

2025

Environmental statement update



European Economic and Social Committee
European Committee of the Regions



**European Economic
and Social Committee**



EMAS
Verified
environmental
management
REG.NO. BE-00L-27



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Abbreviations

CoR: European Committee of the Regions
EESC: European Economic and Social Committee
EMAS: Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
EMS: environmental management system
FTE: full-time equivalent
GHG: greenhouse gas
GPP: green public procurement
PMC: plastic, metal and drink cartons

Buildings

B100: Belliard 100
BvS: Bertha von Suttner
JDE: Jacques Delors
REM: Remorqueur
VMA: Van Maerlant

The Committees' NACE code is NACE 99 (activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies)

This document has been translated into French. Only the English version has been validated and is authentic.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Environmental Statement acknowledges the successful achievement of all environmental targets. Gas, electricity and carbon emissions from administration activities continue to decrease, while water and paper consumption increased slightly due to a general increase in activities on site.







Waste volumes also decreased despite a rise in in-person presence, more meetings in the Committees' buildings and an increase in visitors.

Accomplishments in energy efficiency and emissions reduction underscore the Committees' dedication to combating climate change. This has been achieved through investments in innovative energy-efficient building installations and the purchase of 100% green electricity, minimising the ecological footprint and contributing to a greener energy mix.

Enhanced focus on waste management and recycling has kept waste volumes low and increased the emphasis on circular economy principles. Collaboration with staff and contractors has fostered a culture of waste reduction and resource efficiency. Furthermore, staff engagement and sustainable procurement practices underline the organisation's commitment to social responsibility and environmental education.

In conclusion, the Committees' environmental management system continues to enhance environmental performance, making the Committees more sustainable.

Table 1: Main objectives and performance, 2024

	Objective	Indicator	Target	Performance since 2019	Change since 2023
	Electricity	Reduction between 2019 and 2025	-5%	-19%	-5%
	Gas	Reduction between 2019 and 2025	-5%	-13%	-1%
	Water	Reduction between 2019 and 2025	-5%	-38%	+14%
	Waste	Reduction between 2019 and 2025	-5%	-62%	-12%
	Paper	Reduction between 2019 and 2025	-10%	-54%	+1%
	Carbon footprint ¹	Reduction between 2019 and 2030	-10%	-20%	-4.3%

¹ The carbon footprint objective only relates to the emissions from the administration, it does not include members' travels.

1. THE COMMITTEES

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) are two consultative bodies of the European Union.

European Economic and Social Committee

Established by the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the **EESC** is an advisory body that represents organisations of employers, workers and other parties representing civil society at the European level. It comprises 329 members nominated by the Member States and appointed for five years by the Council.

The EESC's remit is to help the EU institutions by playing a consultative role in association with the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission. It is mandatory for the EESC to be consulted in all the cases stipulated in the Treaties and in all cases where the institutions deem this appropriate, in fields such as the economy, energy, transport, employment, the environment, sustainable development, education and culture. The EESC can also be consulted on an exploratory basis, or it can draw up own-initiative opinions on issues to which it wishes to draw the attention of the institutions. The EESC thus enables representatives of organised civil society to participate in EU policy and decision making.

The EESC also has the task of helping to bring the European Union closer to its citizens, promoting values that underpin the European project and enhancing the role played by civil society organisations and participatory democracy.

The European Committee of the Regions

Established in 1994, the **CoR** is the EU's political assembly of regional and local representatives. Its remit is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The CoR comprises 329 members from the 27 Member States and an equal number of alternates. All of them are nominated by the Member States and appointed for five years by the Council.

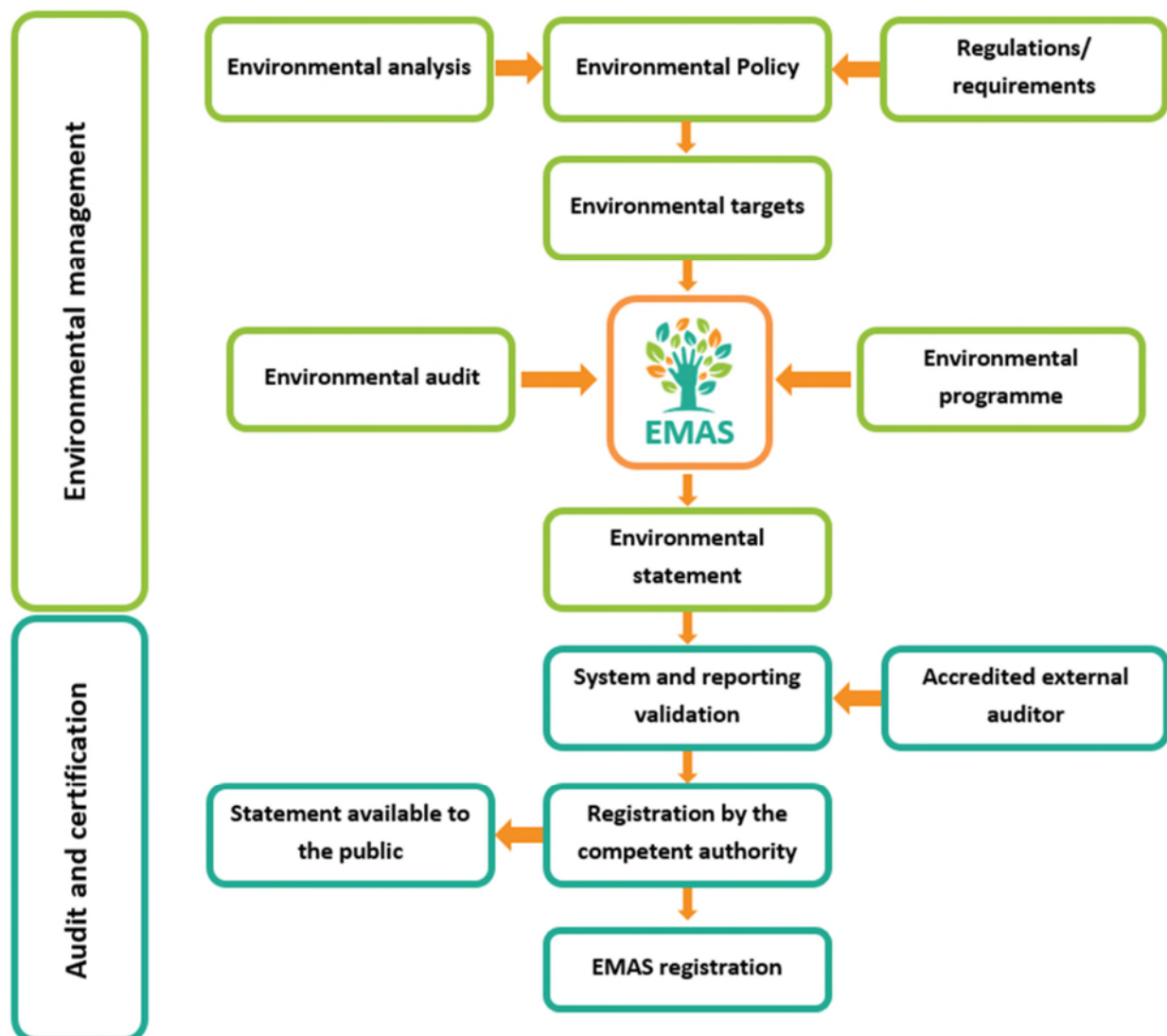
In accordance with the Treaties, the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission must consult the CoR on any proposal of relevance to regions, towns or cities. The CoR can also draw up own-initiative opinions, which enables it to put issues on the agenda of the EU institutions. The CoR can also appeal to the EU Court of Justice if its rights are infringed or if it believes that an EU law violates the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

2. THE COMMITTEES' ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

2.1 Description of the environmental management system – EMAS

EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) was established by EU regulation 1221/2009² to allow voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme by implementing an environmental management system (EMS). The purpose of the EMS is to improve an organisation's environmental performance.

Figure 1: Structure of the EMS established by the Committees



² Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS), as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/1505 of 28 August 2017 amending Annexes I, II and III and by Commission Regulation (EU) 2018/2026 of 19 December 2018 amending Annex IV.

1. Environmental management review

The environmental management review involves a detailed analysis of the Committees' activities, taking account of all stages in the life cycle, in order to identify aspects that have a significant environmental impact.

The identified aspects are regularly updated and monitored annually in line with changes to the Committees' activities or building management.

2. Environmental policy

The Committees have drawn up an environmental policy formalising their environmental commitment. This is signed by the Presidents and Secretaries-General of the EESC and the CoR and published on their respective websites. The environmental policy is communicated to all stakeholders, including contractors who are obliged to comply with the EMS implemented by the Committees.

3. Environmental objectives and indicators

Based on the environmental policy and the results of the environmental management review, environmental objectives in the form of indicators and actions are set, which take into account legal and other requirements applicable to the Committees. The objectives are translated into performance requirements and consolidated in an environmental programme. Chapter 3 sets out the Committees' environmental objectives and indicators.

4. Environmental programme

The environmental programme sets out the deadlines, responsibilities and means for achieving the environmental objectives. It is approved by the EMAS Steering Committee and then implemented through the defined actions. At this stage, all members of the organisation need to work together to meet these objectives. This stage includes information and awareness-raising activities. At the same time, environmental practices (e.g. waste sorting procedures) are formalised and communicated to those concerned.

5. Internal audits

As part of the EMS, internal and external audits are carried out annually in order to identify possible non-compliance and take the necessary corrective action. Cases of non-compliance with environmental requirements (irregularities) are recorded in audit reports, which are used as a basis for improvement measures. The EMS is therefore developing in the spirit of continuous improvement.

6. Environmental statement

The environmental statement (this document) is intended to inform the public of the existence of an EMAS-compliant environmental management system while enabling them to follow changes in the environmental performance of the Committees. The statement is updated and a new version published each year after verification and validation by an accredited body.

The EESC and the CoR share the same buildings and have assigned the management of EMAS to the Directorate for Logistics, one of the Committees' joint services. The environmental statement concerns the environmental performance of both Committees, without distinction.

7. External audit/verification

The EMS is assessed by an independent verifier. If all requirements of the EMAS Regulation are met, the competent body in the Brussels Capital Region, Bruxelles Environnement, grants the EMAS registration. The environmental auditor, Vinçotte, assessed the EESC and the CoR and on 27 December 2011 declared for the first time that they were in full compliance with the provisions of the EMAS III Regulation. The Committees have been declared compliant with that regulation every year since then.

2.2 Scope

The environmental management system applies to all staff in the non-political aspects of their daily activities. The Committees' activities have both direct and indirect impacts on the environment, including energy consumption in office buildings, waste production, paper consumption and the environmental impact of transporting people and goods.

Political activities performed by Committee members within the framework of their mandate are excluded from the environmental management system unless stated otherwise. Consequently, restrictive measures are not imposed on members, allowing them to remain independent in their consultative activities. However, while members' travel is not specifically covered by an environmental objective or indicator, it is taken into consideration in the Committees' overall carbon footprint.

More precisely, the scope of the EMS at the Committees includes:

- The 713 people working at the EESC and 574 people working at the CoR as of 31 December 2024, as well as trainees and interim staff, and the staff of external contractors who work in the premises;
- Five buildings utilised by the Committees, all located in Brussels, Belgium.

Table 2: Buildings

Building	Gross surface — m² —	Occupants 2024	Construction year	Environmental permit — N° —	Permit valid until
Jacques Delors (JDE) Rue Belliard 99-101	51 663	546	1983	381908	30/4/2028
Bertha von Suttner (BvS) Rue Montoyer 92-102	30 491	485	1989	671199	24/10/2033
Remorqueur (REM) Rue Belliard 93	2 696	70	2006	399668	2/10/2033
B100 Rue Belliard 100	7 438	208	1964	664294	18/4/2034
Van Maerlant (VMA) Rue Van Maerlant 2	12 386	316	1985	676713	18/4/2034
TOTAL	104 674	1 625			

2.3 EMAS organisational structure

EMAS Steering Committee

The EMAS Steering Committee is a body representing the services of the EESC and CoR. Its members are responsible for supervising the EMS and ensuring that it operates properly. In this context, they take decisions on the allocation of resources and set a good example in the implementation of best practices.

Table 3: Composition of the EMAS Steering Committee

EESC	CoR
Secretary-General	Secretary-General
Head of the Secretary-General's Private Office	Head of the Secretary-General's Private Office
Director of Legislative Work responsible for environmental matters	Director of Legislative Work responsible for environmental matters
Director of Human Resources and Finance	Director of Human Resources and Finance
Director of Statutory Bodies and Members' Working Conditions	Director of the Directorate for Members, Plenaries and Strategy
Director for Logistics	Director for Translation
Staff Committee representative	Staff Committee representative

The EMAS Service

The EMAS Service is responsible for implementing the EMS in accordance with the EMAS regulation. Its responsibilities include documenting procedures, work instructions and records, coordinating activities, raising environmental awareness, proposing and monitoring environmental objectives, organising audits and drafting the environmental statement.

EMAS Network

The EMAS Service is supported by a network of 80 EMAS contact persons across all directorates of the two Committees and the joint services. These contact persons play a crucial role in communication and awareness raising, relaying messages to colleagues, gathering feedback and suggestions, participating in awareness campaigns and supporting specific EMAS measures within their directorate or unit.

Staff Involvement

The active participation and contribution of all staff in improving environmental performance is a cornerstone of EMAS. To facilitate this, the EMAS Service and its network engage with staff, members, contractors, trainees and visitors through various methods. The approach is outlined in the EMAS communication strategy, which details the information and communication methods used for each target group.

New colleagues are introduced to EMAS during their introductory training. Following this introduction, they can further expand their knowledge by participating in regular training sessions and events.

In a collaborative effort to strengthen the Committees' EMS, staff are also encouraged to attend events and activities such as lunchtime seminars, visits and workshops on a wide range of current topics. These activities provide opportunities to collectively expand EMS knowledge and interact with experts from various fields.

In 2024, a variety of awareness-raising activities, presentations and workshops were organised to promote environmental consciousness and sustainable practices:

- **Lunchtime conference on water:** *What's in the water we drink?* An informative session exploring the quality of Brussels' drinking water;
- **EMAS network workshop:** A special event celebrating 15 years of environmental management at the Committees;
- **Apéro & dessert stand:** Event to raise awareness about food waste;
- **Interinstitutional EMAS Days:** The Committees participated in the event by organising a guided tour showcasing the sustainable renovation of the VMA building.



Cooperation and Collaboration

Collaboration extends beyond the two Committees to include other EU institutions. Representatives of EMAS-certified EU bodies meet in various forums, actively addressing common challenges, exchanging information and sharing best practices.

Internal Communication and Engagement

Internally, the EMAS intranet serves as the primary platform for sharing information on the Committees' environmental objectives and indicators, the latest environmental results and eco-tips for reducing environmental impact in the workplace.

EMAS CORNER LET'S KEEP ON FIGHTING FOOD WASTE



The theme of this year's European Week for Waste Reduction is food waste.

This is an opportunity for the EESC and the CoR to highlight their good practices in managing waste in the canteen and at events.

Thank you for your cooperation in the fight against food waste!

More info on the **EMAS Intranet**

Contact: environment@coce.europa.eu | environment@eesc.europa.eu



Specific information, such as instructions for waste sorting, details on environmental audits and guidelines for sustainable public procurement, is also available on the intranet.

The monthly EESC and CoR newsletters feature an EMAS corner that promotes good environmental practices among staff. Additionally, the EMAS service publishes its own newsletter, informing staff about various EMAS activities and other environmental topics.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The Committees have established 12 environmental objectives aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

Table 4: Environmental objectives and Sustainable Development Goals

Electricity									
Gas									
Water									
Waste									
Paper									
Sustainable procurement									
Catering									
Events									
Staff commuting									
Biodiversity									
CO₂ emissions									

To monitor environmental performance and ensure these objectives are met, the Committees utilise 35 indicators. These indicators are expressed in both absolute and relative terms to account for the evolving nature of the Committees’ activities over time.

To facilitate year-on-year performance comparison, indicators are calculated based on full-time equivalents (FTE). One FTE represents one person working full-time in the Committees’ buildings for 220 working days per year. In 2024, the total FTEs amounted to 1 532³.

³ Calculation of FTEs:

Staff: Each person is considered one FTE, weighted by their working hours.

Trainees: Each trainee is considered one FTE, weighted by the number of working days.

Contractors: Calculated similarly to trainees.

Members: Given that most Committee members do not have individual offices and taking into account their working schedules, the FTE is set at 0.43 for an EESC member and 0.13 for a CoR member.



3.2 Electricity

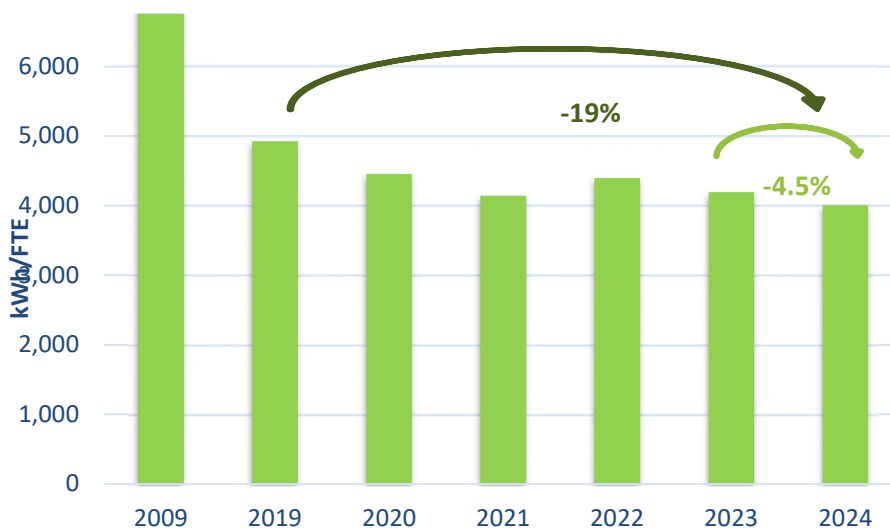


Activity	Electricity needs are primarily associated with lighting, air conditioning and ventilation in the buildings, IT infrastructure (computers, printers, servers) and the operation of lifts and other electrical equipment.
Objective	5% reduction between 2019 and 2025
Indicator	Total annual quantity of electricity consumed per employee, expressed in kWh/FTE

Results	2019	2022	2023	2024	since 2023
Total electricity consumption (kWh)	7 498 751	6 685 324	6 406 123	6 135 392	-4.2%
per/FTE (kWh/FTE)	4 924	4 395	4 195	4 005	-4.5%

In 2024, the total electricity consumption was 6 135 392 kWh. Electricity consumption per FTE for 2024 decreased by 4.5% compared to 2023 and by 19% compared to 2019, continuing to go beyond the Committees' electricity objective.

Figure 1: Trend in electricity consumption, 2009-2024



In addition to purchasing green electricity generated from renewable energy sources, the Committees also produce part of their own energy from solar panels. In 2024, 52m² of solar panels generated 5 046 kWh of electricity.

Actions Taken

The gradual increase in activities since 2022 has been largely counterbalanced by the introduction of energy-saving measures. The geopolitical situation led to rising and volatile energy prices in the second half of 2022, prompting the Committees to implement various measures to minimise electricity consumption across all buildings, achieving significant savings.

Immediate Measures Implemented:

- increasing summer ‘comfort’ temperatures to 27°C;
- adjusting the comfort-mode time range from 7:00-19:00 to 8:00-18:00, reducing the operating time of energy-consuming technical equipment and installations (ventilation units, cooling units, etc.);
- adapting the cooling mode for conference rooms;
- adjusting the light schedule per building zone, reducing the time delay for presence detectors and optimising system configurations;
- placing the B100 and REM buildings in hibernation mode during summer and end-of-year vacations;
- encouraging staff to contribute by distributing an updated guide on efficient use of cooling and lighting systems.

Medium and Long-Term Energy Efficiency Projects:

Energy audits are conducted as a first step, followed by technical studies. If feasible, building infrastructure upgrades are carried out. Subject to technical feasibility and budgetary availability, the following actions will be implemented provided that the technical studies are conclusive:

- Replacing existing conventional lighting with LED lighting;
- Optimising the operation of lighting by installing presence/absence sensors in areas such as corridors, technical rooms, stairs, car parks, etc.



3.3 Gas

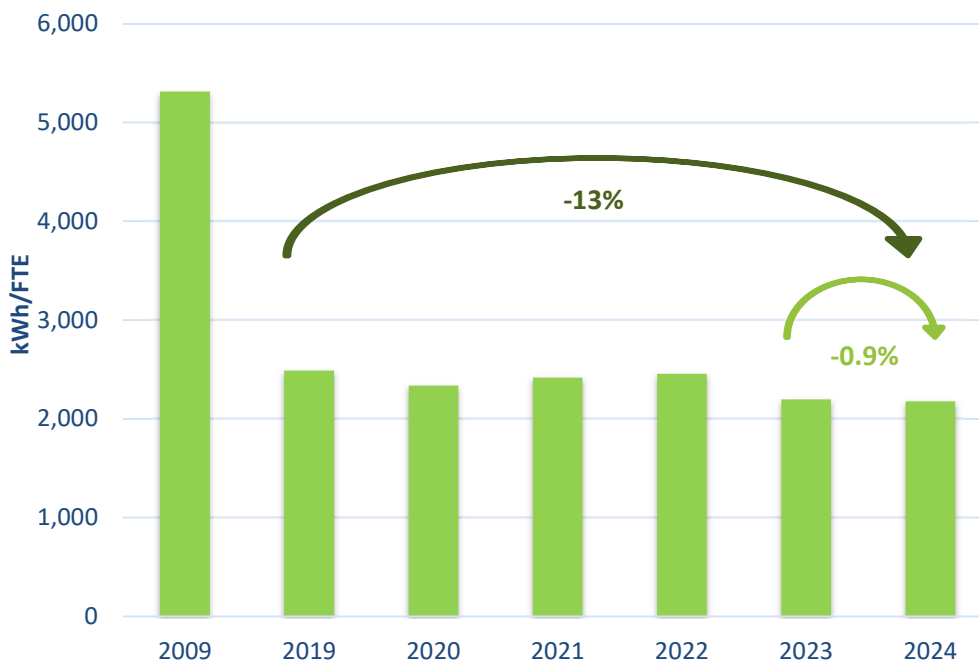


Activity	Natural gas is used to heat the buildings and produce hot water in the JDE building.
Objective	🌱 5% reduction between 2019 and 2025
Indicator	🌱 Total annual quantity of gas consumed per employee expressed in kWh/degree day 18:18/FTE

Results	2019	2022	2023	2024	since 2023
Total gas consumption (kWh PCS)	3 791 138	3 448 233	3 083 480	3 039 042	-1.4%
Gas consumption DD 18:18 (kWh)	3 791 138	3 735 586	3 352 650	3 334 816	
kWh/DD 18:18/FTE	2 489	2 456	2 196	2 177	-0.9%

In 2024, total gas consumption was 3 334 816 kWh/DD 18:18. Gas consumption per FTE for 2024 decreased by 0.9% compared to 2023 and by 8.2% compared to 2019, meeting the Committees’ gas consumption objective. Gas consumption per FTE is adjusted according to the ‘degree day 18:18’ method, which helps accurately track performance year-to-year despite weather variations.

Figure 3: Gas consumption weighted by DD 18:18 (kWh/FTE), 2009-2024



As of mid-September 2022, the Belliard 68 and Trèves buildings are no longer part of the Committees’ building portfolio, with activities now consolidated in the JDE, BvS, REM, VMA and B100 buildings. The reduction in the number of buildings and the deep renovation of the VMA building, particularly its significant energy performance improvements, had a positive impact that is now reflected in the 2024 indicators.

Actions Taken

The geopolitical situation in the second half of 2022 led to rising and volatile energy prices, prompting the Committees to implement various measures to minimise gas consumption across all buildings and achieve significant savings. The challenge was to enhance energy efficiency while maintaining occupant comfort in all seasons. A series of actions aimed at optimising the start-up, operation and shutdown of heating systems based on algorithms incorporating various parameters were introduced to better align indoor temperatures with actual needs and climatic conditions.

Immediate Measures Implemented:

- decreasing winter ‘comfort’ temperatures to 19°C;
- adjusting the comfort-mode time range from 7:00-19:00 to 8:00-18:00, reducing the operating time of energy-consuming equipment and installations (ventilation units, boilers, etc.);
- placing the B100 and REM buildings in hibernation mode during summer and end-of-year vacations;
- optimising system parameters for heating and hot water production;
- encouraging staff to contribute by distributing an updated guide on efficient use of heating systems.

Medium and Long-Term Energy Efficiency Projects:

Energy audits were conducted as a first step, followed by technical studies. If feasible, building infrastructure upgrades were carried out. Subject to technical feasibility and budgetary availability, selected actions will be implemented based on the technical study results.



3.4 Water

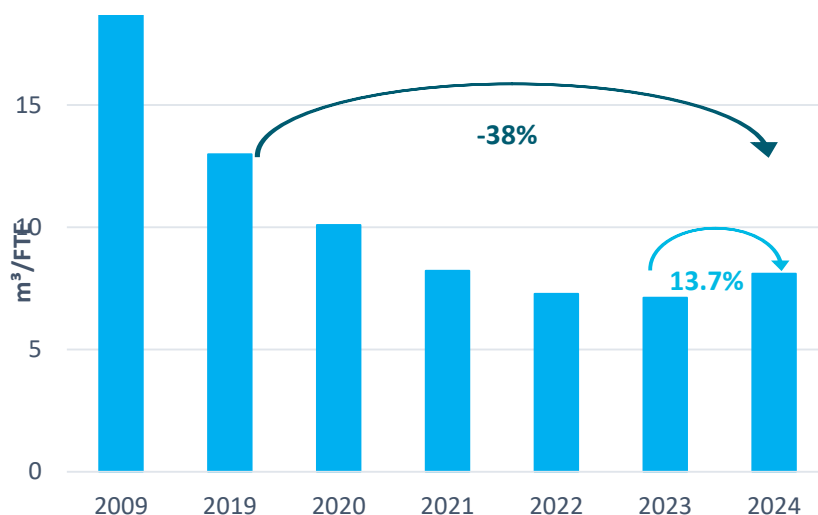


Activity	Water is mainly used for catering, cleaning, restrooms and watering gardens.
Objective	🌿 5% reduction between 2019 and 2025
Indicator	🌿 Total annual quantity of water consumed per employee, expressed in m ³ /FTE

Results	2019	2022	2023	2024	since 2023
Total water consumption (m ³)	19 778	11 059	10 879	12 406	14.0%
per/FTE (m ³ /FTE)	13.0	7.3	7.1	7.4	13.7%

The total water consumption in 2024 was 12 406 m³. The water consumption per FTE for 2024 was up 13.7% on 2023 and down 38% on 2019, surpassing the Committees' objective.

Figure 4: Water consumption (m³/FTE), 2009-2024



In general terms, there has been a gradual reduction in water consumption per FTE since 2009. The rapid decrease seen in recent years is partially due to water-saving measures and partially due to increased teleworking and reduced frequency of events and visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Actions Taken

To achieve these reductions, the Committees have enacted several measures to diminish their water footprint:

- **Toilet flush adjustments:** Reducing flush volumes from nine litres to six litres, substantially lowering water use in restrooms;
- **Enhanced monitoring systems:** Implementing robust monitoring techniques to swiftly identify and address any anomalies like leaks or spikes in consumption;
- **Efficient fixtures:** Installing water-saving devices such as diffuser taps and low-flow showerheads to reduce water usage in handwashing and shower facilities;
- **Automated taps:** Upgrading from manual taps to sensor-based taps to minimise unnecessary water flow and improve hygiene.



3.5 Waste



Activity	The Committees' daily operations generate a variety of waste types, including office waste, leftovers from catering activities and waste from building maintenance and construction projects.
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% reduction in waste generation from office and catering activities between 2019 and 2025 To recycle on average 50% of office and catering waste over the 2019-2025 period
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual quantity of office and catering waste produced per employee (kg/FTE/year) Percentage of office and catering waste that is recycled (%)

Results	2019	2022	2023	2024	since 2023
Office and catering waste (kg/FTE)	189.6	72.9	80.4	70.8	-12%
Recycling (%)	68%	57%	56%	58%	+2%

In 2024, the production of office and catering waste decreased by 12% from 2023 and by 62% compared to 2019, achieving the reduction target. Waste recycling reached 58%, increasing by 2% from 2023.

Figure 5: Office and catering waste (kg/FTE), 2010-2024

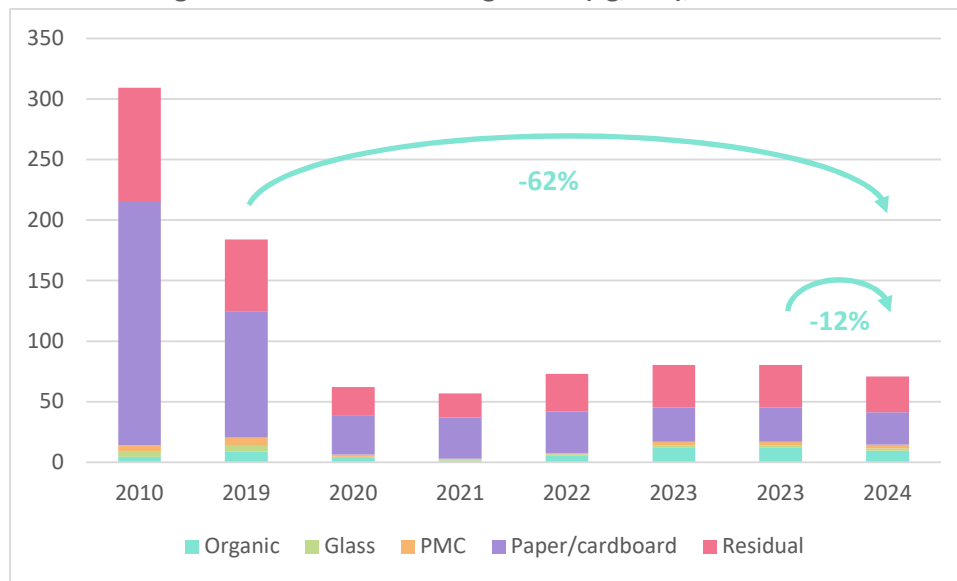


Table 5: Office and kitchen waste (kg/FTE), 2010-2024

Type (kg/FTE)	2010	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	since 2023
Organic	4.4	9.0	4.2	1.2	5.2	11.9	9.5	-20%
Glass	4.9	4.5	0.3	0.9	1.4	1.9	1.8	-7%
PMC	4.8	6.8	1.8	0.9	1.0	3.0	3.2	7%
Paper/cardboard	200.8	104.0	32.0	34.0	34.1	28.4	26.8	-5%
Residual	94.2	59.5	23.9	19.7	31.2	35.1	29.5	-16%
Total	306.1	184.6	62.2	56.7	72.9	80.4	70.8	-12%

Total waste

In 2024, the total waste production was 160 864 kg, representing a 38% decrease from 2023. In addition to office and catering waste, total waste also includes building maintenance and construction waste in addition to hazardous waste.

Table 6: Office, construction and hazardous waste (kg), 2022-2024

Type	2022	2023	2024	since 2023
Non-hazardous waste	535 168	254 376	157 003	-38%
Office and catering	117 100	132 495	108 537	-18%
Construction	401 050	14 120	27 860	97%
Other	17 018	107 761	20 606	-81%
Hazardous waste	5 249	6 608	3 861	-42%
Total	540 417	260 984	160 864	-38%

Analysis of results

The 38% decrease in waste per FTE is linked to a reduction in both office waste and waste from building projects.

The rise in organic waste and PMC is due to higher consumption of catering services and increased use of fresh products, generating more organic waste.

The reduction in paper and cardboard waste is probably related to active promotion of a paperless and digital working environment within the Committees.

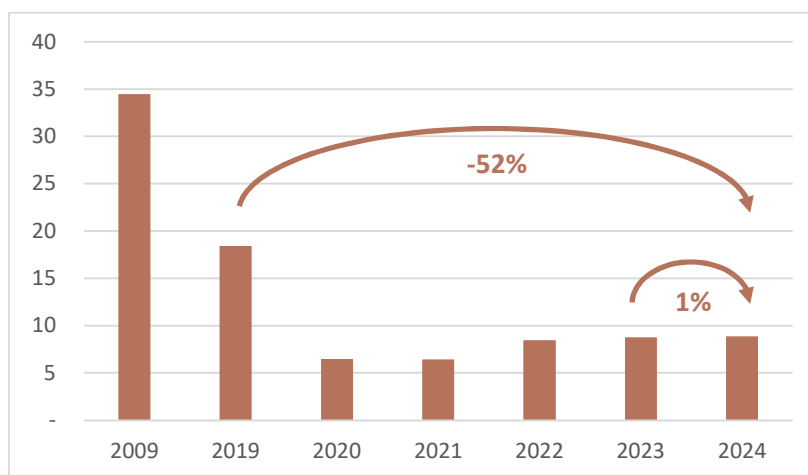
Since the introduction of the EMS, the overall amount of waste has decreased significantly (62% in 2024 compared to 2019). Despite periodic increases, the Committees' sustained efforts in waste prevention and awareness have yielded positive results. The downward trend in waste generation across all categories since 2010 is testament to compliance with environmental legislation and growing awareness of environmental impacts.

Activity	Paper is the main primary material used in the Committees’ activities. Producing and printing paper as well as managing paper waste consume significant natural resources and have a considerable environmental impact.
Objective	🌱 10% reduction in quantity of office paper used between 2019 and 2025
Indicator	🌱 Pages of office paper used per employee per day

Results	2019	2022	2023	2024	since 2023
Pages of office paper (million pages)	6 665	3 051	3 171	3 203	+1%
Pages/FTE (pages/FTE)	18.42	8.63	8.74	8.83	+1%

In 2024, the amount of paper used per FTE per day increased by 1% compared to 2023 but decreased 54% compared to 2019, thereby achieving the Committees’ objective of reducing paper use. This increase from the previous year is linked to the return to office operations. The paper usage metric is measured and monitored based on the number of pages printed.

Figure 7: Pages printed per FTE per working day, 2019-2024



The political activities of both Committees are predominantly ‘paper poor’ or paperless. Documents for political and statutory meetings have not been printed since 2019 for the CoR and since 2020 for the EESC. Office paper used in offices is 100% recycled A4 80g paper, used by staff to print documents.

Actions Taken

To further reduce paper usage, the EESC and the CoR have implemented the following measures:

- EESC: Introduced a ‘paper-poor meetings’ strategy;
- CoR: Adopted a ‘paper-free meetings’ strategy;
- CoR: Launched a digital communication strategy;
- EESC and CoR: Continued digitisation of administrative, financial and human resources procedures through various IT projects within the Committees.



3.7 Sustainable procurement



Activity	All goods, services and works required by the Committees are acquired through public procurement processes.
Objective	100% of calls for tenders with a value equal to or higher than EUR 25 000 (for the joint services) or EUR 60 000 (for the Committees' own services) include environmental and sustainable clauses.
Indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of tenders including environmental criteria Percentage of tenders categorised as 'top green', 'medium green' and 'low green'

Results	2024
Percentage of tenders including environmental criteria	100%
Percentage of tenders categorised as 'top green', 'medium green' and 'low green'	80% top green 20% medium green

All contract documents submitted for consultation in 2024 contained environmental clauses. A set of standard environmental clauses is included in all EESC and CoR calls for tender, with additional specific environmental criteria added depending on the contract's subject.

100% of tenders with a high environmental impact include specific environmental criteria directly related to the subject of the contract.

Ongoing actions

- **Green electricity:** Electricity used is 100% green.
- **Eco-labelled products:** Eco-labelled products are used as much as possible for maintenance.
- **Cleaning products:** 100% of the products used by the Committees are eco-labelled, as in 2022⁴.
- **Pesticide-free:** No chemical pesticides or fertilisers are used for maintaining green spaces.
- **Certified wood:** Any wood used in works is FSC or PEFC certified.
- **Recycled paper:** Office paper is recycled or eco-labelled.
- **Eco-friendly office supplies:** Office supplies meet stringent environmental criteria.

⁴ With the exception of disinfectants and hydroalcoholic gel used in the context of sanitary measures. For catering activities, products that do not have an eco-label are used for strong degreasing, descaling and disinfection.



3.8 Service vehicles



Activity	The Committees use a limited number of service vehicles for transporting people to and from meetings.
Objective	Reduce pollution generated by official cars between 2019 and 2025, with the aim of having a fleet of zero-emission vehicles by 2030.
Indicator	Emissions from service vehicles are included in the Committees' carbon footprint.

The fleet includes fully electric, hybrid and combustion engine vehicles. The objective is to transition to a zero-emission fleet by 2030. The Committees aim to participate in interinstitutional calls for tender or explore other options to procure zero-emission vehicles. A margin for the use of hybrid vehicles is considered to ensure sufficient autonomy where necessary, given the current state of electric vehicle technology.

Actions Taken

Environmental criteria have been included in the leasing contracts for service vehicles. This ensures that the vehicles chosen are less polluting, which contributes to a gradual reduction in the fleet's overall environmental impact. Additionally, drivers receive training in eco-driving techniques to minimise the environmental impact of vehicle use.



3.9 Catering



Activity	Catering services are provided at the canteen, restaurant, cafeterias and events organised by the Committees.
Objective	Reduce the environmental impact of catering activities by introducing sustainable food criteria and minimising food waste by 2030.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of seasonal vegetables used in the menus and in the salad bar Percentage of fresh fruits used in the fruit bar Percentage of purchases from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture Percentage of organic products Percentage of fair-trade products Percentage of vegetarian dishes sold Food waste: percentage of quantities of food wasted in the canteen and during events Food donation: quantities of food donated via the food donation project (in kg)

The Committees have two cafeterias, a canteen and an à la carte restaurant, used daily by hundreds of people. Food and beverages are also provided at meetings and events.

The EESC and the CoR are committed to a sustainable food policy aligned with the EU Farm to Fork strategy, which aims to protect biodiversity and ecosystems. Key features include:

- offering vegetarian and vegan options;
- promoting fresh and local products while banning industrial products;
- prohibition on serving overfished, endangered or environmentally harmful fish and seafood⁵;
- daily monitoring of food waste and efficient food inventory management;
- implementing a zero-plastic policy, using reusable packaging and limiting single-use containers;
- prioritising local, seasonal and certified products.

In 2024 the catering reached the following results:



- level of seasonality of vegetables: 75% (2019: 62%),
- organic farming: 19% (2019: 18%),
- fair trade: 6% (2019: 8%),
- origin of fish and seafood: 100% labelled (2019: 24%).

⁵ Marked with the colour code red or orange in the WWF recommendations: <https://fr.fishguide.be>.



3.10 Organisation of events



Activity	Meetings, conferences and events organised by the Committees
Objective	 Reduce the environmental impact of events between 2019 and 2025
Indicators	 Food waste and food donation from buffets (see 3.9 Catering)

The EESC and CoR host numerous events each year, including conferences, events organised by European civil society organisations, open days and group visits. These events can significantly impact the environment, necessitating a focused effort to reduce waste.

In 2024, the number of in-person events continued to rise. To mitigate the environmental impact of events, the Committees have implemented various best practices. The Committees' Sustainable Events guide is regularly updated, providing comprehensive strategies for minimising environmental impact. Measures are in place to monitor and reduce food waste at events, including better planning of meal quantities and encouraging attendees to minimise waste. Ensuring that the food served at events follows sustainable practices, such as using seasonal, organic and fair-trade products, is also a priority.

The Committees have successfully transitioned to a mix of in-person and hybrid events, balancing environmental considerations with the need for physical gatherings. The guide to organising sustainable events is well consulted, with staff and organisers incorporating its recommendations into their planning processes.



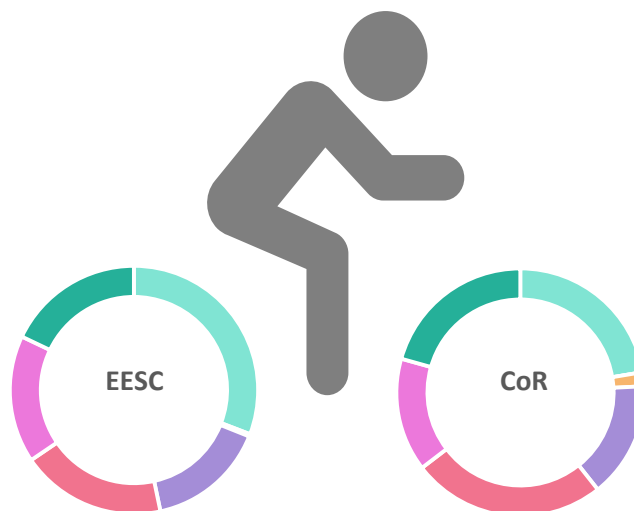
3.11 Staff commuting



Activity	Home-office commuting by staff					
Objective	Reduce the environmental impact of staff commuting by encouraging the use of environmentally friendly forms of transport: public transport, cycling, walking and car-pooling.					
Indicators	Percentage of staff commuting by sustainable modes of transport (public transport, walking, cycling or car-pooling)					
Results 2024						
	Use of sustainable modes of transport	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>EESC</td> <td>CoR</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75%</td> <td>77%</td> </tr> </table>	EESC	CoR	75%	77%
EESC	CoR					
75%	77%					

In 2024, a staff survey showed that at the EESC, 75% of staff used sustainable modes of transport, whereas at the CoR this figure was slightly higher at 77%. The survey indicated that 34% of staff engaged in active commuting, with 18% biking and 15% walking to work, and about 40% of staff used public transport.

Figure 8: EESC staff commuting, modal split, 2024



2024	Walking	Bike	Metro Tram Bus	Train	Motorbike	Car-pooling	Car
EESC	13.7%	16.7%	25.1%	18.5%	1.0%	0.8%	23.4%
CoR	16.8%	20.1%	28.2%	10.5%	1.2%	0.3%	21.6%

In an effort to reduce the environmental impact of home-office commuting and to comply with local legislation, both Committees have established a mobility plan. The expected outcome is to reduce the impact on the environment from traffic and to lower road congestion in the Brussels Capital Region. Specifically, this involves taking measures in favour of more sustainable modes of travel.

As part of the plan, staff mobility surveys are held every three years. The last survey took place in November 2024 and will be used to establish the mobility plan for 2025-2027.



3.12 Biodiversity



Activity	Biodiversity comprises the diversity of species, genes and ecosystems on the premises of the Committees and their surroundings.
Objective	🌿 Improve biodiversity on the Committees' premises and the surrounding area.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🌿 Total land use 🌿 Total sealed area 🌿 Total nature-oriented area on site 🌿 Total nature-oriented area off site

Figure 9: Land use, 2022-2024

Results	2022	2023	2024	%
Total land use (m ²)	14 750	14 750	14 750	-
Total sealed area ⁶ (m ²)	13 384	13 384	13 384	91%
Total nature-oriented area on site ⁷ (m ²)	3 169	3 169	3 169	21%
Total nature-oriented area off site (m ²)	0	0	0	0%

The Committees' built area includes 1 803 m² of green roofs set up on the JDE and BvS buildings. Green roofs are to be considered 'nature-oriented' areas as they are directly aimed at developing biodiversity, alongside other functions such as insulation or reducing the urban heat island effect.

Ongoing actions

The study conducted in 2023 and further contacts with the garden contractor in 2024 identified several priority areas for improving biodiversity, including:

- JDE garden: an area of +/- 250 m² made up of bamboo (car park); an area of +/- 80 m² made up of soil and ivy on the ground; an area of +/- 60 m² concreted;
- VMA courtyard: a fountain (not in use), concreted on three levels of +/- 50 m².

These areas will be specifically developed to promote biodiversity during 2025-2026, depending on budget availability.

⁶ Sealed area: area where the original soil has been covered with impermeable materials (e.g.: pavements, courtyards, etc.).

⁷ Nature-oriented area on site: includes roof, façade, water drainage or other elements that have been designed, adapted or are managed in order to promote biodiversity, i.e. any area dedicated primarily to nature preservation or restoration such as community garden, green roof, rain garden, courtyard with native plants, etc.



3.13 CO₂ emissions

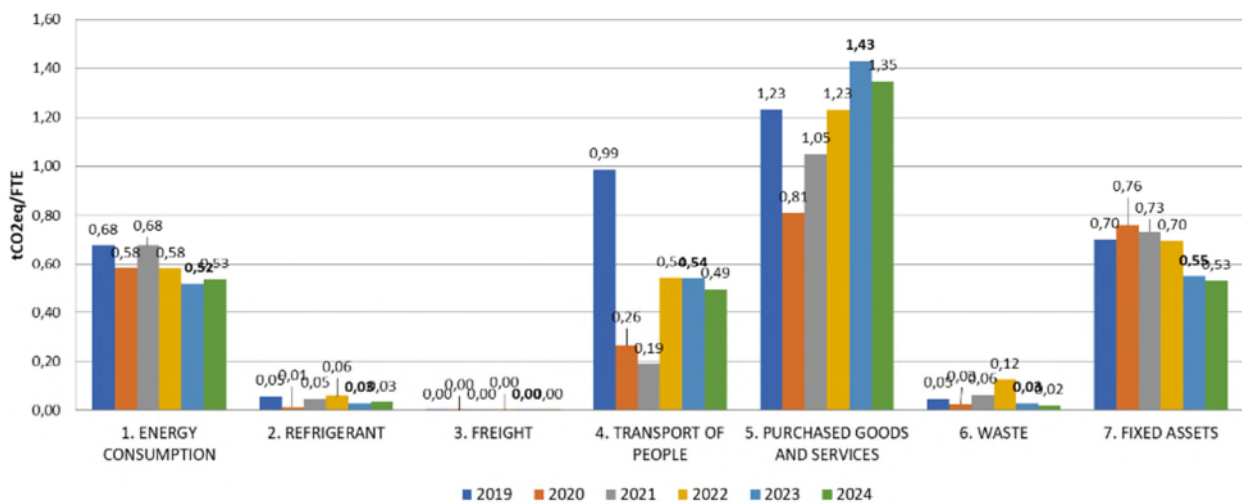


Activity	Most activities at the Committees will directly or indirectly contribute to emitting greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. To mitigate and to measure this, the carbon footprint is calculated, representing the total emissions of CO ₂ generated.
Objective	🌱 10% reduction of the administrations' CO ₂ emissions between 2019 and 2030
Indicator	🌱 Tonnes of CO ₂ equivalent per full-time equivalent (CO ₂ eq/FTE)

Results	2019	2022	2023	2024	since 2023
CO ₂ per/FTE (tCO ₂ eq/FTE)	3.69	3.23	3.09	2.96	-4.3%

Carbon emissions per FTE for 2024 decreased 4.3% compared to 2023 and 20% compared to 2019, double the Committees' objective. The objective only applies to the activities of the administration and excludes emissions from members' travel.

Figure 10: CO₂ emissions of the administration, 2019-2024



The changes in emissions from 2023 are related to all areas of activities and continuous effects from last year's improvements in terms of:

- **Energy consumption:** Reduction in emissions as a result of energy-saving initiatives;
- **Waste management:** Return to normal waste incineration levels after the peak volumes in 2022 generated by the VMA building renovation project.

4. CARBON FOOTPRINT

In addition to the carbon emissions⁸ from the administration’s activities that are monitored under the CO₂ emissions objective (see chapter 3.12), total greenhouse gas emissions from all activities, including members’ travels, are also monitored and reported.

Total emissions were down 2.8% from 2023 and up 10.5% from 2019. The increase mainly comes from travel due to the return to the normal level of activities and a temporary increase in the emission factor for air travel⁹ that persisted into 2024.

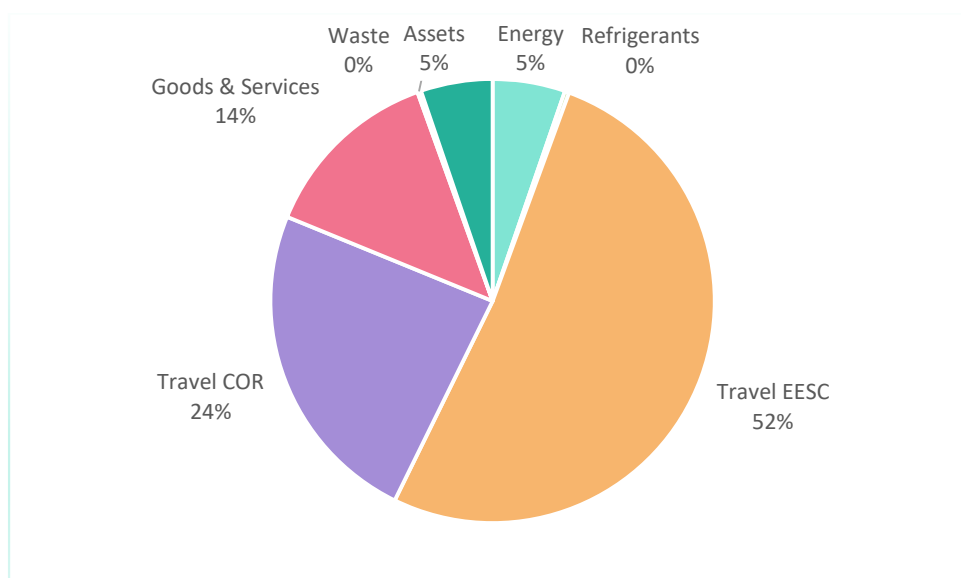
Table 11: Total emissions, 2019-2024

Year	Total emissions [tCO ₂ eq]	Emissions per FTE [tCO ₂ eq/FTE]
2019	13 900	9.13
2020	6 041	4.13
2021	6 649	4.46
2022	12 299	8.09
2023	15 844	10.38
2024	15 471	10.10

The different emission categories are made up of:

1. **Energy:** Mainly combustion of natural gas;
2. **Refrigerants:** Minor losses of refrigerants to atmosphere from cooling installations;
3. **Freight:** Transport of goods;
4. **Travel:** Travel by members and staff including home-office commuting;
5. **Goods and services:** Indirect emissions from the production of products and services bought by the Committees such as external services (maintenance, cleaning, catering, security, IT, consultancy, external interpreting and translation), catering supplies, office furniture and IT equipment;
6. **Waste:** Incineration of non-recyclable waste;
7. **Assets:** Building lifecycle emissions.

Table 12: Total emissions, 2024



⁸ Emission calculations follow the **Bilan Carbone® method** developed by ADEME, the French agency for ecological transition, and managed by the Institut de Formation Carbone. Its principle involves estimating GHG emissions by applying emission factors to activity data. The emission factors are taken from ADEME’s *Base Carbon* database, the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) or other specific databases if necessary.

⁹ DEFRA has temporarily adjusted the emission factor for air travel upwards in order to compensate for a lower ‘load factor’ since the pandemic. The load factor measures how full an airplane is, and with fewer passengers on a plane, the emission per passenger is increased.

Transport of people remains the main source of CO₂ emissions, contributing 74.9% of the total 2024 emissions.

The differences in emissions between the EESC and the CoR are related to EESC members having more meetings and plenary sessions than CoR members (nine plenary sessions for the EESC vs six for the CoR).

5. REFERENCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

The EESC and the CoR are subject to regional, national and European legislation on the environment, namely: Bruxelles/Brussel-Déchets-Afvalstoffen-LEX (Brudalex) for waste management, the Brussels Air, Climate and Energy Management Code (COBRACE), local action plan for energy management (PLAGE), environmental permits and compulsory inspections of installations, etc. Monitoring of the various regulations is ensured by compiling a register of applicable regulations and carrying out regular regulatory compliance audits. The Committees comply with all the legislation to which they are subject.

In the event of an accident or incident entailing environmental or health and safety risks, the Committees will immediately inform Bruxelles Environnement and the relevant local authorities.

6. APPENDICES

6.1 Environmental policy



European Economic and Social Committee



European Committee of the Regions

Environmental policy of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions

In view of the EU's commitment to the environment, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) have undertaken to implement an environmental management system complying with the requirements of the EMAS regulation.

The environmental management system has the support of the EMAS Steering Committee and in particular the secretaries-general, as guarantors that their strategic, organisational and management activities will take environmental aspects into account.

The environmental commitment must translate into specific measures backed by the requisite human, material and financial resources.

In general, the environmental management system must enable the following:

- compliance with environmental legislation applicable to the premises covered by the system;
- prevention of pollution;
- ongoing improvements in the environmental impact of the EESC's and CoR's activities;
- active engagement and participation of all staff.

More specifically, the Committees' environmental management system must meet the following commitments:

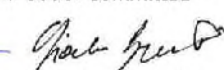
- reducing our gas, electricity and water consumption;
- encouraging reasonable and responsible use of paper;
- encouraging sustainable public procurement in our procedures;
- reducing the use of plastics in our activities;
- encouraging sustainable and seasonal food, and fighting against food waste, including by donating food;
- greening and making events more sustainable;
- reducing the amount of waste produced and sorting it more effectively;
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions resulting from administrative operations and activities;
- promoting sustainable mobility among staff in daily commuting;
- encouraging urban biodiversity;
- informing staff and members and raising their awareness; encouraging staff to participate in the implementation of the environmental management system. Awareness-raising may also take the form of participation in regional or international initiatives.

Meeting these commitments is the responsibility of all EESC and CoR management and staff members, and they are coordinated by the operational service, EMAS. EESC and CoR members, staff members, contractors and any stakeholder or third party concerned will be informed of this environmental policy.


Brussels, 3 0 NOV. 2022

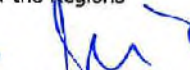
European Economic and Social Committee


Christa Schweng
President


Gianluca Brunetti
Secretary-General

European Committee of the Regions


Vasco Alves Cordeiro
President


Petr Bližkovský
Secretary-General

6.2 Environmental programme

Reference	Actions	Responsible service(s)	Deadline	Status	Comments
ELEC-2023-06	Perform technical studies in view of replacing conventional lighting with LED and/or lighting management system Installation of presence/absence detectors to be considered	DL-INFRA-PI	2024/12/31	Ongoing	Replacement is mandatory (Directive 2011/65/EU). Fluorescent tubes will no longer be produced from the end of 2023.
ELEC-2023-07	Perform technical studies in view of the installation of photovoltaic panels on the BvS and/or JDE buildings	DL-INFRA-PI	2024/12/31	Ongoing	
ELEC-2023-08	Install smart electricity counters in the VMA building	DL-INFRA-MIP	2024/12/31	Ongoing	Analysis of usefulness/necessity/feasibility still ongoing.
GAS-2023-03	Technical audit (multi-domain) of all buildings and environmental audit on all technical installations and building components	DL-INFRA-PI	2025/12/31	Ongoing	The audits will identify all technical installations and building components that need to be renovated.
GAS-2023-04	Technical studies in view of replacing conventional heat production systems (boilers) with more energy efficient ones (heat pumps)	DL-INFRA-PI	2025/12/31	Ongoing	
GAS-2023-05	Installation of smart energy meters in the VMA building	DL-INFRA-MIP	2024/12/31	Ongoing	
GAS-2023-06	Additional gas consumption optimisation based on the analysis of data collected from smart energy meters	DL-INFRA-MIP	Continuous	Ongoing	
GAS-2023-07	Feasibility study on the possibility of reducing gas consumption	DL-INFRA-PI	2025/12/31	Ongoing	Feasibility study to be launched before end of 2025.
WATER-2023-01	Installation of a rainwater collection system as well as a rainwater tank in the car park of VMA	DL-INFRA-PI	2023/12/31	Ongoing	As of 2023, rainwater will be used to flush the toilets on floors 3 to 9 of the VMA.
WATER-2023-02	Toilet flush reduction	DL-INFRA-MIP	2023/12/31	Ongoing	Where there is no dual flush and, if possible, minimising the toilet flush. Flush water flows regulated in BvS.
WATER-2023-03	Installing water taps with sensors (where there are none), tap aerators and water-saving showerheads	DL-INFRA-MIP	2025/12/31	Ongoing	The aim is to identify major water consumers. In VMA new taps with sensors were installed during renovation. Similar installations are present in BvS, JDE and REM (mechanical flow reducers).
WATER-2023-04	Installation of smart water intermediate meters in all buildings	DL-INFRA-MIP	2025/12/31	Ongoing	Studies postponed to 2024 and works to 2025.
PAPER-2023-04	a) Adonis tool : document registration and management of electronic workflows b) Electronic archiving of EESC documents c) Digitisation of the historical archives d) EESC Document Search – central electronic register e) Transparency – access to EESC documents	EESC Dir. D, ICD JS DIIT	2025/12/31	Ongoing	a) Most EESC services register their documents in Adonis. b) Working group on Document Management – meetings on the DM-Survey (first WG meeting: September 2022). Status: planned (priority project). c) Completed. d) Available to public via EESC website. Linked with encoding of the documents via AGORA and to the Members' Portal. e) By email (FMB <i>Access2Documents</i>). Where a public request concerns a number of paper files/documents, the applicant can be invited to the premises to consult the documents.
PAPER-2023-05	Electronic invoicing by contractors	EESC Dir. E-FIN/ACC	Continuous	Closed	The action has become an integrated part of regular financial workflow and can therefore be closed.
PAPER-2023-06	Medical files: management of medical files, medical certificates and transfer of the results of blood tests via an external software for medical services	EESC Dir. E, E3 STA CoR Dir. E, STA	2023/12/31	Closed	Both Committees: Use of Medispring software taken up to manage the medical files.

PAPER-2023-08	Electronic procedure for all expenses connected to the organisation of CoR meetings	CoR, Dir. A, A2	2025/12/31	On hold	The project is very big and IT has limited resources. Divided into two sub-projects: 1. Budget forecast and workflows linked to meetings – ongoing, 2. E-workflow of all requests for meetings.
PAPER-2023-10	Electronic forms for meetings with interpreters	CoR, Dir. A, A2	2025/12/31	On hold	EESC: when plenaries are organised in the EC with SCIC a majority of documents are printed; when plenaries are organised in the EP meeting documents are sent to the interpreters by email.
CAR-2023-01	Participate in interinstitutional call for tenders (or launch its own), with the aim to have a fleet of zero-emission vehicles before 2030	EESC, Dir. A, A2-CIP CoR, Dir. A, A3	2025/12/31	Ongoing	In 2022, it was decided not to report on the ecoscore anymore, but to aim for a fleet of zero-emission vehicles by 2030. In 2024 the Committees will participate in the interinstitutional call for tenders launched by the Council. The EESC fleet is composed of two fully electric cars and one hybrid car. The CoR has three electric cars and one diesel car.
MOB-2023-05	Maintain facilities for cyclists, if possible, upgrade equipment and the spaces available in the car parks for cyclists	Mobility coord. EESC & CoR	Continuous	Ongoing	Extension of BvS bike parking planned for 2024.
MOB-2023-08	Prepare and launch the next mobility plan (<i>PDE: plan de déplacement d'entreprise</i>) for 2024-2026	Mobility coord. EESC & CoR	2025/12/31	Ongoing	Next Mobility Survey: Sept. 2024
BIO-2023-02	Green roofs: examine the potential for increased biodiversity (plant varieties) on the JDE and BvS green roofs to provide habitat and food for new species, in particular insect pollinators	DL-INFRA-GEP	2023 Q3	Ongoing	
BIO-2023-03	Evaluate the community garden project and identify the conditions to relaunch it	DL-INFRA-EMAS	2023 Q3	On hold	Staff participation has decreased in recent years. Due to the pandemic, the project has been reduced to a bare minimum. Given that we are back in the office on a more regular basis, it is worth relaunching the project and trying to get active participation from staff.
BIO-2023-08	Creation of a new outdoor space (VMA building)	DL-INFRA-GEP	2025/12/31	Ongoing	Replacement of a fountain and a currently concrete area with a green area. This project will aim to improve the well-being and enjoyment of the staff but also to create facilities favourable to flora and fauna (in particular protected species). The rehabilitation of water in this area would be an asset.
CO2-2023-04	Implement new rules or recommendations (flight class limitation, transfer to train) for mobility based on distance or availability of alternatives for staff	Dir. E	2030/12/31	Ongoing	

Validation declaration

Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

VINÇOTTE nv

Jan Olieslagerslaan 35, 1800 Vilvoorde, Belgium

Based on an audit of the organisation, visits of its site, interviews with its staff, and the examination of the documentation, the data and the information, documented in the verification report N° **61486860**, VINÇOTTE nv declares, in its capacity as environmental EMAS verifier with registration number BE-V-0016, accredited for the scope 1, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20 (excl. 20.51), 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.2, 30.9, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 79, 80, 81, 82, . 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 93, 94, 95, 96, 99 (NACE-code), to have verified whether the sites as indicated in the updated environmental statement year 2025 of the organisation

**European Economic and Social Committee
European Committee of the Regions**

with registration number **BE-BXL-27**

located at

**Rue Belliard, 99 - 101
1040 BRUSSELS
Belgium**

and used for:

**All EESC and CoR staff activities carried out in the following buildings:
B100 : Belliard 100 – BvS : Bertha von Suttner – JDE : Jacques Delors –
REM : Remorqueur and VMA : Van Maerlant**

Meet all requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 on the voluntary participation by organisations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS), as amended by Regulations (EU) 2017/1505 and (EU) 2018/2026.

By signing this declaration, I declare that:

- The verification and validation has been carried out in full compliance with the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 amended by Regulations (EU) No 2017/1505 and (EU) 2018/2026;
- The outcome of the verification and validation confirms that there is no evidence of non-compliance with applicable legal requirements relating to the environment
- The data and information of the **updated environmental statement year 2025 of the sites** reflect a reliable, credible and correct image of sites activities, within the scope mentioned in the environmental statement.

This document is not equivalent to EMAS registration. EMAS registration can only be granted by a Competent Body under Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009 amended by Regulations (EU) No 2017/1505 and (EU) 2018/2026. This document shall not be used as a standalone piece of public communication.

Declaration number: 11 EA 069d/2

Date of issue: 18 August 2025



For the environmental verifier:

A blue ink signature of Daniëlla Segers.

Daniëlla Segers
Chairman Certification Commission



The next full environmental statement will be published in July 2026 and the following updated statement in July 2027.

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