breakdown by type of contract" situation 31/12/2023

Officials

The workforce is spread over three different function groups: AD, AST and AST/SC.

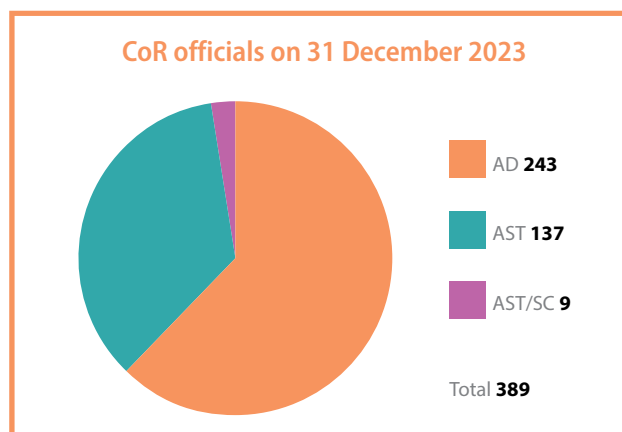


Chart 3 CoR officials by function group, situation on 31/12/2023

Almost 70% of the CoR statutory staff are officials. On 31 December 2023, 62.5% of actively employed officials were administrators (AD), while 37.5% belonged to the assistant (AST) or secretary/clerk (AST/SC) function groups. The share of AST/SC officials is following a

slightly upward trend (from 1% in 2022 to 2.3% in 2023), although the number of posts involving only administrative support or secretarial tasks remains very restricted in the institution. On the contrary, due to the limited number of total posts available, staff members are expected to be versatile and capable of adapting to different levels of tasks.

As far as AD officials are concerned, 17.3% of them are in management positions. For all other officials, the allocation of AD and AST posts across the CoR depends on the role of the different directorates. For example, 44% of all AD officials are in the Directorate for Translation working mostly as translators, while 30% of all AST officials work for the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance, providing budgetary, HR and administrative support to the institution.

Temporary staff

On 31 December 2023, the CoR employed 96 temporary staff, which represents 17.2% of the statutory staff. There are three different categories of temporary staff at the CoR: a small number – 3% – are temporary staff occupying temporary posts (2a), including the Secretary-General, 52% are temporary staff in the political groups and the president's private office (2c) and 45% are temporary staff on permanent posts (2b), who are recruited when it was not possible to recruit a permanent staff member. The number of temporary staff on permanent posts has further increased since last year, as a consequence of the lack of new EPSO reserve lists. This situation led the CoR to consider organising an internal competition in 2024 in order to grant business continuity and retain the expertise developed by non-permanent staff members.

The majority of temporary staff (61.5%) were employed as ADs. The remaining 38.5% belonged to the AST and AST/SC function groups.

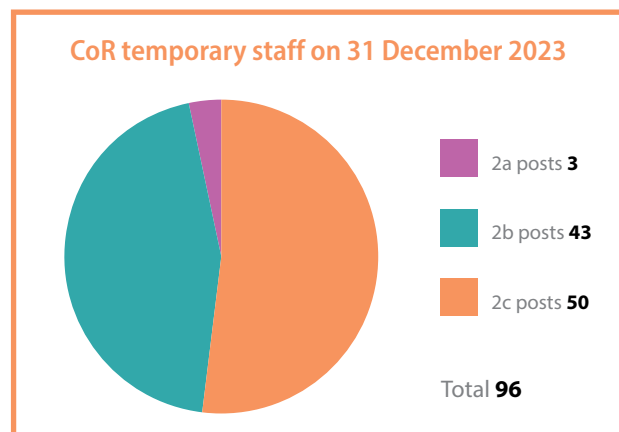


Chart 4 CoR Temporary staff by type of contract, on 31/12/2023

Contract staff

At the end of 2023, 74 people were employed by the CoR as contract staff members, which amounts to 13.2% of the statutory staff.

Contract staff category 3a, function group I – ushers, drivers, manual workers, etc. – are hired to meet permanent needs and in general have open-ended contracts. They represent 28.4% of all contract staff. Contract staff category 3b, function groups II, III and IV are recruited to work on projects which are limited in time and to temporarily contribute the political and administrative priorities of the institution. They are also occasionally recruited as short-to-mid-term replacements of absent colleagues.

In 2023, the contract staff budget increased by almost 50 %, which led to a significant increase in the recruitment of new contract staff compared to 2022.

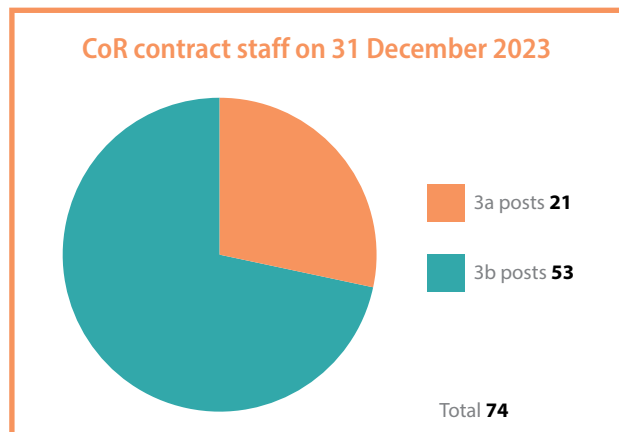


Chart 5 CoR contract staff by type of contract, situation on 31/12/2023

Special advisor

The CoR employs a medical doctor, recruited as special advisor, under the provisions of Article 123 of the CEOS.

Seconded national experts

The CoR regularly hosts national experts from public bodies, to allow them to contribute to the EU-decision-making process and encourage cross-fertilisation and exchanges of best practices. Seconded national experts are sent and supported by their employers during their secondment, with or without additional allowances allocated by the CoR.

At the end of 2023, the CoR had 13 SNEs representing a total annual budget of EUR 616.563. A new decision on the conditions of employment of SNEs entered into force in 2023.

Interim agencies/external service providers

The CoR also uses interim agencies to meet short-term temporary needs, for instance as replacements of colleagues on sick leaves or as support during workload peaks. In 2023, 23 people were employed on interim contracts for the CoR. They carried out a total of 69 interim assignments, which represents a consistent trend across the years.

Due to the specific nature of some functions and profiles, expertise may also be provided by external service providers placed at the disposal of the institution under framework contracts (IT helpdesk, security, communication services, etc.).

TALENT SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

Officials

The CoR follows a transparent vacancy-publication policy. Almost all vacancy notices are displayed on the institution's website. Furthermore, members of selection panels do not have access to candidates' personal data to ensure that applications are evaluated exclusively on the basis of candidates' qualifications and the needs of the recruiting service.

In 2023, the CoR published 34 vacancy notices, returning therefore to a historical average following a record low during the COVID19-crisis in 2021 and a record high in 2022, as can be seen in table 2. The publications also include the more complex publication and recruitment procedure for a senior manager (director) for the Directorate for Translation, which will be concluded in 2024 and 1 middle management recruitment procedure.

	2021	2022	2023
Vacancy notices	25	60	34
Newly recruited officials	6	3	13
Transfers in	8	8	7
Transfers out	6	14	11

Table 2 Permanent staff evolution between 2021 and 2023

2023 saw the appointment of 13 newly recruited officials, strongly offsetting the weaker trend of previous years. Nevertheless, many published posts still did not generate enough applications and had to be either republished or led to the recruitment of a temporary staff member. The average number of applications per vacancy in 2023 remained low in most cases. Delays in delivering new EPSO reserve lists for officials may explain part of the decrease in applications over recent years. It is, however, a fact that EU institutions are slowly becoming less attractive as employers, especially for candidates coming from countries offering better salaries and benefits. At an interinstitutional level, in 2023 the CoR transferred seven officials from other EU institutions which corresponds to the average observed over the years.

The CoR takes part in a number of task forces organised by EPSO at interinstitutional level, to improve the variety of applicants and to boost the efficiency of the EPSO selection process as a whole. The CoR also contributes to the development of the new EPSO competition model through its active involvement in the EPSO Management

Board, the EPSO Working Group, selection boards and several themed working groups (CAST permanent, the working in partnership group, etc.).

Other staff

Despite the increase in 2023 in the number of newly recruited officials, the CoR continued to recruit several temporary and contract staff members over the course of the year.

In 2023, 22 temporary staff members and 31 contract staff members were newly recruited. At the same time, another 26 non-permanent staff members had their contracts extended while 16 staff members resigned from their contracts. The CoR also published three recruitment procedures for temporary staff 2c for the political groups which, due to their more complex and time-consuming nature, will be finalised only in 2024.

The significant increase in new recruitments can be explained by the increased budget for contract staff members and the aforementioned difficulties in attracting officials or EPSO laureates.

	2021	2022	2023
Newly recruited non-permanent staff members	43	36	53
Extensions of existing contracts	20	30	26
Resignations	13	18	16

Table 3 Non-permanent staff evolution in 2021-2023

TRAINEESHIPS

The Traineeships Office plays an important role in facilitating learning opportunities for young professionals and students, contributing to their personal and professional development while supporting the institution's objectives.

Different traineeships opportunities at the CoR

Cicero traineeships

Similar to other European institutions, the CoR offers two sessions of paid traineeships annually, spanning

five months each (beginning on 16 February and 16 September respectively). In 2023, with the increased budget and the creation of the Directorate for IIT, the number of Cicero trainees has raised and the CoR welcomed 52 Cicero trainees

Study visits

At a time of escalating conflict in Ukraine and in an effort to extend support and learning opportunities to Ukrainian nationals, as well as to contribute to the 'Support Ukraine initiative', the institution continued to welcome Ukrainian trainees under the study visit scheme. Three Ukrainian nationals benefitted from the programme in 2023. Additionally, the CoR has also hosted another nine study visitors under the same scheme.

Study visits for government officials

This programme primarily targets government officials from local and regional authorities in EU Member States, with a view to facilitating the exchange of practices and providing hands-on learning experiences within the CoR. Regrettably, the CoR did not host any government study visitors in 2023.

In conclusion, a total of 64 young individuals participated in the CoR's traineeship programmes in 2023.

HR eForms – further developments

In 2023, the HR eForms platform emerged as a pivotal tool in managing the selection of trainees. This innovative application, born from collaboration between the CoR and EESC Traineeships Offices, and the Directorate for IIT, was created to streamline HR processes. Offering a unified interface for authentication, profile management, data handling, communication with applicants, and workflow administration, its full implementation led to increased efficiency. New developments and refinements in 2023 have brought improvements to its features and functions, including in the selection procedure for study visits. The platform has been also used for the management of selection procedures for non-permanent staff members and will be adapted to the evolving service needs of the institution in 2024 to create a fully electronic workflow.

New successful editions of the [Y] Factor project

Launched back in 2017, the [Youth] Factor project is a biannual voluntary research initiative overseen by trainees. Throughout their traineeship period, the trainees have the chance to design and execute a project centred around youth perspectives. The project aims to foster connections between the CoR and the

young generation, while also promoting collaborative work among trainees and facilitating the acquisition of new skills.

In 2023 the trainees worked on two different and impactful projects:

The [Y] Factor Spring 2023 project "At the CoR(e) of an EU Political Assembly" was a documentary which offered an immersive journey following trainees as they explored the inner workings of the CoR and its commissions. The trainees' experience provided insights into the role of the rapporteur and the political work undertaken by CoR members for EU citizens. The documentary comprehensively showcased the CoR's responsibilities in regional development, social policy, environment, culture, education, etc. It highlighted the connection between the CoR's work and its impact at the regional and local level.

In honour of the 30th anniversary of the CoR, the autumn 2023 trainees presented their poster exhibition: 'The CoR on the Ground - Local and Regional Success Stories'. The 2023 edition of the [Y] Factor project highlighted the CoR's pivotal role in ensuring the active representation of local and regional authorities in the European Union's decision-making processes. 19 posters showcased inspiring projects and initiatives by CoR members and young elected politicians (YEPs) who have had a positive impact on a local and regional level. The exhibition was on display in Foyer 5 of the JDE building.

Growing Alumni network

The CoR Trainee Alumni Network is a LinkedIn group that offers former trainees the opportunity to (re) connect and keep up to date with upcoming events of the network and news from the CoR.

Since its launch in April 2022, the LinkedIn group has seen a consistent increase in membership, with 285 participants by 31 December 2023.

Given their great popularity, two 'Get-together (former) trainees' meetings were arranged to facilitate ties between former trainees and current trainees at the CoR.

Additionally, an after-work event was held on 23 June 2023, open to alumni living in Brussels and the surrounding area.

Fruitful joint project between the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) and CoR

The project was launched back in November 2022 with the autumn cohort of Cicero trainees 2022; 20 CoR trainees updated the 'in my region' section of the

website What Europe does for me (referred to with the acronym WEDFM) developed by the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). The work consisted in updating/creating 'fiches' relating to projects in EU cities and regions. Each trainee joined the group of his/her country.

In 2023, the project continued with the cohort of spring 2023 trainees (12) and autumn 2023 trainees (17). Participation in the project was on a voluntary basis and trainees were strongly encouraged to participate.

Interinstitutional network of Traineeships Offices

The Interinstitutional Network of Traineeships Offices, initially founded by the CoR and EESC back in 2019, has continued to evolve as a platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange in the field of traineeship programmes. The second meeting took place in April 2023 in Luxembourg and the members of the CoR Traineeships Office actively participated. During the various workshops, the participants were divided in groups across the following topics: recruitment and retention of high-performing trainees, addressing

geographical imbalances in traineeship applications and benefits of alumni networks.

Traineeships in numbers

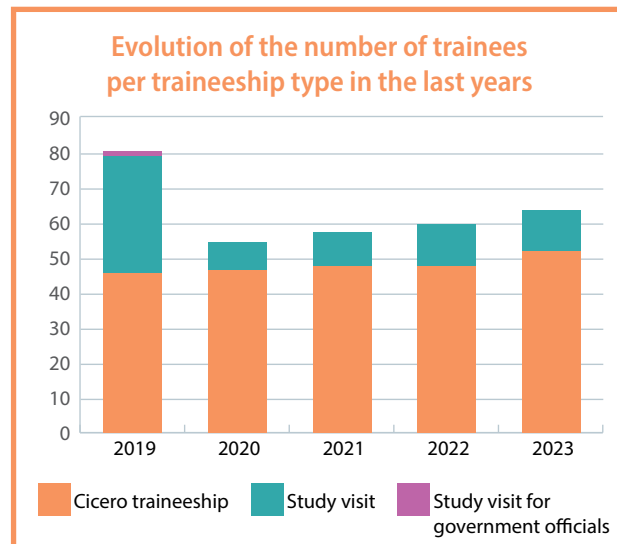


Chart 6 Evolution of the number of trainees per traineeship type in 2019-2023

CHALLENGES AHEAD

New EPSO competition model

In the past few years, the EPSO competition model has come under increased pressure due to several external and internal factors. Several Member States have successfully challenged linguistic and other legal aspects of the competitions, resulting in cancelled competitions and increased complexity of the selection process, and so reserve lists have been delayed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person testing in testing centres and assessment centres faced significant challenges. EPSO therefore had to adapt by organising assessments fully remotely. These difficulties led to substantial delays in delivering new reserve lists for officials. As a result, EPSO intends to implement a new competition model which will be in the 24 languages of the EU and, where generalists will only be tested on cognitive abilities, EU knowledge and written communication skills through remotely administered tests. For specialists, a field-specific test may also be included. This should reduce the overall duration of competitions, while creating a larger pool of candidates on reserve lists. However, this also means that each institution will have to individually

test all the competencies that were previously tested in the oral assessment centre. Therefore, once the new model is fully implemented, the CoR will have to ensure that each candidate for an official's post meets its requirements in terms of general competencies during the recruitment procedure. Such an approach raises a series of legal questions regarding equal treatment of all candidates, comparability of the tests among institutions, etc.

General internal competition

To compensate for the absence of EPSO lists, the Secretary-General has started a social dialogue with the representatives of Trade Unions and Staff Associations (OSP) on organising a general internal competition, on the basis of Article 29(1) of the Staff Regulations. The aim is to guarantee continuity of operations by consolidating the number of permanent staff to meet the needs of the service, while offering them career prospects and retaining the most talented non-permanent staff. The launch of the general internal competition is scheduled for spring 2024.



SUPPORTING CAREER
DEVELOPMENT AND
INTEGRATED TALENT
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

In 2023, the Talent Management Strategy continued to be a priority of the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance, with synergies and integrated efforts to ensure

impact at each stage of the employee lifecycle within the CoR (recruitment, onboarding, development, retention and departure).

ONBOARDING

Concerning the onboarding of new colleagues, as announced in 2022, the *Newcomers induction programme* was further implemented (except the 'mentor' network which will be put in place at a later stage) and some activities revamped with a new format.

To enhance the onboarding experience, a new 'Onboarding e-Learning' training course was developed, in collaboration with an external company. This course is now fully managed and hosted in-house, resulting in annual cost savings of EUR 10 000. Key topics, including ethics and Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), were carefully

updated to align with current best practices. As an example, alongside improvements to content, this course has been optimised for screen reader accessibility and contains features to meet diversity and inclusion needs. It will be made available to all staff in January 2024.

The dedicated MS TEAMS-based network has continued to be used as a platform to exchange information and to communicate with our group of newcomers. The introduction of a fresh format called the 'entry talk' received positive feedback. Building on this success, two additional meetings were held in January and June 2023.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Building competencies is the first pillar of the Integrated Talent Management Strategy. Learning and Development is part of this pillar.

In 2023, the learning model 70:20:10 remained the inspirational model at the basis of learning and development, comprising:

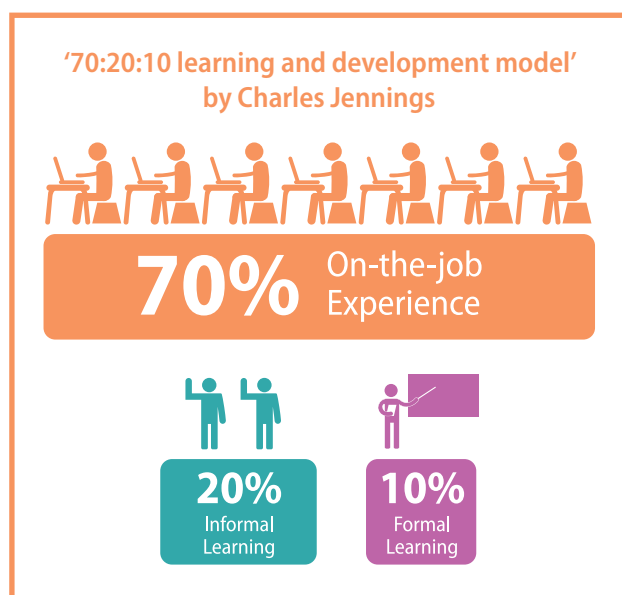


Figure 1 : '70:20:10 learning and development model' - Source: Charles Jennings, former CLO of Reuters

- a wide range of internal and interinstitutional training sessions (online, face-to-face or in hybrid format), on a variety of topics.

- a focus on reinforcing and enlarging the internal trainers' network (in line with the CoR Digital Strategy, action 15 'Peer to peer training').

A few other activities completed the opportunities available:

- job shadowing opportunities (internal and inter-institutional). ing experiences in order to develop new courses tailored towards specific categories of staff (newcomers, staff working with amendments, communicators, financial actors, etc.).
- various networks and communication channels aimed at promoting learning activities and exchange of information with key internal stakeholders (for instance: HR correspondents' network with regular meetings and a dedicated MS TEAMS group; internal trainers' network, with regular information and training opportunities, together with a dedicated MS TEAMS).
- full access to the LinkedIn Learning platform, now part of the normal EU Learn courses for all CoR staff.

In 2023, particular attention was given to the newcomers' needs, management development and capacity building of future managers (in cooperation with EuSA).

With a view to reinforcing the legal basis to achieve this goal, in 2023 the L&D service started working on a new update of the list of compulsory and recommended training.

Concerning the specific training needs for management, in 2023, junior, middle and senior managers had access to the extensive revised range of courses available at the European School of Administration but also interinstitutionally.

The requests for leadership walks organised by the EuSA continued to increase in 2023.

A second Impact 360 group report (as part of the 360° Feedback exercise) confirmed that CoR managers are in step 3 (out of 4) of the performance curve. The follow-up actions to this report aim to change management from an independent culture ('I am a high performer') to an interdependent culture ('We are truly successful together'). One of these actions consisted in holding regular meetings among senior managers (called 'Lounge') to let them improve cooperation and exchange good practices.

New competency framework

Following a change to the EPSO competency framework, the CoR has also decided to adapt its own competency framework to better align it with the requirements of a modern, dynamic and evolving public administration.

There is an increased emphasis on digital skills, which have gained in importance especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, when remote and fully digitalised work became the norm. The framework also highlights the value of learning as a skill, adaptability and sense of initiative (intrapreneurship), while also pointing out the importance of effective communication and working together in a diverse and inclusive environment towards the common goals of the institution.

Professionalisation of HR functions – targeted training in selection and recruitment

In 2023, the Recruitment and Career unit held targeted training courses for managers, HR community members and members of selection panels. These courses were designed to deepen understanding of the selection process, clarify roles and responsibilities and enhance recruitment skills within teams. The ultimate goal was to ensure interviews are as inclusive and unbiased as possible, streamline selection and recruitment processes and position the CoR as a competitive and attractive employer.

ENHANCE INTERNAL MOBILITY POLICY AND CAREER GUIDANCE

Supporting professional development and encouraging mobility is the second pillar of the CoR Integrated Talent Management Strategy. Staff members have their own responsibility in this context and take full ownership of their professional development, including evaluating their professional situation from time to time, looking out for new possibilities, identifying and following training which may lead to new professional challenges, monitoring upcoming internal moves, etc.

In this context, the Internal Mobility Service has a key role, by offering career guidance sessions, organising job shadowing (internal and interinstitutional), offering staff tools for career reflection, etc.

In 2023, the main events were the organisation of the multilateral interinstitutional job shadowing exercise in collaboration with EuSA, and the approval of the Decision on internal mobility in the framework of the Talent management strategy. This new decision (which entered into force on 1/1/2024) introduced the concept of job rotation for AD officials, once every seven years.

A new version of the PerformanSe tests was implemented and career guidance officers were trained to use the new tool.

Job rotation

The Decision on internal mobility within the framework of the CoR Talent Management Strategy was signed on 6 January 2023, entering into force on 1 January 2024 with the launch of a pilot project in 2024.

In November and December 2023, the following took place:

- info sessions open to all staff and managers;
- specific meetings to inform managers;
- a targeted communication campaign supporting the information meetings and aiming to inform staff and managers on the content of the new policy and the upcoming pilot project;
- drafting of guidelines in cooperation with the Staff Committee;
- dedicated bilateral and multilateral meetings with the staff concerned.

Career guidance sessions were offered to staff with a particular focus on people approaching their seventh year in the post, in order to prepare the rollout of the new mobility policy in 2024.



FUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Deputy heads of unit, heads of sector and team leaders were officially recognised as a new functional management level in 2017. The decision on functional management was updated in 2023 with the aim of

making the recruitment of functional managers in the institution more transparent and inclusive by targeting a broader base of potential candidates while at the same time setting clearer and more relevant eligibility criteria.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Annual appraisal

The annual assessment exercise for the 2022 reference period, launched in January 2023, was completed within the deadlines and 461 staff reports for officials, contract and temporary staff were drawn up.

The number of mini-appeals slightly increased compared to the previous exercise (from 23 to 26) while the number of formal appeals remained the same (11), confirming that assessors/coordinators had more effectively followed the instructions on preparing the annual assessment reports.

Following the entry into force of the new cooperation agreement with the EESC, the new Competency Framework adopted by EPSO and the new decision on functional management, CoR's assessment regulatory framework was revised and shall be implemented in 2024 for the 2023 reference period.

Promotion

During the 2023 promotion round, 102 officials (61 ADs and 41 ASTs) were promoted out of a total of 389 officials in active employment on 1 January 2023. The overall promotion rate was 26.2% (compared to 28.4% in 2022). In addition, one contract staff member was reclassified in a higher grade and 12 temporary staff members were assigned to a post with a higher grade.

The review of the decision regarding the promotion of officials and classification to a higher grade for contract staff, in light of recent regulatory changes and lessons learned from previous exercises, is currently under way. These revisions will be applicable for the 2024 promotion exercise.

Certification

Two CoR officials were selected and participated in the certification training programme in 2023, and

one official was successfully completed the training programme. One certified official was appointed to an AD post in 2023. The overall appointment rate for certified officials in the CoR is currently 79%.

Other activities of the Career sector

The Career sector also manages personal files for the whole institution. 79 new personal files have been processed in 2023 for probationary officials, temporary/contract staff, incoming transfers, reinstatements, SNEs. More than 420 documents have been digitised.

Moreover, 17 files concerning ability to work in a third language before the first promotion have been processed.

The Career sector manages six functional mailboxes, treating a yearly volume of more than 4500 requests or emails.

Leave on personal grounds and unpaid leave

In order to ensure the smooth running of the service to which the official on leave on personal grounds is assigned and the continuity of operations, and following the recommendations of the internal audit, the decision on implementing measures concerning leave on personal grounds for officials and unpaid leave for temporary and contract staff at the CoR has been revised. The new decision entered into force on 18 September 2023.

The main changes concern the reinstatement procedure, the mandatory interview with the official to be reinstated and the interpretation of the notion of refusal of an offer of reinstatement.

In 2023, 23 files related to leave on personal grounds (new requests, renewals, reinstatements) and two resignation files have been processed.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Learning & Development

In this ever-evolving sector, the main challenges ahead are linked to determining exact training needs and identifying the best training methods. The sector will need to keep abreast of latest trends in the field and support the digital transformation of the CoR. For instance, the use of AI will also be a key challenge and will need to be integrated into the training offered.

To this extent, the sector needs to accompany the development of the CoR and its political and administrative challenges. To achieve this, maintaining employees' engagement and ensuring their ongoing development is key, and the Learning & Development Strategy will play an important role in achieving this in

cooperation with other CoR services and the Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology in particular.

Internal mobility and career guidance

Challenges can serve as both a catalyst for improvement and a wellspring of inspiration. When this results in the creation of successful cross-cutting activities, projects or networks, it is crucial to remember that, once created, the challenge lies in maintaining their vitality. Regular activities, meetings, and other inputs are essential to nourish and sustain them. This requires a sustainable long-term strategy, which cannot solely rely on people's commitment and resilience, but requires sufficient human and financial resources (via identifying synergies, cooperation with other institutions, reprioritisation or reallocation of resources).



THE COR AS A SMART AND
MODERN ADMINISTRATION



The CoR is enhancing its working conditions by introducing a flexible working environment. This allows staff to work both in the office and remotely, promoting an attractive workplace for employees from diverse

backgrounds. Additionally, the CoR is empowering the Committee's future through digital transformation. Special consideration is given to accessibility and user-friendliness for individuals with disabilities.

NEW WORKING REGIME IN THE CoR: EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT AND FINALISATION OF THE NEW DECISION

In 2022, the CoR adopted a pilot project on working arrangements in a bid to modernise working conditions at the Committee. The post-COVID situation made it essential to consolidate a system based on trust and results rather than presence and to find the proper balance while respecting the interests of the service.

In 2023, HR evaluated the scheme together with staff representatives in cooperation with EESC colleagues on the basis of a staff survey. All CoR managers were individually consulted. The results of the evaluation were very positive both for managers and staff in general.

The evaluation showed the maturity of CoR staff in terms of evaluating when to come to the office and when to work from home as well as the advantages and

drawbacks of both settings. A balance has been found and the new system has become standard. The balance between working from home and working in the office was considered to be the right one, and the possibility to start or finish an office day from home was particularly appreciated as well as the 15 days teleworking from abroad.

The final CoR decision on working arrangements was finalised in late 2023 following a final consultation with the staff unions. The decision confirms the main features of the pilot project and has introduced further improvements to the system. Thanks to this decision, HR contributed to making the CoR a better and more attractive workplace.

SIMPLIFICATION AND DIGITALISATION IN HR

SysPer and assistance to staff

The HR tool SysPer, allowing staff members to perform most HR-related tasks and a vital HR management tool, is supported and supervised at HR level. The SysPer Helpdesk ensures that this vital functionality is available and ready-to-use for all staff members: in 2023, around 445 requests for assistance were received and followed up.

HR-related statistics

In 2023, the CoR received around 35 internal requests for staff data to assist management in determining HR policy, as well as about 10 external requests for information. The HR statistician manages the establishment plan, monthly updates to the organisational chart and implements any changes in the organisation, assists all internal services with their requests for HR-related statistics and contributes to all HR reporting (including the annual HR report, AAR, summary HR leaflets, CoR budget booklets

in the framework of the annual budgetary procedure, etc.). In 2023, a new way to communicate HR data to the Permanent Representations of the EU Member States was put in place to ensure the harmonisation of data across EU institutions, in full respect of data protection policies.

Consolidated HR eForms platform

IT Coordination facilitated the project of the Directorate for Human Resources and Finance to develop initially electronic application forms mainly for short-term study visits and traineeships for government officials. Even though standard traineeship applications were already handled electronically, this special type of traineeship received up to 1000 applications a year which were still processed manually. The new electronic forms, made available in June 2022, are not only less resource-intensive but also add a layer of cybersecurity to ensure that candidate data is safe. This security layer has been further expanded to cover all already existing electronic HR forms.

EMPOWERING THE COMMITTEE'S FUTURE THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The Directorate for Innovation and Information Technology (DIIT) drafted the Committee's new Digital Strategy 2024-2026 with the aim to 'propel our institutions into a future where efficiency, speed, and digital evolution are not just aspirations but the cornerstones of our operations. The DIIT envisions

a transformation that places the administration and members at the heart of every solution, where technology seamlessly integrates with CoR/EESC core mission to serve better, empower efficiently, and evolve continually.'

The Digital Strategy is built around 8 objectives:

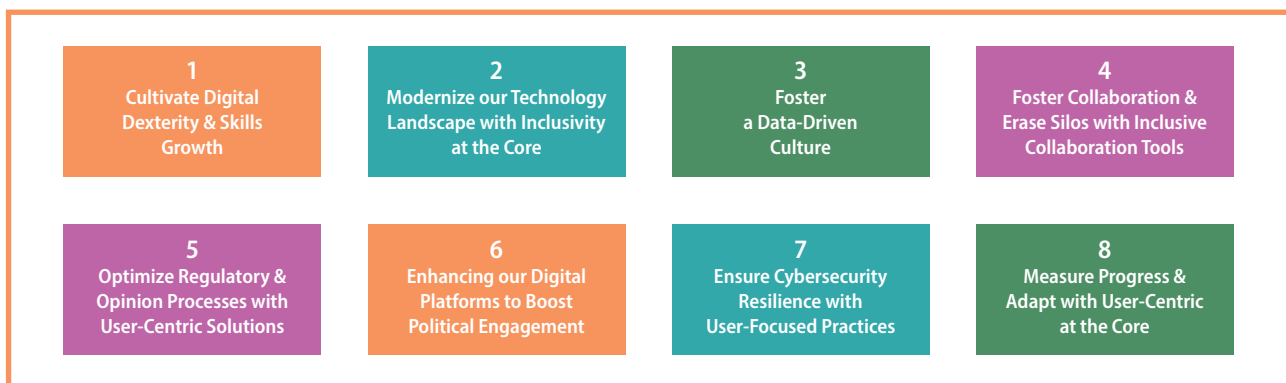


Figure 2 Digital strategy - 8 objectives

and 8 key principles:

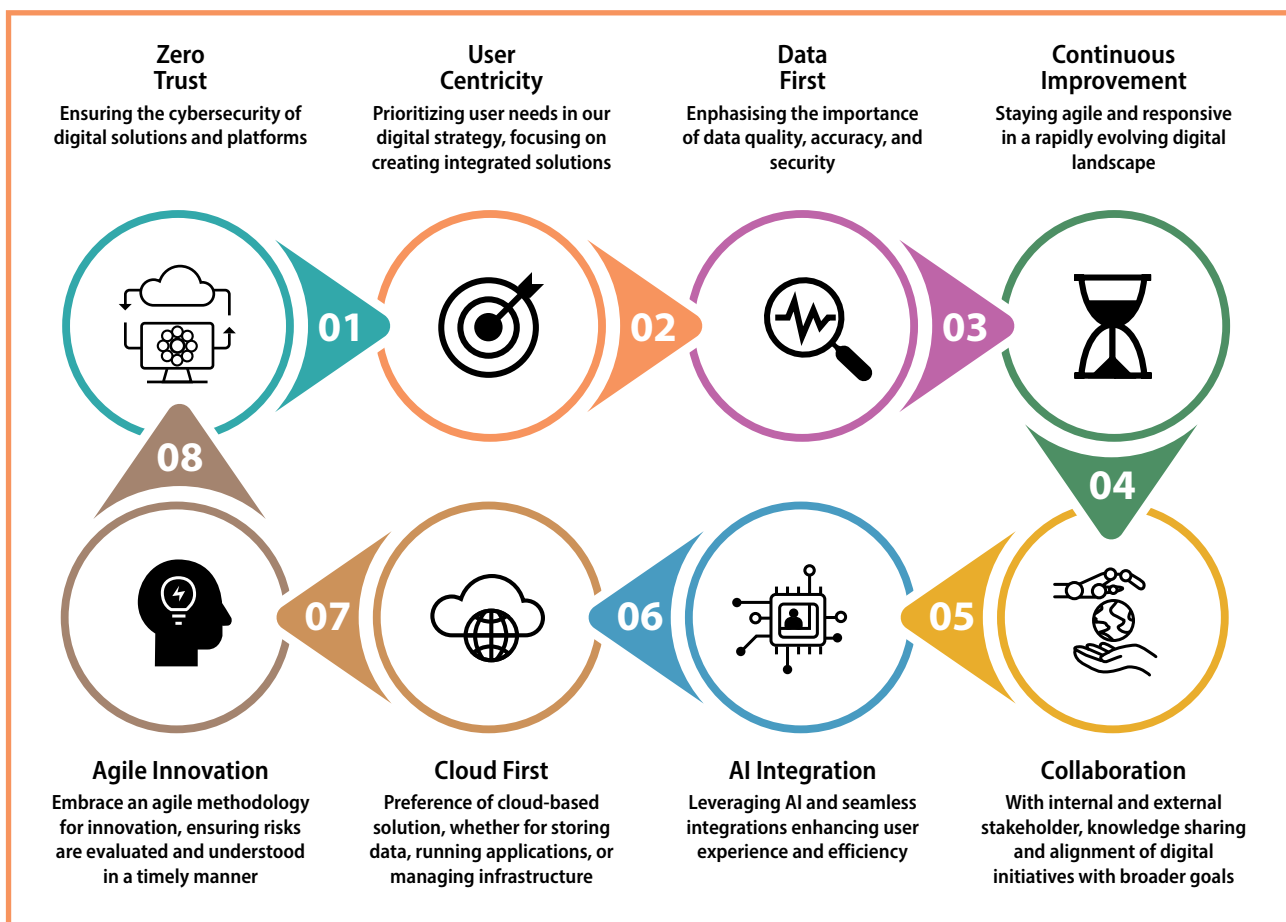


Figure 3 Digital strategy - key principles

Service to users, new ways of working & innovation

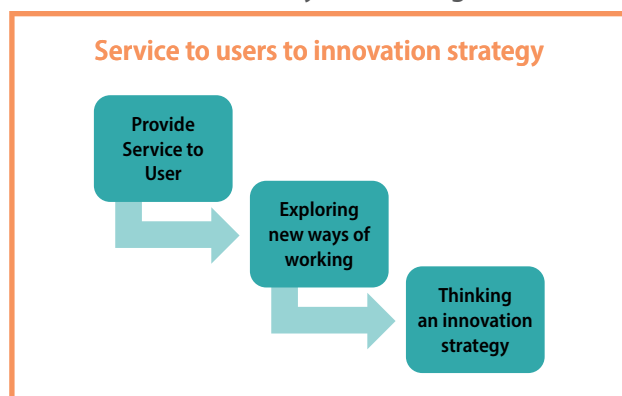


Figure 4 Service to users to innovation strategy

In 2023, providing user support was the main activity of the IT Helpdesk. Of note was the installation of the remaining hybrid meeting rooms. To explore new ways of working, the overall objective was to deliver dedicated support to directorates/units/individuals on working with digital workplace tools. For innovation, the overall objective was to foster a strategic approach to innovation/artificial intelligence. Staff Guidelines on the use of Artificial Intelligence were adopted (aligned with those of the other European Institutions). Information sessions on 'AI Guidelines Explained' and 'MS Teams Premium' were organised. These information sessions were particularly impactful.

Digital solutions

The DIIT manages 61 Digital Solutions and six Enterprise Layer Services, in seven functional domains and one shared solutions domain. Key achievements for 2023 included integrating the amendments flow with the translation tools, analysis and workshops to prepare a possible move towards replacing Adonis by Ares from the Commission, the first phase of Artemis, and the launch of the Dynamics 365 platform.

Specific work was carried out on the Members Plus platform, delivered in time for the European Week of Regions and Cities. Many projects, including Agora Special Authorisations, set the scene for reviewing and modernising existing Digital Solutions. The Project Management Office created the first version of a consolidated Project Dashboard.

Data, systems, cybersecurity and networks

Managing the core digital infrastructure remains a core activity of the DIIT. Key achievements for 2023 included database virtualisation, cloud-based e-mail and a new network topology. Cybersecurity operations focussed on the 'top priorities' of MFA, patching and user awareness.



Figure 5 Cybersecurity activities in 2023

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Revamp of all HR e-Forms

The smaller-scale project for standard traineeship applications was the basis for a larger upgrade and revamp of all HR e-forms to make them future-proof, more robust and secure and to improve the back-end management of applications as well as the front-end user interface and experience.

HR e-Forms were enlarged to include also spontaneous applications from non-permanent staff and Seconded National Experts in 2023. These forms aim to streamline the recruitment process by using an integrated paperless workflow. They will help generate relevant statistics and increase efficiency for HR services while improving the customer experience for the candidates.

Importantly, they will ensure that CoR e-platforms are accessible to people with disabilities. The pilot version of this new tool is expected to be tested in 2024.

In addition, the Recruitment sector is working with IT experts to create a new database for permanent officials. This database will allow for improved data security and a more attractive and user-friendly interface for applicants and other users. The pilot version of this system is expected to be tested in 2024.

The Career sector has also developed e-forms for a fully digital integrated management of requests for leave on personal grounds and for applications for the certification exercise.

The Strategic use of resources, smart house unit, is preparing an online form which will further facilitate requests for outside activities and their management.

The implementation of these new e-forms will also be tested in 2024.

Participation in HR Transformation Programme

The HR Transformation (HRT) Programme, undertaken by DG HR (EC), aims to develop a secure and future-proof 'one HR platform' for all EU institutions, bodies and agencies, thus allowing for enhanced digitalisation, simplification and user-centricity of HR functions. The programme will be implemented in multiple ways during the 2023-2029 period and result in the launch of multiple projects targeting different HR domains (i.e., pre-selection, selection and recruitment, organisation management, ethics, career management, performance management, personal staff management, and other supporting HR services). This initiative will be powered by transitioning to the cloud platform ServiceNow, which will replace the outdated systems currently in use.



MAKING THE COR MORE
ATTRACTIVE
FOR BETTER OUTREACH

The CoR is working on becoming more attractive as an employer in order to recruit and retain the best talent across all EU Member States, while being considered a modern administration reflecting the diversity of European citizens. This priority focuses on enhancing the attractiveness of the workplace by creating an

inclusive, respectful, sustainable, flexible and family-friendly working environment as well as fostering staff wellbeing. Furthermore, the CoR is stepping up its communication through various channels, making greater use of social media and specialised recruitment platforms.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Five-year Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan for 2022-2026

This Diversity and Inclusion Strategy aims to put diversity and inclusion at the centre of action, in line with the approach of European institutions and international organisations, and make the CoR a more inclusive and open institution.

Five-year Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan for 2022-2026

In 2023, the implementation of the Five-Year Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and action plan has already produced concrete results. Over the past year, strides have been made towards a better gender balance. Senior management positions saw a substantial increase from 37.5% in 2022 to 44.4% in 2023, signalling a commitment to inclusivity at the highest levels. However, more efforts

are needed in middle management positions, even if we saw a rise from 29.7% in 2022 to 32.5% in 2023, indicating a promising trend. Notably, a new decision on functional management has enhanced transparency and visibility for future middle managers, fostering an environment conducive to more diverse representation.

The administration actively supported the role and mentoring activities of the Network for Gender Balance in Management, which complemented the actions undertaken in this respect by the administrations and the Joint Committee for Diversity and Inclusion (CODI). The network has launched the 2023 mentoring programme for female ADs aspiring to take on a management role. In addition, two training sessions on assertiveness and self-confidence from a psychological and practical point of view were proposed to the mentees in 2023.

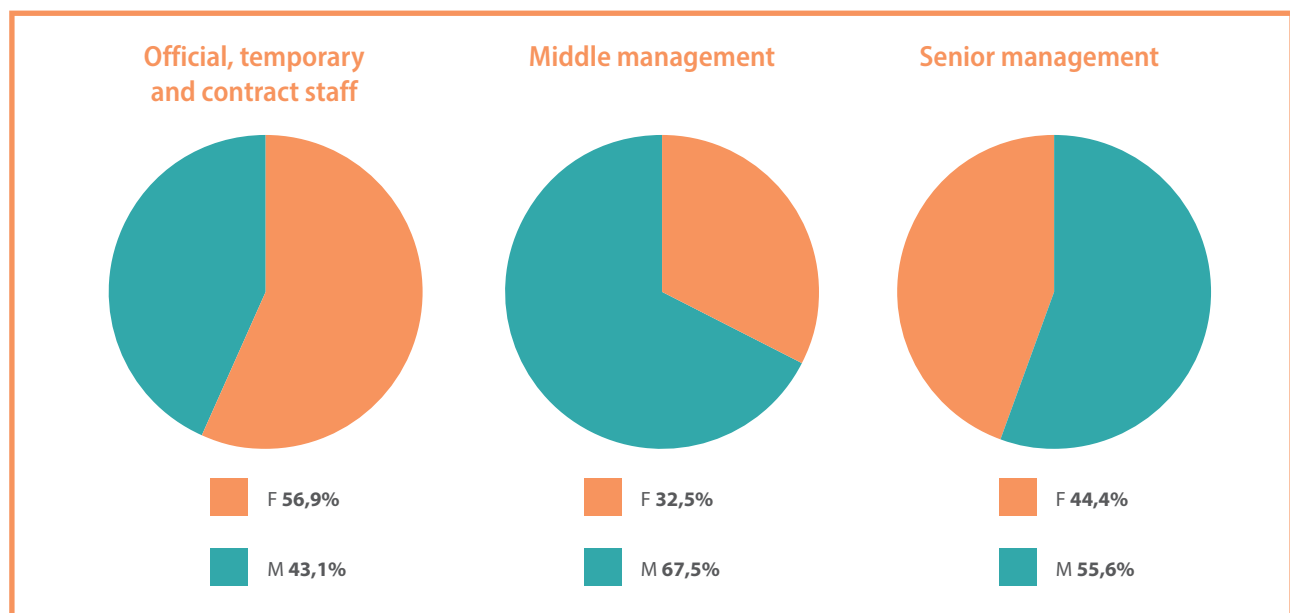


Chart 7 Gender balance at the CoR overall and management posts (situation 31/12/2023)

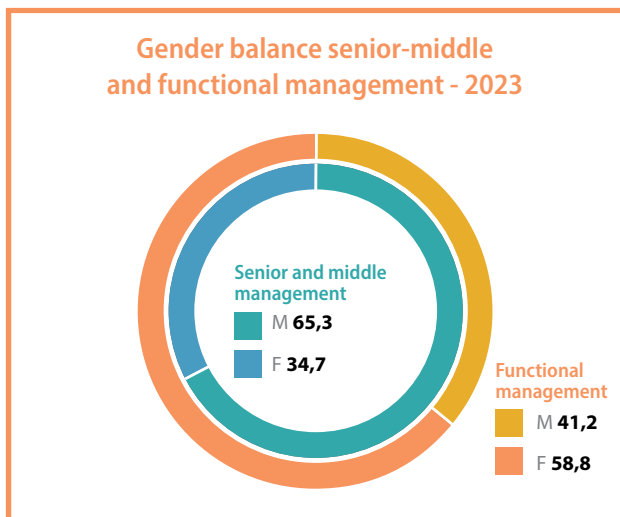


Chart 8 Gender balance in management (situation 31/12/2023)

Geographical balance and cultural diversity

The CoR has also actively participated in the interinstitutional working group on geographical balance, which has resulted in a uniform method of calculating under- and overrepresented Member States. This will allow for a better statistical follow-up of geographical balance and new interinstitutional initiatives that can be more accurately targeted and compared.

The CoR will also look into interinstitutional initiatives that enhance and promote diversity of backgrounds in the institutions. In 2023, the CoR D&I coordinator participated in the making of a short video edited by EPSO aimed at promoting the importance of a diverse pool of talent for the EU institutions and bodies in the framework of the EU Diversity Month.

The CoR Traineeships Office participated for the second time in a session titled 'Opportunities for young Roma' in April 2023 where the CoR traineeships scheme was presented to young and motivated Roma and non-Roma participants. This event was beneficial for the CoR both in terms of presenting the traineeship programme and meeting potential candidates and other traineeship coordinators from EU institutions.

Inclusion and support of persons with disabilities

As part of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the inclusion of persons with disabilities is a challenge for all institutions. Since 2022, the IIINDA (Informal Interinstitutional Network for Disability Advisers) has brought together all European institutions to share best practices to support and include people with disabilities. As a result of these exchanges, the Traineeships Office will launch a reflection, jointly with the diversity and inclusion coordinator, on the appropriateness and

possibility of adapting a trainee's posting based on the notion of inclusion to support candidates with disabilities. Along the same lines of creating a more inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities, the CoR will further explore initiatives to encourage more candidates with disabilities to apply for vacancies, including by better advertising its options for suitable accommodation on the CoR website.

In this field, the Medico-Social Service is key to supporting staff with disabilities or chronic illness and staff who have a child or relative with a disability. The Decision on Annual Leave and Special Leave was updated in 2023 and it broadens the scope of certain special leave in case of disability of a child. It is also possible to adapt the teleworking scheme on a case-by-case basis and streamline administrative paperwork for all colleagues concerned. The Medico-Social Service provides information to staff with disabilities and staff who have a child or relative with a disability, and it regularly updates a list of contact addresses/websites where staff and/or their family members with disabilities can apply for financial or other assistance from the Belgian authorities.

All diversity and inclusion issues are cross-cutting and the collaboration of all departments is essential if we are to achieve our objectives, in particular, to reach full physical and digital accessibility for staff and visitors.

For example, with the end of the renovation of the VMA Building in 2023, all rooms on all floors of all Committee buildings are accessible for persons with reduced mobility without leaving the Committees' premises. The CoR continues to liaise with Belgian authorities in interinstitutional meetings or working groups to improve the accessibility of the EU quarter. The accessibility of our websites, audio visual content and PDFs, continues to be gradually improved by specialised CoR colleagues (web developers and graphic designers). Other non-specialised CoR colleagues are regularly invited to attend EU Learn courses on more accessible writing.

Raising awareness and mainstreaming

In 2023, CoR learning and development continued to be a key actor to raise awareness and help open up the culture of the institution on diversity and inclusion topics and objectives, offering training cycles or sessions relating to IDAHOBIT, religious diversity and disability. The 'Guide for newcomers' has been revised to include information on the diversity and inclusion policy. The diversity and inclusion aspect has also been included in the new 'Onboarding' e-Learning course for newcomers.



Two other initiatives took place in 2023 in the form of a course for CoR policy officers on equality mainstreaming to illustrate how the diversity and inclusion dimension can be integrated into the legislator's work at any time.

STAFF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

As part of its mission, the CoR has developed a strategic approach to ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. The prevention and proper management of absenteeism and active reintegration into work are key elements of this strategy.

Sick leave follow-up

In 2023, the CoR, and in particular its medical officer, social worker and HR services, continued to play an important role in supporting colleagues on sick leave and helping them back to work whenever possible.

Part of the CoR achievements in reducing absenteeism are due to the personalised approach followed by the Medical Service, the further reintegration at work, as well as awareness-raising among managers on early prevention. The CoR Medical Service and social worker have a range of tools to detect and prevent psychosocial health issues and successfully intervene in supporting staff during a period of illness, while also offering return-to-work coaching. In addition to all the measures put in place by the Medical Service in terms of preventative medicine, colleagues on sick leave continued to be subject to an individualised follow-up. The Administration, together with the medical officer and the social worker, held regular meetings to discuss, on an individual basis, the type of follow-up needed.

Moreover, action was taken in order to tackle possible missing links and improve the overall approach. These tools were highlighted during a series of conferences for managers on preventing absenteeism, organised in late 2023 for all CoR managers including functional management. The purpose of the training was to prepare managers to deal with a staff absence, but also in terms of cooperation and communication with the Medical Service. This training course, organised in small groups, provided an opportunity for a genuine dialogue between the those involved in following up colleagues on sick leave and managers, including the possibility to identify possible improvements. In addition, the CoR led an interinstitutional working group on absenteeism in the framework of CPQS in a bid to identify the areas where the Staff Regulations could be implemented more efficiently.

The objective was to make staff aware of the importance of diversity and inclusion in an organisation's culture and the benefits and the challenges of making a more inclusive institution.

Focus continued to be put on return-to-work and the individual accompaniment of colleagues from sick leave back to work after long-term sick leave, in order to help them and their managers to overcome difficulties.

In addition, two framework contracts have been concluded in 2023 to professionalise medical controls and expertise in the CoR: a contract with a General Practitioner for standard medical controls, and a contract with a doctor of psychiatry. The SLA with the European Commission (EC) continued to be used for other medical conditions.

The CoR is at the forefront of best practices among EU institutions as regards absenteeism rates. Thanks to all these actions, the absence rate in the CoR went down again to 3.6% in 2023.

The Medical Service's priorities

In 2023, the Medical Service noticed that the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic posed threats to psychological and emotional health, but also brought major changes to physical health among staff. Notably, the increase in BMI status and negative effects of prolonged physical inactivity were noticed, prompting the Medical Service to take action(s). It recognised that being overweight and having a sedentary lifestyle put people at risk of developing many serious chronic diseases including increasing the risk of diabetes.

To improve staff wellbeing and promote their health, in 2023 the CoR Medical Service started tackling the biggest health risks: a sedentary lifestyle and being overweight. Targeted actions were carried out such as employing a certified personal trainer, osteopath and physiotherapist to conduct training sessions as a part of the wellbeing project of all staff in the CoR. The participants were divided into small groups (maximum 8 participants per group) based on personal goals and medical condition(s). When duly justified, some individual sessions were also provided tailored to a person's physical status and medical conditions. In total, 105 staff members participated in either group or individual training sessions, or both, in May-July 2023.

Additionally, the Medical Service prioritised diabetes prevention. During the annual medical check-ups, staff members with increased blood sugar values and/or who were overweight were proposed to participate in the pilot project Gym by Jim. They also received individual advice, nutritional advice and regular follow-up by the institution's nurse throughout 2023. The Medical Service provided ad hoc glucose measurements and more precise continuous glucose monitoring devices for the risk group and simultaneous follow-up by the nurse.

The Medical Service continued to fulfil its duty to design and carry out standard preventive health measures. In 2023, the medical service conducted 210 annual medical check-ups, which presents an increase of 17% compared to 2022. The Medical Service carried out pre-recruitment examinations, various medical consultations and interventions and delivered opinions on work-related matters. The CoR Medical Service responded to two emergencies resulting in hospital admissions during the year.

	2022	2023
Annual medical check-ups	176	210
Pre-recruitment medical examinations	32	33
Laboratory samples	191	222
Medical attention from nurse	451	815
Flu vaccinations, COVID-19 vaccination and other vaccines	94	101

Table 4 Medical Service activities in 2022-2023

The Social Service

In 2023, the social worker continued to provide support to staff in a wide variety of areas: 268 sessions were recorded (excluding requests directly handled without appointment). This number is similar to the number of sessions in 2022 (272 sessions).

Chart 9 shows that the main reason for contacting the Social Service has changed from dealing with conflicts to difficult family situations, which call for adapted working arrangements combined with measures authorised by the Staff Regulations. Consequently, there were more applications for financial and/or other assistance to staff and/or their family members with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

However, conflicts at work remain a second major reason for seeking help. There is also greater recourse to mediation or facilitation between the two parties. What does stand out, however, is the number of people who felt discomfort at work due to the heavy workload with short deadlines and last-minute requests. In autumn, in the context of the 2024 budget, senior management collectively agreed to set priorities and identify those activities that can be stopped.

Life coaching for staff with personal problems has also significantly increased compared to the 2022. Worth mentioning is the demand for help from staff who have received the status of invalidity due to long-term illness, and a higher demand for debriefing and coaching following a test in NeuroCognitivism that detects stress parameters.

The good cooperation with the Medical Service, the HR services, the Internal Mobility Cell and managers in assisting staff on long-term sick leave and their return to work is proof that supporting the wellbeing of staff is also a better solution for the institution to reach its objectives.

In autumn, the social worker took part in a presentation of the absenteeism policy organised for managers. She has also coordinated and organised the CoR events during the Interinstitutional Health & Safety Week. The social worker is actively involved at interinstitutional level in the management board of the health insurance scheme (JSIS) and an active member in the informal interinstitutional working group of social workers (EISWG).

Reasons for consulting the social service:

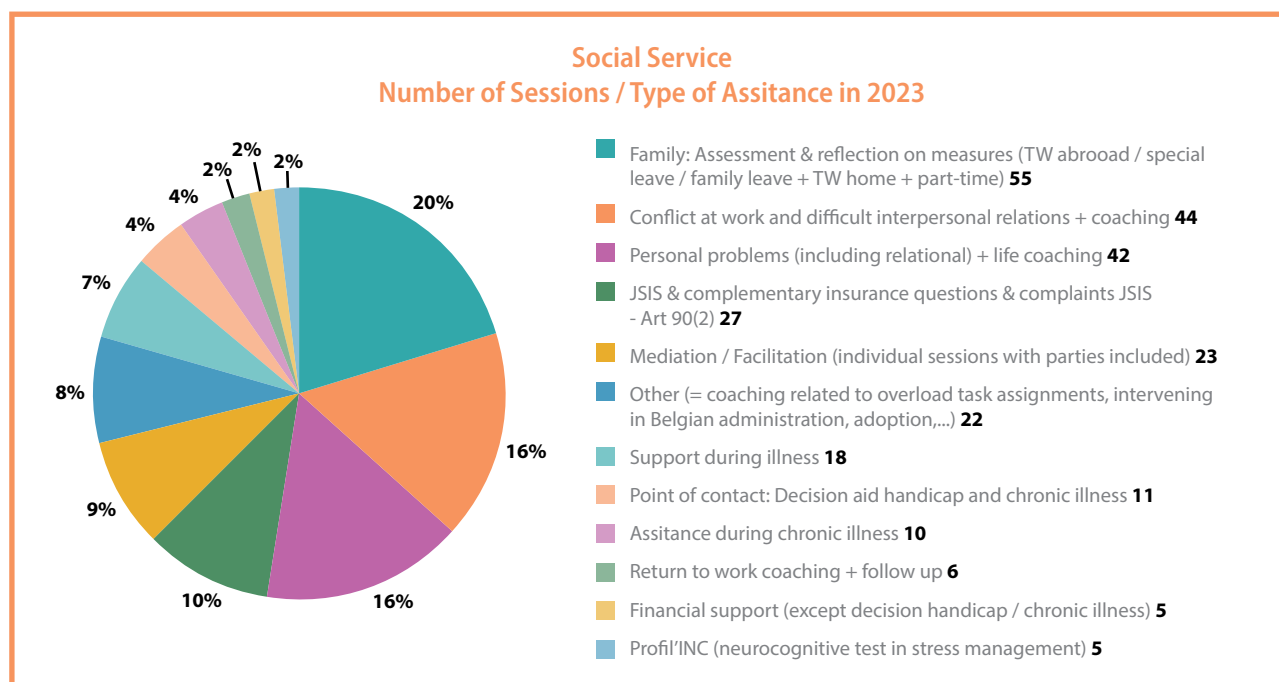


Chart 9 Consulting sessions by main reasons in 2023

EMPLOYER BRANDING

Employer branding is vital for attracting and retaining talent. To achieve this, the HR communication officer improved transparent communication of the CoR's values and bolstered the CoR HR presence on active social media platforms. Moreover, the HR communication officer drafted an HR communication plan to be implemented in 2024 with a dual focus on internal communication and employer branding. Today, we are not only competing with other European institutions in Brussels but also with international organisations and private companies at global scale. Recruitment processes must be faster and meet the expectations of new generations entering the labour market. Consequently, the selection procedures and evaluations used to assess candidates' potential and skills need to be rethought and modernised.

In 2023, a series of initiatives were launched to enhance the CoR's standing as a preferred employer while strengthening internal communication:

Coffee talks

The Directorate for Human Resources and Finance has been hosting regular 'coffee talks' for staff since autumn 2023. These events create a welcoming space for informal discussions on topics of shared interest. The HR communication officer organised four such gatherings,

bringing together staff members to discuss subjects like the decision on new working arrangements at the CoR, best practices relating to the Secretary-General's 'Going for Impact' plan, the future of AI at the CoR, and 'The Urban Peloton & Directorate C'. The interest in these events continues to grow among staff and they are much appreciated.

HR update and Learning and Development newsletter

The HR update has become a key component of CoR HR internal communication and is published fortnightly, alternatively in English and French. Twenty issues were published in 2023. Topics include working conditions, health and wellbeing, social service support, learning and development information, the latest HR information on recruitment, careers and employer branding. The editorial team is made up volunteers from the HR community under the coordination of the HR communication officer.

The Learning & Development newsletter (L&D info) offers staff a selection of training courses on a variety of subjects such as ethics, IT, finance, communication, diversity and inclusion, legislative works, etc. These courses are specifically selected to meet the current, specific or future needs of the institution, and enable

staff to improve their skills and take ownership of the development of their skills. Twenty-four issues were published in 2023, including one specifically for managers.

HR presence during the EU Week of Regions and Cities

For the first time, the Recruitment Sector, in collaboration with the Traineeships Office, set up an HR booth at the headquarters (located in the Jacques Delors building) during the European Week of Regions and Cities. The aim was to promote the CoR as an employer of choice among European institutions and to benefit from the visibility of this CoR flagship event and related public exposure. A comprehensive set of communication products was designed to highlight CoR HR activities. Dedicated HR colleagues volunteered to staff the booth and showcase HR initiatives to the public.

Enhanced outreach and visibility of the Traineeships Office

In order to maximise the traineeship programme's impact and reach a wider audience of potential applicants, the traineeships website has been updated by providing comprehensive information on the traineeship programme, incorporating testimonials and new photos of the trainees.

As a traineeship is an opportunity that benefits both young professionals undertaking their traineeship at the CoR, as well as staff members in their daily activities, the Traineeships Office in collaboration with the Webstreaming team has made a short video

for the MYCOR intranet. In the video, the members of the Traineeships Office explained to colleagues the Traineeship Office's mission to provide quality traineeship programmes at the CoR.

SNE promotion campaign

In order to build up synergies and promote exchanges of best practices, the CoR is fostering the secondment of national experts and encouraging time-limited study visits for officials from LRAs' public administrations. For the second time, a large-scale promotion campaign supported by a social media campaign on LinkedIn led to a significant increase in the number of people visiting the jobs page on the CoR website. CoR members and alternates were also encouraged to publicise the call for expression of interest within their local and regional constituencies. The CoR was hosting thirteen national experts with a variety of profiles (cost-free or paid) in 2023.

HR and social media

Social media has become a powerful tool for attracting top talent. Throughout 2023, several recruitment procedures were supported through both organic and paid social media promotion for senior management positions or specific job profiles, usually those requiring specific skills and not reserved for EPSO laureates only. In this context, the social media and web teams of the Directorate for Communication have been successfully working with the Recruitment Sector and the HR communication officer to promote the CoR as an employer of choice.

COR GREEN INITIATIVES

Environment

The CoR, in cooperation with the EESC within the framework of the Joint Services, has set up an environmental management system as part of a process of continuous improvement in this sphere. These efforts have yielded remarkable results over the last few years and earned the Committees the Brussels Ecodynamic Enterprise label in 2009. Since 2011, the Committees have been awarded EMAS registration and ISO 14001 certification.

Eco-management

During 2023, the EMAS service carried out internal and external environmental audits. Following the external

environmental audit, the auditors have finalised their report and confirm that the Committees continue to comply with the legal and regulatory requirements in accordance with the EMAS and ISO 14001 environmental management standards.

The report highlighted 13 positive points including, among other things, the new guide for greening events, how the IT service considers the impact of digital pollution and the advanced environmentally friendly techniques used during the VMA building renovation.

Furthermore, the auditors mention nine points of attention and 17 opportunities for improvement that will be followed up by the EMAS team in cooperation with the relevant services. The report also identified

a minor point of non-compliance which is currently subject to corrective action.

2023 environmental performance

The Committees continue to reduce their environmental impact as the consumption of gas, electricity and water was reduced even further in 2022 compared to 2021 (-5.7%, -2.0% and -18.3%) despite increasing activities due to staff gradually returning to the office. The surprisingly good performance is a positive effect of the specific measures adopted in 2022 to manage the energy crisis.

As a result of the increased number of people in the office and a higher number of visitors, the waste and paper indicators recovered from the previous year's very low levels following the pandemic, with an increase of +29% and +22%. However, both indicators remain considerably lower than pre-pandemic levels since waste has been reduced by -61% and paper consumption by -54% since 2019.

The validated 2023 Environmental Statement is published on the [CoR Website](#).

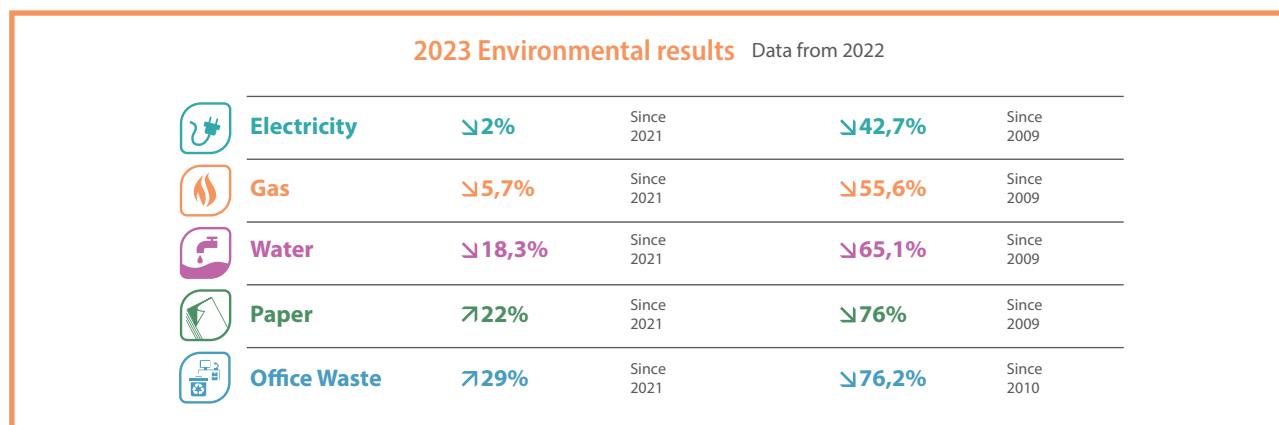


Figure 6 2023 Environmental results (CoR-EESC)

Catering Service

The Catering Service aims to provide a good service across its range of catering activities on the Committees' premises.

The key aspects of the Committees' catering strategy are the following:

- Quality, safety and health
- Customer-oriented service
- Sustainability

A procurement procedure was launched to replace the current catering contract due to expire on 31 May 2024. The new contract is based on the Farm to Fork Strategy and will further increase sustainable food standards including traditional and typical foods with geographical indications, the consumption of local and seasonal products, short supply chains, high animal welfare standards and reduction of food waste and packaging in line with circular economy principles.

BUILDINGS

The CoR and the EESC share premises for their activities. The buildings are mainly managed by the Infrastructure unit within the Joint Services. The physical working environment clearly influences satisfaction, productivity and wellbeing among members and staff. Currently, the Committees have five buildings at their disposal, the Jacques Delors building (JDE), the Bertha von Suttner building (BvS), the Remorqueur building (REM), the Van Maerlant building (VMA) and the Belliard 100 building (B100). The Committees became full owners of

three buildings (namely JDE, BvS and REM) since their options to purchase were exercised in 2018 and 2019. On 1 September 2021, the Committees took over from the EEAS the lease contract of the B100 building. On 16 September 2022, the exchange of the Committees' Belliard 68 (B68) and Trèves 74 (TRE74) buildings for the Commission's VMA building took effect. Since then, the Committees have at their disposal the entire VMA building through a long-term leasehold contract with an option to purchase in the year 2028.

A long-term buildings strategy was established and approved by the two Committees in 2017. The strategy contains a set of guiding principles in the field of real estate and provides a generic framework for any specific decision to be taken in relation to the buildings. The guiding principles of the buildings' strategy include the geographical concentration of buildings, preference for ownership rather than lease and for exercising options to buy, sustainable buildings management and multiannual planning.

With the exchange of the B68 and TRE74 buildings for the VMA building in September 2022 and the taking over of the B100 building from the EEAS in September 2021, the main priority of the buildings' strategy, the 'geographical concentration of the buildings', has been fulfilled. Now, all the buildings used by the Committees are all physically connected to the JDE building.

Renovation of the VMA building

The office floors (3rd to 9th) of the VMA building underwent a complete renovation in 2022 and 2023. They have been stripped from top to bottom and renovated to a very high standard applying the principles of the New European Bauhaus. The quality of the renovation is state of the art. This includes a high-quality selection of fittings, premium finishes with an attention to detail and some gentle touch of colours, conservation of the existing parquet, and the beautiful plant wall which welcomes you when entering each floor.

Offices now have smart lighting, heating, ventilation as well as solar protection with smart glazing on the windows on the rue Belliard side. A single device controls all these systems and optimises them taking into account the physical presence of persons, luminosity, CO² levels in the air, sunshine, indoor temperature and temperature chosen. These smart devices are being installed for the first time in Brussels. The benefit of these devices is that they optimise energy consumption while offering a level of comfort to the users that remains stable during the day and through the different seasons. It also shuts down the lights and, when there are no users present after a while, reduces the pace of functioning of heating and ventilation.

Corridors have been fitted with new glass partitions which allows the offices and central zones to have more natural light. It gives the feeling of freshness and openness.

Special attention has been paid to accessibility of people with disabilities by installing automatic opening doors on both sides of the footbridge to the JDE and by installing a toilet for persons with disabilities on each floor.

The VMA building has now an improved performance in terms of energy savings, and offers a modern look and an efficient and comfortable working space to all its users with the aim of nurturing collaboration and improving wellbeing at work.

In 2023, the technical installations on the office floors (3rd to 9th) were completed and commissioned and various works were carried out in the technical rooms. The street façades of the VMA building and of the footbridge connecting the VMA building to the JDE building were also cleaned and given a water-resistant treatment. Joints were repaired.

New DATA room at the JDE building

A new DATA room in the JDE building was designed, built and put into service allowing the DATA room in B68 to be vacated by the end of 2022. In 2023, these technical installations were completed and commissioned.

Printshop at the JDE building

As part of the reorganisation of the Printing / Distribution unit to maximise flexibility and versatility, the offset area of the JDE was redesigned and refurbished and the copyshop machines, previously located in the BvS, were merged with the offset machines in the former offset area of the JDE.

Lifts in the JDE building

The control system of a group of six lifts in the JDE building was replaced by a DSC (Destination Control System), offering features for people with disabilities and allowing increased lift capacity by recognising beforehand which floor people wanted to go to. At the same time, the lift halls were also refreshed.

PLAGE

The phase 2 (Programming) of the PLAGE (Plan Local d'Amélioration de la Gestion Énergétique) was concluded and the third phase (Execution) has started.



CHALLENGES AHEAD

Participation in events and jobs fair

Three major European institutions based in Brussels seek to raise their profile and make themselves more attractive as employers at job fairs/career days in order to complement EPSO initiatives.

At a time when the CoR is struggling to recruit officials due to the lack of EPSO lists and in the expectation of the benefits of the new EPSO competition scheme, it is essential that the CoR take action to raise its profile at careers events.

Both the Recruitment and Career unit and the Traineeships Office intend to be actively present at the CoR flagships events open to the public and/or EU careers events with the aim of presenting the CoR as an employer of choice both to the general public and to staff already employed by the European institutions (e.g. Open Door Days or #EURegionsWeek).

Implementing the five-year D&I strategy

As part of the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) action plan for coming years, several

actions need to be taken. These actions include analysing key HR processes (such as selection/recruitment, career development, working conditions, wellbeing, training, career guidance, and talent management) from a D&I perspective. The goal is to identify potential implications for different staff categories.

Additionally, an analysis of the specific country situation at the interinstitutional level will help identify why some countries are underrepresented. Measures will be explored to address this imbalance across all staff levels, including targeted communication campaigns to encourage candidates from underrepresented countries to apply for management positions and strengthen efforts to attract SNEs from underrepresented countries.

Fostering an inclusive workplace benefit both staff and the institution. To enhance digital accessibility, the HR teams should prioritise making all HR e-forms and information accessible, making them compliant with accessibility standards.



STAFF-FOCUSED HR SERVICES

WORKING CONDITIONS

The CoR has a comprehensive and solid framework in place to ensure a proper work-life balance for staff and managers. It provides a suitable level of flexibility whenever needed, in order to respond in the best possible way to the diversity of situations and expectations encountered by staff, managers and the institution.

The Working Conditions Sector manages the different working patterns, overtime, leave and absence management, shift work and stand-by duties. Details of the sector's activities can be found in annex IV – tables XVII and XVIII.

New decision on annual and special leave

At the close of 2023, the CoR endorsed a new decision on annual and special leave. While the fundamental provisions regarding leave remain unaltered, several improvements were made:

- Inclusion of references: The decision now incorporates a comprehensive list of references.
- Convenient Table of Contents: A table of contents has been appended at the end for ease of navigation.
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: The CoR's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy has been seamlessly

woven into both the editorial aspects and the substantive content.

- Special leave for surrogacy-born children: A new special leave category has been introduced specifically for children born through surrogacy.
- Special leave: Special leave is now extended to partners.
- Inclusive language: The use of inclusive language – such as replacing 'official' with 'staff member' – has been adopted.
- Alignment with rules on outside activities: The decision has been adapted to align with the latest rules on outside activities.
- Enhanced readability: The text has been simplified to ensure that staff can easily understand their entitlements.
- Precise definitions: Clear definitions have been provided in Article 1.
- Comprehensive summary table: Article 3.1 now features a summary table detailing the number of days entitled, travel time, and the relevant article.

Notably, the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CODI) and the Staff committee (CdP) issued a favourable opinion, incorporating useful suggestions that were subsequently integrated into the new decision.

INDIVIDUAL ENTITLEMENTS

The Individual Rights Service as part of the Rights and Obligations Sector establishes the allowances for staff members upon entry into service and adjusts them throughout their careers in light of changes, notably in their family situation (marriage, birth, education of a child, divorce, change of place of origin, etc.) and upon the cessation of activity (resignation, end of contract, invalidity, pension, etc.).

New onboarding e-learning course

The service is in charge of welcoming newcomers on their first day at the CoR by providing them with a comprehensive overview of the CoR's roles, rules, procedures and contacts. An induction programme established with the collaboration of the L&D service for newcomers was introduced in 2022 to improve the newcomers' experience and help them take their first steps in the institution. In 2023, a new onboarding

e-learning course was developed with the L&D service to provide user-friendly information about the CoR, both relating to HR matters and the working environment and the CoR as a political institution.

Continuous simplification and digitalisation

In 2023, the HR services started to work on setting up a digital platform accessible to future staff to exchange information with newcomers before they enter into service and during the onboarding process. This digitalisation initiative could create a common channel for both services and simplify the administrative paperwork for newcomers, improving the services provided by HR during the onboarding process

Since 2014, additional modules in Sysper have been introduced to improve and simplify the procedures enabling staff to submit declarations quickly and to be managed more efficiently by the Right and Obligations

team. In 2023, requests to the PMO were made to digitalise more procedures, such as transfer IN/OUT in the pension and post-activity field.

Challenges ahead

Family allowances received from other sources and changes to statutory rights

Following the volatile economic and political situation in 2022, the family allowances paid to our staff by the Wallonia and Brussels Regions were indexed six times in 2022 and twice in 2023. The simplified approval

workflow for transactions with low financial impact adopted in 2022 and the use of collective decisions allowed us to manage the workload for the Rights and Obligations service (R&O service) and the other financial actors and the backlog has been cleared.

The R&O service is closely monitoring developments of the automatic update in Sysper of the Belgian family allowance received from another source whose processing has become extremely complex following the regionalisation of the procedure in 2019.

SOCIAL INITIATIVES

Various collective social initiatives have been put in place for staff members (and their families), including financial backing for schemes to promote social contacts between staff members (during job shadowing, 'HR is all ears', newcomers' entry talk, HR coffee talk), for spouses and registered partners to learn the working languages, support for new parents, a ceremony for colleagues reaching 20, 30 or 40 years of service, retired staff, and various social and networking events.

Ceremony marking 20/30/40 years of service and for retired staff

The ceremony honouring staff members celebrating 20/30 years of career and those who have retired could not take place in previous years due to the pandemic.

In early 2023, 50 colleagues were honoured at the New Year's reception.

Financial and logistical support for social activities

Financial and logistical support has also been offered for several activities under the diversity and inclusion

policy, EMAS and the health and wellbeing at work programme at the CoR.

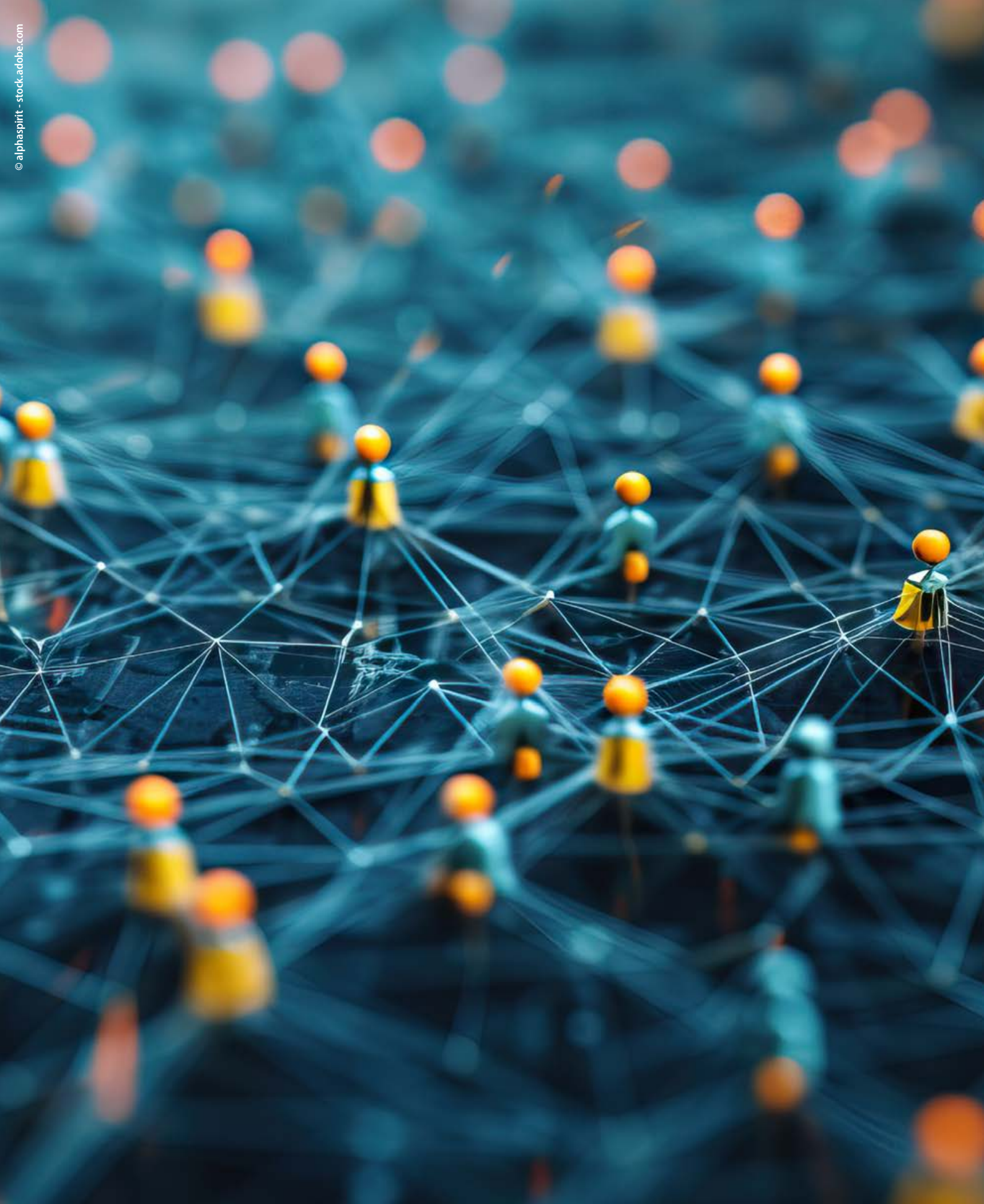
The Welcome Office of DG HR (EC) also offers a range of services and social activities to support integration of newcomers under the Service Level Agreement signed in 2017.

Maintaining the social link with retired staff

After the exceptional number of retirements (19) in 2022 both in the CoR and in the other European institutions, 2023 saw a return to normal with only six retirements.

An initiative was set up to enable pensioners to keep in touch with the CoR through socio-cultural activities in collaboration with the Staff Committee and invitations to the annual staff reception.

The 'Active Senior' project is another initiative being developed in line with the European Commission programme, which will allow former officials to participate on a voluntary basis in unpaid assignments or activities within the institution.



CROSS-CUTTING HR-RELATED MATTERS



ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

New decision on ethics

In order to further clarify the institution's ethical framework, primarily by consolidating in a single text all the ethical rules applicable to staff members, CoR Decision No 157/2023 on the ethical rules applicable to the secretariat of the European Committee of the Regions was adopted by the Secretary-General on 18 December 2023. The new decision on ethical rules contains the new CoR Charter of ethical principles, determines the scope and the general ethical principles, sets out all obligations on declarations or authorisations, clarifies the service obligations and refers to the Code of Good Administrative Behaviour towards citizens.

Dignity at work

Since the adoption of the decision on protecting dignity at work, managing conflict and combatting harassment in 2021, the staff members seeking to resolve a conflict can choose to consult and request assistance from confidential counsellors but also from other contact persons who could be the respective line manager or specialists from the human resources department. In 2023, the confidential counsellors continued their informal work to find solutions to conflicts and prevent (sexual) harassment at the workplace and support colleagues in need of their services, and supported the administration with their expertise whenever required. Nine official cases were reported in 2023.

On 11 December 2023, the confidential counsellors participated, together with their counterparts from the EESC, in a one-day training titled: Prevention of Psychological and Sexual Harassment and the role of bystanders. They also received four half-days of supervision, in the course of 2023.

Interinstitutionally, the spokesperson for the confidential counsellors participated in the meetings of the 'Interinstitutional network for Confidential Counsellors' coordinators. The CoR administration hosted the annual plenary of the network together with the EESC on 20 June 2023. The CoR HR legal advisor presented the CoR ethical framework and notably the decision on protecting the dignity of staff, managing conflict and combatting psychological and sexual harassment (CoR DECS/108/2021 – 26/04/2021) to the network.

Although it is difficult to collect statistics in this area, the medico-social service also played its role as a contact point in managing conflicts at work. In 2023, the social assistant met 21 people whose situation was linked to a conflict at work. In total, there were 44 sessions, some of which required coaching sessions. Apart from these figures, one situation was managed in a group via mediation/facilitation and another group action was started in 2023 and will continue in 2024.

The HR legal advisor dealt with six different conflict cases during 2023, that led to three preliminary assessments, including witness hearings, a conflict management action plan, an external mediation, formal warnings and closing letters by the Secretary-General, while also offering advice informally in some cases.

As the application of this contact person structure is still new, communication and collaboration between the various contact persons must be improved while respecting the confidentiality of exchanges. The ultimate aim is to better identify the causes of conflicts and to help the administration to act effectively.

Outside activities

The decision on outside activities and on occupational activities after leaving the service entered into force in 2022, ensuring greater interinstitutional consistency and improved administrative efficiency by simplifying the authorisation procedure, notably on basis of the presumption that activities deemed not to affect the official's obligations would be authorised.

Therefore, since 2023, the majority of requests are answered by email by the CoR HR legal advisor explaining the new rules, without the need to establish a formal decision, as would have been the case under the previous decision on outside activities.

Nevertheless, requests for paid external activities or activities requiring formal authorisation have been approved using a simplified form via Adonis. The Strategic use of resources, smart house unit, is preparing an online form (SharePoint) which will further facilitate requests and their management.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The Directorate for Human Resources and Finance maintains a structured social dialogue with the Staff Committee (with regular meetings with the HR Director, Secretary-General and CFAA chair), in which topical matters can be discussed with staff representatives.

In addition to the regular meetings, ad hoc meetings are organised whenever a particular topic arises. The Directorate for Human Resources and Finance also manages the concertation process with OSPs (trade unions).

INTERNAL AUDIT

Between 2019 and 2021, the HR services were audited internally, resulting in a series of recommendations that will be implemented in the short and medium term.

A number of general implementing provisions and internal decisions/procedures were revised in 2023 and certain processes were adapted and simplified.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The CoR participates in a number of statutory interinstitutional joint committees, the most significant of which are listed below, along with their main role(s):

Acronym	Name	Main role(s)
SRCC	Staff Regulations Committee	Mandatory consultation before adoption of general provisions implementing the Staff Regulations, as well as on all proposals to revise the Staff Regulations
COPARCO	Interinstitutional Common Joint Committee	Staff + Admin on competition notices. CoR HR deputy director is current chair
CGAM	Management Committee of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme	
ILISWG	Inter-institutional Infrastructure, Logistics and Internal Services Working Group	
INTERCOPEC	Interinstitutional Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities	
COCEPE	Early Childhood Centre Management Committee	
	EPSO Management Board	Strategies concerning EPSO's operation, competitions, the number of successful candidates, etc.

Table 5 CoR in statutory interinstitutional joint committees

The CoR also works with other institutions in interinstitutional working groups and committees, such as:

Acronym	Name	Main role(s)
CPQS	Preparatory Committee for Matters relating to the Staff Regulations	Interpretation of the Staff Regulations
CCA	College of Heads of Administration	Harmonisation of how statutory provisions are applied across the institutions
CPQBF	Preparatory Committee for Matters relating to Budget and Finance	Coordination of new budget establishment parameters, reporting requirements and EU interinstitutional budget processes
CMI	Interinstitutional Medical College	Coordination of the medical officers of all EU institutions
ICDT	Interinstitutional Committee for Digital Transformation	Coordinates the Digital Transformation strategies of the European Institutions. Supported by subgroups for Digitalisation & Interoperability, Cloud Computing, Emerging Technologies, Cybersecurity and Resources.
No value	EPSO taskforces	Five specific taskforces were set up in 2020 to improve the diversity of the candidate pool in EPSO competitions, improve the legal security of language policies, improve cooperation with the institutions and upgrade communication with candidates and review selection mechanisms.

Table 6 CoR in interinstitutional working groups and committees

Technical questions are dealt with by EPSO working groups or, if necessary, by specific ad hoc working

groups (CAST permanent, management of reserve lists, quotas, employer branding, etc.).

ADMINISTRATIVE COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

European Economic and Social Committee

The CoR and the EESC share a number of Joint Services, as agreed in an administrative cooperation agreement which is subject to regular revision. In October 2021, the CoR and EESC presidents and secretaries-general signed a new administrative cooperation agreement between the two Committees, entering into force on 1 November 2021 and running until the end of 2026.

European Parliament

In February 2014, a cooperation agreement was signed between the CoR, the EESC and the European Parliament (EP), with a view to increasing cooperation between the political and administrative services of the three

institutions. On the basis of this agreement, by the end of 2016, 24 staff members (including eight ASTs) from the CoR were transferred to the EP. As of 2023, the CoR obtained an increase of € 1.24 million to compensate for the unbalanced effect of the implementation of the administrative cooperation agreement. This increase is foreseen to stay in the budget in the coming years. The cooperation agreement is being renegotiated with a view to updating it.

European Commission

A cooperation agreement was signed between the CoR and the EC in 2012. It is being renegotiated with a view to updating it.

Service-level agreements have been concluded in the following areas, outsourcing certain services from the CoR to the EC:

- **Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security.** IT tools such as Sysper Career (HR management) and EU Learn (access to European Commission training courses), Welcome Office (facilities for newcomers and staff family members, first-line access to legal advice on private matters, etc.), Protocol on Privileges and Immunities (special ID cards, specific administrative documents, etc.) and medical services (such as pre-recruitment visits).
- **Paymaster's Office (PMO).** Sysper Rights modules (as PMO is the business owner), rights on leaving the service (pension, unemployment, end of service) and sickness insurance. Except for Sysper, in the area covered by the agreement, the PMO has taken over as Appointing Authority.
- **Office for Infrastructure and Logistics in Brussels (OIB).** Childcare facilities.
- **Directorate-General for Informatics (DIGIT).** IT tools such as hosting of the ABAC system, IT procurement, cloud-brokering services, e-Prior services and NDP services (electronic personal files).

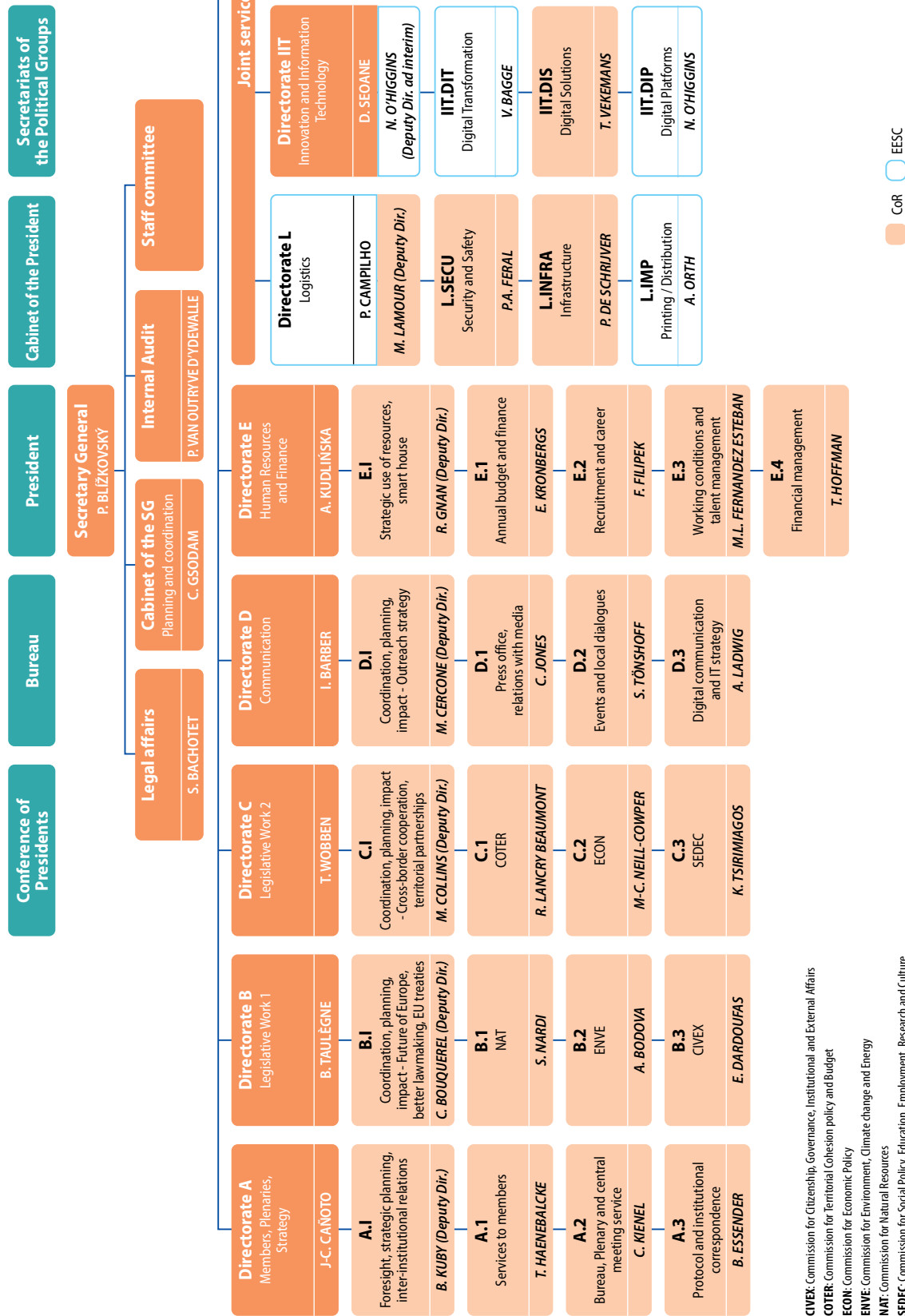


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

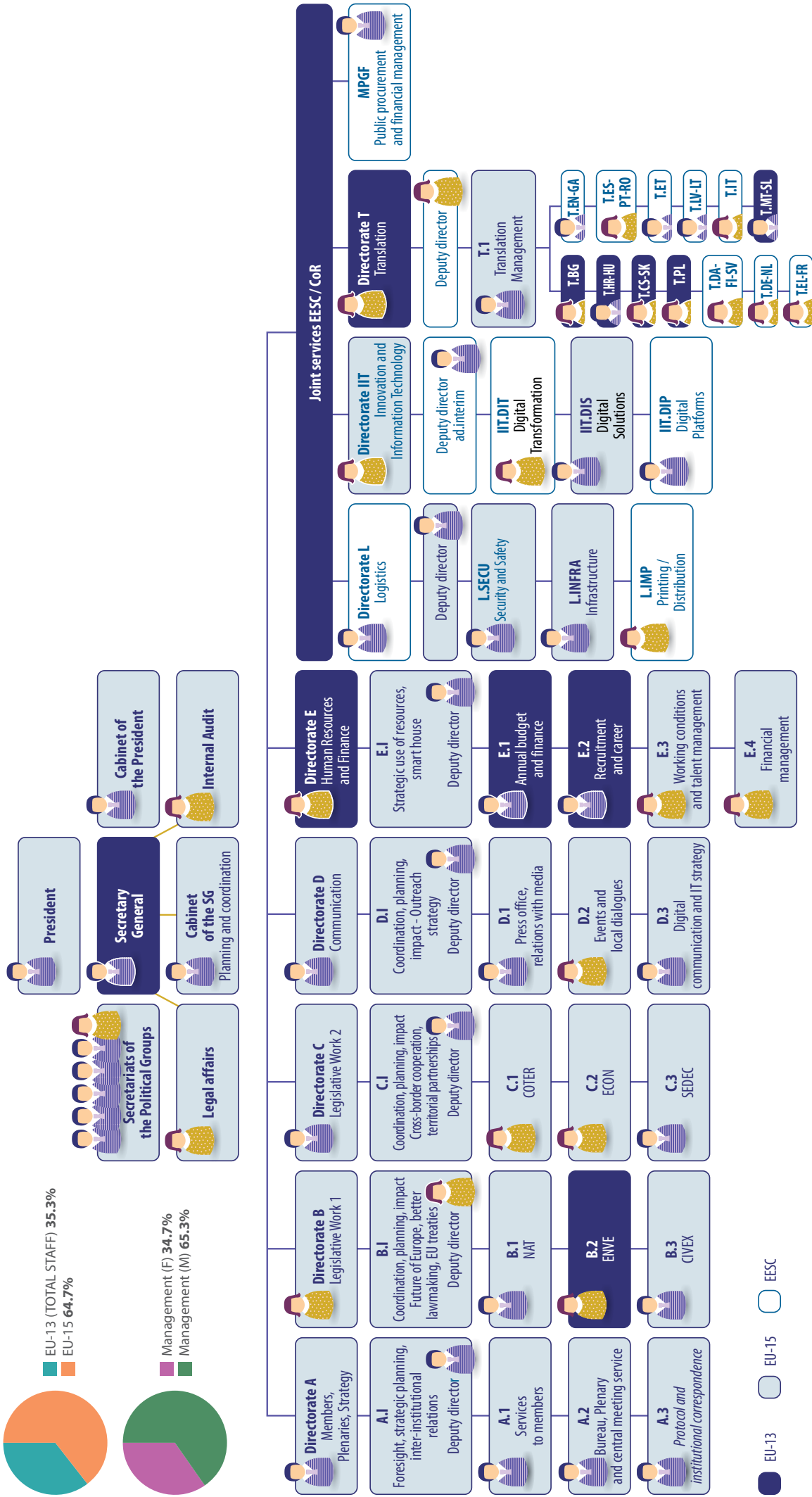
AD	Administrators' Function Group	Eurostat	Statistical Office of the European Communities
AECCE	Authority Empowered to Conclude Contracts of Employment	FG	Function Group
ANS	[Autorité nationale de sécurité] Belgian National Security Authority	FTE	Full time equivalent
AST	Assistants' Function Group	GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
AST/SC	Secretaries and Clerks' Function Group	HR	Human resources
B68	Belliard 68 building	IBGE	[Institut bruxellois pour la gestion de l'environnement] or Bruxelles Environnement, a public service of Brussels-Capital Region for the environment and energy
BvS	Bertha von Suttner building	ICDT	Interinstitutional Committee for Digital Transformation
CAST	Contract Agents for Specific Tasks	IFR	Internal Financial Rules
CCA	[Collège des chefs d'administration] Board of Heads of Administration	IIINDA	Informal Interinstitutional Network for Disability Advisers
CCP	[Congé de convenance personnelle] Leave on Personal Grounds	ILISWG	Interinstitutional Infrastructure, Logistics and Internal Services Working Group
CEOS	Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Union	INTERCOPEC	[Comité paritaire pour l'égalité des chances (interinstitutionnel)] Interinstitutional Committee on Equal Opportunities
CFAA	Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs	JDE	Jacques Delors building
CGAM	[Comité de gestion de l'assurance maladie] Management Committee of the Joint Sickness Insurance Scheme	MS	Member State
CODI	Joint Committee for Diversity and Inclusion	OCAM	[Organe de coordination pour l'analyse de la menace] Belgian Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis
COPARCO	[Commission paritaire commune] Common Joint Committee	OLAF	[Office européen de lutte antifraude] European Anti-Fraud Office
CPAS	[Comité de préparation pour les affaires sociales] Preparatory Committee for Social Affairs	OSP	[Organisations syndicales et associations professionnelles] Staff Unions and Staff Associations
CPQS	[Comité de préparation pour les questions statutaires] Preparatory Committee for Matters relating to the Staff Regulations	OSS	One-Stop Shop
De Lijn	[Vlaamse Vervoersmaatschappij De Lijn] Flemish transport company De Lijn	PMO	The Paymaster's Office/Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements
DG HR	Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security (European Commission)	RAA	see CEOS
DIGIT	Directorate-General for Informatics (European Commission)	REM	Remorqueur building
DPO	Data Protection Officer	SA	Special Advisor
DT	Directorate for Translation	SC	Staff Committee
EDPS	European Data Protection Supervisor	SR	Staff Regulations
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee	STIB	[Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles] Brussels Intercommunal Transport Company
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme	TEC	[Société régionale wallonne du transport – Transport en commun] – Walloon Regional Transport Company TEC
EO	Equal Opportunities	TRE74	Trèves 74 building
EP	European Parliament	VMA	Van Maerlant building
EPI	[Équipier de Première Intervention] Member of the rapid response team/Evacuation stewards		
EPRS	European Parliamentary Research Service		
EPSO	European Personnel Selection Office		

APPENDIX II: STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION CHART (31 DECEMBER 2023)



APPENDIX III: STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION CHART BY NATIONALITY AND GENDER OF MANAGERS

European Committee of the Regions – organisation chart (by nationality and gender – 31 December 2023)



APPENDIX IV: HR KEY FIGURES

WORKFORCE

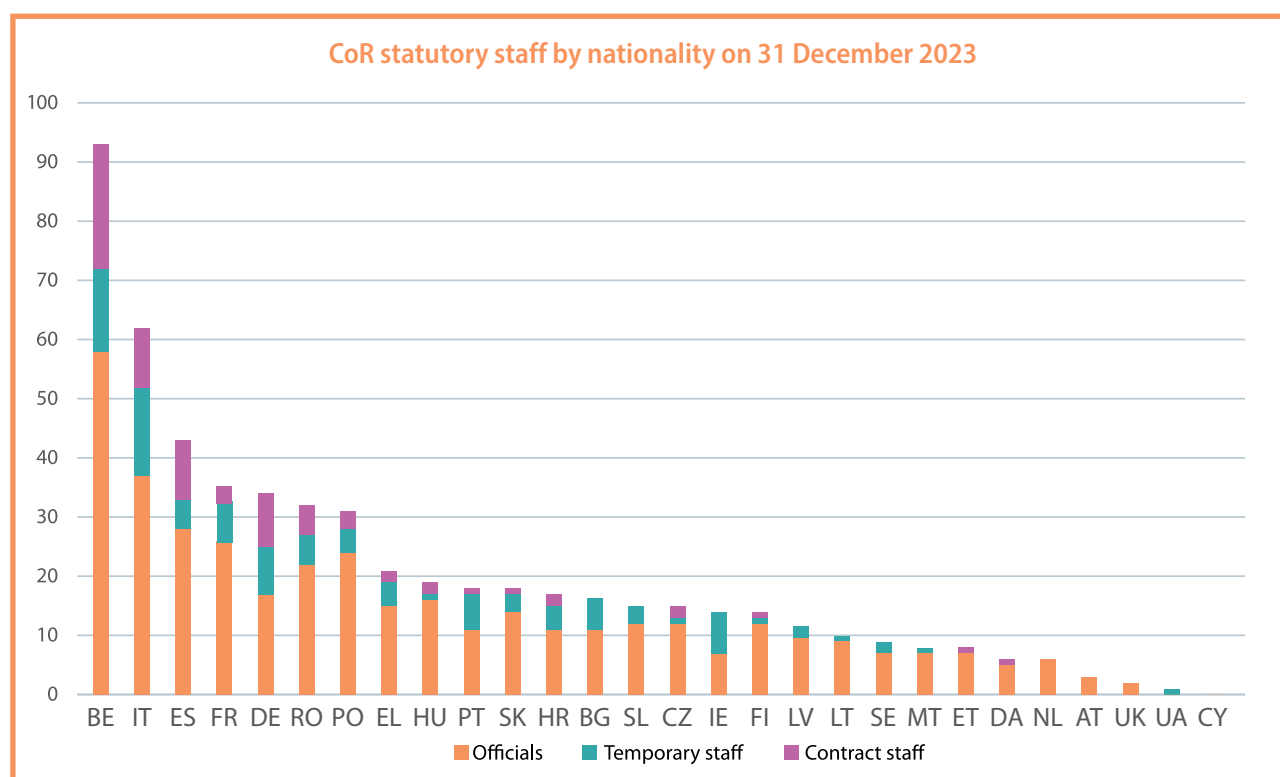


Chart I CoR statutory staff by nationality on 31/12/2023

CoR statutory staff by nationality on 31 December 2023

	Officials	Temporary Staff	Contract staff	TOT
Belgium	58	14	21	93
Italy	37	15	10	62
Spain	28	5	10	43
France	26	7	3	36
Germany	17	8	9	34
Romania	22	5	5	32
Poland	24	4	3	31
Greece	15	4	2	21
Hungary	16	1	2	19
Portugal	11	6	1	18
Slovakia	14	1	1	16
Croatia	11	3	2	16
Bulgaria	11	4	0	15
Slovenia	12	3	0	15

	Officials	Temporary Staff	Contract staff	TOT
Czechia	12	1	2	15
Ireland	7	7		14
Finland	12	1	1	14
Latvia	10	2		12
Lithuania	9	1		10
Sweden	7	2		9
Malta	7	1		8
Estonia	7		1	8
Denmark	5		1	6
Netherlands	6			6
Austria	3			3
United Kingdom	2			2
Ukraine		1		1
Cyprus				
	389	96	74	559

Table I CoR statutory staff by nationality on 31/12/2023

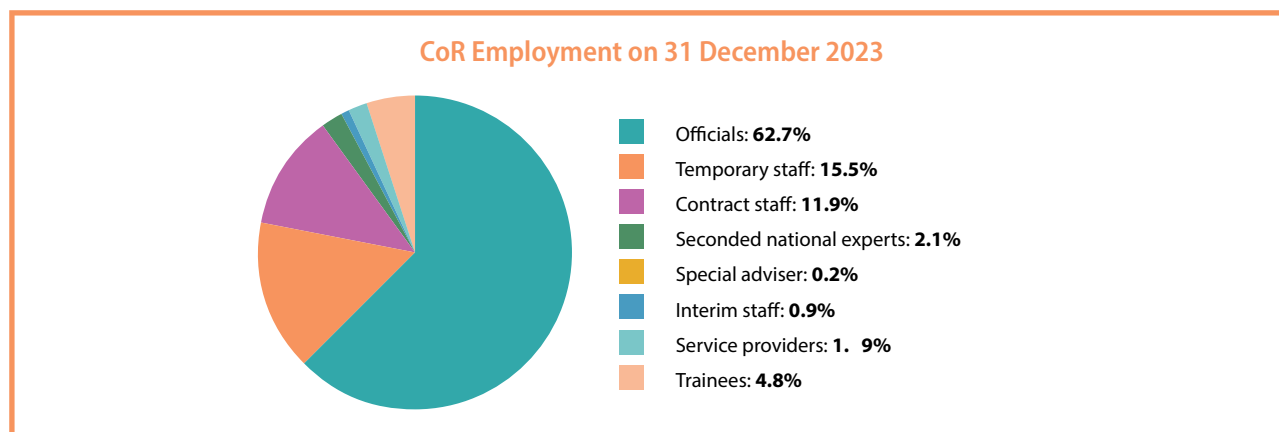


Chart II CoR Employment on 31/12/2023

CoR statutory staff by age and gender on 31 December 2023

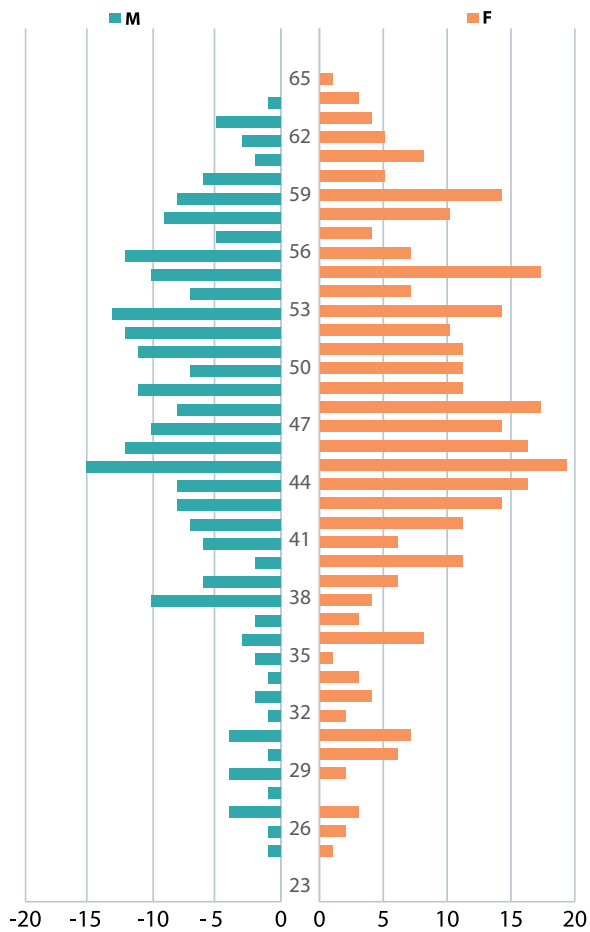
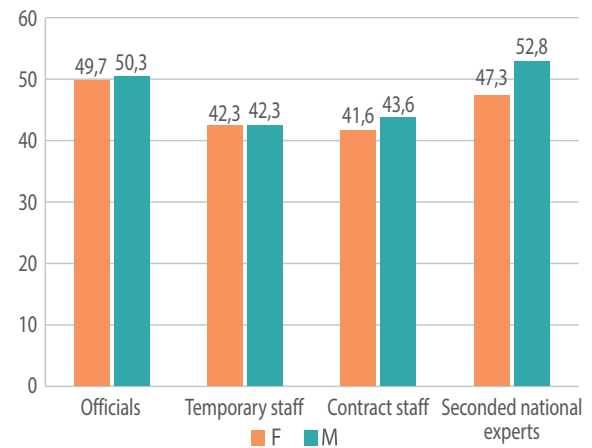


Chart III CoR statutory staff by age and gender on 31/12/2023

Average age of staff - 2023



Staff gender balance - 2023

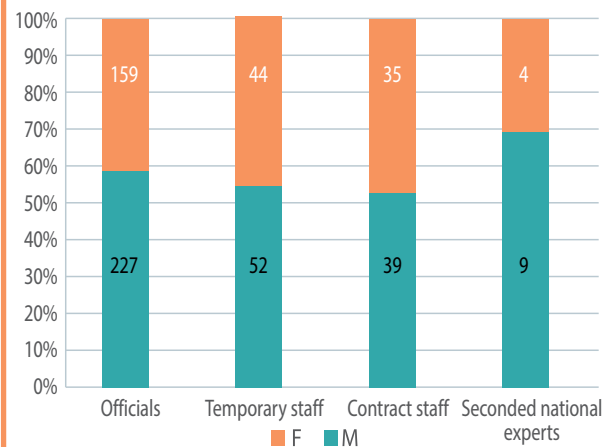


Chart IV staff by age and gender on 31/12/2023

Staff by status 2023

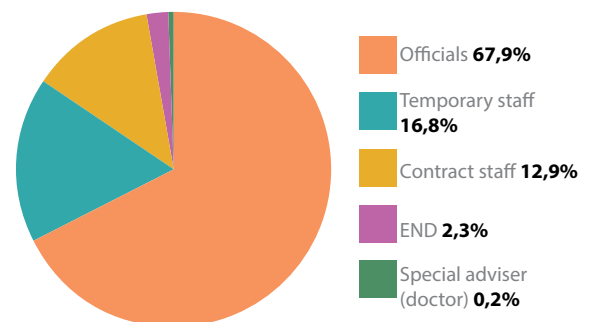


Chart V Workforce breakdown by function group or type of contract on 31/12/2023



Statutory staff by function group 2023

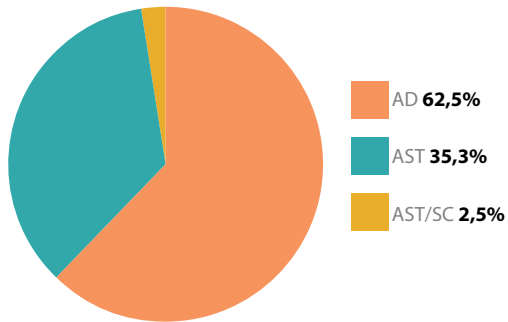


Chart VI Statutory staff by function group on 31/12/2023

Officials by function group 2023

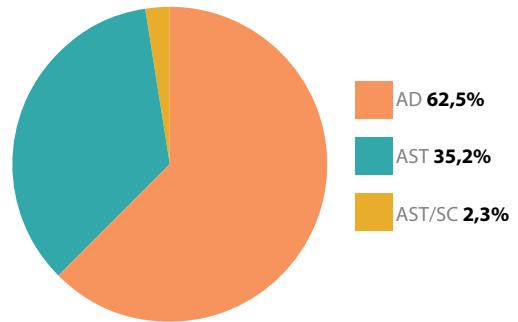


Chart VII Officials – function group breakdown on 31/12/2023

Temporary staff by function group 2023

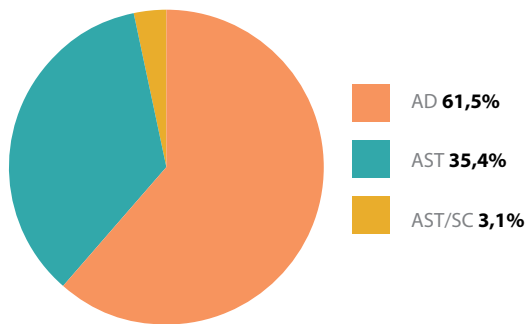


Chart VIII Temporary staff by function group on 31/12/2023

Temporary staff broken down by type of contract 2023

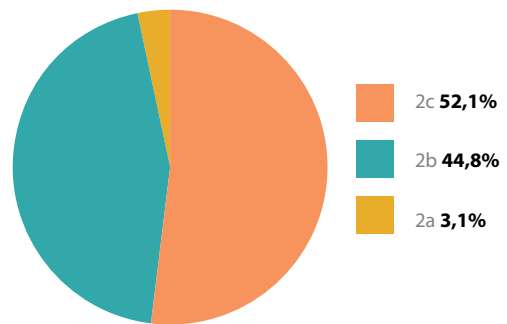


Chart IX Temporary staff broken down by type of contract (2a, 2b, 2c) on 31/12/2023

Contract staff by function group 2023

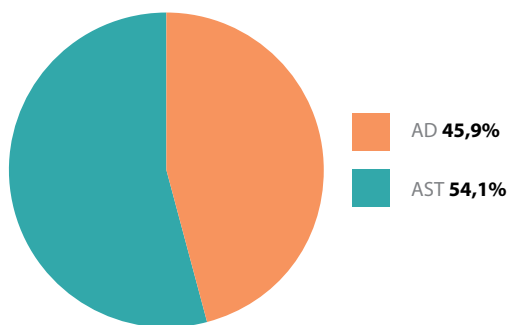


Chart X Contract staff by function group on 31/12/2023

Contract staff broken down by type of contract (3a & 3b)

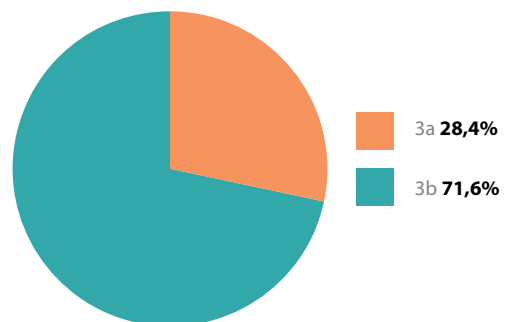


Chart XI Contract staff broken down by type of contract (3a & 3b) on 31/12/2023

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Gender balance at the CoR – per staff category (2019-2023)

Staff category	2019 (Proportion of women compared to men)	2020 (Proportion of women compared to men)	2021 (Proportion of women compared to men)	2022 (Proportion of women compared to men)	2023 (Proportion of women compared to men)
Overall	55.66%	55.49%	56.57%	56.85%	56.89%
AD – general	55.73%	55.60%	55.38%	56.85%	56.52%
AD – translation units	68.81%	66.13%	66.36%	66.67%	66.07%
AD – non-translation units	45.83%	52.13	46.81%	48.91%	48.94%
AST – general	63.21%	64.52%	64.43%	64.67%	65.03%
AST – translation units	72.22%	70.00%	65.38%	70.83%	78.26%
AST – non-translation units	62.29%	63.86%	64.29%	63.75%	63.13%
Contract staff	46.94%	44.64%	54.39%	51.79%	52.70%
Management – overall	31.82%	31.11%	32.61%	31.11%	34.69%
Middle management	33.33%	32.43%	31.58%	29.73%	32.50%
Middle management – translation units	57.14%	57.14%	57.14%	50.00%	50.00%
Middle management – non-translation units	27.59%	26.67%	25.81%	25.81%	29.41%
Senior management	25.00%	25.00%	37.50%	37.50%	44.44%
Senior management – translation units	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Senior management – non-translation units	14.29%	14.29%	28.57%	28.57%	37.50%

Table II • Gender balance at the CoR – per staff category (2019-2023)

Gender Balance in Management – EU institutions - 2023

Institution	♀ staff (%)	♀ managers (%)	♀ middle managers (%)	♀ senior managers (%)
European Parliament	60.1	44	43.4	46
European Commission	56.8	46.1	46.8	43.2
Court of Justice of the European Union	61	42.5	41%	44%
European Economic and Social Committee	65	53	59	30
European Investment Bank	51.2	37.3	37.4	36.4
Council of the European Union	57.7	40.9	44	35.8
European Central Bank	46	33	32	37
European External Action Service	47.3	36.4	38.4	29
European Court of Auditors	52.8	38.6	39.1	36.4
European Ombudsman	69.62	100	100	100
European Committee of the Regions	56.8	34.7	32,5	44.4

Table III Gender Balance in Management – EU institutions - 2023

Gender Balance in Selection of Trainees

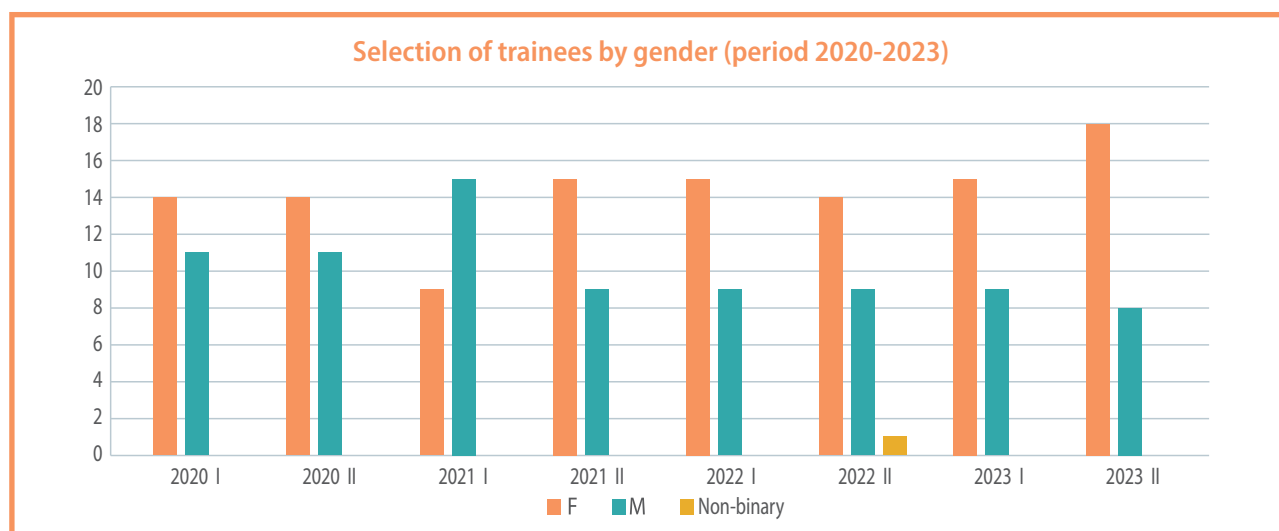


Chart XII Selected trainees per gender (period 2020-2023)

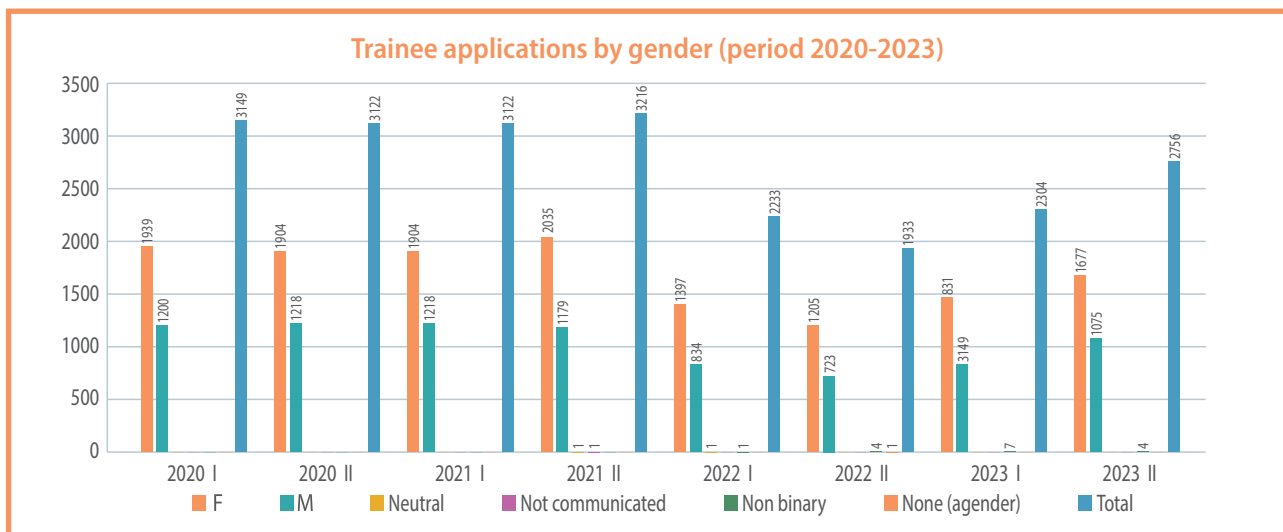


Chart XIII Trainee applications by gender (period 2020-2023)

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Participation in training overall & in CoR courses

Year	Overall participation in training: number of enrolments	Number of courses followed	Participation in CoR courses: Number of enrolments	Number of CoR courses
2023	4858	1073	2304	182
2022	4275	776	2440	170
2021	4584	949	2847	126

Table IV Participation in training overall & in CoR courses

Trend in number of training days (1 training day = 8 hours) and training courses completed

Year	Total number of training days	Average (all staff)	Total number of enrolments	Cancellation rate	Total number of courses completed	Average (all staff)
2023	2807.60	5.02	5805	14.95%	4540	8.12
2022	2453.06	4.57	4950	13.64 %	4275	7.97
2021	2490.65	4.58	5202	11.88 %	4584	8.47
2020	2138.41	3.99	3147	18.18 %	2575	4.76
2019	2823.46	5.33	3655	16.72 %	3044	5.63

Table V Trend in number of training days

Internal training sessions/participants per year

Year	Training sessions delivered by internal trainers	Number of enrolments	Training days	Training hours
2023	92	1457 but 907 participations	23.17	184
2022	96	1527	24.62	197
2021	79	1195	22.8	182
2020	64	440	15.9	127

Table VI Internal training sessions/participants per year

Language classroom training: organised internally or by the European Commission

All staff	Number of training days CoR	Number of enrolments CoR	Cancellation rate	Number of courses completed	% of DT staff participation	% of all other services
2023	1186.87	207	6.28%	190	61.05%	38.95%
2022	764	136	20.58 %	108	33.33 %	66.67 %
2021	1002	183	22.40 %	142	24.65 %	75.35 %
2020	944.25	157	14.65 %	134	29.10 %	70.90 %
2019	1176.75	163			37.80%	62.20%

Table VII Language classroom training – 1 training day = 8 hours

Own-initiative training courses

	2019	2020*	2021*	2022	2023
External language training (SLT)	6	0	0	4	5
Own-initiative training courses (linguistic)	0	0	2	0	0
Own-initiative training courses (non-linguistic)	17	14	10	25	29

Table VIII Own-initiative training courses - * Pandemic and post-pandemic sanitary restrictions

Number of managers who participated in a 360° feedback exercise

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Management level	senior	middle	middle	senior & middle	senior & middle
Number of managers	5	8	7	10	8

Table IX Number of managers who participated in a 360° feedback exercise

Number of managers who benefited from assistance delivered by an external coach

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of managers	4	8	9	6	3
Number of aspiring managers			6	3	2

Table X Number of managers who benefited from assistance delivered by an external coach

Management training in 2023 (recap)

	Total	Online	Face-to-face
Number of courses	5	4	13.25
Number of participants	169	109	60
Coaching requests	4	0	1.25
Number of participants 360°	8		

Table XI Management training in 2023 (recap)

Number of team building and away days organised upon request of services

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Team building	2	0	1	2	5
Away day	14	20	13	16	21
Team coaching		1	3	1	1
Tailored training courses for all staff			67	80	32
Own-initiative training				25	29

Table XII Number of team building and away days organised upon request of services

INTERNAL MOBILITY AND CAREER GUIDANCE

Career guidance

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2023
Number of clients	24	23	23	14	19
Number of sessions	24	43	42	32	23

Table XIII Career guidance

Job shadowing (JS) and Interinstitutional Job shadowing (IIJS)

	2019	2020	2021	2022 Internal JS	2022 Interinstitutional JS	2023 Internal JS	2023 Interinstitutional JS
Requests received (total)	37	22	14	13	10	14	350 in total, 18 for the CoR
Participants guests	34	22	13	11	15 (other institutions)	14	18 (candidates from other institutions)
Participants hosts	3	0	1	2	10 (CoR)	14	32

Table XIV Job shadowing (JS) and Interinstitutional Job shadowing (IIJS):

Exit interviews and number of staff leaving the CoR for another institution

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Staff leaving for another EU institution	13	12	7	14	11
Exit interviews	13	5	2	13	9

Table XV Exit interviews and number of staff leaving the CoR for another institution

Newcomers' meetings in the welcome programme in 2023

Event	# sessions	# participants	Comments
HR is all ears	2	36	
Meet our SG	2	37	
Entry talks	2	15	
Lifecycle of an opinion	2	26	+46 trainees
Intro to CoR tasks and structure	2	17	
	10	131	total registrations
		13	average per event

Table XVI Newcomers' meetings in the welcome programme in 2023

WORKING CONDITIONS

Table Overtime 2020-2023

Calendar year	Overtime declared (number of hours)	Average per month over 12 months	Remunerated hours
2023	1664.35	138.70	1437.83
2022	1153.02	96.09	965.16
2021	577.37	48.11	510.37
2020	295.46	24.36	283.46

Table XVII Table Overtime 2020-2023

Working patterns in 2023

	Part-time	Parental leave	Family leave
Number of decisions	116 (2022: 115)	88 (2022: 86)	4 (2022: 5)
Number of staff members concerned	64 (2022: 54)	66 (2022: 63)	4 (2022: 5)
Women	48	44	1
Men	16	22	3
AST	17	28	1
AD	47	38	3

Table XVIII Working patterns in 2023



**European Committee
of the Regions**



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