2024/2223

10.10.2024

RESOLUTION (EU) 2024/2223 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

of 11 April 2024

with observations forming an integral part of the decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section I – European Parliament

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT,

— having regard to its decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, Section I – European Parliament,

— having regard to Rule 100 and Rule 104(3) of, and Annex V to, its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (A9-0067/2024),

A. whereas, in his certification of the final accounts, the European Parliament's (the 'Parliament') accounting officer stated his reasonable assurance that the accounts, in all material aspects, present fairly the financial position, the results of the operations and the cash-flow of Parliament;

B. whereas, in accordance with the usual procedure, 60 questions were sent to Parliament's administration and written replies were received and discussed publicly by Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on 4 December 2023, in the presence of the Secretary-General, the director of the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (the 'Authority') and the Internal Auditor;

C. whereas there is always scope for improvement in terms of quality, efficiency and effectiveness, as well as transparency in the management of public finances; whereas thorough scrutiny is imperative to ensure that political leadership and Parliament's administration are held accountable to Union citizens; whereas Parliament's integrity is paramount for the functioning of European democracy and increases the citizens' trust in European institutions;

D. whereas foreign interference, information manipulation and disinformation constitute a serious violation of the values on which the Union is founded; whereas the Parliament's Special Committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the Union, including disinformation (INGE), created in June 2022, exposed in detail third countries' efforts and operations to infiltrate, influence and interfere with European democracies and the Union institutions;

E. whereas allegedly Members were paid to promote Russian propaganda;

Parliament's budgetary and financial management

1. Notes that Parliament's final appropriations for 2022 totalled EUR 2 161 million, or 19,55 % of Heading 7 of the Multiannual Financial Framework ([1]) set aside for the 2022 administrative expenditure of the Union institutions as a whole, representing a 4,76 % increase compared to the 2021 budget (EUR 2 064 million);

2. Notes that total revenue entered in the accounts as of 31 December 2022 was EUR 250 473 772 (compared to EUR 215 332 108 in 2021); notes that assigned revenue made available in 2022 amounted to EUR 61 267 620 (compared to EUR 37 150 962 in 2021);

3. Emphasises that five chapters accounted for 76,5 % of total commitments: Chapter 1 0 'Members of the institution'; Chapter 1 2 'Officials and temporary staff'; Chapter 1 4 'Other staff and external services'; Chapter 2 0 'Buildings and associated costs'; and Chapter 4 2 'Expenditure relating to parliamentary assistance';

([1]) Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 (OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11).

4. Notes the figures on the basis of which Parliament's accounts for the financial year 2022 were closed, namely:

(a)	**Available appropriations (EUR)**	
	appropriations for 2022:	2 161 651 286,00
	non-automatic carry-overs from financial year 2021:	22 007 230,00
	automatic carry-overs from financial year 2021:	380 099 194,75
	appropriations corresponding to assigned revenue for 2022:	61 267 620,37
	carry-overs corresponding to assigned revenue from 2021:	39 603 266,73
	Total:	2 664 628 597,85
(b)	**Utilisation of appropriations in the financial year 2022 (EUR)**	
	commitments:	2 607 456 700,15
	payments made:	2 186 635 235,75
	appropriations carried forward automatically including those arising from assigned revenue:	428 826 276,81
	appropriations carried forward non-automatically:	0
	appropriations cancelled:	49 167 085,50
(c)	**Budgetary receipts (EUR)**	
	received in 2022:	250 473 772,00
(d)	**Total balance sheet at 31 December 2022 (EUR)**	1 735 834 446,00

5. Notes that 21 transfers were approved by Parliament's Committee on Budgets ('C transfers'), in accordance with Articles 31 and 49 of the Financial Regulation, in the financial year 2022, amounting to EUR 88 449 115 or 4,09 % of final appropriations; notes that the President authorised 11 transfers ('P transfers') amounting to EUR 34 246 879 or 1,6 % of the 2022 budget; enquires between which budget lines these P transfers occurred; calls on the presidency to inform the Committee on Budgetary Control proactively of the amounts and budget lines concerned;

6. Notes that the COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to have generated a moderate surplus of EUR 16 417 325, which was transferred out of items such as those related to travel expenses, the organisation and reception of groups of visitors, the operation of Parliament visitors' centres, external in-person training, documentation/publications and local parliamentary assistants and trainees for Members; observes that at the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic made it necessary to reinforce other budget lines by a total of EUR 7 549 000; highlights that those lines relate mainly to the provision of financial support to staff working at home, health and prevention, and additional expenditure on interpretation to support teleworking and multilingual remote and hybrid meetings;

7. Notes the fact that 2022 was a year of transition for the Union institutions, including Parliament; notes that measures introduced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic were discontinued by June 2022; welcomes the efforts of all DGs and the Secretary-General to put the necessary tools in place to resume parliamentary work so that it functions in the same way as it did before the COVID-19 pandemic; welcomes the successful resumption of in-presence plenary sessions as of March 2022; remarks that this followed a two-year period during which more than 12 000 voting operations had to take place remotely over no fewer than 175 voting sessions, spread over 30 part-sessions;

8. Notes that the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the exceptionally high level of inflation, which by the end of the year 2022 still stood at 10,4 % for the Union on an annual basis, had a profound influence on the 2022 financial year; acknowledges that the Parliament's administration has put considerable effort into the implementation of the budget with a view to meeting urgent needs arising from the crisis situation; welcomes the donations of technical equipment by Parliament to support Ukraine in difficult times of war;

European Court of Auditors' opinions on the reliability of the 2022 accounts and on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts

9. Recalls that the European Court of Auditors (the 'Court') performs a specific assessment of administrative and other expenditure as a single policy group for all Union institutions; highlights that administrative expenditure comprises expenditure on human resources including pensions, which in 2022 accounted for about 70 % of the total administrative expenditure, and on buildings, equipment, energy, communications and information technology; highlights that the Court's work over many years indicates that, overall, this spending is low risk;

10. Notes that the Multiannual Financial Framework Heading 7 'European public administration' accounts for EUR 11,6 billion or 5,9 % of the Union budget in 2022, of which Parliament accounts for EUR 2,2 billion or 18,9 %; welcomes the fact that the Court found that the level of error in spending on 'European public administration' was not material; calls on the Parliament to check and identify which type of transactions had a high share of errors, although below the materiality threshold and explore the changes in procedure needed to avoid and detect similar errors in the future;

11. Notes that the Court's annual report on the implementation of the budget concerning the financial year 2022 presents specific findings on Parliament; notes the Court's recommendation that Parliament's administration strengthens its guidance on the implementation of budget appropriations by the political groups and that it keeps working to improve the internal rules and ensure compliance with procurement rules and procedures;

12. Notes that the Court selected a sample of 13 transactions for Parliament, and that they found quantifiable errors in three of them; notes that procurement was one of the issues raised by the Court; highlights that this type of finding has also been raised in the past;

13. Takes note of the observations of the Court with regard to Parliament's internal rules; recalls that the political groups manage the funds allocated to them according to the principles of indirect management of funds in analogical application of Article 62(1)(c) of the Financial Regulation; considers that these rules themselves replace the 'contribution agreements' (as referred to in Article 155(6) of the Financial Regulation);

14. Recalls, that according to Parliament's internal rules, the political groups are responsible to the institution for the management of appropriations, within the limits of the powers conferred upon them by the Bureau; takes note that the appropriations are to be managed in accordance with these rules and appropriate action should be taken to prevent any non-compliance;

15. The political groups receive assistance and advice from Parliament when they request; notes that in 2022 the financial departments of the political groups intensified their signatures with national delegations in order to ensure the sound management of the appropriations in line 4 0 0;

16. Welcomes the commitment of the administration to increase the guidance for political groups on the proper implementation of Parliament's internal rules and assist them with the aim of improving their internal financial management; welcomes the fact that it will further clarify the guidelines on procurement by political groups;

Internal auditor's annual report

17. Notes that, at the meeting between the committee responsible and the internal auditor held on 4 December 2023, the internal auditor presented his annual report and described the assurance audits he carried out and consulting services he provided and reported on the outcome of the current state of play, which in 2022 covered a transversal follow-up of open actions from internal audit reports, an audit of staff missions, a review of Parliament's risk management framework, an audit of the procurement process in the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO), an audit of the purchase and use of security equipment and services in the Directorate-General for Security and Safety (DG SAFE), an audit of the financing of European political parties and European political foundations – second assignment, and a periodic review of the ADENAUER 2 building project – Phase 3 (completion of East Wing);

18. Welcomes and supports the actions that the internal auditor has agreed with the directorates-general responsible, as a result of the assurance assignments with regard to the audit of staff missions, with regard to the review of Parliament's risk management framework, and with regard to the audit of the procurement process in DG INLO;

19. Takes note of the assurance assignments for which preliminary conclusions are currently being prepared or for which fieldwork is still ongoing, and which are currently following the process envisaged by the charter of the internal auditor;

20. Notes that the 2022 follow-up process resulted in the closure of 38 of the 92 open actions and for which the agreed due dates for implementation had expired; is concerned by the fact that as of 31 December 2022, 29 open actions were overdue for more than 12 months; expects the different directorates-general to ensure that the remaining actions are closed without any further delay and that the agreed actions are implemented in accordance with the due dates set in the internal auditor's annual report;

21. Acknowledges that, in accordance with Article 118(9) of the Financial Regulation, the reports and findings of the internal auditor, as well as the report of the Union institution concerned, shall be accessible to the public as soon as the internal auditor has validated the action taken for their implementation; notes that, in practice, the reports and findings are only published once all recommendations have been implemented resulting in a de facto delay of publication for years; calls on the Bureau to make each internal audit report available to the public one year after its finalisation, once the internal auditor has validated the actions taken to implement the previous year's recommendation; recalls that Members may only have access to confidential documents under the Bureau's rules on a need-to-know basis; recalls that all Members of the Committee on Budgetary Control have the right to request confidential access to the internal audit report with regard to the discharge procedure; welcomes the fact that the internal auditor reports to the Committee on Budgetary Control on the annual audit activities carried out;

22. Notes that as a consequence of a post that remained vacant throughout the year, envisaged for an information systems auditor, one planned audit in the field of IT (on cybersecurity staff awareness) could not be carried out in 2022; notes the difficulty in finding specific audit staff profiles, including in the field of IT, to perform audits as planned according to their requirements; calls the Internal Audit Service to address the issue in order to ensure the completion of the remaining audit in time for the next discharge cycle;

23. Welcomes the fact that the Internal Audit Service has, through its 2022 quality assurance and improvement programme, continued to seek the enhancement of its activity in providing objective assurance to the decision-making and oversight authorities, to authorising officers and to management; takes note that the internal auditor stated that he did not receive instructions or guidance from any source, which would be such as to compromise his independence;

Follow-up to the 2021 discharge resolution

24. Takes note of the written answers to the 2021 discharge resolution provided to Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control on 13 September 2023, the presentation by the Secretary-General addressing the issues in Parliament's 2021 discharge resolution and the exchange of views with Members that followed;

25. Recalls that once the Plenary calls for different rules or measures to be implemented by Parliament, the rules or measures proposed shall be discussed and voted on by the Bureau; recalls, in light of Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure, that the Bureau is responsible for taking decisions on financial, organisational and administrative matters concerning Members; recalls that the Bureau is composed of the President of the European Parliament, the 14 Vice-Presidents and the five Quaestors (non-voting members) democratically elected by Parliament; notes, that the members of the Bureau deliberate on Parliament's draft estimates; recalls that the discharge is an exercise of democratic scrutiny and that the concrete demands adopted by Plenary in discharge resolutions shall be reflected in the discussions of the Bureau;

26. Is aware of the fact that since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and until the gradual lifting of sanitary restrictions at the beginning of 2022, the Bureau's deliberations were focused primarily on decisions aiming to protect the integrity of Members and staff while ensuring business continuity and implementing practical solidarity measures vis-à-vis the three host Member States of Parliament;

Directorate-General for the Presidency

27. Recalls that the Directorate-General for the Presidency (DG PRES) provides expertise and facilitates the legislative and parliamentary work of the President, the Plenary and Parliament's governing bodies and Members at each stage of the parliamentary and legislative process; recalls that it is also responsible for interinstitutional relations, for protocol support to official visits and events sponsored by the President, for the management of Union classified information, and for the management of official and registered mail, and that it was responsible for interparliamentary relations until November 2022; notes that by 31 December 2022, there were 364 members of staff, of which 307 were officials, 19 temporary agents, 37 contract agents, and 1 agency member of staff;

28. Notes that DG PRES's final appropriations amounted to EUR 1 275 565 in 2022, representing 0,1 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 1 169 055,78 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;

29. Welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the various components of the eLegislate programme using XML technology for faster and easier drafting of both amendments to legislative proposals and preparatory documents for interinstitutional legislative negotiations; calls on the various services involved to further intensify their efforts and ensure that all steps in the parliamentary legislative process are assisted by the eLegislate tools from the start of the legislative process in the 10th parliamentary term;

30. Stresses that transparency, accountability, and integrity are essential ethics principles within the Union institutions and in particular Parliament as the house of European democracy; welcomes the prompt actions taken by Parliament regarding the events related to alleged corruption cases concerning Members and employees in December 2022; welcomes the contribution of DG PRES to the 14-point action plan proposed by the President and its efforts in implementing the new rules on integrity and transparency; further welcomes the efforts by Parliament's political authorities to enhance transparency, integrity and accountability in Parliament; calls on the administration to track the budgetary and financial impact of these measures; notes that Parliament reconfirms trust in the Union's decision-making process by improving transparency, ethics and good conduct in the most representative Union institution through its actions; recalls that these events are commonly known as Qatargate;

31. Notes that 2022 marked the first year of the full implementation of the mandatory transparency register under the revised Interinstitutional agreement (IIA), adopted in July 2021 ([2]) by Parliament, the Commission and the Council; notes that while introducing some principles to enhance a common culture of transparency, the IIA leaves it to the three signatories to implement the conditionality and subsequent complementary measures as they see fit; points out that Parliament has improved conditionality while the Council's participation remains limited;

32. Recalls the significance of this register as a pivotal instrument in fostering transparent and ethical interest representation at Union level, establishing mandatory registration as a prerequisite for interest representatives to be able to engage in specific activities with the Union institutions, including Parliament; calls for the provision of all necessary resources to ensure that the internal rules related to the transparency register are effectively enforced, including, where appropriate, the imposition of adequate sanctions;

33. Welcomes the increased use of the transparency register as an information and reference tool for interest representation activities at Union level, shown by the rise in applications for registration and increased number of visits to the website year-on-year; welcomes the regular communication, helpdesk and awareness-raising activities undertaken by the Secretariat among stakeholders both within the institutions and outside, as well as the development of IT solutions to improve the transparency register; recalls the necessity to keep strengthening data quality checks of new applicants; notes that the quality of entries in the transparency register has improved over recent years due to increased targeted quality monitoring and as a result of investigations based on complaints or own-initiative investigations by the Secretariat, and commends, despite limited resources, the role of the Joint Secretariat in that improvement; notes that the Secretariat's targeted quality checks of 4 238 entries over the course of 2022 found that 44 % provided satisfactory data quality from the outset (a number similar to 2021, + 4 %) while an additional 35,2 % of interest representatives improved the information further to the targeted checks, and 13,6 % were removed following the checks as a result of ineligibility or a failure to update; stresses the need to allocate additional resources to the Secretariat to allow for scrutiny of the transparency register to ensure data quality; calls for an expansion of its scope to include representatives of non-EU countries; recommends that IT solutions are used to integrate the transparency register in all Parliament's activities involving external entities to allow their participation to be recorded and tracked through the relevant databases;

([2]) Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register (OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1).

34. Reiterates its concerns about large-scale foreign interference and disinformation campaigns targeting the Union, particularly by Russia; emphasises the need for an enhanced security culture within Parliament; calls for a mandatory and regular security and integrity training for Members and members of staff, appropriate security clearance and reinforced screening of members of staff, in particular those attending in camera meetings; calls for stricter scrutiny of the organisation of events, of the invitation of external guests to Parliament and of access to Parliament's communication platforms; calls for an urgent investigation into allegations of Russian influence in Parliament;

35. Calls, as a consequence of the events of alleged corruption within the European Parliament that occurred at the end of 2022, for the establishment of robust standards on transparency and access to Union institutions for all entities listed in the transparency register; recalls that NGOs were allegedly misused as vectors of foreign interference in Parliament's decision-making processes; reiterates, in this context, the need for comprehensive financial pre-screening of all entities, disclosing all funding sources, before they are listed in the transparency register; recalls the obligation of registering in the transparency register prior to participating in the organisation of events and conferences on Parliament's premises;

36. Calls on the Commission to ensure that all Union funds are effectively traceable from the direct recipient to the final beneficiary when funds are passed on in a chain as reflected in the proposal for a recast of the Financial Regulation and as requested in the own-initiative report 'Transparency and accountability of non-governmental organisations funded from the EU Budget' adopted on 17 January 2024 ([3]); calls for a revision of the guidelines for registration in the transparency register to disclose all incoming and outgoing funds, including the transfer of funds from one entity stakeholder to another; underlines that all registrants or entities receiving money from third parties, whose registration in the transparency register is not required, need to disclose the source of their funding;

37. Recalls that Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure obliges members to publish their meetings with interest representatives; notes with great concern that in the period until 26 January 2023, 261 current Members had not published a single meeting with an interest representative on Parliament's website; recalls that information and reminder notices on the obligation to publish meetings should be sent to all Members at regular intervals;

38. Notes the revised code of conduct for Members and the increased focus on integrity and transparency regarding Members' declarations of financial interests, potential conflict of interests, meetings with representatives and declarations of input; stresses that the new rules are welcomed but that their interpretation has raised many questions and require action by Parliament's administration and the Code of Conduct committee; highlights that in order for Members to be in compliance with the new rules, clear and reliable interpretation is necessary to allow the highest level of legal certainty; calls for regular information updates to be sent to Members' offices to allow for greater visibility and accessibility;

39. Considers roll call votes (RCV) to be a key instrument for transparency and accountability towards the Union's citizens; calls for introducing automatic RCV to any final vote except for secret ballots, and for increasing the number of RCV that are possible for a political group to ask for per part-session in Rule 190(2), or exempting legislative files from that limitation;

40. Notes with satisfaction the successful organisation of mid-term elections in 2022 of the President, Vice-Presidents and the Quaestors in a remote format, as decided by the Conference of Presidents; acknowledges the importance of the plenary remote voting system in the successful running of such a sensitive and complex secret vote;

41. Recalls the changes in Parliament's Rules of Procedure on 20 December 2020 allowing for remote voting and the fact that voting remotely in committee is currently not allowed unless the President establishes the existence of extraordinary circumstances; reiterates its request to the Bureau, adopted at Plenary level on several occasions, to enable Members to exercise their right to vote remotely while benefiting from maternity or paternity leave, during a long-term illness or in cases of *force majeure*, thus capitalising on the great administrative effort and financial investment that Parliament has made in technical solutions to allow remote voting;

42. Notes that DG PRES managed to address needs that arose after the establishment of the 2022 estimates, despite the volatile sanitary situation and its impact on the level of parliamentary activity; remarks that it also generated a surplus that could be used to finance the needs of other Directorates-General arising from the high inflation in 2022;

([3]) P9_TA(2024)0036.

43. Recalls that according to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Protocol No 6 annexed to the Treaties, Parliament shall have its seat in Strasbourg, where the 12 periods of monthly plenary sessions, including the budget session, shall be held; underlines that the suspension of sessions in Strasbourg and remote participation are linked to the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic; recalls that any change to the Treaties requires the unanimity of the Member States; recalls the support by the vast majority of Parliament for a single seat to ensure efficient spending of Union taxpayers' money and to assume its institutional responsibility to reduce its carbon footprint; notes that permanent changes would require a Treaty change;

44. Notes that the suspension of Strasbourg part-sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to total savings of EUR 26 260 608 according to Parliament's Secretariat, while also significantly reducing Parliament's carbon footprint; highlights that the Court estimates that 'the end of moving from Strasbourg to Brussels could generate annual savings of EUR 114 million plus a one-off saving of EUR 616 million if the Strasbourg buildings are successfully divested, or a one-off cost of EUR 40 million if they are not' ([4]); considers that given the current climate crisis, retaining the Strasbourg seat is irresponsible; calls on the Council to take Parliament's position into account and act on it as a matter of urgency;

Directorate-General for Communication

45. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM) is a multi-site Directorate-General, with staff located in Brussels, Strasbourg and the Liaison Offices in each of the 27 Member States, as well as in London, Washington D.C. (until 1 November 2022 when the two EPLOs were transferred to the new Directorate-General for Parliamentary Democracy Partnerships), and the Jean Monnet House in Bazoches (France);

46. Notes that DG COMM's key tasks are to collaborate with the media, to inform, explain and enhance the visibility of Parliament's work, to increase awareness of Parliament among citizens, stakeholders and opinion leaders through the European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs) located in the Member States, to foster interaction with citizens through enhanced visitor projects, events and information campaigns and its presence on social media, and to provide expertise to Members and political groups on topics such as media intelligence and public opinion monitoring; and to combat disinformation by all means, particularly in the lead-up to elections;

47. Emphasises the need for Parliament and the other Union institutions to have adequate resources to safeguard their information space against information manipulation campaigns, while fully upholding Union values;

48. Notes that DG COMM's final appropriations amounted to EUR 121 235 650 in 2022, representing 5,6 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 121 146 177 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;

49. Notes the complexity of activities of the DG COMM; notes the need to increase the visibility of the work of Parliament and to increase citizens' trust in institution of the Parliament, which would require an increase in the budget for DG COMM;

50. Highlights that during the first four months of 2022, DG COMM's budgetary implementation was still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular with respect to the visitor groups and visitor facilities; remarks that a large part of the surpluses caused by the suspension of activities was re-allocated to other Parliament services to fund other priorities and to tackle the effect of inflation on staff expenditure; notes that several activities of DG COMM, such as audio-visual services, were also severely impacted by substantial price increases;

51. Notes that, on 10 March 2022, the President issued a revised decision on 'Security measures to limit the spread of COVID-19' which meant physical presence for several activities was restored, including re-admitting visitor groups; welcomes the decision to increase the paid financial contributions for travel, accommodation, meals and minor local expenses by 10 % for the sponsored visitor groups in 2022; calls on the Bureau to reverse its decision to reduce the annual quota of sponsored visitors per member from 110 to 100 and from 55 to 50 for election years; highlights that the decision to carry over the unused quota from 2020 to 2022, 2023 and 2024 remained unchanged; insists to the Bureau that APAs be eliminated from the list of permitted heads of groups, leaving only a member of the sponsored group or a professional, such as paying agents or travel agencies, to take up the role, in order to prevent APAs from being compelled to take on the financial responsibility, which can amount to substantial sums of money;

([4]) https://www.eca.europa.eu/other%20publications/pl1407_letter/pl1407_letter_en.pdf.

52. Notes that following the energy crisis in the Union, prices for travel and meals have increased considerably; takes note of the planned revision of the rules with regard to the payment of subsidies to sponsored visitors groups;

53. Takes note that the progressive withdrawal of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in Member States enabled EPLOs to resume operating under normal conditions with the systematic addition of hybrid elements; highlights that a series of activities connected to the European Year of Youth were organised in EPLOs; notes that in Member States, Members are systematically invited to events and activities with media, stakeholders, civil society organisations and the youth community; notes that Liaison Offices also promote the involvement of Members in third party events and activities;

54. Notes that Members were given the opportunity to take part in plenary debates from the EPLOs in their Member States of election as a result of the exceptional measures put in place during the pandemic, this having been facilitated by the actions of DG COMM; welcomes the increased efforts made by DG COMM to make use of new technologies to facilitate the work of Members during the COVID-19 pandemic; acknowledges that the remote access for national media to the communication activities of Parliament has opened up ways to interact with Union citizens;

55. Takes note that, in 2022, DG COMM finished most of its preparatory work ahead of the 2024 European elections; notes that, in 2022, Parliament's Bureau approved the communication strategy for the 2024 elections; notes that a pan-European call for proposals was launched in mid-2022 and resulted in the award of 19 grants, financing capacity building actions and/or citizen-engagement activities in support of the European elections;

56. Welcomes the adoption of the European Media Freedom Act which introduces a new set of rules to promote media pluralism and independence across the Union; is of the opinion that it represents an additional tool, within the Union's continued efforts to fight against systematic campaigns of foreign information manipulation and interference aiming to destabilise the Union;

57. Notes that Europa Experiences are positive actions that promote the work of the Union and that explain Union policies to citizens; notes with satisfaction the increased number of visits to Europa Experiences over the last two years; notes that thousands of visitors per month enjoy Europa Experiences every year; takes note that despite the ongoing inflation crisis in 2022, two new Europa Experience facilities (Paris and Rome) were opened, which allowed the Liaison Offices to benefit from different outreach opportunities and to expand their networks; notes that at the end of 2022, over 80 % of the Europa Experience roll-out objectives had been met;

58. Recalls the ongoing struggle in which the Union is involved with regard to safeguarding European values and upholding the integrity of our democratic processes; welcomes the actions undertaken by Parliament in the pursuit of those objectives, fighting against disinformation and information manipulation; calls for the reinforcement of those actions in light of the upcoming European elections and, in particular, calls on DG COMM to keep developing and implementing effective strategies to counter disinformation and information manipulation, especially within an electoral context; highlights that one of the most powerful weapons against disinformation is positive, fact-based communication regarding Parliament's activities;

59. Believes that granting access to Parliament's resources, such as video recording studios or other communication platforms must not be used to undermine the Union's values or for the purposes of disseminating hostile information by authoritarian regimes;

Directorate-General for Personnel

60. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Personnel (DG PERS) is responsible for the appropriate and efficient management of human resources within Parliament and ensures that Members are supported by a highly skilled workforce to enable them to duly fulfil their mandate;

61. Notes that DG PERS's final appropriations amounted to EUR 1 090 141 584 in 2022, representing 50,4 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 1 087 939 413 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;

62. Notes that, in 2022, Parliament recruited fewer officials from competitions organised by the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) (48 officials) than from Parliament-run internal and open competitions (139 officials); regrets that EPSO encountered various problems with the proctoring of online tests and the language regime of competitions; acknowledges the general difficulties encountered by DG PERS and other DGs in attracting and retaining talent, which has an impact on the performance of Parliament's workforce; calls for more efficient, better targeted and shorter selection procedures that would result in increasing the attractiveness of Parliament as an employer and allow the Directorates-General to speedily recruit the specialist profiles needed to support their work;

63. Highlights that ensuring a fair geographical balance is an important part of creating a truly European public service, remarks that over the years, Parliament has taken a number of measures in that respect; notes that there is still room for improvement; notes that the Bureau has created the legal framework for the organisation of nationality-specific competitions and decided to organise the first of such competitions; highlights that competitions should always be based on professional training of the person, regardless of age, gender, faith;

64. Recalls that, on 13 January 2020, the Bureau approved new and more ambitious targets for gender balance at the senior and middle management levels of Parliament's administration to be achieved by 2024, meaning that women should hold 50 % of head of units posts, 50 % of director posts and 40 % of director-general posts; recalls that a gender action plan for the years 2021-2022 aimed at facilitating the implementation of these targets, as well as comprehensively mainstreaming gender into all activities of Parliament, was subsequently developed and approved by the Bureau on 6 July 2020; notes that in 2022, women held 28,6 % of director-general posts, welcomes the fact that 50,8 % of director posts, and 43,5 % of head of unit posts were held by women;

65. Acknowledges that several Directorates-General have expressed their concerns about attracting talent and specialised profiles that are essential to carry out Parliament's core business; notes that only services that are essential may be considered for a potential internalisation exercise; highlights that some services are carried out by external service providers due to their specific nature which does not meet the conditions for internalisation; is therefore of the opinion that the services not meeting these conditions should not be considered for internalisation by the governing bodies;

66. Welcomes the work done by DG PERS with accredited parliamentary assistants (APAs); highlights that DG PERS' Infodesk organised 85 information sessions for officials, temporary agents and contract agents as well as for APAs, in addition to six webinars on retirement, and 14 information sessions for new Members' trainees; welcomes the work of the APA's Front Office Unit in relation to recruitment and management of APA contracts and acting as point of contact for all related questions and procedures; notes that this unit replied to 12 405 information requests, including recruitments, contract modifications, renewals, resignations and terminations; notes with satisfaction that 100 % of contracts for APAs were produced within 10 working days;

67. Notes with satisfaction that, as requested in the 2021 discharge resolution, at its meeting of 10 July 2023, the Bureau requested to introduce the possibility for a negotiated termination of contract between a Member and their APA, for cases where it is necessary to terminate the contract of an APA for reasons other than a loss of trust;

68. Acknowledges that the work of APAs is an integral part of the work of Members and that they play an important role in the legislative procedures of the Union; notes that following the adoption of the APA statute in 2009, the recognition of their work has increased gradually over the years; notes the efforts made by Parliament to create a framework for providing support to APAs; calls on the Bureau and the administration of the Parliament to regularly and formally consult the APA Committee on revisions and reforms that directly impact the rights of APAs; calls for due adherence to the rules in place; calls on Parliament's administration to explore the feasibility of introducing a notice period within APA's contracts in the event of the unexpected departure of an MEP, whether voluntary or involuntary;

69. Notes, that APAs participate in official missions to Parliament's three places of work; notes that on 11 December 2023 the Bureau adopted amendments to the 'Implementing Measures for Title VII of the Conditions of Employment of other Servants of the European Union', governing the employment of APAs; notes that according to this decision the rules applicable to missions undertaken by officials and other servants of Parliament will apply to APAs *mutatis mutandis*; notes that when APAs have a validated mission order to travel to Strasbourg during the European Parliament plenary sessions then they can travel there in charter train; notes that in the event of chartered Eurostar trains being full, APAs are offered considerably worse and more unreliable travel options than Parliament's other members of staff; calls on Parliament to examine the need for an additional train; reiterates that APAs accompanying Members to the part sessions in Strasbourg, require a mission order and to be reimbursed in accordance with the applicable rules;

70. Observes that the Bureau Decision on applicable rules on Committee missions outside of the three places of work as amended in November 2011, following discussions in the Conference of Presidents in April 2011 and in the Bureau in November 2011, currently prohibits APAs to accompany Members on official Parliament delegations and committee missions; notes that allowing APAs to participate to EP missions unofficially puts the Parliament in a serious reputational risk and imposes specific challenges with regards to their insurance coverage; reminds that MEPs are already accompanied by representatives of political groups on these missions but points out that the technical support that APAs provide during missions is of key importance to the participating Members; reiterates its long-standing request to allow APAs, under certain conditions yet to be determined, to accompany Members on official Parliament delegations and missions outside of the three places of work, as reiterated by Plenary in several discharge resolutions; urges the Bureau and the Conference of Presidents to respond positively to this demand;

71. Recalls, that APAs, regardless of their experience and qualifications are excluded from participating in the internal competitions of the European Parliament; invites the Bureau to explore the possibility to grant the same opportunities to APAs, on fair basis and according to set criteria by the relevant DGs, to allow for APAs, under yet-to-be-determined conditions to participate in internal competitions on equal footing with the staff of the European Parliament; notes that APAs through years of experience attain a thorough understanding of the political and technical nuances associated with the exercise of MEPs' mandate as well as the various legal procedures of the union; stresses that stronger involvement of APAs in the internal structures of the Parliament could lead to more inclusive, diverse and geographically balanced workforce; highlights the importance of knowledge retention and transfer within the European Parliament in relation to the internal working methods;

72. Notes that the cooling-off period applicable to APAs is at least twice as long as the cooling-off period applicable to MEPs; invites a discussion on harmonising cooling-off period for employees of the European Parliament;

73. Welcomes the progress made on the revision of the rules governing the employment of accredited parliamentary assistants; welcomes the positive harmonisation that the decision brings for the staff; welcomes the agreement reached on the mutual termination of contract between APAs and MEPs; welcomes the aligning of rules on mission allowances between APAs and staff; welcomes the revision of mandatory training for APAs upon taking up of duties; welcomes the revision of maternity rules for APAs in order to improve efficient use of resources by MEPs; commends the Bureau of the European Parliament for accommodating the requests of the plenary of the European Parliament and the input from APA Committee over the recent years; encourages the EP bureau to pursue this constructive work with the APA Committee on other pending issues;

74. In order to strengthen transparency and accountability in European parliamentary operations, and to promote fair distribution of resources, the following revisions are proposed regarding parliamentary assistance and overall ceilings and budget:

    (1) The minimum budget allocation for Parliamentary Assistance (APAs) shall be mandated at a minimum of 35 %.

    (2) The maximum allocation budget for other beneficiaries shall be capped at 65 % and shall be divided as follows:

        (a) Service providers shall be limited to a maximum of 25 % budget allocation.

        (b) Local assistants shall be limited to a maximum of 25 % budget allocation.

        (c) Trainees shall be limited to a maximum of 15 % budget allocation;

75. Notes that following the two editions of the Schuman Recruitment and Development Programme that were finalised in 2022, 16 % of the candidates from those placed in the pool were recruited in 2022; highlights that this action resulted in the recruitment of 50 successful candidates from 16 different Member States; remarks that of those Member States, nine of the Member States that were represented by few or very few members of staff are now more represented and are represented by 70 % of the corresponding successful candidates; highlights the creation of an alumni network of former Parliament trainees approved by the Secretary-General at the end of 2022;

76. Welcomes that DG PERS implemented the Positive Action Scheme for candidates with a disability, resulting in a significantly higher number of applications than in previous years;

77. Recalls the decision of the Secretary-General of November 2022 on the new rules for teleworking in Parliament applicable to Parliament's Secretariat; recalls that Members and political groups may also decide to apply the teleworking rules as set out in this decision; remarks that a balanced use of a hybrid working environment is beneficial and productive and therefore welcomes the decision to maintain teleworking possibilities; recalls that physical presence is always of crucial importance for the efficient and effective interaction of all actors in every parliamentary process;

78. Suggests that in order to reconcile the needs of Parliament's administration (including team cohesion, internal communication and on-boarding of newcomers) which would positively impact its performance as well as the attractiveness of Parliament as an employer, an analysis on the new ways of working continues to be carried out; notes the introduction of the possibility for staff to telework from abroad for five days per year; notes that some of the measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic have modified working conditions in specific services; calls for a proactive monitoring and evaluation of the new ways of working so the well-being and satisfaction of staff are not negatively impacted;

79. Notes that out of the 459 Members of the 8th parliamentary term, who were not re-elected in 2019, only a single notification of post-mandate employment was submitted to Parliament (Article 6 of the Code of Conduct); welcomes the prohibition for former Members to engage in lobbying activities during the six months after the end of their mandate and the introduction of a procedure in the event of non-compliance; applauds that it is no longer possible to issue a lobbyist badge to a former Member within the six-month period following the end of their mandate and that their former Member badge is deactivated if a lobbyist badge is issued to the former Member after this period; notes that in 2022, out of the 199 officials who left service, 65 requested permission for an activity after leaving the service (Article 16 of the Staff Regulations); calls on Parliament to establish stronger rules to regulate revolving doors for Members and civil servants;

80. Strongly believes that the sponsoring of events and trips should never serve as a means to compromise Union values or propagate hostile information by authoritarian regimes; reiterates its call for stricter rules for trips taken by Members that are paid for by foreign countries and entities; believes that similar rules should be drawn up for trips taken by APAs or political group staff;

Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics

81. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO) manages facilities covering 1,3 million m^2 in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg, as well as the Liaison Offices and Europa Experience facilities in the Member States; notes that DG INLO also provides catering and transport, and manages and equips Parliament's office and meeting spaces; notes that by 31 December 2022, there were 652 staff members, of which 267 were officials, 47 temporary staff and 338 contract staff;

82. Notes that DG INLO's final appropriations amounted to EUR 271 191 093 in 2022, representing 12,5 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 269 189 287 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations; takes note that budget items where the consumption rate was lower than 95 % were in the areas of mobility, an unsuccessful call for tender for the purchase of vehicles, and lower than expected activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in lower internal meeting expenditure;

83. Acknowledges that Parliament's 'Building Strategy beyond 2019' provides a coherent framework for decisions and contributes to consolidating Parliament's real estate portfolio while adapting facilities to the evolution of meeting patterns, going local and closer to citizens through the gradual roll-out of Europa Experience Centres, enhancing security for Parliament's buildings, and achieving the interconnection of its central buildings; notes that the majority of the policies and actions referred to in the current Building Strategy are either completed or well under way;

84. Emphasises the need for an effective and results-oriented facility management of Parliament's buildings; expresses its satisfaction with the 2022 building assessment results, as communicated to the Bureau in June 2022 in the form of building passports, where the Energy Performance Indoor Environment Quality Retrofit (EPIQR) index score was only 0,1, thus testifying to their overall excellent condition and bearing witness to effective preventive and corrective maintenance and upkeep programming by Parliament's competent services in the framework of the Integrated Facility Management Strategy focusing on the life cycle management of Parliament's building portfolio, adopted by the Bureau on 8 March 2021;

85. Welcomes DG INLO's commitment to putting in place environmentally sustainable solutions; notes that, in 2022, Parliament generated over 19 % of its own energy from renewable sources; welcomes the conduction of a study on on-site electricity production in Strasbourg in 2022 and the subsequent and ongoing implementation of 1 400 m^2 of photovoltaic panels on the PFLIMLIN, DE MADARIAGA, and CHURCHILL buildings. Stresses that Parliament could share this energy with the city of Strasbourg when Parliament's premises are mostly empty; calls on the Bureau to also consider renting the roofs' surfaces to external users for the installation of solar panels and thereby use it as an additional source of income for Parliament;

86. Notes the inauguration of the East Wing of the ADENAUER building in Luxembourg on 10 May 2022, which along with the putting into service of the West Wing after the completion of its construction in 2024 will provide a single building to house all Parliament services located in Luxembourg in one place;

87. Takes note of the opening of the 15 visitor seminar rooms, a multi-purpose agora and a Sakharov Lounge in the ZWEIG building which will contribute to an enhanced visitor experience in the European Parliament in Brussels; notes the completion of the passageway connecting the ZWEIG building with the buildings of the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee;

88. Welcomes Parliament's efforts to encourage staff to use sustainable means of transport for commuting by putting an increased number of traditional and electric bicycles at their disposal free of charge and by reimbursing part of the cost of public transport tickets in exchange for limiting access to the car park; welcomes the new scheme offering a 90 % price reduction for the Brussels seasonal public transport tickets which has led to an 26,57 %increase of staff using a seasonal ticket co-funded by the Parliament;

89. Welcomes the possibility for staff to use rent standard and electric bikes during the part-time sessions in Strasbourg; welcomes the expansion of the bicycle fleet; regrets that in practice the bikes are fully booked out days in advance; calls on Parliament to examine the possibility for offering more rental bikes in Strasbourg and extending the timeframes for their pick-up to meet the demand by Members and staff and contribute to enhancing sustainable mobility;

90. Welcomes that the percentage of zero-emission or plug-in hybrid cars in the people transport service fleet has increased from 81 % in 2021 to 97 % in 2022;

91. Points out that a large share of the seats available in the vehicle fleet commuting between Brussels and Strasbourg for plenary sessions seats remained unoccupied in 2022; reiterates its call on Parliament's administration to widen the user group and allow Parliament's staff to travel to and from Strasbourg with the service fleet without the presence of a Member, while making sure that Members' seats are secured;

92. Recognises the importance and added value of Parliament's EMAS certification with regard to its sustainable environment and circular economy institutional approach; takes note of the water-saving and waste-management measures taken by the administration to that effect;

93. Takes note of the unanimous decision of the Bureau of 23 October 2019 to approve the creation of an IDEA Lab with the aim of testing new, innovative solutions in the context of offices and facility management; welcomes the creation of a permanent laboratory for innovation which could potentially lead to savings in future renovation projects and calls for the establishment of a separate budget line; points out that the IDEA Lab is supposed to be at the disposal of Members and requests that Members will be informed about innovations and tested solutions that will be rolled-out in the future and those that are not pursued any further and for what reasons; is of the opinion that one of the priorities of the IDEA Lab should be an innovative architectural solution to make better use of the space occupied by the unused showers in the Members' offices; calls on the Bureau working group on buildings and Parliament's administration to ensure greater transparency regarding the budget for the IDEA Lab and to regularly present to the Committee on Budgetary Control the list of innovative solutions, their cost and the feedback produced, as well as the potential saving if implemented;

94. Takes note of the various accessibility-related projects and works implemented in all three sites of work as well as the EPLOs and the Europa Experience Centres aiming to ensure total conformity with the applicable regulatory framework in line with Parliament's commitment to being a barrier-free institution, accessible to all;

95. Acknowledges that due to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the energy crisis, supply chain disruptions and raw material shortages forced DG INLO to review its projects and adjust its budget; remarks that due to the resulting deficit in the energy budget, DG INLO had to freeze or put on hold some projects to liberate the resources necessary to cope with the high price increase;

96. Takes note of the measures implemented in order to lower Parliament's energy consumption, such as reducing maximum heating temperatures in office areas and increasing minimum cooling temperatures, switching off the heating and cooling systems during the weekend and public holidays, reducing the lighting of building facades and decreasing indoor lighting levels; acknowledges that the measures are to be reassessed as the energy crisis evolves and should always grant the wellbeing of staff;

97. Acknowledges that the different measures put in place by the administration following the relevant Bureau decisions of May and October 2022 resulted in a significant energy consumption reduction amounting to savings of EUR 10,5 million from May 2022 until October 2023;

98. Acknowledges that throughout 2022 DG INLO continued the implementation of Parliament's Building Strategy Beyond 2019; notes the contribution of the purchase of the TRÈVES II building with regard to the implementation of this strategy and to the consolidation of Parliament's real estate, in particular with the intention of allowing the interconnectivity of Parliament's central buildings in Brussels; requests a timetable for the interconnection between the TRÈVES I and TRÈVES II to the main central buildings in Brussels;

99. Commends Parliament for the accessibility adaptation works that have been undertaken in the Brussels buildings between 2017 and 2022 that amounted to EUR 3,3 million overall ([5]); welcomes the fact that the tribune in the visitors' area of the hemicycle in the SPAAK building is now accessible to people with reduced mobility; recalls that the Union has been at the forefront of promoting inclusivity and equality for all its citizens; recalls that every European citizen should have equal access when visiting the Union institutions; calls on Parliament to pursue the analysis of the needs of visitors with disabilities and asks that the appropriate measures be implemented;

100. Takes note of the Bureau minutes of the additional meeting of 6 July 2022 where the Bureau took note and endorsed the results of the International Architectural Design Competition for the Renewal of the SPAAK building; notes that 5 laureates were endorsed by the Bureau; notes that no other decision was taken during 2022 on this topic and there were thus no financial consequences while at the same time stresses the increasing urgency to start the renewal works as soon as possible; highlights that on 14 February 2024 the final plans to begin renovation works were swiftly approved at committee level, given the deteriorating condition of the building; stresses that the current building has a very low energy efficiency rating and lacks much needed flexibility to be fit for purpose; highlights that the European Parliament should be a forerunner with its own building portfolio in terms of energy efficiency and sustainability to safeguard citizen's support for the objectives of the Green Deal; notes that the renovation would lead to significant cost savings of several million EUR per year and in addition help to comply with the requirements of the future European Energy Efficiency Directive and Building Performance Directive;

101. Takes further note of the Bureau decision of 6 July 2022, on the building strategy for Strasbourg, focusing on improving hosting and accommodation capacity, optimising the use of Parliament premises, enhancing accessibility and consolidating staff functionality;

102. Notes that Parliament's self-service canteen on the − 1 floor of the Spinelli building is frequently overcrowded at peak hours, resulting in long queues and waiting times; calls on the Bureau to reflect on imposing access restrictions to the canteens in Parliament's main buildings for external visitors and visitor groups; is concerned about the unsatisfactory price/quality ratio and particularly the lack of affordable vegetarian options; asks the administration to propose solutions to remedy that situation;

103. Notes that in 2022, after the COVID-related capacity restrictions were lifted, the offer of seats in the service fleet going on Mondays from Brussels to Strasbourg was 250 places and that per part-session week in 2022, on average 162 seats or 65 % of seats available in the fleet were occupied; reiterates its call on Parliament's administration to widen the use of seats while making sure that Members' seats are secured to avoid wastage of resources;

([5]) Note from Working Group on 'Building, Transport and a green Parliament' to the Bureau ((2023)10939, § 16).

Directorate-General for Translation

104. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Translation (DG TRAD) is responsible for the provision of high-quality multilingual legislation and other linguistic services to the European Parliament, Parliament's services and all citizens of the Union, based on the principle of full resource-efficient multilingualism; notes that by 31 December 2022, there were 1 109 members of staff, of which 945 were officials, 97 temporary agents, 66 contract agents, and 1 agency member of staff;

105. Notes that DG TRAD's final appropriations amounted to EUR 17 105 500 in 2022, representing 0,8 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 16 834 967 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;

106. Welcomes DG TRAD's commitment to providing high-quality language services in a timely manner; notes with satisfaction that, in 2022, over 2,89 million gross pages were translated, representing a 26 % increase compared to 2021; notes with satisfaction that the vast majority of work was delivered on time (98,5 % in normal circumstances and 98,6 % when the requests were not in accordance with the rules);

107. Welcomes DG TRAD's promotion and production of content in 'Citizens' language', Parliament's own approach to clear language adapted to people's needs in the 24 official Union languages; welcomes the establishment of a Ukrainian language team, providing linguistic services in Ukrainian, including translations, audio products and subtitles for a dedicated website;

108. Recalls the deaf community's long-standing demand, since 2016, for the ability to submit petitions to Parliament in EU national sign languages; stresses that the measure would allow the deaf community to express their right to petition, which is one of the fundamental rights of all European citizens, enshrined both in the Treaty and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; notes the analysis carried out by DG LINC and DG ITEC on the most efficient solution with minimal cost sent to the Committee of Petitions in May 2020; calls on the administration to adopt this solution and to facilitate the submission of petitions expressed in EU national sign languages via the Petitions Portal;

109. Notes with satisfaction the successful completion of the first round of the open competition for intercultural and language professionals, covering 11 languages, and organised by DG TRAD and DG PERS; highlights that DG TRAD also started recruiting successful laureates of its first ever open competition for clear language professionals; welcomes the fact that cooperation significantly accelerated made the recruitment of highly qualified officials with up-to-date and forward-looking profiles;

110. Recalls that the official languages to be used by the Union institutions, bodies and agencies are established in Regulation No 1 ([6]); acknowledges that DG TRAD ensures that Parliament's procedural content is available in all 24 official and working languages of the Union; welcomes the exceptional work done by interpreters in 2022, ensuring, as far as possible, that public debates are interpreted in all official Union languages; stresses that, under Rules of Procedure of the Parliament, Members have the right to speak in any of the 24 official languages of the Union, which reflects European cultural and linguistic diversity and also makes the Union institutions more accessible and transparent to all Union citizens; notes that one working language in particular is often used widely in the Parliament's work; calls for multilingualism to be respected by ensuring, where necessary, an adequate number of translation and interpreting staff;

111. Highlights that DG TRAD is the linguistic authority of the European Parliament, both by supporting the adoption of multilingual legislation and by contributing to multilingual communication in clear language with Members Union citizens by introducing clear language standards;

Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences

112. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Logistics and Interpretation for Conferences (DG LINC) is responsible for providing linguistic, technical and logistical support for meetings and conferences; notes that by 31 December 2022, there were 554 staff members, of which 443 were officials, 29 temporary agents and 82 contract agents; highlights that the quality of the interpretation provided has a direct impact on the message conveyed to the citizens of the Union;

([6]) Regulation No 1 determining the languages to be used by the European Economic Community (OJ 17, 6.10.1958, p. 385/58).

113. Notes that DG LINC's final appropriations amounted to EUR 79 569 347 in 2022 representing 3,7 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 79 282 501 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;

114. Highlights that demand for DG LINC services started increasing considerably as from the beginning of 2022 while COVID-19 restrictions were still in place; acknowledges that this put pressure on resources as more interpreters, technical support and complex planning operations were needed due to social distancing and other restrictions; takes note that the effects of inflation had an impact on the remuneration of external conference interpreter agents; notes that the increased cost of interpretation was partially mitigated by remote interpretation of Strasbourg plenary sessions from Brussels; with the aim of improving working conditions, primarily better sound quality and a limitation on the number and duration of interpreting hours of remote speakers;

115. Takes note that interpreter representatives contested the working conditions applicable to interpreting for remote participants due to the impact on the health and well-being of interpreters that resulted from remote interpretation for long periods of time, in particular the reported hearing problems; recalls the duty of care owed by the European institutions to their workers; highlights that the resulting industrial action in the summer and autumn of 2022 led to interpreting stoppages, affecting remote speakers; remarks that interim Interpreter Working Arrangements for meetings with remote participation entered into force on 17 October 2022; notes that they allowed for restoration of interpretation for remote speakers while maintaining the reduced weekly working hours for interpreters, thus resulting in a reduction of the service provision; notes that social dialogue aiming to establish a permanent framework and full restoration of interpretation services was ongoing at the end of 2022 and was concluded in 2023;

116. Welcomes the fact that, in 2022, DG LINC was able to consolidate its provision of interpretation services while adapting to the challenging regulatory environment; notes with satisfaction that DG LINC serviced a total of 5 278 parliamentary meetings with interpretation and delivered an average of 5 266 interpretation hours per working week, up from 4 172 meetings and 4 039 weekly hours of interpretation in 2021; notes that this is still below the 2017 and 2018 pre-COVID averages;

117. Recalls Article 26 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; reiterates its long-standing request to the Secretary-General to analyse the feasibility of international sign language interpretation for all plenary debates and to implement without delay this request; believes moreover that plenary sessions retransmission in the sign languages used in each Member State would increase participation of persons with disabilities in the EU democratic process; highlights the importance of using digital tools, including AI-powered assistive appliances; also insists on the need for accessible information through easy-to-read formats, pictograms and new technologies, for all persons with disabilities;

Directorate-General for Finance

118. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Finance (DG FINS) is the administrative body responsible for Parliament's budgetary and financial affairs; notes that by 31 December 2022, there were 246 members of staff, of which 149 were officials, 27 temporary agents, 63 contract agents, and 7 agency members of staff;

119. Notes that DG FINS's final appropriations amounted to EUR 396 723 134 in 2022 representing 18,4 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 395 647 243 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;

120. Notes that, in 2022, many of the tasks for which DG FINS is responsible more or less returned to pre-pandemic levels; notes that the war in Ukraine had a tangible impact on DG FINS' activities, requiring resilience and adaptability to ensure the continuity of certain activities in Parliament through the mobilisation and reallocation of the financial resources needed to cope with the inflationary shock;

121. Welcomes the fact that in response to the significant increase in inflation and interest rates, as well as the global energy crisis, DG FINS tightened its supervision of the levels of utilisation of budget appropriations and had to take exceptional measures to ensure the continuity of Parliament's operations, including through numerous budget reallocations and a request for an amending budget in November 2022;

122. Notes with satisfaction that DG FINS was able to take advantage of the efficiency of its processes and the commitment of its staff to ensure the continuity of the services for which it is responsible and the achievement of the objectives set in its annual work programme; notes the concerns expressed by Members about undue and often significant delays in the processing of reimbursements, with an average time for reimbursement of travel and subsistence allowances of up to 40 days; welcomes that Parliament is continuously modernising its processes in order to offer Members better services by applying automation, simplification and digitisation; calls DG FINS for further speeding up the workflows to provide more expedited procedures; notably by equipping its agents with the necessary tools and software to manage workloads efficiently, thereby reducing processing time;

123. Acknowledges the work of local assistants as an essential part of member's activities in their constituencies and as first contact point for citizens; stresses that the hiring and contract-signing process for local assistants has been increasingly challenging for some years now due to a myriad of administrational requests resulting in double checks and unclear requirements; stresses that DG FINS should recognise that local assistants are subject to national legislation and therefore requests country-specific desks to deal with the hiring process; further recalls that voluntary and political activities of local assistants, within the rules set by the European Parliament, are often regular occupations, which should not warrant unnecessary checks;

124. Takes note of DG FINS' involvement in the changes to the regulatory framework for the funding of political structures; welcomes the fact that it contributed to the drafting of the proposal adopted by the Bureau in July 2022 to amend the rules on the use of appropriations relating to the funding of political groups; notes that the amendment takes into account the situation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and provides, by way of exception, a method for maintaining the carry-over ceiling from 2022 to 2023 of unspent funds at 75 % instead of 50 %; notes with satisfaction that DG FINS was also involved in the work on the revision of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([7]);

125. Welcomes the sustained efforts made during 2022 to digitalise processes, including the development of new functionalities and the redesign of the e-Portal application; notes with satisfaction that as a result the rate of use of the application increased;

126. Recalls that long-COVID requires long-term care and is still subject to intensive research activities; notes that there are long-term patients among EU Parliament members, staff and APAs, who require continuous assistance; regrets that the current JSIS rules do not foresee adequate reimbursements leaving those concerned with a huge financial burden; stresses that similar unfavourable conditions apply to many persons with auto-immune diseases, which are not appropriately recognised; calls on DG FINS and PMO to modify the reimbursement rules to better reflect their needs;

127. Welcomes the organisation of working sessions on specific public procurement topics, including contract price management and fraud management; takes note of the comparative and feasibility studies that concluded in favour of the Commission's model based on e-Procurement;

128. Notes that DG FINS coordinates the services connected with the organisation of travel tailored to the needs of Members and all Parliament's administrative services, including the travel agency; welcomes the fact that DG FINS, in partnership with the travel agency, made efforts to automate the management of the reimbursement of Members' rail travel expenses; notes that 2022 was the second last year before the contract of the current agency ends; reiterates that the new agency chosen should be able to offer more flexible and well-priced solutions for Members that are similar to the offers they can find on the open market;

129. Is concerned that in 2022, five cases of suspected fraud were found where allegedly Members claimed specific means of transport while in fact using a cheaper one; notes that two recovery orders totalling EUR 39 807 are expected to be issued and that the other cases are currently under further investigation, these covering several budgetary years, and could amount to EUR 801 000;

([7]) Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 1).

130. Notes the announcement at the Bureau meeting of 7 March 2022 regarding the setting up of an ad hoc Bureau Working Group on the General Expenditure Allowance (GEA), which is tasked with evaluating the implementation of the Bureau decision of 2 July 2018 establishing a list of expenses which may be defrayed from the GEA on the basis of the experience gained during the 9th parliamentary term; observes that the Bureau, at its meeting of 17 October 2022, adopted a set of amendments to the Implementing Measures for the Statute for Members (IMMS), clarifying the rules applicable to the entitlement and use of the GEA and measures aimed at increasing transparency and providing more legal certainty regarding the entitlement to the allowance; highlights that the ad hoc Working Group was asked to take duly into account aspects of transparency, accountability and sound financial management of funds made available to Members, bearing in mind the principle of freedom and independence of the parliamentary mandate and the objective of not creating unnecessary administrative burdens for Members, their offices and Parliament's services;

131. Points out that in 2022 there were only 32 voluntary declarations on the use of the GEA submitted by 26 Members, of which 29 contained an auditor's report; welcomes efforts by the Secretariat to encourage MEPs to make increased use of these options;

132. Highlights that Members are free to document their use of the funds under the GEA, in detail or by type of cost, on their own or with the support of an external auditor, and to have this information published in whole or in part on their online page on Parliament's website in accordance with Rule 11, paragraph 2, of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament; welcomes that a simplified list of types of costs is integrated into the IMMS and that an amendment clarifying the possibility for Members to use the GEA in the case of exhaustion of other allowances has also been adopted;

133. Recalls that OLAF has the mandate to investigate suspicions of serious misconduct by Union staff and members of the Union institutions, including possible breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament; notes that in 2022 there were no cases in which OLAF requested access to offices or email accounts of Members; notes that a procedure to strengthen the mandate of OLAF in Parliament in cases of substantiated suspicions regarding individual Members when it is strictly needed and proportionate for the investigation and fully respecting confidentiality in accordance with the principle of immunities as laid down in Protocol No 7 on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Union could be completed; reiterates its call on the Bureau to set up such a procedure without delay;

134. Notes that, in 2022, OLAF investigated 32 cases involving Parliament on issues related to, in particular, Members' financial and social entitlements, the financing of political structures and the discharge of professional obligations by staff; highlights that OLAF issued 14 reports, some of which had more than one recommendation, of which 5 included financial recommendations, 5 included disciplinary recommendations, 1 included an administrative recommendations, and 7 did not include any recommendations; takes note that in 2022 the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) investigated 4 cases involving Parliament on issues related to Members' financial and social entitlements, and the financing of political structures; notes that none of the investigations conducted by EPPO in 2022 was concluded on the same year; asks the administration to the extent legally possible whether the recommendations made by OLAF have been fully implemented and the amounts at risk have been recovered, as well as to provide a summary, without any sensitive data, of the typology of cases investigated in order to be able to draw conclusions and make improvements;

135. Notes that Parliament has systematically rejected OLAF's requests to conduct inspections of MEPs' offices and access their electronic servers and devices; highlights that Members are protected by the non-liability for votes cast and opinions expressed in the performance of their duties and the protection from prosecutions and restrictions of their personal freedom during the sessions of Parliament; recalls that OLAF can only enter Members' offices after Parliament's President grants access following a request issued by a responsible authority of a Member State, in most cases a judge; recalls that OLAF needs to respect these limits in the observance of its duties and investigations and stresses that alleged misconduct cannot be used as a pretext to request direct access;

136. Regrets that despite at least 25 breaches of the Code of Conduct by Members recorded in the past twelve years, Parliament's Presidents have not a single time imposed a financial sanction on a Member; calls on the President to consider imposing financial sanctions when it has been proven that Members have breached the Code of Conduct to ensure the sanctions actually have a deterrent effect;

137. Notes that in the year 2022, the amount of EUR 261 891 was recovered by the European Parliament from individual MEPs on revenue budget line 3 3 0 0 'Repayment of amounts wrongly paid'; notes that large part of this amount is not related to parliamentary assistance allowance; notes that in general, amounts recovered on revenue budget line 3 3 0 0 (from individual MEPS but also from political groups/parties/foundations, third parties, staff, other individuals, etc.) for the largest part represent technical recoveries such as the regularisation of amounts spent related to contracts evolved or terminated and for a large majority they do not concern APAs; observes that these amounts also include cases which relate to the voluntary reimbursements by a limited number of MEPs and the specific case of corrections, which were due either to administrative errors in the EP calculations or retroactive change of the rules in some Member States and off-set; notes that changes in terms of contracts and potential related recoveries after validated adaptations of the terms of contract are also falling under this category;

Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support

138. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support (DG ITEC) provides Parliament with information and communications technology (ICT) services and equipment, videoconferencing and multimedia services as well as publishing and printing services; notes that by 31 December 2022, there were 543 staff members, of which 349 were officials, 53 temporary agents and 141 contract staff;

139. Notes that DG ITEC's final appropriations amounted to EUR 134 808 679 in 2022 representing 6,2 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 134 439 573 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;

140. Welcomes the fact that DG ITEC partners with client Directorates-General to deliver a user-centred, secure, hybrid and data driven working environment for Members and staff; notes with satisfaction its promotion of the sustainable and responsible deployment of innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics to enhance the decision-making capabilities of Parliament's services;

141. Recalls the added-value of free and open source software in improving security since they make it possible for Parliament to identify and fix weaknesses, keep control over the data by hosting in its servers and designing solutions according to its own specifications, while being able to avoid vendor lock-in effects; recalls that only high standards of cyber security should guide the selection of the software used;

142. Notes that Parliament's cyber-defence activities were strongly marked by a constantly growing cyber threat and risk landscape around Parliament and the other Union institutions, bodies and agencies; welcomes the fact that additional resources have been used by CERT-EU to guide Parliament in the domains of cloud infrastructure applications, enhanced cyber threat intelligence and 24/7 monitoring of the security perimeter, as well as vulnerability identification;

143. Welcomes the creation of the Directorate for Cybersecurity in 2022, responsible for information security and composed of three units, dealing with security operations, security policy and security risk; urges Parliament to maintain its efforts and increase its investment in cybersecurity; welcomes that DG ITEC offered the possibility to check IT equipment for evidence of spyware such as PEGASUS, calls for DG ITEC to keep working in this area;

144. Notes that following the increased use of portable devices in 2022, DG ITEC issued a global study to plan improvements to the Wi-Fi network in Parliament buildings; notes that, in 2022, the SPAAK building in Brussels was reinforced with the deployment of 351 additional antennas; acknowledges the efforts made to improve the Wi-Fi network in Parliament buildings; calls for further enhancement of the mobile network in Parliament buildings in Strasbourg in order to improve mobile phone reception;

145. Highlights that worldwide inflation coupled with supply chain issues are causing cost increases in areas from hardware to professional services; welcomes the fact that DG ITEC has reprioritised ongoing IT investments; welcomes the new and faster IT governance cycle as part of DG ITEC's Agile IT programme;

146. Notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst for the rapidly accelerated digital transformation of Parliament in the last few years; highlights the move to a hybrid Parliament with fully flexible working arrangements from physical presence to a fully digital working environment; welcomes the resilience demonstrated by Parliament in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that its response was rapid and flexible and benefited from previous investments in digitalisation;

147. Recalls the deaf community's longstanding demand for the possibility to submit petitions in national sign languages used within the Union; notes the discussions held during the Committee of Petitions meeting on 29 November 2023 and 19 March 2024, specifically addressing Petition 1056/2016, and underlines Parliament's commitment to enhancing accessibility for all European citizens; recalls that Parliament's Rules of Procedure require petitions to be submitted in written form; calls on Parliament's Administration to implement the necessary changes in the Petitions Portal in order to enable Petitioners to support their written petition with a video recorded translation in sign language; encourages the Administration to invite relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the deaf community, to provide input and feedback during the implementation process to ensure the effectiveness and inclusivity of the proposed measures;

148. Welcomes the fact that the Digital Signature Portal (DiSP) allows Members to digitally sign documents, which improves efficiency, traceability and transparency to the procedures, notes that, regardless of the possibility to send signed plenary AMs to the plenary services by email or via the EP Transfer portal, signing plenary amendments is still an outdated and burdensome procedure; calls on the Bureau to take the necessary steps for introducing the possibility for Members to sign plenary amendments digitally in the future;

Directorate-General for Security and Safety

149. Recalls that the Directorate-General for Security and Safety (DG SAFE) seeks to anticipate, prevent and mitigate security risks and threats to Parliament and its Members and staff by using a risk-based approach that takes into due consideration the democratic nature of the institution and the values it embodies, in particular openness and transparency; notes that by 31 December 2022, there were 882 members of staff, of which 170 were officials, 22 temporary agents and 690 contract agents;

150. Notes that DG SAFE's final appropriations amounted to EUR 29 507 334 in 2022, representing 1,4 % of Parliament's budget; highlights that, of that amount, a total of EUR 28 370 796 was committed; welcomes the high use of appropriations;

151. Welcomes the internalisation of general security services in Luxembourg which entered into force on 1 January 2022; confirms the difficulty of attracting and recruiting specialised staff from all Member States in the security field with the conditions offered under function group I; recalls the particular situation in Luxembourg, where the salary offered in this function group is lower than the national minimum inter-professional wage, forcing Parliament to resort to social compensation;

152. Points to the increased demand for DG SAFE to provide additional and exceptional security and safety services in all places of work for a growing number of large-scale events; recognises the challenge it represents for Parliament's security services, which have a fixed number of agents, to positively respond to these growing needs;

153. Welcomes the return to normal of the level of visitors following the relaxation of COVID-related restrictions in 2022; is concerned that the lack of space in Brussels to welcome and accredit event and conference participants might pose a risk to Parliament's security;

154. Stresses the importance of thorough forward planning for projects related to European Parliament Liaison Offices and Europa Experience Centres to be able to carefully estimate expenses for security and safety services and equipment;

Horizontal issues with implications on Parliament's budget for the 2022 financial year

Harassment

155. Welcomes Parliament's zero tolerance policy on harassment and the awareness-raising campaigns carried out; stresses that the Code of Appropriate Behaviour for Members of the European Parliament seeks to ensure that Members behave towards everyone working in Parliament with dignity, courtesy and respect and without prejudice or discrimination; recalls that in 2022, 56 MEPs participated in the training session; notes that, since November 2018, when the first sessions were offered, a total of 324 current MEPs ***(46 %)*** had participated in the training session, plus 56 former Members whose mandate has ended; notes that in 2022, 106 members of staff and APAs had participated in anti-harassment training courses; notes with concern that cases of harassment are still occurring regardless of the activities being carried out to eliminate harassment in the work place;

156. Recalls that in previous discharges the implementation of mandatory anti-harassment training courses for all Members and APAs, as well as staff, including persons in managerial roles in the different Directorates-General and political groups was requested; acknowledges that to help build a better working environment in the European Parliament and avoid any abuse of power, on 10 July 2023, the Bureau further approved a training concept on successful team management as well as harassment prevention; welcomes the Bureau's efforts to make the anti-harassment training session mandatory for all members as well as Heads of Unit, Directors and Directors-General;

157. Highlights that there should be mandatory anti-harassment training for members, APAs and members of staff and that all members of staff, including medical personnel playing a role in anti-harassment procedures, should be specially trained for these procedures;

158. Highlights the fact that the Advisory Committee on Harassment and its Prevention in the Workplace received two complaints in 2022, lodged by two trainees; notes that in addition, one member of staff contacted the committee for consultation;

159. Highlights that the Advisory Committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning Members has a mandate to examine allegations of psychological or sexual harassment against Members from all categories of staff, including APAs, trainees, seconded national experts and political group staff; notes that with the aim of further reinforcing Parliament's anti-harassment policies, on 20 November 2023, the Bureau adopted a number of additional amendments to the rules on the functioning of the advisory committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning Members; reiterates its calls on the Bureau to include independent experts on harassment issues in both advisory committees to assist in the performance of their duties;

160. Stresses that sexual and psychological harassment are not acceptable under any circumstances; recalls that Parliament has successfully installed several contact points to deal with harassment cases, like the Advisory Committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning Members, and the Advisory Committee on harassment and its prevention at the workplace as well as confidential counsellors; is very concerned by media revelations of alleged sexual harassment by a Member since summer 2022 without action having been taken; recalls that all political groups are strongly encouraged to report potential cases to these committees and that establishing external structures with the same purpose leads to circumventing Parliament's anti-harassment protocol and establishes a two-tier system; underlines that this leads to grave uncertainty for victims and establishes different rules for different political parties;

161. Notes that, in 2022, 13 staff members (compared to 9 in 2021) sought the assistance of the institution pursuant to Article 24 of the Staff Regulations; remarks that 6 of the cases (compared to 5 in 2021) related to alleged harassment; highlights that none of the members of staff concerned were officials and that all six were APAs or former APAs;

162. Considers that harassment of the parliamentary assistant by other parliamentary assistants or Parliament officials should also be taken into account;

Whistleblowers

163. Recalls that staff members of the Union institutions have an obligation to report any information pointing to corruption, fraud and other serious irregularities that they discover in the line of duty; notes that Parliament recorded one case of whistleblowing in 2022; welcomes the ongoing work in 2022 to update the Internal Rules implementing Article 22(c) of the Staff Regulations of 4 December 2015 with more comprehensive and detailed internal rules; welcome that a Bureau decision regarding the internal rules on whistleblowing was adopted on 20 November 2023 and applies from 1 December 2023; including provisions for the protection of whistleblowers, transmission of evidence to OLAF and, if appropriate, EPPO as well as deadlines for the handling of complaints;

164. Following Bureau Notice No 18/2023 on the Internal rules on whistleblowing and the obligations placed upon APAs and staff members to report any violations, it is imperative that all services within the Parliament also be obligated to report any information they have of fraud, violations of financial rules, or any conduct that breaches the Parliament's ethical code. This obligation applies to all such information, regardless of its confidentiality, and should be reported to the relevant service within the Parliament;

Voluntary Pension Fund (VPF)

165. Notes that the actuarial deficit of the Voluntary Pension Fund (VPF) on 31 December 2021 amounted to EUR 379 million (compared to EUR 371,4 million on 31 December 2020); welcomes the amendments made by Parliament's Bureau to Article 76 of the IMMS in relation to the Additional (Voluntary) Pension Scheme, which entered into force on 1 July 2023, aiming to reduce future pension obligations from EUR 362,7 million to an estimated EUR 139 million, and the actuarial deficit of the fund from EUR 310 million to an estimated EUR 86 million;

166. Welcomes the latest decisions taken by the Bureau; recalls that the problem will still need to be addressed in the future as the fund is expected to exhaust its assets by 2027 at the latest; acknowledges that Parliament is not involved in the management of the VPF's investment portfolio; but calls on the Fund's manager to carry out a proper assessment of the potential reputational risk of its investments; notes that the legal assessment of the latest judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union and their consequences for future Bureau decisions were also made available to the Members of the Bureau in order to allow them to take an informed decision; notes that there are ongoing appeals in the Court of Justice of the European Union and the matter will need to be addressed again after the judgments are handed down;

167. Asks the administration and the Bureau to address the matter once again only after the legal assessment of the CJEU is delivered in order to consider the future of the VPF;

Annual report on contracts awarded

168. Recalls that the Financial Regulation specifies the information to be provided to the budgetary authority and to the public concerning the award of contracts by Parliament; notes that the Financial Regulation requires publication of contracts awarded with a value greater than EUR 15 000, a value that corresponds to the threshold above which a competitive tendering procedure becomes compulsory; notes that, of a total of 194 contracts awarded in 2022, 63 were based on an open procedure, with a value of EUR 359,3 million, and 1 on a restricted procedure, with a value of EUR 460 000; notes that there 126 contracts were awarded by negotiated procedures, with a value of EUR 48 million;

169. Notes that the total amount of contracts awarded decreased in 2022 (194) compared to 2021 (221); notes the substantial reduction of the contracted amounts, which in 2022 reached EUR 410 million, compared to EUR 1 016 million in 2021;

170. Notes the following breakdown of contracts by type awarded in 2022 and 2021, including building contracts:

Type of contract	2021		2022	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Buildings	8	3,6	2	1
Services	176	79,6	169	87
Supplies	27	12,2	17	9
Works	10	4,5	6	3
Total	**221**	**100**	**194**	**100**

Type of contract	2021		2022	
	Amount	Percentage (%)	Amount	Percentage (%)
Buildings	168 302 638	17	27 804 776	7
Services	634 689 038	62	283 779 269	69
Supplies	136 777 513	13	47 817 885	12
Works	76 247 759	8	50 642 975	12
Total	**1 016 016 948**	**100**	**410 044 905**	**100**

171. Notes the following breakdown of contracts awarded in 2022 and 2021 by type of procedure used, in terms of number and value:

Type of procedure	2021		2022	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Open Procedure	78	35	63	32,5
Negotiated Procedure	135	61	126	65
Restricted Procedure	2	1	1	0,5
Exception	2	1	1	0,5
CEI list	2	1	1	0,5
DPS	1	0,5	0	0
Innovation Partnership	0	0	0	0
OP Accelerated	1	0,5	1	0,5
Design Contest	0	0	1	0,5
Total	**221**	**100**	**194**	**100**

Political groups (budget item 4 0 0)

172. Notes that, in 2022, the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 0, attributed to the political groups and non-attached Members, were used as follows ([8]):

Group	2022					2021				
	Annual appropria-tions	Own resources and carried-over appropria-tions	Expenditure	Rate of use of annual appropria-tions (%)	Amounts carried-over to next period	Annual appropria-tions	Own resources and carried-over appropria-tions	Expenditure	Rate of use of annual appropria-tions (%)	Amounts carried-over to next period
European People's Party (EPP)	16 739	12 640	18 651	111,42	10 729	16 750	10 229	13 646	81,47	12 562
Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	13 804	10 258	15 016	108,78	9 046	13 584	9 829	12 295	90,51	10 188
Renew Europe (former Alliance of Liberal and Democrats for Europe (ALDE))	9 799	6 950	11 384	116,18	5 365	9 192	6 948	6 997	76,12	6 894
The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)	6 941	5 196	7 964	114,74	4 173	6 927	4 891	6 126	88,43	5 196
Identity and Democracy (ID)	6 348	5 157	6 958	109,61	4 547	6 874	4 762	5 940	86,42	5 155
European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	6 184	3 847	6 960	112,55	3 071	6 005	3 982	6 269	104,39	3 718
The Left – European United Left / Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)	3 858	2 036	4 498	116,59	1 396	3 806	2 266	4 036	106,05	2 036
Non-attached Members	2 326	861	994	42,72	1 520	1 862	1 041	595	31,94	861
Total	**66 000**	**46 945**	**72 426**	**109,74**	**39 846**	**65 000**	**43 948**	**55 904**	**86,01**	**46 611**

([8]) All amounts in thousands of EUR.

173. Welcomes the fact that independent external auditors for the political groups only issued unqualified opinions for the financial year 2022;

174. Recalls that these appropriations are intended to cover activities in connection with the Union's political activities, and that political groups are responsible to Parliament for their use;

European political parties and European political foundations

175. Notes that, in 2022, the Authority gave European political parties and European political foundations the right to be heard as well as the opportunity for corrective measures in 9 cases; further notes that these were cases relating to reporting requirements, rules concerning revenue and joint activities; highlights that the Authority's early scrutiny indicates that the immediately relevant corrective measures were implemented by the European political parties and foundations concerned in all these cases; takes note that the Authority will continue to monitor that corrective measures with a long-lasting effect will ensure sustained compliance in the areas concerned; welcomes the fact that no sanctions had to be adopted in 2022;

176. Welcomes the fact that in preparation for the 2024 European elections, the Authority is actively enhancing cooperation networks by exploring further partnerships in defence of democratic integrity;

177. Notes with concern that the Authority reports that it is facing constrained human resources; highlights that this issue is expected to become more pressing due to the evolving challenges in the run-up to the 2024 European elections, including, in particular, the need to protect democratic integrity against novel forms of foreign interference, as well as the necessary administrative implementation of any new tasks that would arise for the Authority from the ongoing negotiations on a recast of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1141/2014;

178. Recalls the key role of a lively and resilient European democracy underpinned by pluralism of political parties at Union level; emphasises therefore that a level playing field has to be ensured and compliance has to be controlled with full respect for procedural rights; welcomes, in this respect, the essential work of the Authority, which independently and in close cooperation with Parliament ensures compliance of European political parties and foundations with the legal framework, provides transparency to citizens and contributes to the integrity of Parliament elections;

179. Notes that, in 2022, the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 2 were used as follows ([9]):

Party (2022)	Abbreviation	Own resources	EP final contribution ([1])	Total revenue	EP contribution as % of reimbursable expenditure (max. 90 %)	Revenue surplus (transfer to reserve or loss)
European People's Party	EPP	1 655 732	10 720 235	12 375 967	90	448 128
Party of European Socialists	PES	1 010 502	7 204 815	8 215 317	90	675 194
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party	ALDE	1 177 316	6 448 482	7 625 798	90	560 139
European Green Party	EGP	661 160	5 384 834	6 045 994	90	846 993
Party of the European Left	EL	290 086	2 336 264	2 626 350	90	40 396
European Democratic Party	PDE	176 754	1 257 070	1 433 824	90	127 134
European Free Alliance	EFA	112 712	928 957	1 041 669	90	100 217
European Conservatives and Reformists Party	ECR Party	515 571	1 958 597	2 474 168	90	—
European Christian Political Movement	ECPM	72 331	615 809	688 140	90	—

([9]) All amounts in thousands of EUR.

Party (2022)	Abbreviation	Own resources	EP final contribution [1]	Total revenue	EP contribution as % of reimbursable expenditure (max. 90 %)	Revenue surplus (transfer to reserve or loss)
Identity and Democracy party	ID Party	331 742	618 311	950 053	74	—
Total		**6 003 906**	**37 473 375**	**43 477 281**		**2 798 201**

[1] Composed of second part of 2021 final funding and first part of 2022 final funding according to the Bureau Decision of 26 February 2024.

180. Notes that, in 2022, the appropriations entered under budget item 4 0 3 were used as follows [10]:

Foundation (2022)	Abbreviation	Affiliated to party	Own resources	EP final grant	Total revenue	EP grant as % of eligible costs (max. 95 %)	Revenue surplus (transfer to reserve or loss)
Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies	WMCES	EPP	643 606	5 963 141	6 606 747	95,00	235 689
Foundation for European Progressive Studies	FEPS	PES	613 626	4 959 360	5 572 986	95,00	288 687
European Liberal Forum	ELF	ALDE	306 991	2 636 977	2 943 968	91,06	—
Green European Foundation	GEF	EGP	182 933	2 088 792	2 271 726	95,00	—
Transform Europe	TE	EL	77 965	1 191 366	1 269 331	95,00	3 696
Institute of European Democrats	IED	PDE	42 791	502 109	544 899	95,00	—
Coppieters Foundation	Coppieters	EFA	77 009	561 149	638 158	95,00	23 981
New Direction - Foundation for European Reform	ND	ECR Party	384 557	2 052 425	2 436 982	92,97	—
Sallux	SALLUX	ECPM	21 233	401 927	423 160	94,98	—
Association pour l'Identite et Democratie Fondation	ID Foundation	ID Party	46 893	577 027	623 920	95,00	—
Total			**2 397 604**	**20 934 273**	**23 331 877**		**552 053**

[10] All amounts in thousands of EUR.